

GI SPECIAL 2#C35

**WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE TO BEGIN WITH?
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



A US soldier by M3A2 Cavalry Fighting Vehicle outside Samarra. Two people were killed and 14 wounded in bomb attacks. (AFP/MNF-I/HO)

GI RESISTANCE:

**“What Are We Doing
Here To Begin With?”**

My feeling, and guys I talked to over there, our feeling was: What are we doing here to begin with? Why are we pinned down? Why are they shooting at us? Why are we here shooting at them? Why are we fighting this war?

From the book, *GIs Speak Out Against The War, The Case Of The Ft. Jackson 8: Interviews of participants* by Fred Halstead, Merit Books, 1979

[These interviews were conducted at Fort Jackson, S.C., May 22, 1969. Halstead is the interviewer. In this selection, Pvt. Joseph Cole, 24, Atlanta, is speaking, followed by Pvt. Jose Ruder, 20, Washington DC]

Cole: For one thing, you can't convince somebody to defend anything, to fight, to kill, to accept the possibility that he might be killed, unless he knows what he is fighting for.

Guys would pack an M-16 and go out in the paddy in good discipline if there were a reason for them to do it.

But there's not. It doesn't make any sense.

Their enemy is not the Vietnamese peasant. Their enemy is those who send them out there.

The colonel or general sits back in his goddamned bunker, his officer's bunker, and doesn't even let the enlisted man come into his bunker during a mortar attack when it's the enlisted man who built that bunker.

Rudder: I want to speak from experience there.

Halstead: **Have you been to Vietnam, in combat?**

Rudder: **Yes. In combat.**

In my experience the majority of GIs in Vietnam don't like the war.

They don't know what they are fighting for.

In previous wars in history they did—my father is a veteran of World War II, a lieutenant in the Marine Corps, and fought the same type of warfare that I did, jungle warfare in the Pacific. I used to ask him what it was like when he was pinned down. He said as a commander, first he was thinking about how to get his men positioned to strike back at the enemy, or how he as an individual soldier could strike back at the enemy.

But in Vietnam that feeling isn't shared by anybody except maybe a few lifers.

My feeling, and guys I talked to over there, our feeling was: What are we doing here to begin with? Why are we pinned down? Why are they shooting at us? Why are we here shooting at them? Why are we fighting this war?

And you can't come up with any answers. So the consequence is that the reason you fight is to simply stay alive.

Another thing, the terrific amount of commitment the V. C. had had a great impact upon my mind.

One time two of my buddies and I went out on a small foray— the other two guys were both killed later — we came in contact with a small group of V. C. We engaged them and beat them pretty bad, using M-16s and hand grenades.

Two of them got away and we followed them. They were wounded and we followed them for almost two miles and we came across parts of hands and parts of legs. You see the

M-16 round travels end over end and when it makes contact it tears. So actually we had torn them to bits. We finally came across two corpses.

They could have surrendered, but they had crawled two miles to get away to fight us again. All of us were very quiet. Nobody said anything. It showed how senseless our fight was.

[Now Halstead is talking with Sp/4 Robert Mall, also a combat veteran of Vietnam.]

Mall: I can't really see where the Vietnamese are going to come charging under the Golden Gate Bridge. **I've heard no argument whatsoever that makes any sense why we're in Vietnam.**

It's a civil war which is strictly the Vietnamese's business.

MORE:

Army Directive

[From the book, *GIs Speak Out Against The War, The Case Of The Ft. Jackson 8: Interviews of participants by Fred Halstead, Merit Books, 1979. This case forced the Army to grudgingly recognize that soldiers do have a few rights, scattered around here and there. See this letter now from the Secretary Of The Army.]*

[BE ADVISED; FOR CURRENT POLICY, CHECK OUT: <http://www.nlg.org/mltf/>]

ANNEX C
(Department of Defense Seal)
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
OFFICE OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
WASHINGTON, D. C. 20310

in reply refer to
AGAM-P (M) **(27 May 69)** DCSPER-SARD
SUBJECT: Guidance on Dissent
SEE DISTRIBUTION

1. In the past few weeks there have been press reports suggesting a growth in dissent among military personnel. Questions have been raised concerning the proper treatment of manifestations of soldier dissent when they occur. The purpose of this letter is to provide general guidance on this matter. Specific dissent problems can, of course, be resolved only on the basis of the particular facts of the situation and in accordance with provisions of applicable Army regulations.

2. It is important to recognize that the question of "soldier dissent" is linked with the Constitutional right of free speech and that the Army's reaction to such dissent will— quite properly — continue to receive much attention in the news media. Any action taken at any level may therefore reflect—either favorably or adversely— on the image and standing of the Army with the American public.

Many cases involve difficult legal questions, requiring careful development of the factual situation and application of various constitutional, statutory, and regulatory provisions (See Appendix A). Consequently, commanders should consult with their Staff Judge Advocates and may in appropriate cases confer with higher authority before initiating any disciplinary or administrative action in response to manifestations of dissent. The maintenance of good order and discipline and the performance of military missions remains, of course, the responsibility of commanders.

3. “Dissent,” in the literal sense of disagreement with policies of the Government, is a right of every citizen. In our system of Government, we do not ask that every citizen or every soldier agree with every policy of the Government. Indeed, the First Amendment to the Constitution requires that one be permitted to believe what he will. Nevertheless, the Government and our citizens are entitled to expect that, regardless of disagreement, every citizen and every soldier will obey the law of the land.

4. The right to express opinions on matters of public and personal concern is secured to soldier and civilian alike by the Constitution and laws of the United States. This right, however, is not absolute for either soldier or civilian. Other functions and interests of the Government and the public, *which are also sanctioned and.. protected by the Constitution, and are also important to a free, democratic and lawful society*, may require reasonable limitations on the exercise of the right of expression in certain circumstances. In particular, the interest of the Government and the public in the maintenance of an effective and disciplined Army for the purpose of National defense justifies certain restraints upon the activities of military personnel which need not be imposed on similar activities by civilians.

5. The following general guidelines are provided to cover some of the manifestations of dissent which the Army has encountered.

a. Possession and distribution of political materials.

(1) In the case of publications distributed through official outlets such as Post Exchanges and Post Libraries, a commander is authorized to delay distribution of a specific issue of a publication in accordance with the provisions of para. 5-5, of AR 210-10. Concurrently with the delay, a commander must submit a report to the Department of the Army, ATTN; CINFO. A commander may delay distribution only if he determines that the specific publication presents a clear danger to the loyalty, discipline, or morale of his troops.

(2) **In the case of distribution of publications through other than official outlets, a commander may require that prior approval be obtained for any distribution on post. Distribution without prior approval may be prohibited.** A commander’s denial of authority to distribute a publication on post is subject to the procedures of para. 5-5, AR 2 10-10, discussed above.

(3) **A commander may not prevent distribution of a publication simply because he does not like its contents. All denials of permission for distribution must be in accordance with the provisions of para. 5-5, AR 2 10-10.** For example, a commander may prohibit distribution of publications which are obscene or otherwise unlawful (e.g., counselling disloyalty, mutiny, or refusal of duty). A commander may also

prohibit distribution if the manner of accomplishing the distribution materially interferes with the accomplishment of a military mission (e.g., interference with training or troop formation). **In any event, a commander must have cogent reasons, with supporting evidence, for any denial of distribution privileges. The fact that a publication is critical—even unfairly critical—of government policies or officials is not in itself, a grounds for denial.**

(4) Mere possession of a publication may not be prohibited; however, possession of an unauthorized publication coupled with an attempt to distribute in violation of post regulations may constitute an offense. Accordingly, cases involving the possession of several copies of an unauthorized publication or other circumstances (sic) indicating an intent to distribute should be investigated.

b. Coffee Houses.

The Army should not use its off-limits power to restrict soldiers in the exercise of their Constitutional rights of freedom of speech and freedom of association by barring attendance at coffee houses, unless it can be shown, for example, that activities taking place in the coffee houses include counseling soldiers to refuse to perform duty or to desert, or otherwise involve illegal acts with a significant adverse effect on soldier health, morale or welfare. In such circumstances (sic), commanders have the authority to place such establishments “off limits” in accordance with the standards and procedures of AR15-3. As indicated, such action should be taken only on the basis of cogent reasons, supported by evidence.

c. “Servicemen’s Union.”

Commanders are not authorized to recognize or to bargain with a “servicemen’s union.” **In view of the constitutional right to freedom of association, it is unlikely that mere membership in a “servicemen’s union” can constitutionally be prohibited, and current regulations do not prohibit such membership.** However, specific actions by individual members of a “servicemen’s union” which in themselves constitute offenses under the Uniform Code of Military Justice or Army Regulations may be dealt with appropriately. Collective or individual refusals to obey orders are one example of conduct which may constitute an offense under the Uniform Code.

d. Publication of “Underground Newspapers.”

Army regulations provide that personal literary efforts may not be pursued during duty hours or accomplished by the use of Army property. However, the publication of “underground newspapers” by soldiers off-post on their own time, and with their own money and equipment is generally protected under the First Amendment’s guarantees of freedom of speech and freedom of the press. **Unless such a newspaper contains language, the utterance of which is punishable under Federal law (e.g. 10 U. S. C. Sec. 2837 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice), authors of an “underground newspaper” may not be disciplined for mere publication.** Distribution of such newspapers on post is governed by para. 5-5, AR 2 10-10, discussed in para. 5a above.

e. On-Post Demonstrations by Civilians.

A commander may legally bar individuals from entry on a military reservation for any purpose prohibited by law or lawful regulation, and it is a crime for any person who has been removed and barred from a post by order of the commander to re-enter. **However, a specific request for a permit to conduct an on-post demonstration in an area to which the public has generally been granted access should not be denied on an arbitrary basis.** Such a permit may be denied on a reasonable basis such as a showing that the demonstration may result in a clear interference with or prevention of orderly accomplishment of the mission of the post, or present a clear danger to loyalty, discipline, and morale of the troops.

f. On-Post Demonstrations by Soldiers.

AR 600-20 and 600-21 prohibit all on-post demonstrations by members of the Army. The validity of these provisions is currently being litigated. Commanders will be advised of the results of this litigation.

g. Off-Post Demonstrations by Soldiers.

AR 600-20 and 600-2 1 prohibit members of the Army from participating in off-post demonstrations **when they are in uniform, or on duty, or in a foreign country**, or when their activities constitute a breach of law and order, or when violence is likely to result.

h. Grievances.

The right of members to complain and request redress of grievances against actions of their superiors is protected by the inspector General system (AR 20-1.) and Article 138, UCMJ. **In addition, a soldier may petition or present any grievance to any member of Congress (19 USC, Sec. 1034).** An open door policy for complaints is a basic principle of good leadership, and commanders should personally assure themselves that adequate procedures exist for identifying valid complaints and taking corrective action. **Complaining personnel must not be treated as “enemies of the system.”** Even when complaints are unfounded, the fact that one was made may signal a misunderstanding, or a lack of communication, which should be corrected. **In any system as large as the Army, it is inevitable that situations will occur giving rise to valid complaints**, and over the years such complaints have helped to make the Army stronger while assuring compliance with proper policies and procedures.

6. It is the policy of the Department of the Army to safeguard the service member’s right of expression to the maximum extent possible, and to impose only such minimum restraints as are necessary to enable the Army to perform its mission, in the interest of National defense. The statutes and regulations referred to above (as well as some other provisions of law and regulations) are concerned with these permissible restraints and authorize a commander to impose restrictions on the military members’s (*sic*) right of expression and dissent, under certain circumstances.

<p>However, in applying any such statutes and regulation in particular situations, it is important to remember that freedom of expression is a fundamental right secured by the Constitution. Furthermore, it is important to remember that the</p>
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Commander's responsibility is for the good order, loyalty and discipline of all his men. Severe disciplinary action in response to a relatively insignificant manifestation of dissent can have a counter productive effect on other members of the Command, because the reaction appears out of proportion to the threat which the dissent. represents.

Thus, rather than serving as a deterrent, such disproportionate actions may stimulate further breaches of discipline. On the other hand, no Commander should be indifferent to conduct which, if allowed to proceed unchecked, would destroy the effectiveness of his unit. In the final analysis no regulations or guidelines are an adequate substitute for the calm and prudent judgment of the responsible commander.

7. The mission of the Army is to execute faithfully, as ordered, policies and programs established in accordance with law by duly elected and appointed Government officials. Unquestionably, the vast majority of service members are prepared to do what is required of them to perform that mission, whether or not they agree in every instance with the policies the mission reflects.

BY ORDER OF THE SECRETARY OF THE ARMY:

(signed)

KENNETH G. WICKHAM

Major General, USA

The Adjutant General

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App A

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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 in Iraq. Send requests to address up top.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Two Soldiers Killed, Three Wounded In Baghdad IED Attack

11/29/04 CJTF7 Release #041129e, Baghdad, Iraq

Two Task Force Baghdad Soldiers were killed when their patrol struck an improvised explosive device at about 11:30 a.m. in northwestern Baghdad. Three other Soldiers were wounded in the attack.

FIRST I.D. SOLDIER DIES FOLLOWING AS SADIYAH VEHICLE ACCIDENT

November 29, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
NEWS RELEASE Number: 04-11-18C

TIKRIT, Iraq –One 1st Infantry Division Soldier died from injuries he received in a vehicle accident near As Sadiyah on November 28 at about 2:10 p.m.

The Soldier was riding in a 5-ton truck when it rolled into a canal. The Soldier was evacuated to a MNF medical facility, where he was pronounced dead.

ONE SOLDIER KILLED, TWO INJURED IN VEHICLE ACCIDENT

November 29, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
NEWS RELEASE Number: 04-11-19C

LSA ANACONDA, BALAD, Iraq -- A 13th Corps Support Command Soldier is dead and two more were injured in a vehicle accident 50 km northwest of Al Kut at about 1 p.m. on Nov. 29

The two injured Soldiers were evacuated by air to the 31st Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad.

The Death Of Six Marines

November 29, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1219-04

The Department of Defense announced today the death of six Marines.

Cpl. Kirk J. Bosselmann, 21, of Napa, Calif.

Lance Cpl. Bradley M. Faircloth, 20, of Mobile, Ala.

Lance Cpl. Jeffery S. Holmes, 20, of White River Junction, Vt.

Lance Cpl. David B. Houck, 25, of Winston Salem, N.C.

Lance Cpl. Joshua E. Lucero, 19, of Tucson, Ariz.

Sgt. Nicholas S. Nolte, 25, of Falls City, Neb.

Nolte died Nov. 24 at the National Naval Medical Center Bethesda, Md., from injuries received Nov. 9 as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province, Iraq. Holmes died Nov. 25, Faircloth and Houck died Nov. 26, and Bosselmann and Lucero died Nov. 27, all as a result of enemy action in Al Anbar Province Iraq.

Bosselmann, Faircloth, Holmes and Houck were assigned to 1st Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. Lucero was assigned to 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune, N.C. Nolte was assigned to 2nd Low Altitude Air Defense Battalion, 2nd Marine Aircraft Wing, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point N.C.

Marine's Death In Iraq Prompts Official Investigation

November 29, 2004 CAMP PENDLETON, Calif. NBCSandiego

Military officials announced that the death of a Camp Pendleton Marine lance corporal in Fallujah, Iraq, was under investigation.

Authorities say Lance Cpl. Jordan D. Winkler, 19, died Nov. 26 in a non-combat related incident. Winkler, of Tulsa, Okla., was a logistics vehicle system operator.

Winkler joined the Marine Corps in August 2003. He was assigned to Combat Service Support Battalion 1, Combat Service Support Group 11, 1st Force Service Support Group, 1st Marine Expeditionary Force.

13 US Marines Wounded In Mortar Attack South Of Baghdad

AFP 11/29/2004

Thirteen US marines and two civilians were wounded Monday when mortar shells struck a military base south of Baghdad, a marine spokesman said.

St. Johnsbury Man Wounded But Not Dead

November 29th, 2004 BY TAYLOR REED, Staff Writer, The Caledonian-Record

ST. JOHNSBURY -- Twenty-three-year-old Sgt. Jeremy Bradley will be flown to the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., today to receive treatment for a bullet wound he suffered Friday while on patrol in Ar-Ramadi, Iraq.

The injuries to Bradley's right thigh, abdomen and stomach require the attention of vascular surgeons in the nation's capital. Bradley, now in stable condition, will fly from Landstadt, Germany, to the Walter Reed Center and arrive around 6 p.m. Monday, said his mother, Faye Bradley.

Friday afternoon, in Ar-Ramadi, Iraq, the patrol with which Bradley was traveling was attacked by men with automatic weapons in a drive-by shooting. Every member of the patrol suffered wounds; Bradley was hit four times, he told his mother in a telephone conversation Sunday night.

Faye Bradley said her son joined the service to travel the world and try knew things. **She also said he never explained exactly what he was doing in the Army, because he did not want to frighten her.**

Faye Bradley said she wants to dispel a rumor that her son is dead. The pastor at Grace United Methodist Church in St. Johnsbury announced to the congregation Jeremy had died and requested prayer.

Pastor John Marshall said he received the information from the "prayer chain," which is a word-of-mouth network, and will release a correction notice.

Troops Survive Roadside Bomb Attack

30th November By Nick Allen, PA, at Camp Dogwood, Iraq

British troops in Iraq were hit by a roadside bomb today.

The blast went off next to a Scimitar light tank being driven by members of the Queen's Dragoon Guards. It was the first roadside bomb attack on British forces for more than a week.

The crew were inside their tank and were shielded from flying shrapnel, although one of them suffered a minor injury. The Scimitar was also damaged in the explosion.

It happened as the soldiers were on patrol about three miles east of their base at Camp Dogwood, 25 miles south-west of Baghdad. They were between the camp and the west bank of the Euphrates river.

Decorated Marine, 20, From Mobile Killed

11/28/2004 MOBILE, Ala. (AP) — A decorated U.S. Marine from Mobile was killed on Thanksgiving Day while fighting insurgents in Fallujah, Iraq, his family said.

Lance Cpl. Brad Faircloth, 20, stationed out of Camp Lejeune, N.C., was a member of the First Battalion, 8th Marines, Alpha Company, 3rd Platoon.

Faircloth earned a Purple Heart on Nov. 16 when he was wounded in attempts to drive insurgents from Fallujah, according to his stepfather, Paul Smith. He said Faircloth had an injury to his face.

A week later, Smith said, Faircloth earned his second Purple Heart after being injured in the leg.

Two days after that, his family was told, Faircloth was killed.

"He died trying to get his third Purple Heart," Smith said Saturday.

Tulsa Marine Dies Near Fallujah

November 29, 2004 AP, TULSA, Okla.

A Marine from Tulsa who had been in Iraq since September died near Camp Fallujah on Friday.

Officials with the Anti-Tank Training Company in Broken Arrow said Lance Cpl. Jordan D. Winkler died while stationed at a hospital.

Winkler was a 2003 graduate of Union High School and joined the Marine Corps the same year.

The 19-year-old joined the Marines on the delayed entry program during his senior year, Scott Richardson, a family friend, said during a press conference outside the family's home Sunday.

At least 20 people with direct ties to Oklahoma have died in the Middle East since the war began in March 2003.

The nationwide death toll is at least 1,237 as of Sunday.

Funeral arrangements for Winkler are pending.

Insurgent Attacks Erode Months Of Strategic Progress In Once-Calm Bayji

(European Stars and Stripes, November 29, 2004)

What in the world has gone wrong in Bayji? By Iraqi standards, the crossroads city of 125,000 on the Baghdad-Mosul highway used to be peaceful. But military leaders worry that a spate of recent attacks has eroded months of U.S. work to rebuild the region. [Translation: Iraqis in Bayji finally had enough, and decided to take up arms to fight against the occupation of their country. Military leaders worry that a spate of recent attacks has eroded months of U.S. work to make the simple natives love the Bush dictatorship, and in a heartbeat all that work just blew up in their faces.]

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

**"I'm Fighting For What I Believe In.
He's Fighting For What He Believes
In."**

November 27, 2004 Luke Harding, The Guardian

"It is very clear to us in this hospital that the war isn't over," says Landstuhl's head nurse, Major Kendra Whyatt. "For the past 18 months I have been dancing.

"Some of them are banged up pretty bad. They have broken arms, broken legs and blast injuries. Some of them can walk; others can't." Many of her patients are also deeply traumatised. "Some can't get the words out. All they can do is cry."

Sgt Sergeant Kevin Freiburger, 27, of the Okinawa-based Marine Support Group. had been in Iraq for about 45 days when he was shot.

What happened to the man who shot him? Did he escape?

"I don't know. I'm the good guy. He's the bad guy. I'm fighting for what I believe in. He's fighting for what he believes in."

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans' benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. 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)

TROOP NEWS

Fresh Meat For Bush's Slaughterhouse: 500 Brigade Soldiers Head From Bragg To Iraq

November 29, 2004 FORT BRAGG, AP

Another 500 soldiers are heading for Iraq. Members of the 35th Signal Brigade said goodbye to their families Sunday at Fort Bragg.

They're part of a wave of thousands of Bragg-based soldiers who are heading to the Persian Gulf region over the coming weeks.

About 8,000 troops from units in the 18th Airborne Corps are due to deploy through early 2005. The signal brigade alone will send 1,700 soldiers to handle battlefield communications.

For some families, the holiday weekend was doubly special as a chance to spend time with relatives who will be overseas anywhere from a year to as long as 18 months.

Some squeezed in extra celebrations. Spc. Chris Cody, her husband and their 2-year-old daughter had Thanksgiving dinner -- and then exchanged Christmas presents.

Relatives Fear For 3000 Forgotten British War Wounded

November 28, 2004 Jason Burke, chief reporter, Guardian Newspapers Limited

Nearly 3,000 British soldiers have been evacuated from Iraq to Britain for medical reasons since the beginning of hostilities there last year, The Observer can reveal.

The news will raise concern that the true cost of the British involvement in the war is being hidden.

British forces have so far suffered 74 fatalities, details of which are released by the Ministry of Defence. But, in contrast with the Americans, ***the number of British soldiers wounded on the battlefield is not made public.***

The total of troops 'medically evacuated' from the Gulf - 2,754 since 1 March last year - includes soldiers with serious injuries and severe psychological disorders. The latest figures from the MoD show that 461 soldiers deployed in Iraq have been treated for mental health problems, 50 of whom were diagnosed as suffering from serious post-traumatic stress disorders. At least 12 have lost one or more limbs and scores more have suffered permanent harm from traumatic brain injuries or wounds that damage organs or the spine.

Serving soldiers cannot talk to the press, but one seriously injured infantryman's father told The Observer that men such as his son, who had had much of one leg shot away, risked being 'forgotten'.

'No one is talking about those who have been disabled for life. War cripples healthy young men and we should remember that,' he said.

MoD figures reveal that more than 80 servicemen have been discharged from the forces for medical reasons since the start of the conflict. Many more are undergoing treatment within the army system, some with terrible injuries.

They include two infantrymen with the Black Watch battle group controversially deployed to assist in the US assault on Falluja. The men had their legs amputated after being caught in a suicide bomb attack last month.

In one deployment during the summer a single unit, the 1st Battalion of the Princess of Wales's Royal Regiment, sustained more than 110 casualties in a six-month tour, around half from enemy action.

Trooper Andy Julien of the Queen's Royal Lancers was left with appalling injuries when his tank was hit by friendly fire in Basra last year. Both his legs were crushed and brain injuries left him blind. After a string of operations, Julien, 19, has regained some of his sight but still cannot walk properly.

'I could cry when I look at the photographs taken at his passing out parade. The son that my husband and I had then is not the son we have now,' Julien's mother said.

'Before this he was a fit, energetic, popular boy, who loved sport. He was always laughing, joking and happy, but now it's rare to get a smile out of him. If he hears about Iraq, he gets so upset he cries.'

Specialists say the conditions in Iraq make psychological injury a high risk.

The knowledge that the war is controversial in Britain can undermine soldiers' faith in the justification of taking lives and low-intensity counter-insurgency operations can be more damaging than more conventional combat because the enemy is often indistinguishable from civilians.

Jerome Church, director of the British Limbless Ex-Servicemen's Association (Blesma) said wounded soldiers received less attention today than previously. 'If someone was injured in Northern Ireland or the Falklands it was on the evening news. You at least had a press release,' he said. 'These days you don't hear about it. Iraq is not as dramatic as the Falklands. It is just a running sore.'

Landstuhl: 21,000 Casualties

November 29, 2004 Associated Press

BERLIN — About 21,000 American service members, most of them from units sent to Iraq, have been treated at the biggest U.S. military hospital outside the United States since the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan in late 2001, the hospital said Monday.

Landstuhl doctors treated 17,878 U.S. troops from Iraq and 3,085 from Afghanistan through Sunday, hospital spokeswoman Marie Shaw told The Associated Press.

The Costs Of Staying The Course: Iraq Casualties Nearly At World War II Levels

Brian Gifford (Washington Post, November 29, 2004, Pg. 19)

A research fellow with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation at UC Berkeley writes that a close analysis of the 1,232 U.S. military deaths in Iraq raises questions about our ability to sustain our presence there in the long run.

Taking improved medical care and other factors into account, our troops are taking casualties at a real rate not tremendously lower than their predecessors in World War II, a bloodier, costlier, longer war that was fought on three continents and across three oceans and one that relied heavily on face-to-face combat rather than precision-guided munitions.

“It Could Be Worse”

November 29, 2004 By Gordon Trowbridge, Army Times staff writer

FORWARD OPERATING BASE SPEICHER, Iraq — The chow hall here at this sparse Army outpost near Tikrit was all decked out for Thanksgiving, with plenty of plastic and paper decorations hanging from the ceiling.

And while the troops appreciated the effort, for some it was only a reminder of how far from home they are during the holiday season.

“It’s nice that they decorated, but it would almost make it easier if they didn’t,” said Army Sgt. Sara Dvorak 23, of Pierre, S.D., a member of the Nebraska National Guard’s 267th Ordnance Co.

She called Thursday the biggest spell of homesickness she’s had in her nearly 10 months in Iraq. The only saving grace: “You’re here with people that you’ve become so close to that it’s like they’re family,” she said.

Spc. Dennis Frey, 21, of Genoa, Neb., called his family just before sitting down to turkey dinner in the dining facility.

“They try to sound upbeat, not let you know how much they miss you, because they know that only makes it harder on you,” said Frey, also of the 267th Ordnance Co.

At Kirkuk, Air Force Capt. John Chartkoff was remembering last year’s Thanksgiving, eating a great meal and sitting down to watch football as snow fell outside his sister’s Vermont home.

“This doesn’t feel like Thanksgiving,” he said. “It’s almost like another day. If there hadn’t been turkey, it’s almost like I wouldn’t even know.”

Others said there’s always reason to give thanks, even on the first day of your deployment to Iraq.

“It could be worse,” said Air Force Master Sgt. Gloria Gray, another Tennessee Guard weather expert who arrived at FOB Speicher on Thursday. “I could have arrived in Fallujah on Thanksgiving day. You have to remember, it could always be worse.”

The War Comes Home

Nov. 24, 2004 By JESSE HAMILTON, Hartford Courant

The two loners talk almost every day.

Five minutes on the phone. What are you doing? Nothing special. How about you?

Most times, Joe Yorski doesn't tell Dan Lawler how much it hurts to have watched his old life - his pre-Iraq life - come apart, his marriage over, his family split in two.

And Lawler doesn't always mention the way that he can close his eyes sometimes and feel like he's back in Baghdad, as if a mortar shell might fall at any second to shatter his peace.

There's no reason to dwell on these things with each other. Both already know. Even when it's not mentioned, their year in Iraq is with them, living in the pauses in conversation, pushing them closer together.

Lawler isn't sure why he picks up the phone in his New Jersey office and dials Yorski at the New Britain Police Department in New Britain, Conn. He just can't help wondering what his platoon mate from the 143rd Military Police Company might be doing. So he calls. And it doesn't matter what they talk about. It's enough that they are connected again.

Both need that contact, because the war came home with them. Not roadside bombs and gunfire, but different dangers, the kind of trouble that rings familiar to veterans of any war.

So as they try again to live normal lives, the loners find themselves doing what they're used to: watching each other's back.

Deadly mortar attack

On Oct. 26, 2003, Sgt. 1st Class Dan Lawler was sitting in a Humvee in front of a Baghdad police station when the night air flashed with fire and shards of metal. The first detonations left his ears buzzing, but they were not loud enough to drown out the screaming.

A mortar shell had hit the Humvee next to his. Lawler and others from the 143rd moved toward the screams. Three soldiers from another group, the 527th MP, had been hit. Two were in desperate shape, their legs tangles of meat and blood. Lawler found the third, her helmeted head slumped against the Humvee steering wheel. Pfc. Rachel Bosveld, of Waupun, Wis., was unconscious but alive.

Lawler and another soldier cut Bosveld from her seat belt and carried the 19-year-old between them toward the station, stopping only when a mortar explosion forced Lawler to his knees.

Inside, frantic work already was under way on the blood-splashed floors. Soldiers with medical training tried to keep the two men from bleeding to death. Lawler, who had a combat first-aid certification, focused on Bosveld. Her breaths were shallow, her pulse was fluttering. Lawler didn't know what was wrong with her. The only mark on her body was a quarter-sized wound under her armpit, but the life was draining from her.

"She stopped breathing!" Lawler shouted in the crowded room.

He and another soldier started CPR. Soon, they let another two take over while Lawler went to help with one of the wounded men. He checked to see if a tourniquet was working. He looked at the soldier's ruined knee - a mess of jagged bone and muscle, held together by scraps of skin.

Lawler took turns on Bosveld's CPR. Back and forth, until she was evacuated to a hospital. She never responded.

The CPR didn't work. It couldn't. A small piece of shrapnel had hit a spot not protected by her body armor. It punched through her torso, burning a trail through her insides that no medic could fix. **Rachel Bosveld, a homesick teen barely out of high school, was on her way back home.**

Yorski makes a decision

The argument between Yorski and his wife, Denise, was the kind nobody wins. Yorski's head was full of the falling towers of Sept. 11, 2001, and a friend he lost inside. He wanted to go back to the Connecticut National Guard's 143rd MPs, the unit with which he had gone to the 1991 Gulf War. He wanted to serve his country in something other than a New Britain police uniform.

Denise argued that he had done his service. The Army didn't need him. He would be abandoning her and their two kids. This could jeopardize their marriage. They even tried marriage counseling.

For the 34-year-old Yorski, though, having a family was reason enough to serve, to want to defend his country. I have to put my foot down, he told himself. I have to do this.

When he was satisfied that his wife and kids would be OK in the big house they were building in Cromwell, that they would manage without him, he made the arrangements to re-enlist. He signed up to be Staff Sgt. Joe Yorski again. But he didn't expect his unit to be called up so quickly. The 143rd was among several in Connecticut that would get a look inside another Middle East war.

His wife kissed him at the Brainard Airport send-off. She gave him a card. The message inside seemed to promise that his family would be waiting for him when he got back.

Yorski took it with him to Iraq. But as the months passed, he didn't receive cards or letters or the care packages that other soldiers received. Something was wrong at home. He talked to his wife from a phone bank in downtown Baghdad while his squad guarded the street outside. He was starting to wonder whether the words on the card

still held true. He applied for emergency leave, but it was denied. He waited for a regular R&R and was among the first to receive one.

Yorski flew home for the two-week leave. A friend gave him a ride to his house. When he got there, his wife called the police. Her complaint: He had shown up unannounced. He learned his wife was seeing another man and had decided to serve him with divorce papers. He had a handful of days, his first in the house they had built, to get reacquainted with his kids and get a lawyer.

The Army told him he didn't have to go back to Iraq. No. I have a squad, a bunch of young kids, Yorski told himself. I still have a job to do.

So he went back to Baghdad and to 3rd Platoon. The platoon was run by Lawler. Yorski had a growing friendship with the platoon sergeant who, when he wasn't snapping orders or chewing his soldiers out, reminded Yorski that he had a family in Iraq that needed him, too. Lawler pushed Yorski right back into his duties. The two men bunked five feet from each other. In their scant off-hours, they would talk about family life and missing their children.

For Yorski, "Dan was a big help."

A few weeks ago, Lawler drove a rented minivan through Wisconsin, down a long stretch of country highway, seeking a way to quiet his dreams.

As 70 mph took him past farms and fields, red barns and grain silos, he wondered how he would handle himself when he got where he was going.

He practiced what he would say. Lines like "I'm honored that you would allow me in your life." But he didn't know what might come out. His stomach was knotted.

He drove past a road sign. Berlin, Wis., population 5,305. He turned right, into the cemetery, where autumn had changed the trees into a cold firestorm. A few more turns, a few lengths of narrow road through the headstones, and he was there. He stepped from the van to get this thing settled.

A woman approached him. "Hi, I'm Mary."

Lawler was standing across from the mother of Rachel Bosveld. He told her he was "honored to come up here." He and another soldier, Spec. Alex Wilde of Southington, Conn., had flown out together. Lawler told her more people from his unit had wanted to come for this day, the first anniversary of her daughter's death, but they couldn't make the trip. He didn't tell her that he had been unable to call her, week after week since he got home. That during the drive he thought he might break down once he got there - the tough 36-year-old sergeant crying in front of everybody.

The mother invited him over to the grave site and reintroduced her daughter. The memory of the last time he had seen Rachel, on the floor of the Baghdad police station, crashed back into his head, but he stifled the emotions that came with it. He took off his hat and bowed his head. The dark stone read: "Rachel K. H. Bosveld; Nov. 7, 1983; Oct. 26, 2003; daughter of Mary and Marvin; sister of Douglas and Craig." Douglas

Bosveld's grave was next to hers. He had died young, too, leaving Mary Bosveld with one son - who is re-enlisting in the Army, with Rachel in mind.

Soldier's last night

Mary Bosveld listened as the story of her daughter's last night spilled from Lawler, of how he had leaned on her Humvee before the explosion. "Talking, you know, soldier stuff."

Lawler snapped his fingers to show Mary Bosveld how quickly the attack had come. "It was very . . . very confusing." He told her how they did what they could for her daughter.

The mother had invited dozens of people to the cemetery to stand beside Rachel on this anniversary. A few came. She was trying to be cheerful, but she wore this anniversary like a shroud.

Lawler had hoped to be inconspicuous, but that was futile for the big man in uniform everybody knew had come so far. He stood dutifully in the cold. Gray clouds piled like smoke on the horizon, growling with thunder. There were awkward silences between the gusts of wind that set the carpet of red and gold leaves trembling.

"She was really looking forward to her birthday," Mary Bosveld said of her daughter's last letters. "But we buried her on her birthday instead."

Mary Bosveld urged Lawler to take a few roses and a copy of a poem her daughter had written when she was 12. "Take a part of Rachel with you," she said.

He didn't say it, but Lawler didn't need flowers or a poem to carry Rachel with him. He has had no choice. "I didn't know the girl," Lawler said as he drove away. "Do I have a bond with her? Yeah. I was there when she left this world."

The walls of that Baghdad police station that he had tried to leave thousands of miles in his past had long refused to let him out. But already, as he drove away from the cemetery, the walls were starting to crumble. He felt better. He knew that the young soldier did make it home to her family, in a way.

Lawler went home to his wife and three young boys in North Brunswick, N.J., back to his corporate job at Bed, Bath & Beyond. As the days passed, it started getting easier for him to spring out of bed before dawn, eager to start the day, just like he used to before the war.

The dreams still came, once or twice a week, but less than before. Sometimes, Rachel Bosveld was in them. He would wake up slick with sweat, tasting the air of Baghdad in his mouth.

But there's good in the bad. The darkest days in Iraq left him with a shield against thinking the speed bumps of daily life in America are anything to worry about. He is taking things slowly, trying to keep a piece of wisdom in his mind, advice for returning soldiers: Don't make any major life decisions for a year.

"I'm happy to be alive," Lawler said. "Every day is a great day, because I wake up and I'm here with my family."

Not every vet has that solace.

Yorski sat in Room 407 of Middletown Superior Court on Oct. 29. In the nearly empty courtroom, in a businesslike ceremony, he was watching two lawyers and a judge dismantle a decade of marriage.

It was just the day before that Joe and Denise Yorski had finally set the terms and avoided a trial. They had split their possessions to match the rift between them. That included a shared custody arrangement for Micayla, 6, and Ryan, 5. Now, this last step would mark the legal end of the family they had been. The husband and wife sat in the front row, across the aisle from each other, both dressed in funeral black and neither talking to the other, while their attorneys bantered cheerfully.

"Yorski vs. Yorski," the judge called.

Denise Yorski took the witness stand.

"Has your marriage to the defendant broken down irretrievably?" the judge asked.

"Yes," she answered.

Such a short answer to define the months of an emotional and often ugly separation whose foundation, in Yorski's mind, was Sept. 11 and the obligation he felt to fight back. Abandonment, to her. Duty, to him.

It was a story familiar to others in the 143rd. Yorski wasn't the only one of the returning soldiers whose life would be radically changed. He could look at his squad and count a number of relationships broken, whether by long absence or because some soldiers were different people when they came back.

Yorski is back at the police department in his old job. His former wife, who is a Realtor, is closing the deal on his next house, near the one they built together, so the kids won't have to change schools. And he already is getting used to the complex routine of his new parenthood, the half-days and alternate nights.

Lawler comes to Connecticut often. He has plenty of reasons to make the long drive. His family is here. His unit is here. And Joe Yorski is here.

It wasn't until the two men got home that they really started leaning on each other. Soldiers at war are never more than a few steps from the people they have to trust with their lives. They sleep, eat and fight together. It ends abruptly one day, and suddenly a soldier finds himself alone in a quiet bedroom, at his office desk, in his patrol car.

But, back at home, all the leaders of the 143rd get together before their monthly drills. Lawler and Yorski set off to look for a restaurant, settling into the relaxed chatter of brothers.

Yorski started talking about something and got sidetracked. Lawler accused him of holding information back. "I tell you everything," Yorski insisted. "You know that."

They talked through dinner, Yorski's acid sarcasm pitted against Lawler's gung-ho optimism. Then it was back to headquarters. The two swapped greetings and jokes with those they had been to war with, speaking an impenetrable language of shared memories and unspoken words.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Explosion Hits Oil Pipeline In South Iraq

November 28 BASRA, Iraq (AFX)

An explosion on a pipeline in southern Iraq today caused a fire and disrupted the flow of oil from wells in Rumaila field toward the Basra terminal but did not affect exports, an oil company official said.

Firefighting officials said the explosion was caused by smugglers piercing the pipeline, 35 kilometres east of Basra. This caused an oil leak which started the fire.

They said the fire, which broke out around 11:00 am (0800 GMT), was extinguished some two hours later and that the company had used an emergency pipeline to maintain production.

In another incident, a pipeline south of Basra was damaged during maintenance work, interrupting the oil flow from wells to a pumping station, an oil source said.

Again, an emergency pipeline was used to maintain flow from the wells.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

"We're 8,000 miles away from home, what can I be thankful for?" said Spc. Erik Kenezuroff, 23, a rifleman from Olympia, Wash., pondering the question. "I'm thankful for being alive." November 29, 2004, C. Mark Brinkley, Army Times staff writer.

“One Should Never Be Where One Does Not Belong.”



From: Notes From The Boonies, By Paul Wisovaty, The Veteran, Fall 2004, Vol. 34, Number 2, Vietnam Veterans Against The War. **WISOVATY IS A MEMBER OF VVAW HE WAS IN VIETNAM WITH THE US ARMY 9TH DIVISION IN 1968.**

When I talk to my history students about Vietnam, I suggest that if you've been doing something really stupid, especially something that gets lots of people killed to no good end, you have two choices. You can keep doing it, or you can stop doing it.

This time around, neither Bush nor Kerry and probably not even Nader advocates that dreaded “cut-and run” approach. That would suggest the unsuggestable: America made a mistake. **[Right. All three opposed bringing the troops home now. Three disgusting stooges for the Empire and more bloody war. That's what's called a “free election.” Your “free” choice among three scumbags who wanted more dead U.S. troops and more dead Iraqis.]**

I've been wrestling with this dilemma for several weeks, which means I've been trying to figure out how to end this column. I'm also approaching the deadline for submission of an article to the editors, and if I miss it they'll replace me with a couple of Frank and Ernest cartoons. (I know; you don't need to say it.) Lacking an answer, let me retreat and throw out some questions.

Does anyone really believe that our indefinite presence in Iraq will stop rather than prolong the bloodletting?

Does anyone think that our 130,000 pieces of cannon fodder have Iraq under control? That they'll ever get it under control? That Iraqis right around the corner from becoming a representative democracy?

And finally, that the future of that oddly-fashioned entity will be any different, whether we pullout tomorrow or five years from now?

Hell, I don't know, and I certainly don't have the answer to that last question.

So let me refer you to a higher authority: “The moral of this story, the moral of this song, is that one should never be where one does not belong.” (Robert Zimmerman, “John Wesley Harding” album, 1968.)

A simple but timeless truth.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Facts Are Stubborn Things

11/24/2004 The Nation

Resistance

According to military statistics, the number of insurgents has quadrupled since last year, from 5,000 to 20,000. A British general places the insurgency at 40-50,000 fighters.

The US has trained only 145,000 of the 270,000 Iraqi security forces needed to establish order for the upcoming elections.

The Iraqi police has only 41 percent of the weapons, 25 percent of the vehicles, and 31 percent of the body armor identified as necessary by US forces.

Ninety of the country's 540 voter registration sites are currently closed due to violence, *The New York Times* reported.

The province in Mosul shut down all 56 registration centers

Of the \$18.4 billion in reconstruction funds allocated last year by Congress, the US has spent only \$1.7 billion.

Nationwide electricity levels are down 25 percent since the prewar days, and 66 percent lower in Baghdad.

The value of the Iraqi currency--the Dinar--dropped 25 percent compared to the US dollar in the past year (which didn't have a great year itself!)

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Bush Arrested In Canada

(30 November 2004 OTTAWA –PKJ) NYC.Indymedia.org

Canadian authorities have arrested US president George W. Bush in Ottawa. He has been charged with several offences under Canada War Crimes Act.

Vice-President Dick Cheney has mobilized the American military and all border crossings between the two nations have closed.

Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin has urged for calm in a short radio and television broadcast to the Canadian people immediately after the arrest.

Part of the Prime Minister's broadcast is included here:

"This decision was not made lightly. But, it was also decision that was impossible not to make. The United States is not outside the rule of law, and cannot expect to get an unlimited "free pass". This decision puts a grave strain upon both our nations, and I urge calm and restraint from our American neighbours, as well as from Canadians. I have met with the cabinet, and with our colleagues in the House.



"This is a time of great crisis for us as a nation. But as people, we will survive this test. Earlier I enacted the Emergency War Powers Act. This is necessary to guarantee our domestic security. This is not a time for panic, for lawlessness, for anything other than a responsible and sober focus on what lies immediately ahead."

Prime Minister Martin also said, "President Bush has been arrested under the Canadian War Crimes Act and the charges against him are being processed. He is being treated in accordance with the Geneva Convention and he will be treated fairly."

Reports from the White House say there is absolute chaos as frantic phone calls and meetings are held to deal with this crisis.

Speculations on the American response run the spectrum from one analyst's prediction of an all out American invasion of Canada to a more restrained pin-point rescue mission of the President. **Whatever course of action is decided upon all experts are in agreement that the war in Iraq has so weakened the American military that it could be some days before the United States is ready to field a large scale military response.**

A Britney Spears concert which had been scheduled to occur this evening in Ottawa has been postponed. A spokesman for the entertainer said that Ms. Spears was concerned for the President's wife and two daughters. The spokesman also said that Ms. Spears would be praying for the president.

President Bush had been due to attend an Ottawa luncheon when the arrest occurred. Witnesses at the scene said that utter havoc erupted as the arrest was carried out.

Earlier in the day things seemed to be going smoothly on this first visit to Canada by President Bush. The President's private jet, Air Force One had landed at the Ottawa International airport amidst intense security. Only a few protestors were on hand at the airport to welcome the President.

Authorities had been expecting moderately sized protests in downtown Ottawa, but the fine weather and unseasonably warm temperature brought an estimated three hundred thousand demonstrators out on to the streets.

From the airport the President's motorcade drove directly to the Ottawa Convention Centre.

The moment that President Bush stepped from his limousine a group of RCMP officers, who had been standing guard, grabbed the President and proceeded to place him under arrest.

A gunfight broke out with the President's secret service bodyguard. In the short exchange of gunfire two bystanders were killed and another three slightly wounded by flying debris. The RCMP were able to quickly subdue the American agents, and they have been detained in a separate facility. Separate fire arms related charges are pending.

According to Canadian Justice Department officials the President faces a lengthy list of offences.

Canada's War Crimes Act was designed to hold foreigners accountable for their complicity or involvement in a vast array of war crimes.

George Bush is being charged not only as the civilian head of government of the United States, but also as the commander in chief of the United States Armed Forces. This position could bring with it even more serious consequences, but he will not face the death penalty.

Under both Canadian and International War Crimes law George Bush is being charged with genocide, torture, murder, and the most strong of all war crimes, the crime of war of aggression.

The United Nations position on the illegality of the Iraq invasion has been known for sometime, but skeptics believed that the UN would fail to be able to bring America to account.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Taliban Suspected In Raid On Aid Group That Kills 3

(New York Times, November 29, 2004)

A large group of suspected Taliban fighters stormed the offices of an aid agency in southwestern Afghanistan, killing three Afghan workers and wounding three security guards in its heaviest attack since the elections last month. A seventh man, also believed wounded, is missing and may have been kidnapped.

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:

<http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/> ; www.qifightback.org ;

<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/qi-special.htm>,

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