

GI SPECIAL 3D46:

Any More Silly Doubts About Who's In Control In Iraq?



A U.S. Army soldier searches a man for weapons while the man holds his hands in the air, including his ink stained finger, *signifying that he voted*, near Baqouba, Iraq, Dec. 15, 2005. *The man was stopped by U.S. soldiers* when he was caught driving home from the polls. Driving is forbidden during the election day period. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

[And, obviously, somebody has to take responsibility for making sure people are punished for what is “forbidden.” And, obviously, it isn’t Iraqis, is it?]

**“After Seeing Friends
Die And Almost Dying
Myself, It's Needless And
I Think We Need To
Bring Everybody Home”**

[Thanks to Z, who sent this in.]

12/14/2005 By MICHAEL RUBINKAM, Associated Press Writer

Nearing the end of a year in Iraq, Army Sgt. Bob Knowles and his closest friends became disillusioned. And not because they thought the war was a mistake; they didn't have time to think about that.

No, it was just the daily grind of battle.

"Guys were away from their wives and their kids, away from their families and home. After 13 months, you're tired," says Knowles, 28, of Pottstown, Pa. "It's not a kind of tired you can sleep off in a couple days. It's long-term exhaustion."

Although they gave each day's mission 100 percent, "We were doing it for each other more than anybody else," he says. "We wanted to keep each other alive, that was the biggest goal. Everything else was details. Everything else was back burner."

Knowles, a tank gunner, just barely got out alive.

On May 4, 2004, he was riding in an M1 Abrams tank that was ambushed. A rocket-propelled grenade hit the top of the tank. Since the hatch was open, Knowles was hit with shrapnel that entered his back and went out his shoulder. His helmet was also blown off.

As he waited for a medical helicopter, he could feel himself going into shock; he thought about his German-born wife and their infant daughter.

Doctors later told him that fragments had come within 1 millimeter of his heart and 2 millimeters of his lung. But he would be OK.

Knowles left the service in October 2004. He suffers from occasional shoulder pain but otherwise has a normal life. He's now a train conductor for Norfolk Southern.

He has since come to oppose the war.

"After seeing friends die and almost dying myself, I think American soldiers are, I wouldn't say dying for nothing, but it's needless and I think we need to bring everybody home."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

MARINE KILLED IN IED ATTACK NEAR RAMADI

December 15, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
NEWS RELEASE Number: 05-12-22C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to the 2nd Marine Logistics Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was killed in action from an improvised explosive device attack while conducting combat operations against the enemy in the vicinity of ar Ramadi, Dec. 14.

Andover Marine Killed During Combat

December 16, 2005 Associated Press

A marine from Minnesota was killed in Iraq when a bomb exploded.

Staff Sgt. Kenneth B. Pospisil, 35, of Andover, died Wednesday when an improvised explosive device went off while he was involved in combat near Ar Ramadi. Pospisil was assigned to the 8th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Marine Logistics Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force, based at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Pospisil is the 31st Minnesotan to die as a result of injuries sustained in the Mideast during the Iraq war.

U.S. Marine Wounded In Green Zone

12.15.05 Associated Press

Mortars were responsible for a series of explosions around Baghdad, including one fired at the heavily fortified Green Zone, home to the Iraqi government and U.S. Embassy, as polls opened. It slightly injured two civilians and a U.S. Marine, the U.S. military said.

TROOP NEWS

Italy To Pull Out 300 More Soldiers From Iraq In January 2006

15 December 2005 FOCUS News Agency & AP

Rome. Italy will pull out 300 of its soldiers from Iraq in January next year, AFP reported, citing a statement of the Italian Minister of Defense Antonio Martino.

This way, the Italian contingent will be reduced from 2,900 to 2,600, continuing a gradual withdrawal started earlier this year.

An initial batch of around 10 percent, or about 300 troops, was pulled out in September.

LETHAL ENVIORMENT NO HONORABLE MISSION BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



Marines of 2nd platoon, India Company, 3rd Battalion, 6th Marines, fire on an enemy location in Qusayba on November 8, 2005. (Cpl. Neill A. Sevelius, USMC, Handout, Reuters)

The Enemies Domestic In Washington Cut The VA Healthcare Budget

[Despite the bullshit from Bush and his criminal associates, the facts here show more cuts for veterans, and Iraq veterans will get the worst of it. There is no enemy in Iraq. The common enemies of Iraqis and American troops are running

the government in Washington for their own private profit. The question isn't why Iraqis are fighting the Bush regime. They're fighting for their freedom and to keep the Bush gang from looting their country. The real question is what U.S. troops are going to do about these criminals and traitors in control of our government.]

At \$19.8 billion, the VA healthcare budget is just 2.6 per cent larger than last fiscal year. This figure is immediately turned into a negative. Inflation in the healthcare sector supplying goods and services to the VA has averaged 5.6 per cent per year for the last five years. The negative becomes larger when we factor in a 3.1 per cent pay raise for VA employees.

December 11, 2005 by Larry Scott -- VA Watchdog dot Org

Republicans call it an increase. Vets' groups call it a "shell game:" cuts in services and more vets add up to a VA healthcare crisis

On November 30, President Bush signed the "Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, 2006." Much was said about the military and little was said about veterans.

The President's only mention of veterans in his 474-word statement was, "The Act also provides funds to support the medical care and other needs of our Nation's veterans."

Why the deliberate lack of attention to the healthcare budget for the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA)?

Because it is a cause of great embarrassment to the Bush administration. This VA healthcare budget is such political bad news that the Bush appointees who run the veterans' agency won't even comment on it. Numerous requests for interviews have been met with, "No one is available."

The new VA healthcare budget, once again, leaves countless thousands of veterans in a life-and-death struggle for medical services.

Administration officials brag of a "53 per cent increase in the VA budget in President Bush's first five years in office." What they forget to explain is that most of the VA budget is made up of components that are part of the mandatory budget process. The overall VA budget would have gone up no matter who was President.

However, the healthcare portion of the VA budget must be hammered-out in Congress every year as part of the discretionary budget process.

Republicans claim the VA healthcare budget for this fiscal year is a whopping \$22.5 billion, a 17 per cent increase over last year. A closer look at those numbers shows a budget that is nothing more than a "shell game" according to veterans' groups who have analyzed the figures. "...You never know where the pea is," said Richard Fuller, national legislative director for Paralyzed Veterans of America.

\$1.5 billion of the budget is a promised carryover from last fiscal year. Except, no one knows if that money exists. If it does, no one knows where it is. And, there

appears to be no mechanism to carryover funds into the new budget. So, we have to scratch that figure and now the budget is down to \$21 billion.

Then there is \$1.2 billion stipulated as emergency funding. Those funds can only be released by President Bush if he declares a funding emergency at the VA. This won't happen.

Last fiscal year Republicans refused to admit there was a budget shortfall at the VA until the reality was forced on them by Democrats. VA Secretary Jim Nicholson said of the billion-plus dollar shortfall, "A crisis? I don't agree." So now we take out the \$1.2 billion and the budget is down to \$19.8 billion.

At \$19.8 billion, the VA healthcare budget is just 2.6 per cent larger than last fiscal year. This figure is immediately turned into a negative. Inflation in the healthcare sector supplying goods and services to the VA has averaged 5.6 per cent per year for the last five years. The negative becomes larger when we factor in a 3.1 per cent pay raise for VA employees.

Now we have a VA healthcare budget with less spending power than it had the year before. For the last few years many VA hospitals have been so underfunded that they have instituted hiring freezes, closed patient wards and cut essential services to the point where they are turning away qualified veterans seeking necessary healthcare.

Add to chronic underfunding a dramatic increase in the number of veterans seeking VA healthcare.

There are three main groups. The first is middle-aged, qualified veterans who have never used the VA system and now find themselves, because of unemployment or under-employment, without healthcare benefits. The second is older veterans who have discovered that it is less expensive to use the VA pharmacy than it is to purchase medications through Medicare.

The third group is veterans returning from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Although the official Pentagon list of wounded stands at just over 15,000, the reality is eight times that figure. It depends on your definition of wounded. The VA's latest figures (released in October) show that of 433,398 troops returning from Iraq and Afghanistan, 119,247 have sought medical treatment.

Of those 119,247 veterans, 39 per cent have joint and back and connective system disorders, 30.9 per cent have mental problems, 30.1 per cent have diseases of the digestive system and 27.1 per cent suffer from diseases of the nervous system or sense organs.

Also, 15.5 per cent have been poisoned and 15.1 per cent exhibit problems with metabolism, nutritional, thyroid, parathyroid, adrenal, pancreas, and pituitary gland diseases. The list continues with 12.9 per cent having diseases of the circulatory system and 12.8 per cent having skin diseases. Obviously, many of the veterans suffer from more than a single disease or condition.

The above laundry list represents the tip of the iceberg when it comes to medical problems that will be experienced by Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. As they age many will experience acute PTSD symptoms. And, the effects of exposure to depleted uranium munitions, a subject on which the Department of Defense is eerily silent, may lead to catastrophic health conditions.

The Bush administration harshly admonishes anyone who says there has been a cut in VA benefits. They point only to the increased dollar amount of the overall VA budget. But, as VA hospitals are closed and services cut back, it is safe to say that a **CUT IN SERVICES** is a **CUT IN BENEFITS**.

The miniscule “real dollar” increase in the VA healthcare budget turns into “fewer usable dollars” when inflation and the increased number of veterans needing healthcare are factored-in.

What will become of the veterans who are denied healthcare by the VA or who are put on waiting lists that can delay medical treatment for as long as 36 months?

Some veterans will seek healthcare in the private sector and go into debt to pay for medical treatment that should have been provided by the VA.

Other veterans will try to get help from state Medicaid programs if they can get accepted.

And, some veterans will simply do without and hope.....

Half The War Hawks Want Troops Home Now

Dec 15 By Susan Page, USA TODAY

Close to half of those who say the war wasn't a mistake nonetheless want to see U.S. troops begin coming home now.

Thieving U.S. Commander Arrested For Grabbing Cash In Iraq

[Only about 2,000 more to go, starting with some Generals.]

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

15 Dec 2005 Reuters

A U.S. Army officer was arrested on Thursday for stealing between \$80,000 and \$100,000 in funds from the U.S. governing administration in Iraq and using the money to install a deck and hot tub in her New Jersey home.

The U.S. Justice Department said Army Reserve Lt. Col. Debra Harrison, 47, who served with the Coalition Provisional Authority, was arrested on charges involving bribery, money laundering and fraud.

Harrison is the second army officer and the fourth person charged in the past few weeks in connection with the scheme.

The Justice Department said Harrison was on active duty for the U.S. Army in 2003 and 2004, and was responsible for developing contract solicitations and ordering contracts for reconstruction efforts for the Coalition Provisional Authority -- South Central Region.

According to court papers, Harrison and her co-conspirators accepted money and gifts in return for using their official positions to rig contract bids.

An affidavit filed in the U.S. District Court in New Jersey said she used the money to add a deck and put in a hot tub at her home in Trenton, New Jersey, accepted a Cadillac Escalade worth about \$50,000 and a \$6,000 airline ticket from a contractor in return for rigging the bids.

Harrison was also accused of laundering funds from the CPA.

In the affidavit, Harrison was also charged with numerous firearms charges, including conspiring to embezzle and possess pistols, automatic machine guns and grenade launchers bought with CPA funds.

She is charged along with her co-conspirators of using the CPA funds to buy dozens of firearms and related military-grade hardware in North Carolina for their own use.

If convicted, Harrison faces up to 30 years in prison.

**“Sgt. 1st Class Carl Latson Says
He Won’t Re-Enlist Ever Again”
Guardman Still Seeking Re-Up
Bonus Due Last June**

“I feel like they threw up a smoke screen,” Latson said. “I had a congressman and my brigade commander calling me saying we are getting our bonus. (But) when I asked when, it was, ‘I will get back to you,’ or, ‘We don’t know how to pay it.’.”

December 13, 2005 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times staff writer [Excerpts]

After re-enlisting during his second tour in Iraq but not receiving a promised \$15,000 re-up bonus, Sgt. 1st Class Carl Latson says he won’t re-enlist ever again.

In January, the Spanaway, Wash., soldier signed a six-year contract that was supposed to get him a \$15,000 bonus — tax-free, since he signed up in the war zone.

But when his 13th year of service ended in March, the check never made it to the bank.

Latson’s contract contains the \$15,000 bonus, but the Army said the bonus was for regular active-duty soldiers only.

Last month, after hearing there had been a mistake, Latson hired a lawyer. Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., and another member of Congress got involved.

Then, the Defense Department announced it was rushing through a change in its bonus policy to allow Guard members who are on full-time active duty to be eligible for re-enlistment bonuses while in a war zone, just like other troops.

“I feel like they threw up a smoke screen,” Latson said. “I had a congressman and my brigade commander calling me saying we are getting our bonus. (But) when I asked when, it was, ‘I will get back to you,’ or, ‘We don’t know how to pay it.’.”

Latson’s lawyer, Mark Clausen of Seattle, said no one has given him a date for the bonus, which should have been paid in June, nor has he been told whether the Army will pay Latson’s lawyer fees.

Latson said some soldiers in his unit immediately received their re-up bonuses when they returned from Iraq, but others, including some under his command, are still waiting. He knows 10 other Guard soldiers who also did not get their bonuses; as many as 1,500 soldiers may have been affected by a policy that denied re-up money to members of the Active Guard and Reserve.

Latson said he gets e-mails and phone calls from those soldiers asking him to find out when they are going to receive their bonuses. He said some are facing financial hardship because of the late bonus.

“We should not have to fight, but I will for the future of these soldiers,” Latson said.

“Like I have told my attorney, I want to go ahead with filing the lawsuit, and if I don’t get anything out of it, and I have to pay my attorney fees on my own, at least the soldiers get their bonuses.”

Charges Dropped Against World War II-Era Anti-War Veterans



Joan Keefe, 84, left, and Jay Wenk, 79, pose in Wenk's Woodstock, N.Y., home on Thursday, Dec. 7, 2005. Wenk is wearing with the Combat Infantry Badge that he received while in the Army during World War II. Wenk also received the Purple Heart. **At an age when many old soldiers fade away, they promise to keep up their anti-Iraq war leafletting.** (AP Photo/ Jim McKnight)

[Thanks to John Gingerich, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

December 13, 2005 (AP)

ULSTER, N.Y. (AP) Trespassing charges were dropped Tuesday against two World War II-era veterans arrested while distributing anti-enlistment fliers outside a military recruiting center.

Jay Wenk, 79, and Joan Keefe, 84, were arrested twice in August for refusing requests to leave Kings Mall in the Hudson Valley city of Kingston.

The pair were prepared to argue during trial that they had a First Amendment right to protest outside a government office, even if it's in a privately owned mall. But a town justice granted their lawyer's motion to dismiss the violation on the procedural ground that the complaint against them failed to state why the pair was asked to leave.

The dismissal was greeted in court by cheers from dozens of supporters who had earlier stood outside holding signs protesting the war in Iraq.

But Wenk and Keefe said later that they were looking forward to arguing their case in court. They promised to hand out anti-recruitment pamphlets at the mall again this weekend.

"I'm disappointed about today and I think they're chicken," said Keefe, who served on the Women's Army Corps, as she walked out of court.

Wenk, who served in the infantry in Europe, said he's prepared to be arrested again because he feels people are being enlisted under false pretenses.

"I'm going to keep going back," he said.

Both Wenk and Keefe are longtime activists.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

GUESS WHO'S IN CHARGE HERE?



Insurgents secure an election center in Ramadi Dec. 15. (AP Photo/Bilal Hussein)

Assorted Resistance Action

12.15.05 Associated Press & PakTribune

A roadside bomb west of Baqouba killed one Iraqi soldier and injured another, provincial police reported.

Two election workers were slightly injured in Muqdadiyah, a mixed town of about 80,000 people about 60 miles north of Baghdad, after Iraqi army demolition experts blew up a bomb that had been discovered 700 yards from a polling station.

The U.S. military said that Iraqi Security Forces throughout Baghdad reported incidents of small-arms fire.

Two Pakistani drivers have died in a road side bomb explosion in Iraq, source said.

Muhammad Asif, a resident of Lahore and his friend were taking oil tankers from Kuwait to Iraq twenty four days ago and racing along the road when Mohammad Asif's tanker skidded off the road due to over speeding and hit a road side bomb killing Mohd Asif and the other driver instantly.

The body of the Muhammad Asif would be sent to his native house Pakistan (Lahore) with in few days while there is no clue of the dead body of his friend.

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

Yes

12.15.05 By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer

"Liberation is the most important thing for all Iraqis," said Sunni grocer Omar Badry. "I don't care if we die of thirst and hunger, as long as the Americans leave."

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

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

Mike Hastie

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

“The Men And Women In The Military Who Oppose The War Must Be Encouraged To Resist” From A US Resistance Primer; A Conversation with Randy Rowland

Asked later why he had approved such harsh charges and treatment against a peaceful demonstration, the Commander of the 6th Army replied "We thought the revolution was starting, and we were trying to crush it."

From: Ron Jacobs
To: GI Special
Sent: December 15, 2005
Subject: Conversation with Randy Rowland

December 5, 2005, By Ron Jacobs

I just got off the phone with Randy Rowland in Seattle.

For those readers who don't know, Randy was a a GI resister and a member of the Presidio 27. Let me begin with his summary of that moment in history.

The following description is from Rowland himself and appears on the VVAW-AI website. (http://www.oz.net/~vvawai/sw/sw31/pgs_35-44/presidio_mutiny.html)

Saturday, October 12, 1968, a massive demonstration was to be held in San Francisco. 10,000 or more people would march in the demo. Four of us, AWOL from the military, were to turn ourselves in to military authorities at the end of the march.

The Brass, worried about the growing GI anti-war movement, tried to prevent active duty GIs from going to the demo through harassment and blatantly restricting whole units to base for the weekend.

In spite of this, many GIs and vets marched in the demonstration.

Afterwards there was a small ceremony at the gates to the Presidio Army Base and I stepped over the line, into the custody of the awaiting MPs.

I had been on orders to go to Vietnam (a common unofficial punishment for having applied for noncombatant status). On the advice of my lawyer, I had gone AWOL to avoid shipment. I hadn't been on a military base in over 3 months. I was nervous-word on the street was that there was a lot of brutality going on in the stockade.

Much to my surprise, the military authorities decided to put me in a holding company instead of confining me in the stockade.

I tried to think of how to deal with this unexpected development. I couldn't find out what was going on in the stockade if I wasn't in it.

The Sergeant on duty in the orderly room was the kind of guy all the jokes about military mentality are based on. I walked in and announced "I'm refusing to sweep this floor on grounds of conscience!" It didn't occur to the Sarge that nobody had asked me to do anything.

He immediately found a broom and thrust it in my face growling, "I'm giving you an order to sweep this floor, and I don't want lip, just assholes and elbows."

I wouldn't take the broom. His face was a study in self-righteous determination as he handcuffed me to a chair. Half hour later, I found myself in the Presidio Stockade.

It didn't take long to hear the story of how the guard had shotgunned a prisoner at close range, how there had been a riot on Friday night in response to the murder.

The prisoners were angry, and wanted to escalate the struggle.

I found Keith Mather, one of the "Nine for Peace," GIs who had chained themselves to clergymen in a San Francisco church in protest to the war. He and I and a few others started going around talking to prisoners calling for a meeting later at night in the cellblock.

People debated the options hotly and finally agreed on a sit-down demonstration in the stockade yard on Monday morning. We drew up a list of demands, including investigations into the murder of the prisoner, protests against stockade conditions, opposition to the war and racist harassment of Blacks. I passed a copy of the list to my lawyer Sunday morning and reported back that he would set up support on the outside.

Monday, October 14th, 1968 was a cool but clear day. The inmates stood tensely in morning formation. None of us was sure if anyone else would do it. But on cue 27 of us broke ranks and walked over to a grassy spot in the yard, singing "We Shall Overcome."

We sat down, linked arms and continued to sing. The Sgt. in charge was yelling. The Commandant arrived and tried to order us to return to the formation. We sang louder. He tried to read us the articles of mutiny.

We drowned him out, pouring our souls into the song. Walter Polowski, who had agreed to be our spokesman, stood up and read the list of grievances and demands. When the Brass tried to speak, we burst into song again.

A CID photographer came into the compound and began taking our photos for "evidence."

We knew the penalty for mutiny was death, but in a wildly elated way we didn't care. We were going up against the motherfuckers, we were taking our stand.

They brought firemen up to squirt us with their hoses, but the firemen refused to do it.

We kept singing. They brought in a company of MPs with riot gear and gas masks. We feared the worst, but kept singing. Finally the MPs moved in and picked us up one at a time and carried us back into the cells.

We were charged with mutiny, the most serious military offense.

The reason mutiny is considered so serious is that not only is it going up against the Brass, it is done in concert with others.

The image of GIs facing the electric chair for singing "We Shall Overcome" sent a shock wave through the community.

And after the first several mutineers to be tried got 14, 15, and 16 years each, there was a national uproar

Asked later why he had approved such harsh charges and treatment against a peaceful demonstration, the Commander of the 6th Army replied "We thought the revolution was starting, and we were trying to crush it."

By spring of 1970 the Presidio case had gotten so much publicity and there was such a "Free the Presidio 27" movement that the Brass must have decided to cut their losses. All of us were released within a short time of each other.

When I spoke with him, Randy had just returned from a Vancouver, BC showing of the recently released film No Sir, No Sir, (<http://www.sirnosir.com/main2.htm>) which is a chronicle of the GI resistance movement against the US war in Vietnam.

Although the turnout was less than the organizers had hoped, Rowland told me that the overall experience was a positive one. The audience was a combination of Canadian civilians, US expatriates and military deserters. The film's producers are hoping to create enough of a stir to interest a US distributor.

Rowland has been involved with independent media since the inception of the first IndyMedia Center (IMC) in Seattle prior to the actions against the World Trade

Organization (WTO) in 1999. This IMC was the first of its kind and was set up expressly to provide an alternative to mainstream reporting on the actions against the WTO meeting and the establishment's response. After the meetings were over, Rowland and some other members of the Seattle IMC began an independent media video news collective known as Pepperspray Productions. Their films and reportage can be seen on Free Speech TV broadcasts and on the web, among other places.

The IMC was not Rowland's first media involvement. He was part of the staff of a Tacoma, Washington GI underground newspaper in the 1970s.

Tacoma is literally right next door to one of the largest US Army bases in the world: Ft. Lewis. McChord Air Force Base is less than an hour away.

If those of us who work in independent media ever wonder about our reach and effectiveness, this anecdote that Randy shared should give us hope.

He was at a party a few years back and found himself in a conversation with a fellow veteran from the Vietnam era. The two men had never met before this particular party. As the conversation wound its way through the paths such conversations take, the fellow vet mentioned to Randy that the best thing he remembered from his days in the service was reading the Ft. Lewis underground paper.

In fact, it was that paper that helped convince this vet to oppose the war.

As we discussed the influence phenomenon like the media can have, our conversation turned to the comparable effect acts of resistance also provide. To this end, Randy told how, even before he decided to oppose the war, he had a picture of Dr. Howard Levy on his wall. Rowland was a medic and Levy was a military doctor who went to jail for refusing to train Green Berets.

I asked Randy what the differences he saw between today's GIs and those he served with, especially in terms of today's lack of conscription.

While he acknowledged that the soldier in a conscripted army starts his service with an attitude already in place, many enlistees soon developed a very similar negativity towards the military.

Drawing on his experience as an enlistee who grew up in a military family, he noted that it was quite often the enlistees who opposed the Vietnam war the strongest while they were in uniform and after they got out.

It is, Rowland reminded me, more difficult to desert than it is to go along. The deserter is potentially giving up considerably more. At the same time, however, a GI who deserts is no longer taxing their conscience daily.

This naturally led me to bring up the question about supporting the troops. How does one do this? Or, better yet, should one?

Rowland replied with an anecdote from his work as a nurse in the trauma unit of a Seattle area hospital. He told me that he recently cared for a woman who was in a car

accident because her husband and her were celebrating her twenty-first birthday and drank too much. While driving home, they wrecked their car. She ended up in the emergency room and her husband ended up in jail.

This soldier did not want to go back to Iraq. According to the man's wife, her husband drove a Humvee in Iraq. When he was driving the vehicle, his orders were to never stop and, if something got in his way, to just run it over. Children, animals, whatever: just keep going.

This was not what the fellow had in mind when he joined the service and, when he had the opportunity to stop doing this, he took advantage of the moment and went AWOL.

Rowland pointed out to me in a followup email that the point of this story is that here is a guy who's impulse is to not run over living things, but whose fate is that he is criminalized for being a decent human being.

Furthermore, he continued, in a war of aggression those who are criminals get medals, and those who find their humanity are punished.

In short, wrote Rowland, "a lot of GIs are stuck in a hell not of their own making, where they are being asked to do the wrong things. They either do it or don't do it, both are shitty choices. I understand and sympathize with them in their dilemma. I don't uphold doing the wrong things, and I'm sure some of those who do wrong things at the time will come back and speak out against what they were ordered to do. Of course, as a GI resister myself, I'm especially proud of and especially support those who figure out some way to not do the wrong things."

If we are going to stop the US war in Iraq, the men and women in the military who oppose the war must be encouraged to resist.

Based on his interactions with active duty and Iraq and Afghanistan war vets, Rowland believes that the numbers of GIs who fall into this category are growing exponentially.

His understanding is corroborated by others in the antiwar movement. As our conversation wound down, Randy related a story about some Vietnam vets who opposed the US contra war in Nicaragua during the 1980s.

These vets, explained Rowland, went to Nicaragua and walked roads that had been mined by the CIA-commanded contra forces. The roads carried schoolchildren to school every morning and the contras had laid the mines with this knowledge in mind. In short, the contras were trying to kill the schoolchildren. To prevent this, these antiwar vets became human minesweepers, risking their lives to ensure that no CIA mines would kill innocent children.

This, explained Rowland, is what we who oppose the current wars must do--in essence, put ourselves between them and their war.

The people in power in the US, both Democrat and Republican, want control of the world's oil supplies so that the class they represent can dominate the world.

As we all know, a good deal of that oil lies under the sands of Iraq.

The rulers of this country, as Rowland's tale about the contras and their mine placement illustrates, will stop at nothing to get what they want. It is up to those who oppose their designs to prevent them.

This is more possible now than before, if only because most US residents now oppose this war and do not consider the oil or controlling it to be worth the cost in human lives.

Indeed, noted Rowland, most US consumers could care less who controls the oil and wonder why doesn't the government just work out some deal and buy the stuff?

Given the fact that there fingers are quite literally on the trigger of the Empire's guns, GIs can play the greatest role. Our conversation ended with Rowland quoting the German poet and playwright Bertolt Brecht:

**General your tank is a powerful vehicle
It smashes down forests and crushes a hundred men.
But it has one defect:
It needs a driver.**

**General, your bomber is powerful.
It flies faster than a storm and carries more than an elephant.
But it has one defect:
It needs a mechanic.**

**General, man is very useful.
He can fly and he can kill.
But he has one defect:
He can think.**

(From A German War Primer)

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.

**“People Need Not Be Helpless
Before The Power Of Illegitimate
Authority”**

[Based on a statement by David Cortright, Vietnam Veteran and armed forces resistance organizer.]

In the final analysis the stationing of American forces abroad serves not the national interest but the class interest of the corporate and political elite.

The maintenance of a massive, interventionist-oriented military establishment is based on the need to protect multinational investment and preserve regimes friendly to American capital.

Imperialism is at the heart of the national-security system and is the force fundamentally responsible for the counterrevolutionary, repressive aims of U.S. policy.

Only if we confront this reality and challenge it throughout society and within the ranks can we restore democratic control of the military.

Of course nothing can be accomplished without citizen involvement and active political struggle.

During the Vietnam era enlisted servicemen created massive pressures for change, despite severe repression, and significantly altered the course of the war and subsequent military policy.

To sustain and strengthen this challenge we must continue to build political opposition to interventionism and support those within the armed services, including national guard and reserves, who defy the goals and program of Empire.

The central lesson of the GI movement is that people need not be helpless before the power of illegitimate authority, that by getting together and acting upon their convictions people can change society and, in effect, make their own history.

The Military Project
Contact@militaryproject.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.

Got That Right

From: Z
To: GI Special
Sent: December 15, 2005

Subject: bring everybody home

A bumpersticker seen in Stockton, California:

“Troops home, liars to jail.”

Solidarity,
Z

“Who Is The Evil Doer: A ‘Suicide’ Bomber Or A B52 Bomber?”

13th December 2005 Yamin Zakaria, International Institute of Peace [Excerpt]

When democracies drop 500 pound bombs or even Nukes, killing hundreds of thousands of civilians, it is ‘liberation’. But a ‘suicide’ bomber, acting in retaliation, killing handful of people is automatically evil!

The leading democracies claim to have the higher moral ground, because they say, their bombers do not target civilians indiscriminately. The reality is: their bombs are far more indiscriminate, consuming far more number of civilians than all suicide bombers combined!

Once again, the notion of ‘evil’ has no relationship to the level of wanton carnage and destruction caused: it is dependent upon the identity of the perpetrators and/or their victims.

Radical And Moderate

What is the difference between the radical cleric, Moqtada as-Sadr and the moderate cleric Sistani?

Ayatollah Sistani is calling for cooperation with the US forces, where as Moqtada as-Sadr is advocating resistance to the US designs in Iraq.

The radical or moderate label has nothing to do with their interpretations of the Islamic texts but everything to do with how much they align themselves with the occupiers.

To further illustrate the point at another level, Bush can claim to have a hotline to God, Israelis can invoke their Bible to justify ethnic cleansing as the so-called ‘chosen’ people of God, but only the Muslims can be given the religious fanatic label, even they are nominal Muslims!

To date, no WMDS in Iraq and no war reparations announced for this unprovoked attack on Iraq.

Forget the 100,000 plus civilians murdered, the ones who are alive are expected to view Bush and Blair as innocent. Because, the pair acted in good faith, misled by 'faulty' intelligence, they launched a pre-emptive strike on Iraq.

After having committed mass murder, if we are expected to accept their (Bush and Blair) plea of innocence, then surely all the miniature murderers held in prison are entitled to that same claim of innocence, as they also acted in good faith, based on faulty information, in self-defence they launched a pre-emptive strike killing their victim(s).

OCCUPATION REPORT

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



12.8.05: An Iraqi family forced out of their home by US marines from 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines Regiment as they search the home without witnesses during a house-by-house raid in the village of Abu Qusayb. (AFP/File/Mauricio Lima)

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqis over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign" and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any changes being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to occupy their country. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that?]

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

“Fake Elections That Will Ensure Pro-US Politicians Are ‘Elected’”

December 15, 2005 by Eric Margolis, Lewrockwell.com [Excerpt]

Credulous US reporters in Iraq and Afghanistan, cooped up under the wing of US military forces, know only what the Pentagon and its rent-a-journalist tell them.

When you see reporters from the major networks reporting in from Iraq, they are all doing so from the safety of the fortified Green Zone and must rely on press handouts from the US military. They have no more ideas what's going on in Iraq than your average corn farmer in Iowa.

So, what happens is that propaganda cooked up in Washington by fancy, high-priced contractors (friends of the Bush Administration, of course), stories like 'Iraqis turn against terrorism and embrace democracy,' or 'Afghanistan's women greet liberation with joy,' are then picked up by US reporters and sent back to US media as news.

Thus the Pentagon is shaping US media content and the views of Americans. It's only a matter of time before we have the Department of Truth.

The upcoming elections in Iraq are mostly more political kabuki staged by the US: fake elections that will ensure pro-US politicians are 'elected.'

22 Million Iraqis Suddenly Vanish: U.S. Troops Forced To Do Election Campaigning



A US soldier places an electoral sticker on the windshield of a bus at Kirkuk's central station, in northern Baghdad. (AFP/Filippo Monteforte)

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

UNCONQUERED. UNCONQUERABLE.



PICTUREPEOPLE-L@LISTSERV.DFN.DE

[Thanks to John Gingerich, Veterans For Peace, for sending in.]

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a foreign power, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.]

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT 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)

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Policeman Tasers Granny As She Sits In Police Waiting Room

[Thanks to Liz Burbank for posting.]

12.9 FRANKLIN, Ohio Unknownnews.org

A local grandmother says she's still afraid to set foot in her hometown, more than a year after being repeatedly shocked with a Taser gun at a police station.

Beverly Kidwell said she went to the Franklin Police Department in April 2004 to talk to an officer about a domestic fight she'd had with her granddaughter.

After a long wait, Lt. Wayne Bowling came into the lobby. A surveillance tape of the lobby shows what happened next. Kidwell said that Bowling pulled out a Taser unit and shocked her.

"I don't know if he thought I was going to get up and leave or what, but he pulled his gun. I thought it was a gun. I'd never seen a Taser gun in my life and I thought, 'Oh my God. He's going to shoot me. He's going to kill me,'" Kidwell said.

"He pulled the trigger and I felt this excruciating pain and I was immobilized," she said. "You can't think or move, and I fell to the floor and I crumbled up in the fetal position."

Then, the 68-year-old great-grandmother says Lt Bowling ordered her to roll over and stand up. She said, "I thought he is going to kill me, and then the next thing, he shot me again. And he kept saying all the time, get up get up, and I couldn't. It paralyzes your body."

Kidwell said Bowling shocked her five times. "I kept screaming, 'Oh God, please help me. Oh God, please help me,'" she said.

Kidwell was charged with with domestic violence for the fight with her granddaughter and resisting arrest for the incident at the police department.

She has filed a federal lawsuit for a civil rights violation against the city of Franklin, the Franklin police department and Bowling, asking for unspecified damages.

Her attorney, Rick Schulte, said, "Even if he thought Beverly Kidwell had killed someone, there are other means for him to protect himself and society to restrain her. This simply should not have taken place."

The Franklin Police Department won't say why the lieutenant used his taser. The city and police had no comment Tuesday.

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

All GI Special issues achieved at website <http://www.militaryproject.org/> .

The following have also posted issues; there may be others:

<http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>, <http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/>,
www.williambowles.info/qispecial, http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/,
<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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