

GI SPECIAL 3D49:



Seymour Chwast [Vietnam War] Rawstory.com

**“This Is All Senseless.
They Could Have Been
Sent Home Months Ago”
Mother Wants Answers About
Son's Death**

"No officials from the military have called me and talked to me," she said. "I'm angry. I want to know why my son died. I want to know why he's not coming home." She was told there would be more contacts from the military after the funeral, which has not yet been scheduled.

Dec. 08, 2005 By Don Schanche Jr., TELEGRAPH STAFF WRITER

At age 17, Marcus Futrell was too young to join the National Guard without his mother's signature, so she signed him in.

He hoped his military stint would net him the funds to further his education.

Instead, his mother got a visit Sunday that every military relative dreads: two officers on her front step, delivering the news that her son, now 20, would not be coming home.

Futrell was one of three members of the guard's 48th Brigade Combat Team who died Friday when their vehicle overturned in Iraq.

"I had just talked to him the Sunday before he was killed," said his mother, Cheryl Futrell, a legal enforcement agent at the state Child Support Recovery Unit in Macon.

"Every time I talked to him I told him I loved him," she said, her voice soft but steady. He was too much the macho soldier to say the same in return, but his mother said his love was an unspoken truth between them.

Marcus Futrell was born into a military family. His father serves in the Air Force. Before Marcus was 10, they had moved from Fayetteville, N.C., to Okinawa, Japan, and then to Eglin Air Force Base in Florida.

In 1995 they moved to the Macon area. It was around then that his parents divorced. Marcus attended Rice Elementary, McEvoy Middle and Southwest High schools before graduating from Crawford County High School.

At 5-foot-11 and 142 pounds, he was small for a tight end, but that's the position he played during his senior year on the high school football team. It wasn't a winning year for the team, but he loved football.

"I was there at every game," his mother said.

Besides football, she said, he was crazy about Game Boy and repairing electronic gadgets. He took a semester of electronics at Central Georgia Technical College before going overseas.

"He could fix things," Cheryl Futrell said. "He loved tinkering with stuff." The military used his skills. He installed communications equipment in Humvees and worked on computers, she said.

Cheryl Futrell said her son didn't know what to expect from boot camp. But she said he grew up there.

"He came back a different man," she said. His "yes, ma'am" and "no, ma'am" came automatically. He contributed his earnings to the household without being asked.

"That was the one thing I was afraid I couldn't do, teach him how to be a man, and he got it from the Army," she said.

As a guardsman, he provided security during the G-8 Summit on the Georgia coast and hurricane relief in Florida. In January, the 48th Brigade was called to active duty. In May, Marcus Futrell and his fellow soldiers were sent overseas. First stop Kuwait, then on to Iraq.

He didn't like to worry his mother, so they didn't speak about what he did from day to day. When he called home, Marcus wanted to know about her work and the latest news from Macon.

Sunday morning, when the officers came to her door, Cheryl Futrell's mind refused at first to grasp what it meant.

"I knew this can't be so," she said. But then she did know.

"I couldn't say anything or do anything because I knew what was going on. You don't want to hear them say it."

She said Marcus' younger sister Sheedra, 17, is taking it hard. The siblings were close.

Now Cheryl Futrell is left with questions: How did her son die, and why?

The guard has given her no details except that the Humvee rolled over. She wants to know more about the circumstances.

"No officials from the military have called me and talked to me," she said. "I'm angry. I want to know why my son died. I want to know why he's not coming home." She was told there would be more contacts from the military after the funeral, which has not yet been scheduled.

Not having information, she said, "makes me uncertain about what's going on."

She takes comfort in one thing: He was not alone. Among the soldiers who died with him was Spc. Philip Allan Dodson Jr. of Forsyth. Cheryl Futrell worked with Dodson as a correctional officer several years ago at the Al Burrus Correctional Training Center. She liked and respected him. She ran into him last spring when she was bidding her son farewell at Fort Stewart.

"I said, 'Keep an eye out for him, will you?'" she recalled.

Cheryl Futrell also has questions about the bigger picture.

"I have a lot of questions about the war," she said. "This is all senseless. They could have been sent home months ago. Normally, you would think of a National Guard unit being national, not international."

Cheryl Futrell said her son's unit was better suited to respond to Hurricane Katrina than fight in Iraq.

"If I had the slightest concern that this was where he would be headed in a couple of years after he signed up, I would have discouraged him. I wouldn't have signed," she said.

She added, "He was a good boy. He was a good son. He was a good brother, and he would have been a good man."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

MARINE DIES FROM NON-HOSTILE GUNSHOT WOUND

December 18, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
NEWS RELEASE Number: 05-12-23C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to the 2nd Marine Logistics Group, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), died from a non-hostile gunshot wound here, Dec. 16.

Pendleton Marine Killed

December 3, 2005 By: North County Times

CAMP PENDLETON ---- A 30-year-old staff sergeant based at Camp Pendleton has died in Iraq after a vehicle accident that occurred away from combat.

Staff Sgt. William D. Richardson, 30, of Houston, died Wednesday near Al Taqaddum, Iraq, according to the Pentagon. He was with Marine Wing Support Group 37 of the Third Marine Aircraft Wing that is based at Camp Pendleton, and also works at Miramar.

His death brings the number of locally based Marines killed in Iraq to 266.

Richardson joined the Marines on June 27, 1994, and was promoted to the rank of staff sergeant in 2002.

This was his second deployment to Iraq, according to Miramar officials.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:

BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



US soldiers inspect a mine shell, right, the remains of a road side bomb, which exploded in Al-Baladyaat district in Baghdad Nov. 15, 2005. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban)

Soldier From Southern Illinois Killed By Mine

Dec. 08, 2005 Associated Press

KEENSBURG, Ill. - A 19-year-old Illinois National Guardsman, who used to dress up as a soldier as a small child and dreamed of being in the military, has been killed in Iraq, his father said Thursday.

Spc. Brian Wright of Keensburg died in Ramadi, Iraq on Tuesday when a vehicle he was in struck a mine during combat operations, according to a Thursday statement from the U.S. Department of Defense.

"He loved people, he loved life and he loved the Lord," said his father, the Rev. Allan Wright, speaking from the Keensburg Christian Church where he serves as pastor. "I will miss him terribly."

Rev. Wright said his son joined the National Guard when he still was a junior at Mount Carmel High School in 2003. To join, he required the signature of his parents, his father said.

"I told him there was always a chance you might be killed and he said, 'I know Dad, but I've got to do this. I've got to defend you and Mom and our freedoms' ... so we signed the papers," he said.

He began his first tour of duty in Iraq in June of this year, his father said.

Mount Carmel's principal, Clyde Leonard, said he told the school's 650 students about Wright's death over the school intercom Tuesday. He said a handful of other Mount Carmel graduates also are serving in Iraq.

"After I made the announcement, students were walking back to classes quietly with their heads down," he said. "We are utterly shaken by this news."

Brian Wright's brother, Lance Cpl. David Wright, also has served in Iraq and currently is stationed with the U.S. Marines in Johnstown, Pa., Rev. Wright said.

In addition to his father and brother, Brian Wright also is survived by his mother and a 12-year-old sister.

TROOP NEWS

“As A Marine, He Wants To Serve But He Doesn't Believe In The Cause”

December 15, 2005 By REGINALD PATRICK, STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE STAFF WRITER

As Iraqi voters headed to the polls for a parliamentary election, a coalition of anti-war activists urged Rep. Vito Fossella and other House Republicans to support an Iraqi exit strategy to bring the troops home by the end of next year.

At noon, braving frigid temperatures, a dozen members of several peace groups, including Move On, Peace Action of Staten Island, Veterans for Peace and the Staten Island African American Political Association, demonstrated in front of Fossella's district office in Eltingville and later delivered a petition urging the troop withdrawal.

Spokeswoman Dawn Ellwood said the petition had been signed by 500 residents of Fossella's 13th Congressional District, which encompasses Staten Island and a slice of Brooklyn, with several signers including notes explaining their positions.

"My son is leaving for Kuwait," wrote one of the signers. "As a Marine, he wants to serve but he doesn't believe in the cause."

A spokesman for Fossella, Craig Donner, responded, "On the eve of elections, the United States can't send the wrong message to our troops, the Iraqi people or the enemy by cutting and running."

However, George McAnanama of Livingston, a member of Veterans for Peace, said the cost of the Iraq conflict is too high "in terms of human lives, economics and the lost opportunities to help our own people."

"We need to ask who's profiting from this thing and who's paying for it," said McAnanama, a Vietnam War veteran.

Deborah Anderson of West Brighton, whose husband, Charles, served for about a year in Baghdad with a National Guard unit, said he believes "he was lied to and let down."

"It's time to get these troops out of harm's way," she said.

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.

19 Arrested In Maine Anti-War Civil Disobedience At Senator Snowe's Office

From: Gerald Oleson
To: GI Special
Sent: December 18, 2005
Subject: Dec 15, 2005

At 2:00 pm, on December 15, 2005, a ""This War Is Over"" press conference and rally ""To Tell The Truth"" were held in front of U. S. Senator Olympia Snowe's office at One Cumberland Place, Bangor, Maine.

A group of approximately 100 people attended the rally and heard Judy Robbins of Sedgwick read a letter signed by 450 citizens from around the State of Maine that had been sent to Senator Snowe.

The letter asked that Senator Snowe agree to participate in a public ""town meeting"" to listen to the voices of Mainers who are concerned about the war in Iraq. The letter also asked that Senator Snowe admit that she had been lied to by the Bush administration in the lead-up to the war; that she would work to stop the funding for the war; and that she would work to bring the soldiers in Iraq home now.

Statements were also read by Rob Shetterley of Brooksville, artist of the ""Americans Who Tell The Truth"" series, Bruce Gagnon of Brunswick, a member of Veterans for Peace, and Nancy Galland from Stockton Springs.

Gail Kelly, Senator Snowe's office manager, left her office to read a response from Senator Snowe.. Nearly 50 rally participants who were felt that Senator Snowe's letter did not address their concerns went to Senator Snowe's office hoping to talk by phone with Senator Snowe in Washington, DC, or to discuss Senator Snowe's position on the war in Iraq with her staff.

At approximately 3:30 pm, the building manager at One Cumberland Place requested that the rally participants leave the building. Upon being told by an officer from the Bangor Police Department that they would be arrested for "criminal trespass" if they did not leave, all but 19 people left the building.

At 3:45 pm officers from the Bangor Police Department and deputies from the Penobscot County Sheriff's Department arrested 19 people including Doug Rawlings, President of Maine Veterans for Peace, Chapter 001, for "criminal trespass" and transported them to the Penobscot County where bail was set and 18 people were released. One person, Jim Harney, refused to post bail. He was released Friday morning on his own recognizance.

A hearing is set for 8:30 pm January 20, 2006, in Bangor District Court.

Gerald Oleson, Maine Independent Media/Maine Commons
Bangor, Maine 207-947-2970

These are the names of those who were arrested.

Judy Robbins Sedgwick
Doug Rawlings Chesterville
Steve West Penobscot
Ron King Penobscot
Jim Harney Bangor
Sandy Yakovenko Tenants Harbor
Maureen Block Swanville
Debby Marshall Deer Isle
Nancy Hill Stonington
Peter Robbins Sedgwick
Richard Stander Stockton Springs
Carolyn Coe Blue Hill
Elizabeth Adams Ellsworth
Olenka Folda Brooklin
Dud Hendrick Deer Isle
Nancy Galland Stockton Springs
Rob Shetterly Brooksville
Bruce Gagnon Brunswick
Pat Wheeler Deer Isle

**Gerald Oleson
73 1/2 Court Street
Bangor, Maine 04401
207-947-2970**

Recipient of the Maine Civil Liberties Union Roger Baldwin Award 2004, and according to George Bush and John Ashcroft, I am both the "enemy" and a "terrorist."

All Are Welcome: **Tomas Young, Anti-War Iraq Veteran, Filming In New York City 12.22**

On Thursday Night, December 22nd at 7 pm, Phil Donahue (Television talk show pioneer) will be shooting a documentary on the Iraq War at the Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church (85 So. Oxford St. in Brooklyn, NY / 718-625-7515).

The subject of the film is Tomas Young, a paralyzed veteran soldier, who will be speaking. He is opposed to the war in Iraq.

Also singing and rehearsing will be our own Lafayette Inspirational Ensemble. We want to create the atmosphere of a church service so ALL ARE INVITED to come and be in the film.

Please come and help make this film. Refreshments will be served afterwards in the Lecture Room.

Pentagon Idiots Caught Lying To Key Senator

December 18, 2005 By Mark Mazzetti and Kevin Sack, L.A. Times Staff Writer

WASHINGTON — U.S. military officials in Iraq were fully aware that a Pentagon contractor regularly paid Iraqi newspapers to publish positive stories about the war, and made it clear that none of the stories should be traced to the United States, according to several current and former employees of Lincoln Group, the Washington-based contractor.

In contrast to assertions by military officials in Baghdad and Washington, interviews and Lincoln Group documents show that the information campaign waged over the last year was designed to cloak any connection to the U.S. military.

"In clandestine parlance, Lincoln Group was a 'cutout' — a third party — that would provide the military with plausible deniability," said a former Lincoln Group employee who worked on the operation. "To attribute products to [the military] would defeat the entire purpose. Hence, no product by Lincoln Group ever said 'Made in the U.S.A.' "

Military officials initially distanced themselves from Lincoln Group's activities, suggesting the company may have violated its contract when it masked the origin of stories placed in the Iraqi press.

On Dec. 2, Pentagon officials told Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John W. Warner (R-Va.) that all of the published materials were supposed to be identified as originating with the U.S. military but that identification was occasionally omitted by accident.

But Lincoln Group documents obtained by The Times, along with interviews with military officials and the current and former Lincoln Group employees, show that those who worked on the campaign believed the media products would be far more credible if their origins were disguised.

Pentagon Caught Faking Recruiting “Good News”

12.15.05 Christian Science Monitor

This week, the Pentagon reported that for the second month in a row, the service hit hardest by a recruiting shortfall, the Army, had exceeded its monthly recruiting goals. But even within the Defense Department, few suggest that the Army has seen its way through the crisis.

Instead, what the Army has done is backload the goals for its recruiting year, which runs from October through next September. For instance, last fiscal year the Army's October recruiting goal was 6,935 recruits; this year it dropped to 4,700.

Pentagon Crooks Caught Handing Out \$8 Billion In Bonuses To War Profiteers Who Failed To Perform

12.14.05 Bloomberg.com

The Defense Department paid contractors \$8 billion over five years in bonuses on weapons programs that were often dogged by severe cost overruns, performance problems and delays, the Government Accountability Office said.

The agency reviewed 93 of 597 military contracts in force between 1999 and 2004 that included the possibility of a bonus. Contractors on average were awarded about 90 percent of the bonus money available, the agency said in the draft of a report it sent to the Pentagon and plans to release next week.

Freedom *Of* Religion Includes Freedom *From* Religion

But what is a soldier to think when he comes to the chaplain to discuss his marital difficulties and he's told that the first thing he must do to heal his home life is embrace Jesus as his lord and savior?

December 19, 2005 Army Times editorial [Excerpt]

It's been less than four months since the Air Force set new guidelines intended to prevent religious intolerance in the workplace, and already congressional leaders want to roll back those rules.

Rep. Walter B. Jones, R-N.C., fired off a letter to President Bush signed by more than 50 congressmen asking that Bush issue an executive order to protect "the constitutional right of military chaplains' right of free speech."

At a press conference, Jones declared that "chaplains are under direct attack and that their right to pray according to their faith is in jeopardy." Rep. Todd Akin, R-Mo., said the Air Force is using the First Amendment as a tool for censorship.

The congressmen apparently forget why the guidelines were established to begin with: to bring clarity to a hot-running debate over where religion is appropriate in the workplace, and where it is not, and to remind commanders that endorsing religion from a position of authority is inappropriate.

In short, they're intended to help guarantee another right — the freedom of religion.

Critics might be quick to attack that position, citing the point that freedom of religion does not mean freedom from religion.

But what is a soldier to think when he comes to the chaplain to discuss his marital difficulties and he's told that the first thing he must do to heal his home life is embrace Jesus as his lord and savior?

That might be a reasonable step were the chaplain a civilian congregation leader. But a military chaplain, a commissioned officer, is a government official, a religious leader — and a de facto social worker. His obligation is to minister to those in his unit while not infringing upon their right to practice any religion they choose.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

18 December , 2005 Sify Ltd & Sameer Yacoub, AP & Evening Echo & UPI & Reuters

In central Baghdad, insurgents killed Ali Karim al-Assadi, a Shiite member of the Badr Organisation, the former military wing of the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq, an interior ministry source said.

SCIRI is the largest Shiite [collaborator] party in the country and leads the main United Iraqi Alliance coalition, which is tipped to become the majority grouping in parliament following last Thursday's general election.

Three policemen were killed and another two wounded when a makeshift bomb exploded as they were driving near Mustansiriyah University in the north of Baghdad, police and hospital sources said.

Insurgents also broke into a barber shop in Baladruz, about 60 kilometres, northeast of Baghdad, killing two policemen and a civilian and wounding the barber Saturday, police said.

A roadside bomb left one policeman dead and three wounded in the northern town of Tuz on Saturday night police said.

Unidentified fighters in separate incidents killed a police Lt. Colonel and an Interior Ministry employee as they were driving to work in western Baghdad.

In another, four police officers were seriously injured when their squad car was sprayed with gunfire.

A police captain and his driver were shot and killed in south Baghdad while two people, including an Interior Ministry driver, were killed in Baghdad's Shiite Sadr City slum.

A bomber killed a police officer and injured another four when he blew up a bomb in a mini van at a checkpoint along the a highway in eastern Baghdad near the Interior Ministry.

KIRKUK - Four Iraqi policemen were wounded on Saturday when a makeshift bomb went off near their patrol in Kirkuk, police said.

TAJI - Two Iraqi soldiers were killed and four injured when insurgents opened fire on their bus near al Taji military base north of Baghdad, police said.

RAMADI - The brother of Sheikh Saad Naef al-Hardan, minister of provincial affairs, was abducted on Saturday in Ramadi, police said. The prime minister's office in Baghdad said it had no knowledge of the kidnapping.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE

END THE OCCUPATION

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“While We Argue About What Is Best, My Brothers And Sisters Die In Iraq”

From: Soldier X
To: GI Special
Sent: December 14, 2005

The more I reflect back to my service in the military and my deployment in Iraq a bad taste forms in my mouth.

I am beginning to realize that I was an active component in the fundamental loss of the Iraq War or (Bush's War).

I took part in the occupation during Iraq's most fragile hour. In the year I was in Iraq I witnessed the rise of the insurgency in April 04', the scandal at Abu Ghraib break open, false sovereignty handed over, the re-election of George W. Bush, the second battle of Fallujah, and a mockery of an election in Iraq. All these events were tipping points in a war where the US soldier lost the trust and support of the Iraq people.

Through the use of conventional war against a guerilla insurgency and abusive tactics we turned the communities we were supposed to be bringing democracy to, into terrorized anti-Americanists.

We can not win the hearts and minds with shock and awe and shake and bake. I watched as the undecided Iraqi civilians still sitting on the fence started to side with the rebels. It became harder to get information from the friendlys and the insurgents found safe havens in many more Iraqi homes and mosques. There was a growing animosity between the Iraqi people and the US soldier.

Terms like "Rag Head" and "Sand Nigger" were used more frequently.

The name Haji became the "Gook" and "Skinny" of the Iraq War. An honorary term the Muslim uses for a man who completes the Islamic pilgrimage, now a derogatory remark by the GI.

Bags went over anyone's head who was eighteen and older and didn't give us full cooperation when we raided houses and search vehicles at check points.

People started to disappear from neighborhoods and ended up as enemy prisoners of war. With little to no records of who they were and why they were detained, these prisoners were assumed to be the most violent of insurgents and treated with very few rights. A bigot's war had escalated.

As we begin to withdraw troops we are going to pressure the ill prepared Iraq security forces to step up. The death squads will get more brutal as we approve of hard line tactics that decrease US soldier casualties. Meanwhile the Iraq civilian population will suffer under extreme and unchecked militias.

We will increase our air campaign allowing Iraq Army officers to coordinate targets. Often these will be to resolve personal vendettas and attack opposing political personalities.

The US Armed Forces will become an instrument for the power plays and attempted genocides that are beginning to over take Iraq's troubled areas. The innocent Iraqi people will be caught in the middle.

The damage done by this war to peace in the middle-east and the security of the world is so vast I am not sure if anyone has the answers. But, here is my attempt to add some reason to this tragedy.

We must realize that as Americans we do not know what is best for anyone and to assume we have the world's solutions is fairly arrogant. The best we could do is try harder to understand and listen to the Iraq people instead of forcing them into a mold we believe is best for all mankind.

One aspect that is long over due is the fact we should begin to treat the insurgency as a legitimate military force and create an environment where we can negotiate with the primary leaders. Possibly even, compromising areas to allow insurgents to become an institutional part of the security forces in those sectors. This might offer a safer region in the long run for the civilians there and will force the insurgents to take active roles in the political procedures.

We should shift the aggressive conventional operations into peace keeping efforts that concentrate on missions that reduce criminal activity and protect the Iraqi people. Flood areas of Iraq with civil affairs projects and non-profit work in order to rebuild communities from the ground up. Improve the standard of living so the Iraq people start to trust America is going to deliver on our promises. Create jobs so that Iraqis can start helping themselves. If the Iraqi is providing for his family he will be too busy and content to join the rebellion and his children will be less susceptible to joining extremists.

A lot of the strategies to win the war in Iraq rely on one major factor, we must have an honest foreign policy that is transparent to the global community. This is a tangled mess when we take a hard look at why we entered Iraq in the first place and who's definition we are using as to what success truly is in the region.

To the American people winning in Iraq should be defined as gaining security from terrorists and building stability in the Middle-East. These can be achieved by satisfying

the impoverished nations by having American corporations becoming less dependent on out sourced labor and by abusing countries to capitalize on their resources.

We will be at war with the third world until we manage to keep our business to ourselves.

The largest problem that applies here is the control of oil. It is time to confess to ourselves and the world that the consumption of oil by the US is dependent on the Middle-Eastern oil fields. We will soon have to face up the fact that we require a certain amount of these resources until we have developed alternatives and negotiate terms with the rest of the world.

We have known since the Carter Doctrine, and it was further proved in the Bush Doctrine, that we would be willing to go to war to insure we had access to the oil resources in South West Asia. So it is about time we start working on a way to get the oil while we withdraw troops or else in a few years we are going to have Iraq War II Vets, Iran War Vets, Syria War Vets, and Saudi War Vets.

These are my views on the current situation. I can't say that I am right on all these accounts.

I just added my personal experience with the knowledge I have gained about these issues. Having the perspective on the ground allows me to understand how these plans and strategies will likely play out.

I am fairly depressed about the direction we are going and I don't think we are doing what is best for anyone but a few individuals.

I hear Murtha getting slammed for being afraid to stay the course, but isn't it fear that we also attempt to win over Iraq?

It is hard to tell who is right when we neither side can see the future. The best plan is to set conditions to withdraw and benchmarks to initiate more of the exit strategy. But, also we must be flexible to adapt to current events and adjust the operations on the fly if the plan seems to fail.

I don't think sticking to one stubborn solution will get our troops out of harms way and supply Iraq with a safer environment. It is going to take a lot of compromising and our polarized America seems to be unable to do that.

While we argue about what is best, my brothers and sisters die in Iraq.

the heretic (soldier X)

**“Over Two Thousands Americans
Dead In Iraq, Tens Of Thousands Of**

Iraqis Dead, And Bush Must Not Be Upset?"

From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: December 14, 2005
Subject: Newsweek's current issue: The Silence of the Lambs

Maybe Capitalism is showing Bush the door.

Even corporate mobsters have house rules. No sitting on the pool table. In Bush's case, he maybe throwing up on the pool table.

Instead of balls on the table, it could be loose screws.

To be honest with you, I don't see how this guy has made it this far. Maybe the spring is about to come out of the box. Drug addicts and alcoholics who are being held together by string, do not do well under pressure.

Eventually, it is in the corner with a magic marker.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71**

From: Eric Bagai
Sent: Dec 14, 2005
To: Defeat Bush , Veterans For Peace 72
Subject: Newsweek's current issue: The Silence of the Lambs

[Excerpts]

Newsweek's current issue, December 19th, now on the stands, has a cover showing George Bush in a bubble with the heading: "Bush's World: The Isolated President: Can He Change?"

For months Doug Thompson's blog, Capitol Hill Blue, has been circulating on the internet, with many of us more curious about Thompson than about Bush.

Thompson's charges were outrageous: reports of a President who wandered the White House yelling at his aides, accusing those around him of betraying him, surely Thompson was on a private rant of his own. (Thompson is not a left winger - if anything, he is a libertarian, so his reports carry more sting than something written by a liberal).

Now, with this long article by Evan Thomas and Richard Wolffe, running for ten pages (with a terrific follow-up column on the "Imperial Presidency" by Fareed Zakaria), it is clear that Capitol Hill Blue was reporting the reality.

What is most interesting about the article is not what is in it, but what is not in it.

Where other articles discussing past Presidents, Clinton, Kennedy, Johnson, Reagan, would have been able to quote "named sources", what we have here is almost entirely anonymous. Take this example: "A White House aide, who like virtually all White House officials (in this story and in general) refused to be identified for fear of antagonize the President . . ." or "White House officials, as well as one of his closest friends (also speaking anonymously so as not to complicate relations with the President) . . ."

The problem extends beyond the White House itself, to the military: "According to senior Pentagon officials who did not want to be identified discussing private meetings", to the Republicans in Congress, "One House Republican, who asked not to be identified for fear of offending the White House . . ." and even to those entirely outside the US, "A foreign diplomat who declined to be identified was startled when Secretary of State Rice warned him not to lay bad news on the president. 'Don't upset him' she said'".

Don't upset him? Over two thousands Americans dead in Iraq, tens of thousands of Iraqis dead, and Bush must not be upset?

The situation is so serious that Senator Joseph Lieberman, an enthusiastic supporter of Bush's war, now is urging a bipartisan "war council" that could advise the President. (There is a rumor Lieberman may be brought in to replace Rumsfeld).

The Newsweek article confirms the feeling many of us have had, as we watched Bush blunder into a criminal adventure in Iraq and stumble so badly over the New Orleans tragedy, that the nation is like a train rushing along toward a bridge that isn't there.

The war is getting worse instead of better, the deficit is rising, the tax cuts benefit the very wealthy, the administration is absolutely riddled with corruption, as bad as anything I've seen in my life, and Bush doesn't listen, doesn't read, wants long vacations and wants to be in bed by ten! (And now, as those my age realize, we are stuck with a medical insurance plan that Bush can't even understand).

Bush, the man who became President by one vote of the Supreme Court, despite losing both the popular vote and (as the media pretty unanimously agreed after a careful look at the Florida ballots) the electoral college, is now frightened, fearful, appearing only at events that can be carefully controlled, with audiences that are friendly.

We have three more years of this Administration, and frankly not much to hope for from the Democrats.

If there is any hope it will come "from below", from millions of citizens who are fed up with an administration that has had only the interests of the corporate state at heart.

What I believe we need to do is tie together some of the issues - the terrible losses of American and Iraqi lives, the failure of the country to put its money where it is needed (New Orleans and our infrastructure), the loss of our civil liberties, the shock of finding torture now an official project - to point out, by dialogue, not by shouting, that we have an administration of the wealthy which is indifferent to the burdens carried by working families, many of them African American, Asian, Hispanic.

In short, where there is no leadership, that burden falls on us, home by home, town by town, vigil by vigil, letters to the editors, delegations meeting with members of Congress.

The Newsweek article is important: this is a newsmagazine, not a journal of opinion. And the news it brings us is that our Administration is out of touch and out of control.

For our friends elsewhere in the world, now is not the time to "make peace" with the Administration, but to speak truth to power.

For those of us living here, now is not the time to despair but to realize that when even a leading newsmagazine runs a feature article pointing out that the emperor is naked, the time for change has come.

“Military Power Is Useless In Dealing With The Effects Of Larger Social And Political Problems”

December 17, 2005 By GABRIEL KOLKO, CounterPunch [Excerpt]

The US dilemma, and it is a fundamental contradiction, is that its expensive military power is largely useless as an instrument of foreign policy.

It lost the war in Vietnam, and while it managed to overthrow popular regimes in Brazil, Chile, and elsewhere in Latin America, its military power is useless in dealing with the effects of larger social and political problems, and Latin America, the Middle East, and East Asia are more independent of American-control than ever.

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

Big Surprise

12.14.05 Los Angeles Times, December 14, 2005

Two detainees may have been tortured to death by Iraqi security forces, the head of a commission investigating allegations of abuse at Iraqi jails said.

“So Does Riding On The Back Of An American Tank Into Baghdad Make You A ‘Liberator’?”

[Thanks to JM for sending in.]

12.14.05 The Guardian, UK [Excerpts]

In the run-up to the Iraq conflict, Salam Pax attracted a global following with his web diary from Baghdad. This is the third in a series of blog posts he is writing for Guardian Unlimited as Iraqis prepare to go the polls for the third time in 11 months.

Posted Dec 9

One of the ugliest facets of the pre-election campaigning has got to be the personal attacks the heads of the main political parties are launching at each other.

Ibrahim Jaafari’s party accuses Allawi of promoting the presence of foreign forces, while Jaafari himself is in Japan asking the Japanese government to reconsider its decision to withdraw forces.

And Allawi accusing Jaafari’s government of corruption while his own ministers are still under investigation.

And Chalabi writing on his campaign posters: “We liberated Iraq.” So does riding on the back of an American tank into Baghdad make you a “liberator”?

And these were people who three years ago were sitting together in London on some foreign government’s payroll. How stupid do they think Iraqis are?

Why do people have to be so ugly to each other? Why can’t we all just hold hands, wear pink fluffy slippers and sing Rings Around the World? And would somebody please slap me before I get even more sappy?

December 13

I found out yesterday that Iraqis all over the world get to vote before us in Iraq. The state-run station has been broadcasting pictures from everywhere, from Britain to Iran, all doing the Iraqi democracy finger salute; purple index finger held up.

I bet the majority of these bomb-scare-free, minimal-security voters do not know that their votes will only count towards the 45 "compensatory seats". The fight for the rest of the 230 seats happens on Iraqi ground.

The insurgency is doing its best to defy all the security measures and has blown up the electricity generator that feeds the main water pumps to Baghdad. Most of the city is without running water and the municipality says they hope to get everything running again by tomorrow afternoon.

So, in the meantime, the government is starting countdown procedures. A couple of military operations here and there to "secure peaceful voting." Closing down the borders with Syria, Jordan will follow in a couple of days and the Baghdad airport will be also closed (not that there are many people planning on spending their holidays in sunny Baghdad but, just in case you want to, you better hurry).

Not that closing the borders will do much; the levels of violence have been escalating. Just this morning there was an armed confrontation between insurgents and Iraqi forces west of Baghdad.

There are so many incidents Reuters' AlertNet took the easy option and started putting the headline Security incidents in Iraq followed by the date

What does it say about the country when it's getting too tedious to think of a headline for all these incidents?

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**These Homeland Security Goons
"Should Get On The Next Plane
And Employ Their Fabulous
Talents In Iraq"**

Welcome to Rumsfeld and Cheney's world of "actionable intelligence" where no scrap of information is too trivial, where the "dots" must be connected to find the

next hijack conspiracy, where the seemingly innocent in bars and strip joints and mosques and college campuses and Quaker meeting houses could be the next Jose Padilla or Mohamed Atta.

December 14, 2005 By William M. Arkin, The Washington Post [Excerpts]

An NBC Nightly News piece yesterday on domestic spying by the military featured yours truly discussing an intelligence database of 1,519 "suspicious incidents" that covers the period July 2004-May 2005.

The database, which I obtained from a military source, is a rare look inside the actual work of the Defense Department conducting counter-terrorism and "force protection" missions inside the United States. Building on the NBC story, what does the database actually show?

The database includes three categories of incidents: The first are actual, seemingly valid potential terrorism tip-offs. The second category of incidents are anti-war and anti-military protests by civilians. The third are security incidents with only the most tentative terrorism connection.

The second category of "incidents," those based on surveillance of anti-war and anti-nuclear groups, as well as students and others protesters, should be disturbing to any Americans who care about civil liberties in this age of counter-terrorism because they indicate that military intelligence and local law enforcement agencies are routinely watching lawful protests.

But it is the third category of incidents that is the most numerous, the most revealing and the most corrosive.

The hyper vigilant homeland security types probably wouldn't be monitoring the web sites, intercepting the Emails, and sending undercover agents into meetings of lawful and peaceful Americans if they had not accumulated this mass of self-perpetuating "threat" reporting that does little more than pad a database to suggest domestic dangers by sheer repetition.

Under the excuse of "force protection" -- what the Defense Department told NBC News was the "protection of Defense Department installations, interests and personnel" -- U.S. military special agents and military police constantly report any suspicious activity that might conceivably suggest a potential threat.

In last night's report, NBC focused on one such report, the monitoring of an anti-war Quaker meeting in Lake Worth, Florida by the Army's 902nd Military Intelligence Group (that, according to the database). The database categorizes the meeting, which was to plan a protest at a military recruitment station, as a "threat."

The database includes nearly four dozen anti-war meetings or protests as "threats."

One wonders why the military or intelligence community would waste its time at all with the raging grannies in Florida.

But most important, the database includes hundreds upon hundreds of incidents that are not only labeled "not credible" but also are absurd indicators of any kind of threat. An example:

"August 2004, Atlanta, Georgia, a Navy enlisted man is arrested for driving under the influence by the Cobb County Police Department "and upon search of vehicle, discovered a picture of Usama bin Laden displayed as a screensaver on E-4's cellular telephone." Send that goofball to Guantanamo!

The database is jammed packed with these types of silly reports. I've already written about CIFA's concern about stolen or lost identification cards; the database includes 109 incidents -- that's almost 10 percent -- where military people mostly report losing their IDs.

Anybody out there have kids who perhaps conduct this "suspicious activity"? 1-800-CALLSPY, and I'm not kidding: The 902nd Military Intelligence Group is standing by.

One after another, over and over, potential surveillance, "solicitation" of military wives, crank bomb threats, girls trying to get onto military bases to see their boyfriends without ID, that is the stuff of CIFA's "suspicious activity" database.

None of these incidents go anywhere. There is not one case where the "subject" is found to be an actual threat.

Welcome to Rumsfeld and Cheney's world of "actionable intelligence" where no scrap of information is too trivial, where the "dots" must be connected to find the next hijack conspiracy, where the seemingly innocent in bars and strip joints and mosques and college campuses and Quaker meeting houses could be the next Jose Padilla or Mohamed Atta.

It is this assumption that everything is potential actionable intelligence that has led to renditions and torture and secrets prisons abroad. Now in the United States, it is contributing to an ever growing domestic military, intelligence and law enforcement triangle.

I'm torn between saying that these homeland security goons are a menace and suggesting that perhaps if they are so gung ho they should get on the next plane and employ their fabulous talents in Iraq.

MORE:

Hot On The Trail Of High School Protests!

December 15, 2005 By Robert Burns, Associated Press

NBC News said the database lists a meeting in 2004 of The Truth Project in Lake Worth, Fla., where activists planned a protest of military recruiting at local high schools. It listed the meeting as a “threat” and one of more than 1,500 “suspicious incidents” across the country over a recent 10-month period.

MORE:

Enemy Spies At Work, And How To Handle Them

For years I was active with Act Up, the AIDS activist group. And at the beginning of each meeting we had an incantation. If you are -- that was stated to everybody in the room -- if you are an on-duty member of the New York City Police Department or any other law enforcement agency, you are required by law to identify yourself.

December 15th, 2005 Democracy Now, Interviews By Amy Goodman & Juan Gonzalez [Excerpts]

Earlier this week NBC News exposed the existence of a secret Pentagon database to track intelligence gathered inside the United States.

The database including information on dozens of anti-war protests and rallies particularly actions targeting military recruiting.

The list included: counter-military recruiting meetings held at a Quaker Meeting House in Lake Forth, Florida. Anti-nuclear protests staged in Nebraska on the 50th anniversary of the U.S. atomic bombing of Nagasaki. An anti-war protest organized by military families outside Fort Bragg in North Carolina. And a rally in San Diego to support war resister Pablo Parades. The Pentagon database described all of these events as threats.

The documents obtained by NBC also indicate the Pentagon is now conducting surveillance at protests and possibly monitoring Internet traffic. One Pentagon briefing document stamped "secret" concluded: "[W]e have noted increased communication and encouragement between protest groups using the [I]nternet."

The same document indicated the military is tracking who is attending protests in part by keeping records on cars seen at protests.

The Pentagon's domestic intelligence gathering has been done through a secretive program called TALON which allows military bases and other defense installations to file reports of suspicious activity into a consolidated database.

Newly leaked Pentagon documents have confirmed the military has been monitoring and collecting intelligence on anti-war groups across the country.

Peace protests are being described as threats and the military is collecting data on who is attending demonstrations.

We speak with William Arkin, the former Army intelligence officer, who obtained the secret Pentagon documents.

AMY GOODMAN: It's good to have you with us. Why don't you start by just laying out how you got these documents and what exactly they say?

WILLIAM ARKIN: Well, I got the documents from military sources.

And it's in that actual data about the report issuer that one can see the degree of Pentagon monitoring in the United States of not just things that go on inside military bases, but also things that go on in our communities, from particularly suspicious incidents associated with military recruiting stations, which as you know are located all over the United States in malls and in shop fronts, in office buildings, and this is sort of the thin edge of understanding, and therefore, a smaller number of incidents that are associated with anti-war and anti-military protests or planned protests throughout the United States.

JUAN GONZALEZ: The information that you got, as I understand, only covers a period of about ten months, between July of 2004, May of 2005?

WILLIAM ARKIN: That's correct.

JUAN GONZALEZ: So the 1,500 incidents would be about 150 a month on average that are being catalogued?

WILLIAM ARKIN: That's correct. And again, as I wrote yesterday in my blog, you know, I wouldn't want to leave the impression that what we're seeing here is merely a devious and menacing activity of the U.S. military. What we're also seeing here is just gross bureaucratic incompetence and overstatement.

Here's how it works. The military has a mission of protecting Defense Department interests and installations. In the course of trying to figure out whether or not there is a threat or that there is some dots to be connected that would indicate a threat, they compile all of this information.

Even though many of these reports are not credible or are resolved without any incident or without any threat determined, the accumulation and repetition of so many incidents, 150 a month, as you say, certainly suggests a greater threat and certainly suggests a threat.

And so, therefore, it becomes a kind of self-perpetuating bureaucratic activity. Oh, my, we have 1,500 incidents in less than a year, certainly indicates that we better keep a close eye on all of this, even though when one goes into the database, the number of actual terrorist incidents which are found credible by the military itself is really only two dozen.

JUAN GONZALEZ: And in terms of the information that you gathered, was it strictly aimed at meetings and events, or were individuals tracked, as well, in these files?

WILLIAM ARKIN: The detail in the documents don't really give us an answer to that question.

We can see, for instance, in the case of the meeting which NBC highlighted in its show on Tuesday night, the Ft. Worth, Florida anti-military protesters at a Quaker meetinghouse, we can see that the incident occurred. We can see on the date, and clearly those activists, who I understand might be on your show today, are going -- you know, we're able to say, yes, we met on this date. It gives reference to a report, with a report number of the 902nd Military Intelligence Group, which is the Army's military intelligence organization that is responsible for both counterterrorism, counter-intelligence and force protection in the United States.

My guess would be that when we obtain that report, and eventually some patriot will either leak it to us or we'll get it under the Freedom of Information Act, we'll see that they did record the names of the people at meeting and that they did check those names against watch lists and databases and did their jobs, but I'm just -- in the database itself, what we see is only a sliver of insight into what it is that the military is actually up to.

So, I think that what we're seeing in this debate about domestic spying that has sort of come out of nowhere in the last couple of weeks, and what we're seeing in John Murtha's breaking ranks with the administration on Iraq and the 9/11 Commission's continuing work itself, is, I think, the beginning of a questioning of some of the very fundamental premises behind the war on terrorism, and until we are able to have that debate, I find it unlikely that the Pentagon's review of this matter is going to result in anything beyond some wrist-slapping and some promises that they'll tweak the rules.

We speak to anti-war activists in New York, Florida, California, Iowa and Ohio who organized protests listed as threats by the Pentagon.

Will Klatt, High School Student Organizer.

Marie Zwicker, organizer with the counter-recruiter group Truth Project in Lake Worth, Florida. The group's November 2004 meeting at a Quaker Meeting House was described as a "threat" in the Pentagon intelligence documents.

William Dobbs, spokesperson for United For Peace and Justice.

WILL KLATT: My name is Will Klatt. I was a high school senior when we -- the Columbus Student Network helped organize the anti-war demonstration down at the statehouse in Columbus, Ohio. There were students, you know, like organizers as young as like 12 to 18. I was a senior, and we had no idea that the F.B.I. had listed us as a threat to, like, the state or whatever. It's just like a complete shock that, like, peaceful protests and dissent can be viewed as a threat by our own government.

AMY GOODMAN: Marie, let me ask you a quick question.

MARIE ZWICKER: Sure.

AMY GOODMAN: In looking at this Pentagon intelligence domestic database, where it talks about the meeting that you had, it says, "Incident summary: counter-military recruitment planning meeting, Lake Worth, Florida. Incident type: threat."

It then says, "Reason discounted: discussion of surveillance against D.O.D. recruiters," Pentagon recruiters, which could suggest there was someone in your meeting. I mean, I know these meetings are totally open, but do you have any thought that there was an infiltrator?

MARIE ZWICKER: There was a possibility. A couple, several of us had questioned -- again, it's an open meeting. We publicize it freely on the internet and through other contacts. And so, it was an open meeting.

But there was a particular person there that none of us knew, and so we questioned it, the possibility. But we more or less expect that. Our meetings are open, and we're doing everything according to what we believe is our absolute right to do, and so, we -- you know, we never saw the individual before that, and we never saw the individual after that. So, there was a possibility that our meeting was infiltrated. But we don't know for sure.

AMY GOODMAN: What about how this has operated in the past and now in places like Chicago?

BILL DOBBS: Some of the lessons, I think, that were learned from previous experience with covert action and COINTEL-PRO and all was that it's not good enough to just hear the government say, 'Well, we won't do this anymore.'

Like right now we're hearing, 'Well, we're going to review why all of these things are still in our database.' Why were you doing it to begin with, and what kind of accountability will the law provide? There were numbers of lawsuits, the National Lawyers Guild, I'm sure the civil liberties chapters around the country were involved in them, and right here in New York, for example, the Handschu Agreement.

For years I was active with Act Up, the AIDS activist group. And at the beginning of each meeting we had an incantation. If you are -- that was stated to everybody in the room -- if you are an on-duty member of the New York City Police Department or any other law enforcement agency, you are required by law to identify yourself.

That's a legacy of Handschu, that there could not be --

AMY GOODMAN: Explain. Handschu is a name.

BILL DOBBS: Sorry, Handschu is the name of a lawsuit that was brought to stop the NYPD and law enforcement from, without any serious reason, surveilling political

activity. And over the years, there have been many, many battles over how far we're going to be able to push the police back. That case is in court again.

Received:

“While A Convicted Criminal Can Turn Himself Into A Nobel Peace Prize Nominee, Not All People Can Change”

[Thanks to Tim Goodrich, Co-founder, Iraq Veterans Against the War / Western Region Contact (www.ivaw.net) for sending this in.]

By Heather Ramirez. Heather Rae performs for the Enlightenment Project in Southern California. To learn more about the project, visit myspace.com/enlightenmentproject.

The United States is a country whose proudest moments have rested on moments when great leaders have made law-breaking choices based on the notion that people, and their old traditions, change.

Although black citizens were granted the right to vote with the fifteenth amendment, it wasn't enforced until The Voting Rights Act passed in 1965, following a tumultuous civil rights movement that cried for sweeping political reform and change in attitude towards people of color. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. called for peaceful civil disobedience that changed the mindset of the public majority, and President Lyndon B. Johnson responded by signing the Act, which truly changed the law and enforced the meaning of democracy.

Before 1920, American women of all races were not allowed to vote. Then, it was the general mindset of the American public that women weren't truly equals of their male counterparts. This non-American view changed when Woodrow Wilson shifted his own mindset to support an amendment to the Constitution in 1918.

The public majority began to view United States citizens to include both women and men, both black and white.

As Susan B. Anthony said in a speech after she was arrested for casting an illegal vote in the 1872 presidential election, “It was we, the people; not we, the white male citizens; nor yet we, the male citizens; but we, the whole people, who formed the Union.”

Now, the American public mindset is changing again. For racial and class minorities, myself included, our attitudes are slowly reverting to a type of racism, which our predecessors fought to diminish.

Because when Stanley “Tookie” Williams was denied clemency two days ago, I couldn't help but wonder who the Governor was making that decision for.

It wasn't made for international icons of peace and justice, such as Willie Mandela. It certainly wasn't made for outstanding human beings connected with the Nobel Peace prize, such as Nobel Peace prize holder Bishop Desmond Tutu. After all, Mr. Williams was nominated himself.

And denying Mr. Williams clemency wasn't made for we, the whole people, of the United States. Men and women of all color, from all classes and all backgrounds, have fiercely fought for his clemency.

But at a time when the Governor is attempting to regain political standing amongst his wealthy, white, conservative Republican supporters, I can't help but wonder if his definition of who "we the people" consist of is sadly outdated.

Let's forget for a moment that the circumstances surrounding Mr. Williams' conviction were a far cry from upstanding. Three African-Americans were removed from the jury by the prosecution, and many of the witnesses were themselves facing sentences for felonies.

Even the 9th Circuit Court of Appeals stated in a September 10, 2002, ruling that the witnesses in Stan's case had "less-than-clean backgrounds and incentives to lie in order to obtain leniency from the state in either charging or sentencing."

Let's forget that Mr. Williams has maintained his innocence for more than twenty years, and has made several appeals to have his conviction investigated on claims of racism, which was not uncommon towards gang members. These appeals were denied by the Supreme Court.

Let's also forget that Mr. Williams worked on saving children and teenagers from making poor choices, keeping hundreds of minority youths out of the gang community. Eight of his nine books were written specifically to warn children about the dangers of gang life. He was nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Let's instead look at the death penalty, a law that is so outdated and in such opposition to the remaining morals our government is straining to hold on to, a law that is so opposed by the public majority that it is a wonder that it is still in effect. Currently, four hostages, including American Tom Fox, are facing execution at the hand of Middle Eastern terrorists. How can we call for his execution to be stopped on moral grounds, when we refuse another citizen the same right on our own soil?

The Governor had a difficult decision to make. He, of all people, should know about the virtues of change. The Governor has led many lives, changing himself from a foreign bodybuilder (where he first met Mr. Williams, an avid weight-lifter) into an international acting celebrity, and then into the leader of one the most influential and democratic states of America.

Since taking office, though, he has consistently resorted to using his old personas, even those of the fictional roles he has played, by quoting from such characters as a robot from The Terminator and using his celebrity to maintain his public likeability.

There was a moment when the Governor could have joined past great leaders and made a ground-breaking choice.

He could have granted clemency to a reformed American citizen and shown the world that he was no longer playing a role of a heartless robot, but had changed into a great and just leader.

But sadly, we instead realized that, while a convicted criminal can turn himself into a Nobel Peace Prize nominee, not all people can change.

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