

GI SPECIAL 3C19:

The Good....



Cindy Sheehan of Vacaville, California, Gold Star Families for Peace and mother who lost her son, U.S. Army Specialist Casey Austin Sheehan, among dozens of crosses representing Iraqi war dead during her vigil near the Bush ranch August 11, 2005. (Jason Reed/Reuters)

....The Bad And The Butt Ugly



Bush at his ranch in Crawford, Texas, Aug. 11, 2005. From left: JCS Chairman Myers, Cheney, Bush, Rice, and Rumsfeld. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Montgomery County Firefighter Killed



John Kulick, a 35-year-old firefighter from Montgomery County, Pa., was killed in action Aug. 9, 2005, in Iraq. (AP Photo/Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs)

Chicago Soldier Killed



August 10, 2005 By Ben Bradley, ABC7Chicago

August 10, 2005 — A Chicago family has transformed their front yard into a memorial to Army Specialist Miguel Carrasquillo. He was killed in Iraq Tuesday. Carrasquillo grew up on the West Side and was engaged to be married.

He joined the army at the age of 18. He died at the age of 25.

Soldier Dies In U.S. Of Wounds Suffered In Iraq



Courtesy Star Tribune

8.11.05 The Associated Press

A Winona native died after being injured in a suicide bombing in Baghdad, his brother said Thursday.

Army Sgt. Mike Benson, 40, was riding in a Humvee on Aug. 2 when it was struck by a bomb, said his brother, David Benson of Winona. He said the information was passed on by the U.S. Army.

"There was no operation going on, it was just a routine day of activity," Benson told The Associated Press. He said the family at this point has few other details of the attack.

Mike Benson suffered massive head injuries and was transported first to a military hospital in Germany and, on Sunday, the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md. He died there early Wednesday, David Benson said.

He is the 25th Minnesotan to die as a result of injuries sustained in the Mideast during the Iraq war.

Mike Benson grew up in Winona, graduating from Winona High School in 1983. He joined the Army a few years later and has made a career out of it. "He's lived all over the world," his brother said, including a stint in Iraq during the first Gulf War.

Mike Benson was with an Army training unit based in Fort Drum, New York. They had been in Iraq since Easter and were there training Iraqi police officers, David Benson said.

Benson is survived by his wife, Elizabeth Benson, who lives in the Fort Drum area, his brother said. His mother, Norma Benson, and two brothers live in Winona, while another brother lives in the Twin Cities, David Benson said.

Bucks County Man Killed



Nathaniel DeTemple, 19, of Bucks County, Pa., was killed in action Aug. 9, 2005, in Iraq. (AP Photo/Pennsylvania Department of Military and Veterans Affairs)

SOLDIER KILLED BY SMALL-ARMS FIRE NEAR HABBANIYAH

August 11, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
Release Number: 05-08-16C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Soldier assigned to 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was killed Aug. 9 by small arms fire.

The incident took place during combat operations near Habbaniyah, Iraq.

Marine Killed By Ramadi IED

8.11.05 By ANTONIO CASTANEDA, Associated Press Writer

Thursday, the military said a U.S. Marine assigned to the 2nd Marine Division was killed in a roadside bombing the night before in the western city of Ramadi.

The slain Marine, whose name was not released, was injured in a bombing Wednesday night in Ramadi, 70 miles west of Baghdad, and died later of his wounds, the military said.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. Marines takes breakfast after making sandbags as they set up defensive positions in Kandagal village, Kunar province, eastern Afghanistan, August 11, 2005. **The operations have left 6 U.S. troops dead in the past week.** (AP Photo/Tomas Munita)

TROOP NEWS

“The Iraqi People...Felt They Were Fighting For Their Homeland”

A View Of Iraq From A Soldier

Many of the people who were attacking me were the poor people of Iraq. They were definitely not members of Al Qaeda, left over Baath Party members, and they were not former members of Saddam's regime. They were just your average Iraqi civilian who wanted us out of their country.

7/19/2005 By John Bruhns (Via Cindy Sheehan) [Excerpt]

My speech to the "Out of Iraq" Congressional Caucus on July 19, 2005

I am a concerned veteran of the Iraq War. I am not an expert on the vast and wide range of issues throughout the political spectrum, but I can offer some first hand experience of the war in Iraq through the eyes of a soldier. My view of the situation in Iraq will differ from what the American People are being told by the Bush Administration.

The purpose of this message is to voice my concern that we were misled into war and continue to be misled about the situation in Iraq every day. My opinions on this matter come from what I witnessed in Iraq personally.

George Bush and his political advisors have been successful in presenting a false image to the American people that Saddam Hussein was an "imminent" threat to the security of the United States. We were told that there was overwhelming evidence that Saddam Hussein possessed a massive WMD program, and some members of the Bush Administration even hinted that Saddam may have been involved in the 9/11 attacks.

We now know most of the information given to us by the current Administration concerning Iraq, if not all the information, was false.

After 9/11, comments like this proved to be a successful scare tactic to use on the American People to rally support for the invasion. Members of the Bush Administration created an image of "wine and roses" in terms of the aftermath of the war. Vice-President Dick Cheney said American troops would be greeted as "liberators." And there was a false perception created that we would go into Iraq and implement a democratic government and it would be over more sooner than later. The White House also expressed confidence that the alleged WMD program would be found once we invaded.

I participated in the invasion, stayed in Iraq for a year afterward, and what I witnessed was the total opposite of what President Bush and his Administration stated to the American People.

The invasion was very confusing, and so was the period of time I spent in Iraq afterward.

At first it did seem as if some of the Iraqi people were happy to be rid of Saddam Hussein. But that was only for a short period of time.

Shortly after Saddam's regime fell, the Shiite Muslims in Iraq conducted a pilgrimage to Karbala, a pilgrimage prohibited by Saddam while he was in power. As I witnessed the Shiite pilgrimage, which was a new freedom that we provided to them, they used the pilgrimage to protest our presence in their country. I watched as they beat themselves over the head with sticks until they bled, and screamed at us in anger to leave their country. Some even carried signs that stated, "No Saddam, No America."

These were people that Saddam oppressed; they were his enemies. To me, it seemed they hated us more than him.

At that moment I knew it was going to be a very long deployment.

I realized that I was not being greeted as a liberator. I became overwhelmed with fear because I felt I never would be viewed that way by the Iraqi people.

As a soldier this concerned me. Because if they did not view me as a liberator, then what did they view me as? I felt that they viewed me as foreign occupier of their land. That led me to believe very early on that I was going to have a fight on my hands.

During my year in Iraq I had many altercations with the so-called "insurgency."

I found the insurgency I saw to be quite different from the insurgency described to the American people by the Bush Administration, the media, and other supporters of the war. There is no doubt in my mind there are foreigners from other surrounding countries in Iraq. Anyone in the Middle East who hates America now has the opportunity to kill Americans because there are roughly 140,000 US troops in Iraq.

But the bulk of the insurgency I faced was primarily the people of Iraq who were attacking us as a reaction to what they felt was an occupation of their country.

I was engaged actively in urban combat in the Abu Ghraib area west of Baghdad.

Many of the people who were attacking me were the poor people of Iraq. They were definitely not members of Al Qaeda, left over Baath Party members, and they were not former members of Saddam's regime. They were just your average Iraqi civilian who wanted us out of their country.

On October 31st, 2003, the people of Abu Ghraib organized a large uprising against us. They launched a massive assault on our compound in the area. We were attacked with AK-47 machine guns, RPGs and mortars.

Thousands of people took to the streets to attack us. As the riot unfolded before my eyes, I realized these were just the people who lived there. There were men, women, and children participating. Some of the Iraqi protesters were even

carrying pictures of Saddam Hussein. My battalion fought back with everything we had and eventually shut down the uprising.

So while President Bush speaks of freedom and liberation of the Iraqi people, I find his statements are not credible after witnessing events such as these.

During the violence that day I felt so much fear throughout my entire body.

I remember going home that night and praying to God, thanking him that I was still alive.

A few months earlier President Bush made the statement, "Bring it on" when referring to the attacks on Americans by the insurgency. To me, that felt like a personal invitation to the insurgents to attack me and my friends who desperately wanted to make it home alive.

I did my job well in Iraq. During the deployment, my superiors promoted me to the rank of sergeant. I was made a rifle team leader and was put in charge of other soldiers when we carried out missions.

My time as a Team Leader in Iraq was temporarily interrupted when I was sent to the "Green Zone" in Baghdad to train the Iraqi army. I was more than happy to do it because we were being told that in order for us to get out of Iraq completely the Iraqi military would have to be able to take over all security operations.

The training of the Iraqi Army became a huge concern of mine. During the time I trained them, their basic training was only one week long. We showed them some basic drill and ceremony such as marching and saluting.

When it came time for weapons training, we gave each Iraqi recruit an AK-47 and just let them shoot it. They did not even have to qualify by hitting a target. All they had to do was pull the trigger. I was instructed by my superiors to stand directly behind them with caution while they were shooting just in case they tried to turn the weapon on us so we could stop them.

Once they graduated from basic training, the Iraqi soldiers in a way became part of our battalion and we would take them on missions with us. But we never let them know where we were going, because we were afraid some of them might tip off the insurgency that we were coming and we would walk directly into an ambush.

When they would get into formation prior to the missions we made them a part of, they would cover their faces so the people of their communities did not identify them as being affiliated with the American troops.

Not that long ago President Bush made a statement at Fort Bragg when he addressed the nation about the war in Iraq. He said we would "stand down" when the Iraqi military is ready to "stand up." My experience with the new Iraqi military tells me we won't be coming home for a long time if that's the case.

I left Iraq on February 27, 2004 and I acknowledge a lot may have changed since then, but I find it hard to believe the Iraqi people are any happier now than they were when I was there.

I remember the day I left there were hundreds of Iraqis in the streets outside the compound that I lived in. They watched as we moved out to the Baghdad Airport to finally go home. The Iraqis cheered, clapped, and shouted with joy as we were leaving.

As a soldier, that hurt me inside because I thought I was supposed to be fighting for their freedom.

I saw many people die for that cause, but that is not how the Iraqi people looked at it.

They viewed me as a foreign occupier and many of the people of Iraq may have even preferred Saddam to the American soldiers.

I feel this way because of the consistent attacks on me and my fellow soldiers by the Iraqi people, who felt they were fighting for their homeland. To us the mission turned into a quest for survival.

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.

Foul Play Suspected In Soldier's Iraq Death

August 10, 2005 By Daniel R. Brown Special to the NNPA from the St. Louis America

ST. LOUIS: "The military came to my door on July 19 at 7:30 in the morning. The moment my wife looked out the window and she said 'John, it's a soldier standing on the porch,' I knew it was bad news," recounted John Johnson, father of Private LaVena Johnson, 19, of Florissant, Mo., who recently died near Balad, Iraq.

She was the first female soldier from Missouri to die while serving in the current war in Iraq.

"It came totally unexpected, because she had just talked to her mother on the phone on Sunday for about an hour," Johnson said. "They talked just about every-thing— about how crazy things were, the weather, the big spiders and the large scorpions. They just laughed and had a good time the way they always do."

Despite the personal visit that LaVena's family received, which is standard military protocol for families of soldiers who die in the line of duty, they have many unanswered questions concerning her death, which is under investigation.

"This is what they said: 'Your daughter died this morning of a self-inflicted wound,'" Johnson recounted. "I said, 'Self-inflicted? Are you saying that my daughter shot herself?' He said, 'No, sir, but it's being investigated.'"

After LaVena's remains were returned to the family two weeks ago, the Johnsons did some disturbing and shattering investigations of their own.

"I am going to tell you for a fact. We looked at her body and we saw some things," Johnson said. "I don't want to say too much right now, but I am going to say this: I think that the investigation is a criminal investigation, and I think that there is foul play."

At Hazelwood Central High School, from which she graduated in 2004, LaVena was known as a topnotch student. Despite her school's large size, she stood out for her exceptional academic and extra-curricular performances. That's why it was a shock to many when during her junior year she announced her plans to join the U.S. Army following her graduation.

"It's like a conversation that I had yesterday. She said that she was going in the Army, and I was shocked because I just knew that she was going to go on to school," said Frank Smith, Central's principal. "I knew her three brothers, because her three brothers graduated from Central, and I know that they went on to college and different things. I was wondering why she wouldn't pursue that."

Her father, who served in the military for three years, provided some insight into how she reached her decision.

"She talked to me about the benefits of me going, because I went from high school to the Army. When I got ready to go to college, it did pay for some of it. When I got my first house, I didn't have to make a down payment because I was a veteran," Johnson said. "So, she decided it would be a good idea for her to go into the military first, because she wanted to travel and she wanted to earn her own money to go to college."

We told her that we could come up with the money to send her to school, but she said, 'No, I want to do this on my own.'"

Based on her performance on a military aptitude test, LaVena was initially assigned to work as a chaplain's assistant. But, once the Army discovered that she did not have a driver's license, she was reassigned to weapons supply.

"The chaplain's assistant position would have been great, because she is a good Christian woman," Johnson said. "That would have been perfect."

A member of the 129th Corps Support Battalion based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, LaVena arrived in Iraq in April 2005, just four months ago. The Johnsons, a close family of seven, remained in regular contact with LaVena while she was there.

“She talked on the phone to my wife just about every day. She e-mailed her sister, and they communicated on the computer often. And then, in between the two of them, I wrote her,” Johnson said.

LaVena will be remembered by all who knew her for her big smile and her even bigger heart.

“The point that really stands out is that, out of 2,700 kids at the school, when she walked up she had a smile on her face,” said Smith, her former principal. “She was that type of child that made an impact on everyone that she came in close contact with. She was just a great child. We all were at a loss for words when we got the word that she had passed away in Iraq.”

ANOTHER GOLD STAR MOTHER AGAINST THE WAR



Mary Ann MacCombie, right, of Atlanta hugs an unidentified woman after speaking at an anti-war rally in front of the Veterans Administration Hospital in Decatur, Ga., Aug 11, 2005. **MacCombie's son Sgt. Ryan M. Campbell was killed while serving in Iraq in April 2004.** (AP Photo/John Bazemore)

Senators Tear Lying VA Scum New Asshole

August 04, 2005 by Patricia Salisbury, Executive Intelligence Review

On July 19, the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on Military Construction and Veterans Affairs put the Bush/Cheney Administration on notice, that the administration policy of shutting down or scaling back vital Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and other facilities around the country, will not go forward unchallenged.

Eighteen VA facilities nationwide are currently under threat, as part of the "Capital Asset Realignment for Enhanced Services" (CARES) process, which is evaluating such extreme measures as shutting down the premier VA hospitals in Manhattan, New York and Waco, Texas.

The subcommittee report states that conditions have changed since the CARES 2004 study of VA infrastructure, as large numbers of veterans return from Iraq and Afghanistan; it says that public meetings conducted as part of the CARES process in April and May raised issues and problems that were not identified in 2004.

This is mild language to describe the absolutely chaotic situation in the veterans health-care field. The breakdown of the general health-care infrastructure in the country has forced tens of thousands of non-Iraq War, non-Afghan War veterans to seek the VA systems services, over and above the war-created influx. The latest figures provided by reluctant VA bureaucrats to Congressional hearings, indicate that at least 25,000 veterans seeking VA services are on waiting lists around the country.

The stubborn refusal of the Bush/Cheney Administration to face the reality of the disintegration of health care, along with the rest of the economy, and its continued pursuit of gimmicks such as CARES, and assorted budgetary slight-of-hand tricks, is fueling the ongoing revolt of both Democratic and Republican members of Congress on a number of fronts.

In addition to the action taken at the July 19 appropriations subcommittee hearing, administration representatives were grilled and charged with "bad faith" at the House Committee on Veterans Affairs on July 21.

Republican committee chairman Steve Buyer of Indiana announced that he was instructing the VA to see if any staff involved in the current budget debacle should be dismissed, and that he would seek a GAO investigation of the VA budget process.

The Committee members of both parties were also enraged by the stonewalling of Perlin when he was asked, no fewer than five times, what exact figure the VA had submitted to the Office of Management and Budget. Perlin finally admitted that this information was "embargoed," implying that he had been forbidden to release it.

Congressmen also objected to the constant evocation by Perlin and other VA representatives, of the now thoroughly discredited Milliman actuarial model, which was the basis for the failure to discover the shortfall in the first place.

Congressman Bob Filner (D-Calif.) told the VA representatives, ``You act as if you were locked in a computer room.... We are not run by a model, talk to the Vets.... You act as if the human intellect had no role here."

Committee members also demanded to know how the regular conference calls between the VA's Washington headquarters and its regions, could have failed to alert the national office to in the unprecedented increase in demand for VA service.

The clear implication was that the word was out in the administration, to ignore anything that might increase costs. Said one Member, "The policy of OMB is to continue the myth that they will generate revenue on the back of the veterans."

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)

Straws In The Wind

[This is run as a perfect reflection of the turmoil churning in the intermediate layers of the armed services. There is an instinctive understanding that something has gone wrong, that our liberties are threatened here at home, that what the politicians are spinning is nonsense, but the writer hasn't crossed the last bridge: recognition that the politicians are nothing more than shills for the corporate empire builders who have betrayed the services into this stupid disaster in Iraq. T]

August 08, 2005 By Josh Gibbs, Army Times. The writer is a Marine first lieutenant stationed at Naval Support Activity New Orleans.

Just when you thought it was safe to do anything you wanted, you were wrong because it's never safe to do anything.

Don't you watch the news? There are terrorists everywhere, including behind your couch.

If there's one point that the news agencies, the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security want to hammer home, it's that every single American is, at most, 10 seconds away from being annihilated by terrorists and their death rays.

Our motto seems to have become, "If you are not absolutely terrified at every single moment of every single day, the terrorists win."

Terrorism has become a part of our daily lives. Many news organizations devote daily segments to terrorism issues. A trip to MSNBC.com reveals a "Terrorism and Security" section on its Web site that includes such helpful tips as "fighting bioterror," "coping with terror" and "potential targets."

Wait, what was that last one? Do you mean to tell me that we're actually giving people ideas on what U.S. landmarks would make good targets?

We have allowed our lives to be controlled by the ambiguous question: "What if?"

The catchphrase from Sept. 11 was "never forget." The recent bombings in London prove that not only is it impossible to predict when and where an attack will take place, but that we do forget and the cycle begins anew.

When Abu Musab al-Zarqawi was allegedly injured, it was all over the news for days. It was as if people expected his injury or death to spell the end of the insurgency and victory for the United States.

I am sorry to be the one who bursts the bubble, but it does not matter whether he is alive, dead, injured or healthy. We are not fighting an enemy that will crumble and fall when one of its senior leaders is killed.

Too many people see this new enemy as a poorly organized force that uses archaic weapons and fighting tactics against our superior firepower. Some think that by killing a few key figures, we will somehow win the war and bring democracy to Iraq.

What they fail to realize is that the enemy chain of command is not much different from our own. If Zarqawi is, in fact, injured or killed, there will be someone to take his place.

Marine Commandant Gen. Mike Hagee said it himself: "We're going against a smart enemy. That's really important to remember. We are also going against a very dedicated enemy, and sometimes we forget that."

How much did the capture of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein change the will of the enemy?

When the war started, many people thought that once Saddam was captured, his armies would give up their weapons and surrender en masse to our troops. The war would be over. How could they continue fighting with their leader in chains?

But there were some who knew better. Those of us who faced this enemy in the scorching sands of Iraq knew better. Those who face this enemy every day on the streets of Fallujah, Rawah, Baghdad and Ramadi know better.

The Middle East is chock-full of people who still support Saddam. Some of those countries also tend to support terrorism, in one way or another.

Unless we're willing to nuke the entire region into one melted glob of goo, we can't possibly take out every terrorist faction before we take another hit.

Deposing Saddam didn't scare the terrorists into hiding. Instead, it drew out the wackos who want to be martyrs.

There are also a number of Middle Eastern nations that wanted Saddam gone, but they didn't want the United States to do it.

If there's one thing they hate more than a dictator who gets his Doritos-loving jollies by gassing Kurds, it's the United States acting as if it can exercise as much power as it wants anywhere in the world.

As Hagee said, "A better understanding of the people we are trying to help and the people we are fighting — their culture, what they think is unimportant, what they think is important — will help us."

This war will not be won by killing a man with a famous name.

It will be won by not taking any of our freedoms and liberties for granted and, most important, by showing unwavering support for our men and women serving overseas.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

GET THE MESSAGE?





Holding American flags, a demonstration by “The White Revolutionists Movement” gathers outside the US military base demanding the withdrawal of military occupation, Aug. 11, 2005, in Baqouba. (AP Photo/Mohammed Adnan)

Assorted Resistance Action

8/11/2005 By ANTONIO CASTANEDA, The Associated Press & Anatolia.com Inc. & The Conservative Voice

In the Yarmuk district of Baghdad, a police officer traveling to work Thursday was killed in a drive-by shooting. Police 1st Lt. Hamid Mahmoud was killed and a taxi driver injured in the attack, Jawad said.

One Iraqi soldier was also killed in the capital.

Guerrillas burst into the home of an intelligence official from the Defense Ministry and killed him Thursday in the in the Junaina neighbourhood in northern Basra, said police Capt. Mushtaq Kadhim. Lt. Col. Ibrahim Khalil was killed as he was preparing for work.

In the northern town of Samarra four Iraqi soldiers were wounded when a group of Iraqi soldiers came under fire from resistance fighters.

An engineer-cum-interpretor, Said Adib Touma, 32, was kidnapped from the northern town of Kirkuk and his body found later, police said.

Another police officer was shot dead in the town of Al-Dujail, 70 kilometers (40 miles) north of Baghdad.

Rebels also kidnapped one businessman from Kirkuk and a police officer from Baghdad.

An employee in Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari's office, Thair Wahib al-Jumili, was seriously wounded by militants north of Baqouba.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The White House has become a Mental Hospital, and the patients are armed.

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
July 28, 2005

FRANCIS ONA'S ROLE AND ...PLEKHANOV

And when the PNG officers became scared of their own courage, their rank and file soldiers, who'd finally had enough massacring Bougainville villagers, took over the movement, backed by the Port Moresby masses. "We support our Resisting Soldiers, and Peace in Bougainville."

July 28, 2005 By Max Watts.

[With David Cortright, Max Watts co-authored LEFT FACE, Soldier Unions and Resistance Movements in Modern Armies, Contributions in Military Studies, Number 107; GREENWOOD PRESS, New York • Westport, Connecticut • London]

Thoughts:

Many years ago a Russian called Plekhanov wrote a series of articles on "The Role of the Individual in History". Plek also introduced the writings of Karl Marx, who had then – 1883 – just died in London, to Tsarist Russia. Amongst his readers was one Vladimir Ulianov, later himself an important individual known as Lenin.

Plek's thesis, as I remember, was that – given certain economic and political conditions – a certain space for individual "leaders" opened up, and that under such conditions someone would come forward, and fill this place. Take on the new, historically necessary, role. Writing around 1890, Plek analysed particularly the role of General Buonaparte, famous as Napoleon.

His fundamental point: The French Revolution would – given the failures of the "Ancien" Feudal/Royalist regime – have happened anyway, liberating enormous social forces for change, progress. Nappy, or Bony, as his English enemies called him, seized the time, the leadership.

Had it not been him, had this Buonanaparte died earlier or been elsewhere, someone else, Hoche, whoever, would have taken the job, of channeling, braking, and then exporting, the French Revolution. The French Bourgeoisie, having taken enough power, would have found another, suitable "Good Sword" to stop the lower classes from endangering its new rule.

Plek was aware that Nappy was – as it turned out – a quite exceptional general, winning (and sometimes losing!) battles far and wide. However, his point was that the job required somebody like that. Of course, another General might not have been quite that "grandiose", might not have made the same mistakes – did Nappy really have to march half a million men in the Grande Armee into Russia – and their death! – in 1812 ?

These thoughts came to my mind when I sat down to write an obituary about Francis Ona, Leader, and General, of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army BRA, self-crowned (as was Nappy, in France, Emperor) King of Mekamui, Bougainville.

All proportions taken into account, Ona was as remarkable a leader as – in his time, in his country, Napoleon.

Of course: the time is not the same, and Mekamui, although it is often given the French Aristocrats' name: Bougainville, is not France.

But as Napoleon, initially but a junior French artillery officer in the revolutionary armies - harnessed the – unexpected – at the time incredible energies of the French Revolution to win, for two decades, against the combined forces of the then rulers, the kings and feudal lords of "the entire world", (well, of Europe), so Francis Ona – an unknown minor "native" employee of Bougainville Copper Ltd BCL, that is of Conzinc Rio Tinto Australia CRA, led a – a priori hopeless – revolt of some – first just a few dozen -"natives" -against the mercenaries of the PNG riot police, against the Papua New Guinea "Defense Force", in fact against Australian Imperialism, against the world-wide mining Giant Rio Tinto.

For years Ona was only a hunted "terrorist" in the mountains of Bougainville, with a 200,000 Kina price on his head, dead or alive. No one, certainly not the mining company, nor its henchmen in Canberra, London, or Port Moresby, thought he had "a chance".

I never met him, but – thanks to the devotion of the BRA soldiers, of Bishop Zale in his radio-shack/living room in Gizo, of the – oft forgotten - Australian "Joan of Arc" (though no virgin!) Rosemarie Gillespie – of the Bougainville Freedom Movement's activists in Australia, of the rare "real journos" and film-makers who defied the blockade, of too many others to name, I was able to speak to him, his mates, by a tenuous, often interrupted, radio linkup.

One conversation particularly remains in my mind, I think it was in the "darkest days," after the BRA had lost the capital, Arawa. I asked Francis how he, the BRA, could continue their – apparently hopeless – struggle?

Ona replied: "Papua New Guinea – we can beat in a week. Australia, Rio Tinto – that will take a little longer..." A good line, but is it for real? I was wrong. Ona was right

Another (radio) conversation, with BRA Field Commander Ishmael Toroama, late in 1995. Things still looked pretty bleak, but Ishmael says: "We will win the war, next year." They did.

In 1996 the BRA defeated the PNG "colonial" army, its Australian "advisors," in Buka, Koromira, Aropa, Kangu Beach, Buin.. The BRA "marine" shot it out successfully with the Australian-flown Iroquois Helicopter gunships, the Australian supplied "speed boats" lost sea battle between Bougainville and the Solomons, the blockade of the island began to fail.

Massacres continued, but now even the great brains in Canberra realised they were losing that war.

They told their PNG servant, Prime Minister Chan: "We'll cut our losses, negotiate". Chan – humiliated – rebuffed, went ballistic and, without even consulting his Australian bosses, bought some British/South African "Sandline" mercenaries. For US \$ 36 Million, big money there, then.

Sandline boss Lt. Colonel Tim Spicer (hastily retired from British army, leaving some unanswered questions about murdered Irishmen behind) spun Chan an "alternative war plan". Sandlines would put down Ona, the BRA, just as it had done in Africa for other mining companies. Spicer's gunships would kill all in central Bougainville, targetting their thousand 60 mms rockets onto – by body-heat identified - humans. And so "recover the lost Panguna" mine.

We should remember this plan, when we think about terrorists, bombing... LTC Spicer – when last heard from – was actively running mercenaries in Baghdad for Mr. Bush. For some – I'm told – US 300 million/year, an upgrade from his failed, but paid-for, Bougainville ops.

But then in mid-March 1997 even the PNG military commander, Brig. Gen Jerry Singirok, would no longer buy Sandline's blood-bath. Singirok realised this killing wouldn't work, would not reopen the Panguna mine. He revolted, with the help of his officers!

And when the PNG officers became scared of their own courage, their rank and file soldiers, who'd finally had enough massacring Bougainville villagers, took over the movement, backed by the Port Moresby masses. "We support our Resisting Soldiers, and Peace in Bougainville."

Spicer in Port Moresby got a black eye, Sandlines was thrown out of PNG, and, in Bougainville, Francis Ona recognised a historic moment. He held out his hand to

Singirok, his long-time PNG opponent. We shall make Peace. De Facto, this - followed by much de jure talking, ended the war. The Bougainvillians had won, Rio Tinto, Australia, had lost.

BACK TO PLEKHANOV:

I've heard a story, wasn't there. It may be true. It's late 1988. No shooting, violence, yet. Francis Ona is negotiating with BCL/Rio Tinto – about the Environmental Damages the Panguna mine is causing on Bougainville. He asks for ten Billion Kina's, dollars, compensation. The Mine managers, BCL bosses, laugh at him. "Ten Billion! That's more than the whole mine is worth!"

Ona says: "Don't you laugh at me in my country!" Walks out, slams door, goes to the company store with some mates, takes out 50 kilos of dynamite and blows down an electric pylon. Stops the Panguna mine. This riles BCL into calling the cops, then the army, killing Bougainvillians, starting a – 10,000 plus dead – Revolutionary War.

What would have happened had Francis Ona said: "Ten Million" (not Ten Billion)? BCL might well have answered: How about Five?...A Bee, an eM, a – perhaps – misheard? Letter? What is the role of this accident in history?

A small, black, people, on a far-off island in the Pacific, have shown that "we can win". Against the combined forces of world capital, New Flag Imperialist Australia, their local servants.

Sure, the objective conditions were right for a reaction against the Mining Company. But, without Ona, would Bougainville have become the first, sofar perhaps the only, successful, such revolt?

(Panguna, as I write, remains closed – though the BCL shares -"they've heard "Ona is dead"! - are climbing thru the roof."

Would this all have happened without the role of that individual: once-BCL surveyor Francis Ona? Of the role of the accident in history?

I leave these answers to Plekhanov. Personally, I think Plek was having a bob each way... Sometimes it's one person, an accident, which make a real difference. Sometimes it's the mass movement, the historical wave, which is all-important..

Whatever happens now, later, the Bougainville victory over Rio Tinto, - and it was led by Francis Ona! -- remains a lesson for others, world-wide. Things will never be the same again. We will not Forget !

OCCUPATION REPORT

Winning More Friends: For The Armed Resistance That Is



U.S. soldiers of the army infantry from the Stryker brigade enter a house during a patrol in Mosul, northern Iraq, July 26, 2005. REUTERS/Andrea Comas

There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?

The Great Iraqi Collaborator Army Training Fiasco Rolls On

COMMENT:

In this long, grim description of the Great Iraqi Training Fiasco, isn't it interesting that nobody; not the reporter, not the U.S. personnel, and not the Iraqis; have one word to say about the 10 ton elephant in the room:

HOW COME THE IRAQI RESISTANCE MOVEMENT HAS NONE OF THESE PROBLEMS ORGANIZING AND MOTIVATING *THEIR* FIGHTING FORCE?

Of course, none of the occupation people want to go there.

They can't handle the truth.

The resistance fights for national liberation and love of country.

These collaborator troops?

Read on.

T

August 08, 2005 By Robert Hoderne, Army Times staff writer

As U.S. trainers repeatedly say, the new Iraqi army doesn't have to be as good as the American Army, just better than the insurgents. But those insurgents are good enough to have bottled American forces inside fortified bases.

U.S. troops venture forth only in convoys more heavily armed and protected than anything anyone envisions for the fledgling Iraqi army, whose current idea of an armored vehicle is a Nissan pickup with steel plates welded to the sides.

The number of fully capable Iraqi units is secret, but published accounts that no one in the military disputes put the figure at only 5 percent.

That amounts to just 10,000 Iraqi troops and police, less than half an American division.

KHALIDIYAH, Iraq — Iraqi troops clambered out of the backs of Russian-made Kraz trucks and began sealing off half a dozen city blocks in this town 50 miles west of Baghdad that is typically described as “restive.”

They swiftly began searching homes, looking for men who have been planting roadside bombs and lobbing mortars at nearby American and Iraqi bases.

The Iraqis worked alongside U.S. soldiers of the 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division. For the first hour of what would be a three-hour operation, the Iraqis operated as they had been trained: They spread out, kept alert, took knees and sought cover when they stopped moving.

But by the third hour, Iraqi discipline had wilted in the hot sun. The Iraqis sat in bunches in whatever shade they could find, smoking, while the Americans provided security.

One American adviser to the Iraqi unit fumed. “That’s a duckwalk,” Marine Staff Sgt. James Stevens shouted at a group of Iraqis lined up nicely for any enemy with an automatic weapon.

Stevens, 37, a crusty combat Marine from Muleshoe, Texas, was particularly incensed because he’d spent an hour the day before drumming that simple bit of battlefield wisdom into his Iraqi charges.

Maj. Mohamed Abed Alwahab Dawod, 32, the Iraqi company commander, was the bright spot in the day’s operation. He worked the crowds like a politician and his message, repeated time and again to attentive clusters of Iraqi citizens, was simple: “Give us

information so we can fight the insurgents and then it won't be Americans searching your houses."

Among those training the Iraqis, it is agreed that progress toward the goal of a fully capable Iraqi military is spotty.

While some units display discipline and aggression, all involved in training the Iraqis acknowledge that those units make up only a tiny fraction of the new, 171,000-member Iraqi security forces.

Even further away is an Iraqi army and police force able to plan and execute operations on their own, feed, clothe and arm themselves and maintain vehicles and communications gear.

The number of fully capable Iraqi units is secret, but published accounts that no one in the military disputes put the figure at only 5 percent.

That amounts to just 10,000 Iraqi troops and police, less than half an American division.

How many more will be ready by Casey's predicted date for a "fairly substantial" reduction in U.S. forces is anyone's guess.

Many American advisers are cynical about even the stated low numbers of Iraqis supposedly ready today.

"I have sent up so many different evaluations using colors and numbers and graphs at this point that it wouldn't surprise me if I was asked which '80s song best represents my battalion's operational capability," one adviser said. "Asking about readiness without specific parameters is like eating cotton candy for dinner — it tastes good and if someone asks you can say that you ate without actually lying about it. But when you walk away, your stomach hurts."

As U.S. trainers repeatedly say, the new Iraqi army doesn't have to be as good as the American Army, just better than the insurgents. But those insurgents are good enough to have bottled American forces inside fortified bases.

U.S. troops venture forth only in convoys more heavily armed and protected than anything anyone envisions for the fledgling Iraqi army, whose current idea of an armored vehicle is a Nissan pickup with steel plates welded to the sides.

Any number of obstacles must be overcome before a credible Iraqi military is in place, including a U.S. training force that lacks experience in that mission, an Iraqi culture that has institutionalized corruption ***and a fighting force motivated not by patriotism but by money.*** [And that's the closest they get to the elephant.]

Take Rahad Koaim Ahmmed, for example. When American forces invaded Iraq in 2003, he was a recruit in Saddam Hussein's army. After the war, the 22-year-old returned to his parent's home near Balad and worked in their orange grove. But last November, he left to enlist in the new Iraqi army.

Rahad is frank about his motivation: money. In a nation where high school teachers earn \$90 per month and doctors \$200 per month, Ahmmed, who is illiterate, gets \$350 per month — 100 times what Saddam paid him as a recruit.

With an unemployment rate estimated by the Iraqi government at 28 percent, the competition to get one of the lucrative army slots is so intense that Rahad had to rely on a combination of family influence — a cousin is one of the training cadre in Rahad's unit — and payoffs.

Rahad said he paid an officer in his unit a month's salary for the right to sign up. Others say they have kicked back two months' salary.

Whether an army motivated largely by money can become an effective counterinsurgency force remains to be seen. But that is the gamble the Americans are making. **[What bullshit. No, it doesn't "remain to be seen." It's already seen very clearly; the collaborators are useless. And no, it's not a "gamble." A gamble means you have some chance of winning, however small. There is not the slightest chance of that here. And the U.S. troops pay with their lives for political and military leaders too blind and stupid to understand anything more complex than how to find their feet.]**

Military pay has skyrocketed in the past 18 months. In the winter of 2004, recruits lined up in great numbers when the salary was only \$60 per month. But a year of violence that frequently targeted army recruits has driven wages steadily upward.

It is a rare Iraqi who convincingly cites patriotism as a motive for signing up.

"They don't fight for their country," says Marine Staff Sgt. Jayme Kohler, 29, of Bismarck, N.D., part of the Marine-led team training the Iraqi battalion that searched Khalidiyah. "They're here to collect their paychecks."

Maj. Gen. Joseph Taluto, commander of the 42nd Infantry Division, which works with two Iraqi divisions, said the Iraqis' biggest challenge will be sustaining themselves.

"If that unit doesn't get paid for three months, their weapons break, they have one truck, that's a problem," Taluto said. "You have vehicles. Great. The vehicle breaks. Who's going to fix it?"

The near-term plan for that sort of support is to contract out maintenance. But Taluto noted that the contracting system is "highly centralized" in Baghdad. "The division commander has no budget," he said.

In a recent e-mail, Labbe also noted that logistics was the Iraqi weak point.

On a scale of one to 10, with one being the highest, "I'd say in the seven months I've been here we've climbed from 10 to six," Labbe said. "Again, though, if you throw logistics or supply ... or communications into the mix we plummet to about an eight."

A few hundred meters from where the Marines are training their battalion, a team of reserve drill sergeants was running an NCO academy for Iraqi sergeants. While the U.S. trainers are experienced drill sergeants, none had dealt with Third World soldiers. **They got 40 days of training for their mission. Sgt. 1st Class Francisco Maciel, 39, of Dumont, N.J., with the 98th Division in Rochester, N.Y., said the training “wasn’t very helpful.”**

What’s more, his eight-man team didn’t get much logistical support, he said.

“We’ve had to beg, borrow and acquire — not steal — acquire. We’ve spent thousands of dollars of our own money. We use our own laptops and computers and MWR items like TVs and DVDs.”

For most U.S. troops, it comes down to this: When will the Iraqi army be able to take over so the Americans can go home?

Clark, the blunt commander of 1-506, said the Iraqi battalion under his guidance eventually will take over his area of operations in the Sunni triangle.

When? “It’s really hard to say,” is the best Clark can offer.

The commander of that Iraqi battalion, Lt. Col. Majid Nset Abelullah, 41, served 24 years in Saddam’s army. He joined the new army 13 months ago because “I don’t know anything else except the military.”

He thinks it will be five years before the Iraqi army can stand on its own.

And “if they want to make us a professional army, we would need training for 25 years,” he said.

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Big Surprise

6.8.05 By Greg Ip, Wall St. Journal

While economic output has grown rapidly in the past few years, much of the resulting income has flowed to corporate profits and the highest-paid workers.

In effect, the economic pie has gotten larger but the average family’s share has shrunk.

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.

Workers Can Be Fired For “Fraternizing”

July 2005 American Rights At Work.org

It is a regular pastime for co-workers to chat during a coffee break, at a union hall, or over a beer about workplace issues, good grilling recipes, and celebrity gossip.

Yet a recent ruling by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) allows employers to ban off-duty fraternizing among co-workers, severely weakening the rights of free association and speech, and violating basic standards of privacy for America's workers.

So how did the NLRB decide to weaken fundamental workplace protections?

Security firm Guardsmark instituted a rule directing employees not to "fraternize on duty or off duty, date, or become overly friendly with the client's employees or with co-employees." In September 2003, the Service Employees International Union filed unfair labor practice charges with the NLRB against Guardsmark, claiming that the company's work rules inhibited its employees' Section 7 rights.

Section 7 of the National Labor Relations Act grants workers the right to "self-organization, to form, join, or assist labor organizations...and to engage in other concerted activities for the purpose of collective bargaining or other mutual aid or protection..."

While the law allows employers to ban association among co-workers during work hours, Guardsmark's rule was broader in that it applied to the off-duty association of co-workers.

On June 7, 2005, the Board ruled 2 to 1 that Guardsmark's fraternization rule was lawful.

The Board majority argued that workers would likely interpret the fraternization rule as merely a ban on dating, and not a prohibition of the association among co-workers protected by Section 7.

But the dissenting member of the Board pointed out that since the rule already mentions dating, workers would understand fraternization to mean something else. She noted, "the primary meaning of the term 'fraternize...[is] to associate in

a brotherly manner'...and that kind of association is the essence of workplace solidarity."

While there are reasons for employers to ban dating among co-workers (namely to prevent sexual harassment), prohibiting off-duty fraternization is something quite different.

Such a ban inevitably chills collective action of any sort—be it on a purely social basis or related to employees discussing whether to form a union or not.

Since employers are not obligated to inform employees of their legally-protected right to associate with their co-workers, how can we expect any employee to assume that a rule banning fraternization doesn't interfere with these rights?

And why would someone risk violating a no-fraternization rule, given that most employees work 'at will'—meaning they can be fired for no reason?

America's workers need more opportunities to come together to discuss vexing workplace issues, or just to make personal connections with those we spend most of our waking hours with.

But the NLRB gives employers the green light to invade our privacy and chip away at our most basic rights in the workplace.

RECEIVED:



(Boston Globe) [Thanks to Phil G who sent this in.]

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