

## GI SPECIAL 3C49:

# HOW MANY MORE FOR BUSH'S WAR? BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



A U.S. soldier lies dead on the kitchen floor of a house used as a base by insurgent fighters in Fallujah, Nov. 13, 2004. Photo by EPA/STEFAN ZAKLIN/Landov

## “I'm Just Tired Of Letting My Troops Get Pushed Around”

### Members Of Guard Unit Weary Of Iraq, Short Supplies, Lack Of Manpower

"I'm just tired of letting my troops get pushed around," wrote Staff Sgt. Doug Heller of Duluth in a series of e-mail interviews. He corresponded with the Duluth

**News Tribune despite recent orders not to speak to the media. "All I'm asking for is the people to realize that their friends, families and loved ones have been through hell," Heller wrote. "If there is a way for me to prevent this from happening in the future, I will try anything, at the cost of my rank."**

Sep. 09, 2005 BY JANNA GOERDT, Duluth News Tribune [Thanks to DB for sending.]

When the 216th Air Defense Artillery Echo Battery left Cloquet, Minn., in August 2004, it left as one unit ready to join Operation Iraqi Freedom.

**What the National Guard unit couldn't know is that they would soon be split — with half the soldiers sent to guard an American contractor's compound in Saudi Arabia and the other half sent "to hell," according to soldiers now guarding the Daura oil refinery near Baghdad.**

**There, soldiers describe pulling 48- to 72-hour shifts and being out on patrol or guarding the base when sleep deprivation clouds their judgment.**

**They describe equipment shortages — of everything from flashlights to laser-sighted scopes to medicine for insect bites.**

**And they describe a frenetic pace coupled with shifting missions that they believe has needlessly endangered their lives and left them soured on the military.**

**"I'm just tired of letting my troops get pushed around," wrote Staff Sgt. Doug Heller of Duluth in a series of e-mail interviews. He corresponded with the Duluth News Tribune despite recent orders not to speak to the media. His messages provide a look at the ordeals of serving in Iraq and its impact on one unit.**

**"All I'm asking for is the people to realize that their friends, families and loved ones have been through hell," Heller wrote. "If there is a way for me to prevent this from happening in the future, I will try anything, at the cost of my rank."**

It's an unusual move for active-duty soldiers to speak out about their mission, said John Marshall, combined Honor Guard Commander in Duluth. Marshall served in the Army and was injured in the Persian Gulf War.

**"The situation must be pretty bad for them to talk," Marshall said. "By doing this, they are sticking their necks out."**

Soldiers learned around November 2004 that the E-battery would be split in half, said former unit commander Major Tad Hervas.

"It's very unusual," Hervas said. "They never want to split a unit. But (military commanders) said they believed in Echo 216, and that they had no choice."

Soldiers were needed to guard a compound in Saudi Arabia, and they needed visas to enter the country. Minnesota soldiers were most quickly able to obtain visas, Hervas said from his parents' home in Coon Rapids, while he was home on leave in August.

Soldiers and their families soon discovered that the living and working conditions in Saudi Arabia and Iraq are quite different.

**Those in Saudi Arabia live in a renovated palace with private rooms and access to a swimming pool and bowling alley. Soldiers in Iraq live in a compound where electricity has been intermittent, sand fleas swarm during the rainy seasons, and soldiers bathe in gritty water from the Tigris River.**

Soldiers from the 216th ironically call the camp, located inside Baghdad's protected Green Zone, "Camelot."

**Specialist James Silda, a Gilbert native now serving with the 216th E-Battery in Iraq, believes his unit is doing too much with too few people. Of the already halved E-Battery, now numbering just less than 60 soldiers, sometimes 20 soldiers or more are gone. Some go home on leave, some work at the nearby operating base and others monitor perimeter security. That leaves about 36 soldiers to patrol their sector within Baghdad, Silda said.**

Doug Heller's father, Bob Heller of Duluth, is a Vietnam War veteran. He realizes soldiers living in a war zone shouldn't expect luxury.

"The mission comes first," Bob Heller acknowledged, "but these conditions transcend what you'd expect."

The stepped-up operations pace, which soldiers believe is a result of the split battery and fewer available soldiers, worries Bob Heller the most. "The harder you work, the more you do, the more careless you get," he said.

**Early this summer, the battery was ordered to step up patrols and provide new security support for two Iraqi Army compounds. Trips through the streets of Baghdad increased dramatically during the new mission, Silda said, and soldiers sometimes slept for three to five hours every other day.**

"The real kicker here is we are doing all this with 60 people, while other full units, over 120 people, are doing the same job," Silda said. Soldiers resorted to drinking Red Bull and other caffeine-rich drinks to help them stay awake, Silda said.

Sleep deprivation may have caused at least one serious accident in Iraq, Doug Heller believes. After a series of long shifts, a senior noncommissioned officer was severely burned when he used a lighter to check the fuel level in a generator. Fumes from the fuel tank ignited, causing burns to the officer's face and upper body.

Hervas confirmed the incident. He said the officer "pushed himself pretty hard" and was working on about five hours of sleep a night. Such sleep patterns were "not uncommon for us over here," Hervas said.

Hervas also said while it was true the unit was at half-strength, "we were not given a mission that required a full battery." He said the sector assigned to E-battery was about half as large as other assignments.

Hervas recently was removed from his three-year command of the 216th E-battery and assigned as a Division G-3 air officer, helping to coordinate the air space over Baghdad. He described his reassignment as a lateral move and one designed to take advantage of his experience with the U.S. Air Force.

After Hervas was reassigned, the 216th was given another new mission. They are now training the Iraqi Special Forces Police.

The pace has slowed a bit in the past month, Doug Heller and Silda said, as the unit begins winding down operations and prepares to come home later this year. But the effects linger.

Doug Heller volunteered to deploy to Iraq two months after returning from a tour in Bosnia. He said he loves the Army, and he loves his unit. But he is ready to call it quits after eight years with the National Guard.

**"I guarantee that after they let us off stop-loss half my unit will be done" with the National Guard, Doug Heller said.**

Members of the 216th should start packing their gear in December and be home in February "if the timelines don't change that much," Hervas said. Donna Flaherty of Deer River, whose son, Ryan, is with the 216th E-battery in Iraq, said she believes her son also will leave the Guard.

**Ryan Flaherty's tour was supposed to be up as of December 2004 but has been extended through the military's stop-loss policy, through which the U.S. Defense Department has forced some members of the volunteer armed forces to stay in the service beyond their contracted dates.**

**"Probably for most of us (in Iraq), this will be the end of our military career because of this experience," Silda said.**

It might be anyway, Marshall said. The military doesn't look very charitably on soldiers who complain publicly about operation conditions, he said, and can stall or halt their career advancement.

Speaking out "compromises everything," he said. "The military will make their lives hell. My guess is that they are trying to inform the public that they need more governmental support over there."

**Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.**

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

# **Khalidiya Mortared, Fires Seen Inside U.S. Base**

9.10.05 Khaleej Times Online

**Mortars fell on the US base in Khalidiya, west of Baghdad. Flames were seen coming from inside the base but no detailed reports of casualties were available. US forces retaliated, witnesses said, shooting towards the source of the mortars and injuring three civilians including a woman.**

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



US troops patrol the site of bombing July 25, 2005, in Baghdad (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

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# **Katyusha Rocket Attack On American Base In Karkouk**

9/10/2005 Arabic News

Armed fighters launched on early morning Friday an attack against Karkouk airport, 255 km northeast of Baghdad, the main base for the American forces using Katyusha missiles.

**Col. Adel Zein Eddine from Karkouk police said that three Katyusha missiles fell on the airport, west of the city.** He said that the American forces surrounded al-Wasiti quarters and Huzeiran (June) in search of the attackers.

**For his part, a spokesman for the American army said that two Katyusha missiles fell at the base but no human casualties were reported.**

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## **Tal Afar Being Destroyed In Order To Save It**



**U.S. Army soldiers from the Third Armored Cavalry Regiment, Tiger Squadron, Apache Troop, walk over the demolished front gate of a house in Tal Afar, Sept. 10, 2005. U.S. and Iraqi troops swept into the insurgent stronghold of Tal Afar early Saturday, conducting house-to-house searches and battering down walls with armored vehicles. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)**

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## **Stunning News!**

9.9.05 Washington Post

**Finding the terrorists in Iraq is difficult for Americans because they fit so easily into Iraqi neighborhoods.**

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Resistance Attacks Army Arms Depot**

9.9.05 New York Times

Taliban insurgents attacked an Afghan National Army weapons depot south of Kabul, killing six Afghan policemen. Two suspected insurgents were also killed in the fight.

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## TROOP NEWS

# ***News From Disasterland:* REPORT FROM VETERANS FOR PEACE HURRICANE RELIEF PROJECT**

**The Red Cross is helping a few in Covington, but there are masses of food that is just sitting there. They are throwing away large quantities of food that are not being consumed, while people that really need help are getting nothing.**

From: Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace: wardpeace@hotmail.com  
To: GI Special  
Sent: September 10, 2005  
Subject: News from disasterland

Hi T...A short report from South Louisiana...keep up the great work and see you in DC.

I have been in southeast Louisiana the last couple of days (I live in Baton Rouge), and it is completely chaotic, as all can imagine...

**Veterans For Peace has set up an effective pipeline and grass-roots relief effort between Folsom and Covington, La....we have gotten over 200 relief packages that have been mailed to my house in Baton Rouge, which are then being sent directly to the our inventory and distribution team.**

Several of our team members are driving out in every direction from the camp and we have started mapping locations that are in dire need of help, where nobody has even tried to bring any relief to.

THANKS to the people from all over the country, and several foreign countries, that are sending much needed relief items.

**The Red Cross is helping a few in Covington, but there are masses of food that is just sitting there. They are throwing away large quantities of food that are not being consumed, while people that really need help are getting nothing.**

Food Not Bombs has set up in our camp, and Woody Powell of VFP has flown in to help organize computer records to keep track of the MANY packages and to keep a running inventory record.

**VVAW member Billy Kelley is here in the field, as are the VFP Impeachment bus team, along with Iraq Veterans Against the War member Michael Cuzzort of New Orleans. We have about 30 other civilian volunteers set up in our camp.**

**Andrea Garland and her husband Jeffrey of "Get Your Act On" has left camp to try to get to Algiers in their donated van. A used car dealer in Austin(Don's Auto Sales) heard that they were going to use the van they were going to buy, to use to run supplies, and he GAVE them the van for free...just one of many incredible stories of kindness and benevolence that I will share when I have time.**

Kathy Kelly of Voices In the Wilderness told me that the Pastors For Peace bus is headed our way to help.

More later, back to work...

Peace from Ward

**MORE:**

## **WHAT THEY NEED AND HOW TO GET IT THERE**

September 09, 2005 Via Debbie Clark, Veterans For Peace, Greater Atlanta Chapter 125

**According to the home page, the following supplies continue to be needed at Camp Casey-Covington:**

**Water**

**Canned Goods**

**Baby Supplies - Baby Food Formula, diapers #4, #5, Wipes, Pedialyte**

**Hygiene Supplies**

**Adult Depends**

**Steril Gloves**

**Electrolites**

**Food bank & delivery volunteers with trucks, vans or cars**

**Self contained kitchens with generators, utensils, workers**

**Office & media equipment**

**Can be UPS'ed or FedExed in care of VFP member Ward Reilly in Baton Rouge:**

Veterans For Peace Chapter 116  
C/O Ward Reilly  
645 Kimbro Drive  
Baton Rouge, LA 70808-6041

I have been keeping in contact with Ward. He is planning to make a supply run from Baton Rouge to Camp Casey-Covington on Friday to deliver supplies, returning again on Sunday to bring back a couple of relief workers for R&R at his home in Baton Rouge where he is currently running a supply depot and half-way house...

**Online donations can be made to VFP Chapter 116 in Covington, LA through their website at <http://www.vfpoadtrips.org>**

**(Also, checks can be mailed to Ward Reilly at the address above for anyone who can't use PayPal.)**

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## ***Wounded Soldiers Mom Says:*** **“My Question Is Will IRAQ Help Our Wounded Soldiers?? The VA Is Not”**

**From: Soldiers' Mom**  
To: GI Special  
Sent: September 10, 2005

I heard on the TV troops will be home in two years.

That guy that has a big bank expense? [This refers to an article about an Iraqi collaborator official stealing electricity reconstruction money from his expense account to fill his own bank account. T.]

**My question is will IRAQ help our wounded soldiers?? The VA is not. Who could we ask???**

**My son is here this weekend - he is homeless; he brought his Army gear to my house to store - he is currently seeking help from the VA - he got his two hearing aids just to hear us. 60% loss of hearing - he is currently on a waiting list for back surgery - he hasn't heard from the foot dr. about his broken bones in left foot.**

**Oh, and the shrapnel that hit his face head and neck he got taken care of after 1 year from being in combat; he still had sand in wounds.**

**I was shocked about how slow the VA is - he said the PTSD classes were going good - but everything else is slow.**

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# Australia: RICE / RUMSFELD RECEPTION COMMITTEE

From: Stephen Darley  
To: GI Special  
Sent: September 09, 2005  
**Subject: Rice, Rumsfeld, New Orleans**

*For your interest, keep up the great work. You and your correspondents are the indispensable news source on Iraq – and I am spreading your distribution as fast as I can. Stephen Darley*

## PRESS RELEASE

**The Rice Rumsfeld Reception Committee (RRRC) is protesting the proposed visit of Condoleeza Rice and Donald Rumsfeld to Adelaide in November.**

**The recent horrendous events in New Orleans, according to the RRRC, starkly highlight why these two senior members of the Bush administration can be referred to as international criminals who are not welcome in Adelaide.**

RRRC spokesperson Stephen Darley said “they are criminals against the environment – Rice’s reason for being here is to set up a multilateral alliance to undermine the already modest Kyoto treaty, and so leave the world without a credible response to global warming”.

And the enormous fury of the hurricane that flooded New Orleans can be sheeted home to global-warming-induced high temperatures in the Gulf of Mexico (according to US scientists and others around the world).

As one of the biggest polluters on earth, the US military machine’s environmental piracy was devastatingly reaped in New Orleans. The events reveal the social and ecological unsustainability of the Bush Administration’s policy of permanent warfare. “How can those who prosper most from pillaging the planet be trusted to lead the world on environmental protection?”

“They are criminals against the people of Iraq – as principal authors and initiators of the invasion and occupation of that country,” claimed Mr Darley. Over 1800 US soldiers and uncounted tens of thousands of Iraqis are dead as a result – these are war crimes of the worse kind. Significant parts of the National Guards of Louisiana and Mississippi (and their heavy transport equipment) are in Iraq – rather than serving in their home states where their rescue capacity was sorely missed.

Mr Darley said “this makes Rice and Rumsfeld and the rest of the Bush Administration criminals against their own people”. Still uncounted numbers of poor, mostly African-American New Orleans residents have died as a result of their culpable neglect – not only in sending the Guard to Iraq, but in massively under-funding the levees and other coastal defences of New Orleans. The need for this vital public investment has been known for years, but very little has been done.

**“Rice, Rumsfeld, Bush and the other criminals have chosen instead to spend this capital on imperial adventures in Iraq and Afghanistan,” stated Mr Darley. “Rather than welcome them to Adelaide, we intend to indite them as criminals before the citizens of Adelaide, on behalf of Iraqi’s, US citizens, and the global community”.**

For further comment: Stephen Darley (08) 8242-5121

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Assorted Resistance Action**

10 Sep 2005 Reuters & AFP & Khaleej Times Online

**Two Iraqi soldiers were killed on Saturday and another two injured in Fallujah, west of Baghdad, when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb planted by unknown insurgents.**

Frightened colleagues opened fire following the explosion, killing a civilian bystander, hospital sources said.

**In Fallujah late Friday, two policemen were killed and another three injured when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in the city’s central road.**

Sabah al-Falluji of the city hospital said the survivors in the vehicle shot indiscriminately following the blast, injuring two civilian bystanders.

**MAHAWIL - Iraqi Police said five Iraqis, including one policeman, and two militants were killed on Friday when two small trucks exploded in the town of Mahawil, 60 km (37 miles) south of Baghdad.**

**The explosion occurred when a police officer approached the two trucks with an occupant in each. As the officer reached the trucks, the bombers blew them up.**

**SAMARRA - Two Iraqi soldiers were killed and four injured when a bomb exploded inside a home that was raided in the Iraqi city of Samarra on Friday night.**

**Four men who worked in a multi-national forces base northwest of Baquba, 60 kilometers (35 miles) north of Baghdad, were shot dead as they travelled to work, police said Saturday. Three others were wounded.**

In a separate attack, armed fighters shot and killed the mayor of Baquba's al-Yarmouk neighbourhood.

In the northern oil hub of Kirkuk, an off-duty policeman was killed and another seriously wounded as they came under fire in the centre of the town, police said.

A policeman was also seriously wounded when armed fighters shot at his superior's car while he drove, police added.

Police spokesman Lieutenant Kareem Wali from the Al-Mashru district, north of the southern city of Hillah said the four officers were killed by a car bomb close to the district's police station.

Wali said 11 other policemen were injured in the blast which took place late Friday evening.

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

## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

# **Whining About "Terrorism" In Iraq? Have A U.S. History Lesson**

September 7, 2005 William R. Polk, Williampolk.com [Excerpt]

Of course, there will be a period of confusion, of fighting, of atrocities – as there are now, every day [if the U.S. Occupation ends]. That is the price that must be paid for our decision to go into Iraq in the first place.

A similar time of chaos has followed evacuation in every insurgency.

**American revolutionaries hounded out of the country, brutally assaulted or even hanged large numbers of the Loyalists who had supported the British.**

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## **Fire Next Time**

September 8 2005 Tim Wise, Black Commentator.com

**If anything the poor of New Orleans have exercised restraint.**

Maybe you didn't know it, but the people of that city with whom you likely identify - the wealthy white folks of Uptown - were barely touched by this storm.

Yeah, I guess God was watching over them: protecting them, and rewarding them for their faith and superior morality.

**If the folks downtown who are waiting desperately for their government to send help - a government whose resources have been stretched thin by a war that I'm sure you support, because you love freedom and democracy - were half as crazed as you think, they'd have marched down St. Charles Avenue and burned every mansion in sight.**

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## **“I AM Making This Statement As An Act Of Willful Defiance Of Military Authority”**



**Siegfried Sassoon**  
**September 8, 1886 - September 1, 1967**

September 09, 2005 [Via John Judge. He writes: For this letter, Sigfried Sassoon was locked up in a military psychiatric hospital. Would that we could all contract his dis/ease.]

**By Siegfried Sassoon, 1917**

**"I AM making this statement as an act of willful defiance of military authority, because I believe that the war is being deliberately prolonged by those who have the power to end it.**

I am a soldier, convinced that I am acting on behalf of soldiers.

**I believe that this war, upon which I entered as a war of defense and liberation, has now become a war of aggression and conquest.** I believe that the purposes for which I and my fellow-soldiers entered upon this war should have been so clearly stated as to have made it impossible to change them, and that, had this been done, the objects which actuated us would now be attainable by negotiation.

**I have seen and endured the sufferings of the troops, and I can no longer be a party to prolong these sufferings for ends which I believe to be evil and unjust.**

**I am not protesting against the conduct of the war, but against the political errors and insincerities for which the fighting men are being sacrificed.**

**On behalf of those who are suffering now I make this protest against the deception which is being practiced on them; also I believe that I may help to destroy the callous complacency with which the majority of those at home regard the continuance of agonies which they do not share, and which they have not sufficient imagination to realize."**

- Siegfried Sassoon, 1917

## Picture-Show

By Siegfried Sassoon

And still they come and go: and this is all I know--  
That from the gloom I watch an endless picture-show,  
Where wild or listless faces flicker on their way,  
With glad or grievous hearts I'll never understand  
Because Time spins so fast, and they've no time to stay  
Beyond the moment's gesture of a lifted hand.

And still, between the shadow and the blinding flame,  
The brave despair of men flings onward, ever the same  
As in those doom-lit years that wait them, and have been...  
And life is just the picture dancing on a screen.

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

## OCCUPATION REPORT

# **Kill And Lie: Mercenaries Slaughtering Civilians; No Fear Of Punishment**

**"These guys run loose in this country and do stupid stuff. There's no authority over them, so you can't come down on them hard when they escalate force," said Brig. Gen. Karl R. Horst, deputy commander of the 3rd Infantry Division, which is responsible for security in and around Baghdad. "They shoot people, and someone else has to deal with the aftermath. It happens all over the place."**

**Abdullah Ali, director of the Irbil security police, called the U.S. report "three pages of lies to try to cover up that their company was involved."**

Sep 10 By Jonathan Finer, Washington Post Foreign Service

IRBIL, Iraq -- The pop of a single rifle shot broke the relative calm of Ali Ismael's morning commute here in one of Iraq's safest cities.

Ismael, his older brother Bayez and their driver had just pulled into traffic behind a convoy of four Chevrolet Suburbans, which police believe belonged to an American security contractor stationed nearby. The back door of the last vehicle swung open, the brothers said in interviews, and a man wearing sunglasses and a tan flak jacket leaned out and leveled his rifle.

"I thought he was just trying to scare us, like they usually do, to keep us back. But then he fired," said Ismael, 20. His scalp was still marked by a bald patch and four-inch purple scar from a bullet that grazed his head and left him bleeding in the back seat of his Toyota Land Cruiser.

"Everything is cloudy after that," he said.

**A U.S. investigation of the July 14 incident concluded that no American contractors were responsible, a finding disputed by the Ismaels, other witnesses, local politicians and the city's top security official, who termed it a coverup. No one has yet been held responsible.**

Recent shootings of Iraqi civilians, allegedly involving the legion of U.S., British and other foreign security contractors operating in the country, are drawing increasing concern from Iraqi officials and U.S. commanders who say they undermine relations between foreign military forces and Iraqi civilians.

**"These guys run loose in this country and do stupid stuff. There's no authority over them, so you can't come down on them hard when they escalate force," said**

**Brig. Gen. Karl R. Horst, deputy commander of the 3rd Infantry Division, which is responsible for security in and around Baghdad. "They shoot people, and someone else has to deal with the aftermath. It happens all over the place."**

**No tally of such incidents has been made public, and Aegis, a British security company that helps manage contractors in Baghdad and maintains an operations center in the capital's fortified Green Zone, declined to answer questions.** In the rare instances when police reports are filed, the U.S. military is often blamed for the actions of private companies, according to Adnan Asadi, the deputy interior minister responsible for overseeing security companies.

"People always say the Army did it, and even our police don't always know the difference," he said.

**The shootings became so frequent in Baghdad this summer that Horst started keeping his own count in a white spiral notebook he uses to record daily events.** Between May and July, he said, he tracked at least a dozen shootings of civilians by contractors, in which six Iraqis were killed and three wounded.

**The bloodiest case came on May 12 in the neighborhood of New Baghdad. A contractor opened fire on an approaching car, which then veered into a crowd. Two days after the incident, American soldiers patrolling the same block were attacked with a roadside bomb.**

On May 14, in another part of the city, private security guards working for the U.S. Embassy shot and killed at least one Iraqi civilian while transporting diplomats from the Green Zone, according to an embassy official who spoke on condition he not be named. Two security contractors were dismissed from their jobs over the incident.

**Employees of private security firms are immune from prosecution in Iraq, under an order adopted into law last year by Iraq's interim government.** The most severe punishment that can be applied to them is revocation of their license and dismissal from their job, U.S. officials said.

**Their heavy presence stems in large part from the Pentagon's attempts to keep troop numbers down by privatizing jobs that would once have been performed by American forces.**

There are now at least 36 foreign security companies -- most from the United States and Britain -- and 16 Iraqi firms registered to operate here, according to the Interior Ministry, and as many as 50 more are believed to have set up shop illegally. Their total workforce is estimated at 25,000; many are military veterans, though levels of experience vary. As of December, contracts to provide security for U.S. government agencies and reconstruction firms in Iraq had surpassed \$766 million, according to a recent Government Accountability Office report.

Horst declined to provide the name of the contractors whose employees were involved in the 12 shootings he documented in the Baghdad area. But he left no doubt that he believed the May 12 incident, in which three people were killed, led directly to the attack on his soldiers that came days later on the same block.

"Do you think that's an insurgent action? Hell no," Horst said. "That's someone paying us back because their people got killed. And we had absolutely nothing to do with it."

In May, Asadi sent a brief letter to registered security companies warning them to obey local laws or risk having their licenses revoked. "The cancellation will be circulated to all state offices, with the aim of shunning any dealing with you," he wrote. On May 27, after the shootings in Baghdad, Horst called a meeting with representatives of security firms and police officials at the U.S. Embassy.

The shooting of Ismael in Irbil came six weeks later. Police said the convoy of Suburbans quickly proceeded from the scene to a base operated by the U.S. Agency for International Development that is guarded by DynCorp International, an American firm.

**An investigation by U.S. officials concluded that "the evidence clearly indicates the vehicle was fired on from the rear by an as yet unknown party and not from the front by the" security company, according to a July 15 report filed with Kurdish security officials.**

**Abdullah Ali, director of the Irbil security police, called the U.S. report "three pages of lies to try to cover up that their company was involved."**

**"We looked at all the evidence," he continued. "Witnesses only saw a shot from the front. And we found his hair and blood towards the back window, which supports that. We are 1 million percent sure."**

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## **Mercenaries Suck Up Reconstruction Money: Now It's All Gone; "A Castle Built Of Sand"**

**It is in this context that many of the estimated 20,000 foreign security contractors now in Iraq - some paid more than \$1,000 a day - are employed. Mr Bowen said \$5bn had been diverted to security.**

September 9, 2005 Rory Carroll in Baghdad and Julian Borger in Washington, The Guardian

**Key rebuilding projects in Iraq are grinding to a halt because American money is running out and security has diverted funds intended for electricity, water and sanitation, according to US officials.**

**"We have scaled back our projects in many areas," James Jeffrey, a senior state department adviser on Iraq, told a congressional committee in Washington, in remarks quoted by the Los Angeles Times. "We do not have the money."**

Water and sanitation have been particularly badly hit. According to a report published this week by Government Accountability Office, the investigative branch of Congress, \$2.6bn has been spent on water projects, half the original budget, after the rest was diverted to security and other uses.

Both Democrats and Republicans in Congress also said administrative bungling had played a part.

Stuart Bowen, the US special inspector general for Iraqi reconstruction, said he was reluctant to ask for cash immediately after Hurricane Katrina: "It is an issue that we need to address at the right time."

He said non-US sources might be asked to plug the gap.

**It is in this context that many of the estimated 20,000 foreign security contractors now in Iraq - some paid more than \$1,000 a day - are employed. Mr Bowen said \$5bn had been diverted to security.**

"It seems almost incomprehensible to me that we haven't been able to do better," said Don Sherwood, a Pennsylvania Republican.

Another Republican, the committee chairman, Jim Kolbe, said the Bush administration's vision of stabilising Iraq by funding reconstruction was "a castle built of sand".

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

**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](http://www.ivaw.net))

# OCCUPATION PALESTINE

## **STONES AGAINST TANKS: UNCONQUERED. UNCONQUERABLE**



Palestinians hurl stones at an Israeli tank during clashes near the demolished Zionist settlement of Neve Dekalim in the southern Gaza, Palestine, September 6 2005. Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian man and wounded a boy as the two approached a Zionist settlement in Gaza Strip on Thursday, witnesses and medics said. (Suhaib Salem/Reuters)

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

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## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

### **Bush Approval Rating Falls Below 40%: “Horses And People Are Different Things”**

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

Sep 10 By WILL LESTER, Associated Press Writer

President Bush's job approval has dipped below 40 percent for the first time in the AP-Ipsos poll, reflecting widespread doubts about his handling of gasoline prices and the response to Hurricane Katrina.

Nearly four years after Bush's job approval soared into the 80s after the terrorist attacks on Sept. 11, 2001, Bush was at 39 percent job approval in an AP-Ipsos poll taken this week. That's the lowest since the poll was started in December 2003.

**More evidence of problems with the storm response surfaced Friday when the Federal Emergency Management Agency announced it would discontinue a 2-day-old program to issue debit cards worth \$2000 to displaced families.**

The administration also dumped FEMA Director Michael Brown, who had come to symbolize the stumbling early days of the hurricane response, as commander of Katrina relief efforts.

**Brown once served as the judges and stewards commissioner for the International Arabian Horse Association.**

**"Bush puts people in jobs who don't know what they're doing," said Shirley Carignan, a retiree and a political independent from Weymouth, Mass. "I think he's picking friends for these jobs. My girlfriend raises Arabians. You know horses, so what? Horses and people are different things."**

[Whoa, let's not be unfair here. There was a perfectly good reason. Everybody ignores the key word, "ARABIAN" Horse Association. This was an effort to win hearts and minds in Iraq and save American lives by fighting weapons of mass destruction hidden in holes with Saddam Hussein over there before they got on boats and attacked our freedom over here.]

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## **Two-Thirds Of Public Blame Bush For New Orleans Disaster**

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

September 09, 2005 By DARLENE SUPERVILLE, Associated Press Writer

**Two-thirds of the public, according to the latest Pew poll, and lawmakers of both parties blame Bush, who is one face of a federal government they say was too slow to respond.**

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## **Occupied New Orleans: "Silence, Exclude, Control And Intimidate"**

**Breaux and three of his friends are camping outside their trailers; the water here had been four feet high but flowed out after a day. Why people should leave dry areas of the city is not at all clear. When pressed, some local officials say they might reconsider the order, which smacks of the incoherence and high-handedness that have characterized the whole evacuation. Refugees are loaded onto buses and just shipped away, not told where they're going or for how long. It's this sort of bad treatment that hardens people's resolve to stay.**

September 8, 2005 Christian Parenti, The Nation

New Orleans

The empty streets of this city present a vista of apocalyptic desolation: wind-ripped roofs, downed trees, smashed fast-food signs, dangling power lines, columns of dark smoke and everywhere heaps of garbage. On a lawn near the Ninth Ward three light brown mules, wandering the city alone, graze peacefully. In the sky above, helicopters drum the air. From the pale, empty stretches of elevated Interstate 10 one can look down on wide expanses of the city where homes are submerged in the flat, brackish floodwater. Strangely, the wind now is gritty and dry.

At first the city appears like a giant conceptual art installation, or the set of some archetypal cold-war disaster movie. But then comes evidence of what this really means: dazed refugees wade through the filthy water or push shopping carts down ravaged streets or wait silently in lines for evacuation. And every now and then there is the stench of abandoned corpses. Officials have no idea how many people are lost, trapped in the attics soon to be dead, or drowned and hidden in their homes.

**Few can fathom the near-total lack of planning and coordination among local, state and federal authorities. "I been hearing about this is gonna happen for my whole life--how could they not have a plan?" says a man named Reginald Bell as he drops off extra candles to a neighbor.**

On a side street in Algiers, on the flood-spared west bank, the corpse of a young black man in blue pants and white shirt lies rotting in the sun about ten feet from a chained-up health clinic. Swollen, greasy and oozing maggots, the dead man has become a symbol of official neglect. There are scores of uncollected corpses like this all over New Orleans.

"See, they just leave him here," says Malik Rahim, a community organizer who is spearheading a grassroots relief effort called the Green Cross. "He's been here almost five days, man." A colleague and I look down at the corpse dumbly. A police car rolls by. Another one stops, but the two white cops in it are dismissive. "We don't have the resources," says one.

**"Their message to black people here is, Get out or die. You on your own," says Rahim, as the cops pull away.**

The next day at the infamous convention center, where stunned refugees are being searched and then loaded onto outbound helicopters, a dozen ambulances sit waiting for orders. No rescues yet today, I am told. As for corpses, no one knows what the plan is.

**Archie Haley, an emergency medical technician from Oak Grove, near the Arkansas border, squats as I scarf down a military MRE food ration; he explains that the major problem is "the large population of welfare-ized blacks who can't help themselves." My interlocutor is white like me, so he feels comfortable.**

**"See, these people are the city's disease."**

**His is an attitude that is far too common among officials here.**

Racism and incompetence seemed to merge to create a sluggish response. Despite all the troops, SWAT teams and out-of-town cops that have arrived since September 5, there's still little sign of a plan: On the ground, chaos reigns. Civilian volunteers are still doing many of the rescues; no one knows where to get water or MREs; the radio reports nothing of use.

By the Wednesday after Katrina hit, people here began to grow desperate as their stockpiles of supplies ran out. Survival looting, facilitated by the police, gave way to opportunistic rampaging and panic.

"We grew more and more frightened each day because there was never any word from the government about emergency foods and water distribution, and we listened to the radio pretty regularly," says Mike Howell, a former academic, local peace activist and Nation reader I happened upon in a dark but open bar in the Bywater district. There is no power or water in this joint but somehow there is cold beer and free BBQ.

"All they kept saying was, Go to the Superdome, but we knew conditions over there were horrible, and we heard they weren't letting people back out who wanted to leave," says Howell.

**Several SRO hotels, he says, have organized themselves into "communes" and do their survival looting in an organized and collectivist fashion. Everywhere one hears stories of mutual aid.**

One of the most striking things about being in New Orleans is the number of people who outright refuse to leave. Howell calls them "the diehards." The mayor has ordered a mandatory evacuation, but the diehards, as well as thousands who live in dry, relatively unscathed areas, are poised to defy the order.

Out east on elevated I-10, above the dark, oily floodwaters of Elysian Fields, a man and his son are camped in a looted mail van. Two empty bottles of champagne sit on the dash; Black Power is spray-painted on the side. "We're bringing food and water back down in to the dogs. I got two of 'em still in the house." He points off east to roof-deep water.

At the far eastern edge of New Orleans, where the floodwater consumed I-10, a crew of rescuers from the state Department of Wildlife and Fisheries--biologists with boats--are getting ready to launch. They've been out here for days, bringing in water and bringing out the wounded, but as Clint Jeske explains, "A lot of people are in there just wading around, getting supplies and wading back in. They're living in half-flooded homes and they don't want to come out."

Nearby, in a sodden trailer park in the Chef Menteur Highway area, Paul Breaux sums it up thus: "I did two tours in Nam, went through the LA quake. I was a federal cop. I can deal with this. All I need is some resupply, some MREs and water."

**Breaux and three of his friends are camping outside their trailers; the water here had been four feet high but flowed out after a day. Why people should leave dry areas of the city is not at all clear. When pressed, some local officials say they might reconsider the order, which smacks of the incoherence and high-handedness that have characterized the whole evacuation. Refugees are loaded onto buses and just shipped away, not told where they're going or for how long. It's this sort of bad treatment that hardens people's resolve to stay.**

By a levee on the west bank, school buses wait to load up. "I don't want to go far away, but I was in a boat with my disabled neighbor for five days eating nothing but potato chips and two gallons of water and some Gatorade," says a tall, skinny man named Lee from the totally submerged and oil-fouled St. Bernard Parish. "They just told us, Out," says another man, from the Algiers neighborhood, which has running water but no lights. The mayor has threatened to force people out and deny them food and water if they insist on staying.

**Traditions of racism, exploitation and exclusion are visible in every aspect of this crisis.**

**One also feels the repressive reflexes of the war on drugs and war on terror.**

**Rather than work on rescue and cleanup with the mutual-aid networks, like the distribution efforts of Malik Rahim and his neighbor, the increasingly militarized local, state and federal agencies have defaulted to their worst bureaucratic instincts toward the dispossessed: silence, exclude, control and intimidate.**

**Never mind why or toward what end.**

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## **Bush Regime Orders Blackwater Mercenaries To Help Occupy New Orleans And Lies About It: Iraq Butchers Given "The Authority To Use Lethal Force"**

**If Blackwater's reputation and record in Iraq are any indication of the kind of "services" the company offers, the people of New Orleans have much to fear.**

**[If Blackwater's reputation and record in Iraq are any indication of the kind of "services" the company offers, the people of New Orleans would be well advised to arm themselves and organize for their own neighborhood and community defense. Veterans can be especially useful in developing effective self-defense preparations. At the same, they need to reach out to enlisted-rank National Guard members so the Guard will be ready to help veterans and civilians defend themselves from the Blackwater mercenaries, as may be necessary.]**

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

10 September 2005 By Jeremy Scahill and Daniela Crespo, Truthout Report

**New Orleans - Heavily armed paramilitary mercenaries from the Blackwater private security firm, infamous for their work in Iraq, are openly patrolling the streets of New Orleans.**

Some of the mercenaries say they have been "deputized" by the Louisiana governor; indeed some are wearing gold Louisiana state law enforcement badges on their chests and Blackwater photo identification cards on their arms.

**They say they are on contract with the Department of Homeland Security and have been given the authority to use lethal force.**

Several mercenaries we spoke with said they had served in Iraq on the personal security details of the former head of the US occupation, L. Paul Bremer and the former US ambassador to Iraq, John Negroponte.

"This is a totally new thing to have guys like us working CONUS (Continental United States)," a heavily armed Blackwater mercenary told us as we stood on Bourbon Street in the French Quarter. "We're much better equipped to deal with the situation in Iraq."

**Blackwater mercenaries are some of the most feared professional killers in the world and they are accustomed to operating without worry of legal consequences.**

**Their presence on the streets of New Orleans should be a cause for serious concern for the remaining residents of the city and raises alarming questions about why the government would allow men trained to kill with impunity in places like Iraq and Afghanistan to operate here.**

Some of the men now patrolling the streets of New Orleans returned from Iraq as recently as 2 weeks ago.

What is most disturbing is the claim of several Blackwater mercenaries we spoke with that they are here under contract from the federal and Louisiana state governments.

Blackwater is one of the leading private "security" firms servicing the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan.

**As the threat of forced evictions now looms in New Orleans and the city confiscates even legally registered weapons from civilians, the private**

**mercenaries of Blackwater patrol the streets openly wielding M-16s and other assault weapons. This despite Police Commissioner Eddie Compass' claim that "Only law enforcement are allowed to have weapons."**

Officially, Blackwater says its forces are in New Orleans to "join the Hurricane Relief Effort." **But what has not been publicly acknowledged is the claim, made to us by 2 Blackwater mercenaries, that they are actually engaged in general law enforcement activities including "securing neighborhoods" and "confronting criminals."**

**That raises a key question: under what authority are Blackwater's men operating?**

A spokesperson for the Homeland Security Department, Russ Knocke, told the Washington Post he knows of no federal plans to hire Blackwater or other private security. "We believe we've got the right mix of personnel in law enforcement for the federal government to meet the demands of public safety," he said.

But in an hour-long conversation with several Blackwater mercenaries, we heard a different story.

The men we spoke with said they are indeed on contract with the Department of Homeland Security and the Louisiana governor's office and that some of them are sleeping in camps organized by Homeland Security in New Orleans and Baton Rouge.

One of them wore a gold Louisiana state law enforcement badge and said he had been "deputized" by the governor.

They told us they not only had authority to make arrests but also to use lethal force.

We encountered the Blackwater forces as we walked through the streets of the largely deserted French Quarter. We were talking with 2 New York Police officers when an unmarked car without license plates sped up next to us and stopped. Inside were 3 men, dressed in khaki uniforms, flak jackets and wielding automatic weapons. "Y'all know where the Blackwater guys are?" they asked. One of the police officers responded, "There are a bunch of them around here," and pointed down the road.

"Blackwater?" we asked. "The guys who are in Iraq?"

"Yeah," said the officer. "They're all over the place."

A short while later, as we continued down Bourbon Street, we ran into the men from the car. They wore Blackwater ID badges on their arms.

"When they told me New Orleans, I said, 'What country is that in?'" said one of the Blackwater men.

He was wearing his company ID around his neck in a carrying case with the phrase "Operation Iraqi Freedom" printed on it. After bragging about how he drives around Iraq in a "State Department issued level 5, explosion proof BMW," he said he was "just trying to get back to Kirkuk (in the north of Iraq) where the real action is."

Later we overheard him on his cell phone complaining that Blackwater was only paying \$350 a day plus per diem. That is much less than the men make serving in more dangerous conditions in Iraq.

Two men we spoke with said they plan on returning to Iraq in October. But, as one mercenary said, they've been told they could be in New Orleans for up to 6 months. "This is a trend," he told us. "You're going to see a lot more guys like us in these situations."

If Blackwater's reputation and record in Iraq are any indication of the kind of "services" the company offers, the people of New Orleans have much to fear.

[If Blackwater's reputation and record in Iraq are any indication of the kind of "services" the company offers, the people of New Orleans would be well advised to arm themselves and organize for their own defense.]

### **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](http://www.ivaw.net))

## **Rumsfeld Says Bush Occupation Under Pressure**



**TERRORIST UNDER PRESSURE**

[Thanks to Don Bacon, who sent this in.]

September 9, 2005 U.S. Department of Defense News Transcript: Presenter: Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld and Iraqi President Jalal Talabani

**SECRETARY RUMSFELD: The terrorists in that country are still there. They're still lethal. But the pressure is being put on them.**

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**Received:**

**Watch Galloway Decapitate Hitchens On The Internet; Idea**

From: Anita Job  
To: GI Special  
Sent: September 10, 2005  
Subject: Watch Galloway Decapitate Hitchens on the Internet; Idea

For folks who want to watch anti-war British MP George Galloway debate ex-leftist traitor Christopher Hitchens this Wednesday at 7pm, the event will be webcast live (audio certainly and we hope video as well), starting at 7:10 pm, at many locations, including <http://kpftx.org/>

**ALSO, AN IDEA FOR WHAT TO DO ABOUT KATRINA:**

Besides organizing caravans with aid to circumvent the do-nothing organized crime syndicate known as "the U.S. government," I think it would be powerful if a family or two did a Cindy Sheehan in front of the White House.

Imagine a hurricane victim asking Bush for a personal meeting for why her/his loved ones had to die; why did he put an unqualified loser who lied on his resume in charge of FEMA; and why the hell is the National Guard in Iraq killing and dying for oil when people need aid right here at home?

Just an idea....

[And a damn good one too.]

**Web Copies:**

For back issues see GI Special web site at <http://www.militaryproject.org/> .

The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://gi-special.iraq-news.de>, <http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>,  
[www.williambowles.info/gispecial](http://www.williambowles.info/gispecial),  
<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/gi-special.htm>

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