

GI SPECIAL 3A59:

**THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.**



Matthew Bundy, the brother of Army Sgt. Jessica Housby, an Illinois National Guardsman killed in Iraq, places a rose on her casket Feb. 19, 2005. Deborah Bundy, Housby's mother, right, holds flag during the ceremony in Rock Island, Ill. (AP Photo/Quad-City Times, John Schultz)

Unions Say Get Out Of Iraq: Bring The Troops Home Now!

The AFL-CIO should demand an immediate end to the US occupation of Iraq and return of U.S. troops to their homes and families,

Open Letter and Appeal
From: U.S. Labor Against The War

To: President John Sweeney and the General Executive Council of the AFL-CIO

Across the country, local, district, and national unions, labor councils, state labor federations and numerous other labor organizations representing millions of

working people have adopted resolutions condemning the war in Iraq, and calling for an end to the occupation and return of all troops to their homes and families.

Among these are national unions like SEIU, AFSCME, CWA, APWU, NPMHU/LIUNA, and UE; allied organizations like the Coalition of Labor Union Women, Pride at Work and the Labor Council for Latin American Advancement; State Labor Federations in California, Maryland/DC, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin; and fifteen or more labor councils across the country.

110 of these organizations have banded together to form U.S. Labor Against the War (USLAW), a national organization committed to ending the war, returning the troops, restoring funding to social programs and government services, and changing the direction of U.S. foreign policy.

Union members and their family members are being killed, wounded, disabled and psychologically traumatized in a war that has already killed almost 1500 U.S. military personnel, wounded more than 10,500 others, a war in which more than 100,000 Iraqi civilians have died. This war is siphoning resources from our communities, starving or eliminating essential public services and social programs, eroding our democratic rights, and making our country even less secure.

It is time for labor to speak out! At this time of discussion about renewing our labor movement, how can we not discuss the most urgent issue facing American and its working families? We ask you to put the issue of the war on the agenda of the upcoming Executive Council meeting. And we urge the national leadership of the AFL-CIO to oppose this reckless, illegal and immoral war.

More specifically, we ask for action on the following proposals by the Executive Council and the quadrennial convention of the AFL-CIO.

The AFL-CIO should demand an immediate end to the US occupation of Iraq and return of U.S. troops to their homes and families, and the reordering of national priorities toward peace and meeting the human needs of our people; and

Through its community service programs, the AFL-CIO and its state and local affiliates should assist union members and their families who are called upon to serve in the armed forces and returning veterans by identifying and providing information about resources and services available to meet their needs, by advocating for their interests, and by protecting their jobs, seniority and benefits and those of unorganized workers in similar circumstances.

Sisters and brothers, this war is draining away precious resources essential to meet human needs of working and poor people. It is undermining our security by alienating the U.S. from the community of nations and by provoking the spread of terrorism. It is weakening rather than reinforcing the rule of international law. It has led to an erosion of our most basic rights and liberties. **And it is doing terrible direct harm to many thousands of military families.**

We, the American labor movement, should take a stand and speak out on the biggest issue facing working people and the country as a whole. We urge you to join us!

AFSCME District Council 47, Philadelphia, PA, Thomas Paine Cronin, President
AFSCME Local 1723, District Council 47, Philadelphia, PA Gary Kapanowski, President
AFSCME Local 2858, Chicago, IL, Stephen M Edwards, President
AFSCME Local 2910, Washington, DC, Saul Schniderman, President

AFT California Federation of Teachers, Martin Hittelman, Senior Vice President
AFT Wisconsin Federation of Teachers Executive Board
AFT Local 1493, San Mateo, CA Community College Federation of Teachers, Dan Kaplan, Executive Secretary
AFT Local 2334, Professional Staff Congress of the City University of New York
AFT Local 4999, PERSA, Madison, WI, Carol Weidel, President

Bay Area Labor Committee for Peace & Justice

Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Pennsylvania Federation - Jed Dodd, General Chairman

Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees Division/ International Brotherhood of Teamsters, Kevin Hussey, Vice Chairman & N.J. Legislative Director

Chicago Labor Against the War Coalition of Labor Union Women, Philadelphia Chapter, Katherine Black, President

CSEA Local 446, Staten Island, New York, Joel Schwartz, President

CWA Local 1180, NY, NY, Bill Henning, Vice President
CWA Local 9423, San Jose, CA, Louie Rocha, President

DC Labor for Peace & Justice

Hawai'i Labor for Peace and Justice, Jason Ward and Stephen Dinion, Coordinators

Mid-Willamette Jobs with Justice, Jim Cook, Chair

Monterey Bay Central Labor Council, Paul Johnston, UCAFT 2199, Secretary-Treasurer

New England Health Care Employees Union, District 1199, Jerome P. Brown, President

New Jersey Labor Against the War, Carol E. Gay, Chairperson

Office & Professional Employees International Union, Local 3, Bay Area, CA, Conny Ford, President & General Manager

PACE Local 8-675, David W. Campbell Secretary-Treasurer

SEIU Local 415, Santa Cruz County, CA, Jeffrey Smedberg, President

SEIU Local 535, California, Jerry Fillingim, Legislative/Political Director
SEIU Local 616 Executive Board (Alameda County, CA)
SEIU District 1199P Pennsylvania's Health Care Union, Thomas V. De Bruin, President
SEIU Pennsylvania State Council, Eileen Connelly, Executive Director

South Central Federation of Labor, Wisconsin, Jim Cavanaugh, President

St. Louis Labor Against the War, Joan Suarez and Roosevelt Stewart, Co-Convenors

UAW Local 2110, New York, New York, Maida Rosenstein, President
UAW Local 2334, Detroit MI, David Sole, President

U.A. Plumbers and Fitters Local 393, San Jose, Fred Hirsch, Vice President

United Health Care Workers of Greater St. Louis, Jerry Tucker, Executive Director

Union of Professional Employees, University of Illinois at Urbana, Urbana, Illinois, Mark H. Leff, President for the Executive Board

Vermont State Federation, AFL-CIO, Daniel L. Brush, President

Washington-Orange-Lamoille Labor Council (VT), AFL-CIO, Traven Leyshon, President

Western CT. CLC, Waterbury, CT, Blair F. Bertaccini, President

Wisconsin State AFL-CIO, David Newby, President

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW 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)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

MARINE KILLED IN BABIL PROVINCE

February 27, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS
RELEASE Number: 05-02-40C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq -- A Marine assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in action Feb. 26 in Babil Province.

Two U.S. Soldiers Killed In Baghdad Attack, 2 Wounded

27 February 2005 Aljazeera

The US military said two US soldiers were killed in a bomb and gunfire attack in Baghdad on Saturday.

"Two Task Force Baghdad soldiers were killed and two others wounded after a combined improvised explosive device and small arms attack in southeast Baghdad on 26 February," the military said.

Roadside Bomb Injures Four R.I. Army National Guardsmen

February 27, 2005 CRANSTON, R.I. (AP)

A roadside bomb blast injured four Rhode Island Army National Guard soldiers north of Iraq's capital Sunday, the military said.

Maj. Gen. Reginald Centracchio, the head of the Rhode Island guard, said a mounted patrol was hit by an improvised explosive device, or IED the term the military uses for roadside bombs.

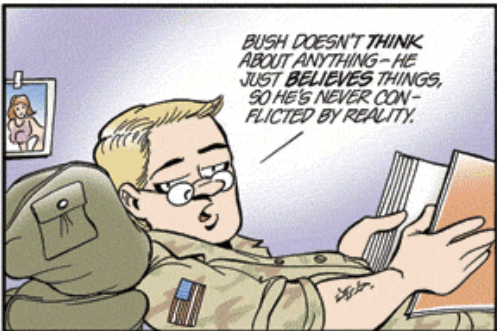
No one was killed in the explosion, said guard spokesman Lt. Col. Mike McNamara.

The wounded soldiers, all part of the 173rd Long Range Surveillance Detachment, were treated for minor injuries at a triage hospital in Balad, Iraq, then released back to their unit.

The soldiers were identified as Staff Sgt. Timothy Halloran, of Pawcatuck, Conn.; Spc. Randy Leboeuf, of Cumberland; Spc. Richard Busa, of Newton, Mass.; and Spc. Michael Finn, of Warwick.

According to Centracchio, the IED exploded next to the soldiers' up-armored humvee during a patrol in Samara, about 60 miles north of Baghdad.

TROOP NEWS



[Thanks to Phil G who sent this in.]

No Shit?

2005-02-26 JOHN F. BURNS, New York Times

The two top officers in the Baghdad handover, Maj. Gen. Peter W. Chiarelli of the cavalry division, and Maj. Gen. William G. Webster of the infantry division, who will formally assume command in Baghdad on Sunday, were holding a joint news conference in Baghdad's heavily protected Green Zone.

General Chiarelli said the "hardest part" of going home was the fact that more than 160 of his men had been killed, along with more than 1,200 wounded. [That's about 9% casualties.]

General Webster said about 50 percent of the Third Infantry Division's soldiers were on their second tour in Iraq, but they accepted the importance of the mission, even if "combat is a cup that soldiers would just as soon let pass, especially on the second and third time around."

U.S. General Says Bush Will Be Defeated

2005-02-26 JOHN F. BURNS, New York Times

"The enemy will not likely cease his efforts, despite the foolhardiness of his venture," said General Chiarelli, a 54-year-old native of Seattle. "But he will be defeated."



Louisiana National Guard Staff Sgt. Nicholas J. Olivier. Olivier, 26, was with the Charlie Company, 3rd Battalion of 256th Brigade Combat Team. He was killed Feb. 23, 2005, when a homemade bomb exploded while he was on ground patrol in Baghdad. (AP Photo)

Camp Anaconda: "Today Is The Day We Die."

In a celebrated incident on Dec. 8 in Kuwait, Tennessee National Guard Spc. Thomas Wilson surprised Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld during an impromptu press conference, asking why Guard units were being sent into Iraq with inadequate armor on their vehicles. Cheered by his fellow soldiers, Wilson claimed that his unit was forced to rummage through local landfills for "rusted scrap metal and compromised ballistic glass . . . to put on our vehicles to take into combat."

"I call it the 'question heard 'round the world,' " says military historian Col. Mike Doubler, a Tennessee native who served 14 years in the Army and nine years in the Guard. "There is a growing perception—among guardsmen and reservists—that there are two armies in Iraq."

'This is [crazy], man. They're not going to stop pushing us until someone gets hurt or killed. Then maybe they'll let up.' That was the last thing I remember him saying."

January 30, 2005 By Rone Tempest, Times Staff Writer.

Rone Tempest was helped on this story by UC Berkeley graduate journalism students Jeff Nachtigal, Melissa Nix and Adam Raney, reporting as part of The Times' ongoing series on the California National Guard, "The Guard Goes to War." Staff writers Monte Morin, reporting from Iraq, and Scott Gold, reporting from New Mexico, also contributed to this story.

CAMP ANACONDA — Some months after the Americans took over the sprawling Balad Air Base, about 50 miles north of Baghdad, someone posted an enigmatic sign on the main gate asking: "Is Today the Day?"

Soldiers at the base, which the U.S. military renamed Logistics Support Area Anaconda, or Camp Anaconda, take turns speculating about what the sign means.

In the tense months leading up to today's planned national elections in Iraq, the population at the base has swollen to more than 22,000 soldiers and civilian contractors. Some Camp Anaconda residents—installed in relative comfort inside the 15-square-mile compound that now features four dining halls, two swimming pools, a first-run movie theater and a Burger King franchise—have concluded that the sign is a military safety message: "Stay Alert!"

For the 90 California National Guard soldiers who make up Alpha Company, a Petaluma-based arm of the 579th Engineer Battalion of Santa Rosa, and regularly venture outside the base to patrol the treacherous canal-veined perimeter, the sign carries a more ominous meaning.

The soldiers are part of one of the most star-crossed National Guard units in Iraq. Since arriving at Anaconda last March, one out of five in Alpha Company has been killed or wounded. Three of the nine California National Guardsmen killed in Iraq by the end of 2004 were from Alpha Company.

"A lot of the guys hate the sign," says Alpha Company Sgt. Timothy "T.J." McClurg, a 27-year-old welder from Chico sent home to recover after shrapnel from a roadside bomb ripped into his foot on Nov. 11. "They think it means today is the day we get hit, or today is the day we die."

For Patrick Ryan McCaffrey, a 34-year-old father of two from the Bay Area suburb of Tracy, the day was June 22, 2004. McCaffrey, a rising auto-body shop manager in Palo Alto, signed up for the National Guard during the wave of patriotism that swept the country after Sept. 11, 2001.

Exactly one month after the terrorist attacks on New York and Washington, McCaffrey joined a National Guard unit with a mission statement that emphasizes its engineering support role to "provide mobility, counter-mobility and survivability support to a combat arms brigade" as well as "providing manpower and engineering expertise" during stateside crises.

But like many of the other 50,000-plus National Guard soldiers now serving alongside about 20,000 Army Reserve troops in Iraq, McCaffrey didn't foresee that he would one day find himself in deadly combat on the other side of the world. McCaffrey's unit had not been in overseas combat since World War II.

McCaffrey told friends when he enlisted that he expected to be assigned to homeland security duties, such as guarding the Golden Gate Bridge or Shasta Dam.

But as the U.S. campaign in Iraq bogged down in the summer of 2003, the Pentagon turned to its legions of "citizen soldiers," serving mostly weekend duty in crumbling state armories, and ordered them to relieve exhausted regular Army units in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Authorized by a presidential emergency order issued only two days after the Sept. 11 attacks, the historic deployment took place with relatively little public notice or fanfare.

Today more than 40% of the 150,000 U.S. soldiers in Iraq are either National Guardsmen or reserves. By the end of the spring, that percentage is expected to rise to more than 50%.

Despite McCaffrey's expectations as a National Guard engineer, his marching orders were quite different. Once the U.S. moved into Iraq, he was converted into an infantryman and sent into combat, one of more than 5,000 California National Guard soldiers mustered for service in the war. As the Pentagon scrambled to adjust to long-term military occupation, similarly abrupt job reclassifications became widespread. After years of developing caste pride as engineers, their transformation into foot soldiers was unsettling.

"It's like telling the Lakers that they are not going to play basketball but are now going to be Ping-Pong champs," says retired Army Col. David H. Hackworth, a critic of the current National Guard policy.

It also meant that some of the soldiers got less training than the regular Army infantry they were replacing. Army infantrymen receive 14 weeks of training in their specialty. A National Guard engineer normally undergoes eight weeks of basic infantry training and six weeks in engineering school, where they learn how to plant mines, detonate explosives and lay concertina wire, among other skills.

McCaffrey's company was called to active duty on Jan. 17, 2004, after a month of refresher training in Ft. Lewis, Wash., followed by another month of more Iraq-specific maneuvers at Ft. Irwin, Calif.

The 579th Alpha Company, under the command of Capt. William C. Turner, a computer chip designer from Mountain View, arrived in Iraq in early April 2004. McCaffrey was initially gung-ho about the assignment. He regularly wrote to his family about the children he met in the villages and often asked for hard candy or soccer balls to distribute to the Iraqi kids.

But after only a month of daily patrols along the dangerous periphery of the base, McCaffrey confided to family and friends that he had become disillusioned with the American war effort, particularly after the revelations of prisoner abuse by U.S. soldiers at Abu Ghraib. In a May 16 e-mail to his mother, Nadia McCaffrey, he described how the abuse scandal had inflamed anti-American sentiment among Iraqis.

McCaffrey also was troubled by the behavior of the Iraqi national guard units, then called the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps, that he and his fellow soldiers had been assigned to train.

On April 20, McCaffrey and other members of the 2nd platoon, 2nd squad—nicknamed "Double-Deuce"—were called out in the middle of the night to find the source of a rocket that had hit inside the base. McCaffrey's unit stopped two Iraqis on a motorcycle, one of whom McCaffrey recognized as a man he had been training earlier in the day at Camp Anaconda.

The two Iraqis were "swiped" for explosives and tested positive for TNT and another explosive known as RDX. Suspected of participating in the rocket attack, both were arrested as insurgents. When McCaffrey called home the day after the arrests, he told his father how distressed he was about the incident.

"That episode cut Patrick and all the soldiers right to the quick," says his father, a San Jose building contractor. "It made them all realize that things were not going the way they were supposed to be going. It also made him mad as hell because now they not only had to look in front of them, but they had to look behind as well."

For McCaffrey, the arrest of the two Iraqis also foreshadowed a devastating reality that would come two months later, on a narrow asphalt road surrounded by cotton fields outside Camp Anaconda.

THE GUARD GOES TO WAR

While the use of guard units in combat theaters has a long history in the U.S., they were almost always asked to play a supporting role. In addition, much of its combat service history faded from memory during the last 50 years as the National Guard was rarely called upon to fight. In the end, only 7,000 National Guard troops—only a handful from California—served among the 2.6 million military men and women who went to Vietnam.

After Vietnam, Army Chief of Staff Gen. Creighton Abrams Jr. vowed that the reserves would play an active role in all future conflicts. Since then, virtually all American military action has included the National Guard.

Sending the Guard into extended combat is a different story.

Currently, National Guard soldiers deployed in Iraq account for nearly one-third of the U.S. ground forces. By the end of 2004, 154 National Guard soldiers had been killed and more than 1,000 wounded in the conflict. The first days of 2005 were even bloodier. Ten National Guardsmen were killed during the first week of this year.

Johnson, the visceral Texas politician, knew by intuition what Bush administration officials are learning today: In an unpopular war, National Guard troops and reserve soldiers represent a potential political land mine.

They tend to be older, and are more likely married with children. They're also much more entrenched in their civilian communities than the regular military. In Iraq, for example, the average age of U.S. Marines killed in action is 21; the average age of guardsmen lost in combat is 10 years older.

Richard H. Kohn, history professor and chair of the Curriculum in Peace, War and Defense at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, argues that the Iraq deployment violates the "citizen soldier" concept at the heart of the National Guard. "By transforming them into a very different armed force, you are robbing these people of a substantial part of their civilian lives, warping their careers and changing the kinds of people who can afford to be part-time soldiers," Kohn says. **[And really pissing them off no end.]**

As the military occupation of Iraq approaches its third year, morale and recruitment issues have begun to surface. A 2004 battlefield survey conducted in Iraq for the Secretary of the Army showed that morale among the National Guard soldiers was "markedly lower" than that of active-duty soldiers. At the heart of the complaints, the survey results said, is the feeling among guardsmen that they are "treated like second-class citizens in the Army." More recently in New Mexico, where the California National Guard's 184th Infantry Regiment was preparing to be deployed to Iraq, soldiers complained to a Los Angeles Times reporter about poor training and inadequate equipment. "We are going to pay for this in blood," one said.

In a celebrated incident on Dec. 8 in Kuwait, Tennessee National Guard Spc. Thomas Wilson surprised Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld during an impromptu press conference, asking why Guard units were being sent into Iraq

with inadequate armor on their vehicles. Cheered by his fellow soldiers, Wilson claimed that his unit was forced to rummage through local landfills for "rusted scrap metal and compromised ballistic glass . . . to put on our vehicles to take into combat."

"I call it the 'question heard 'round the world,' " says military historian Col. Mike Doubler, a Tennessee native who served 14 years in the Army and nine years in the Guard."There is a growing perception—among guardsmen and reservists—that there are two armies in Iraq."

"The fact is," says Kohn, the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill professor, "we have worn these people out [and] taken advantage of their patriotism and service. Many of them are going to quit as soon as they get a chance."

A SUNNYVALE CHILDHOOD

At Camp Anaconda, Patrick McCaffrey battled his own morale problems as well as those of his overworked unit. He had excellent people skills developed during a civilian career of dealing with emotional car owners. Because of his talent for calming customers, McCaffrey's desk was the closest to the front door at Akins Collision.

McCaffrey practiced a kind of holistic collision repair, caring for the client as well as the car. "People would come in a panic mood after an accident, hurting and wanting their cars fixed," says colleague Marline Cather. "Patrick would say, 'You know, we can fix your car quickly, but it takes longer to fix people.' "

McCaffrey grew up on the San Francisco Peninsula in Sunnyvale in Santa Clara County. For most of his childhood it was a relatively sleepy Bay Area suburb and agricultural processing center.

But McCaffrey's happy childhood took a turn after Bob and Nadia separated when their son was 11. The separation was hard on the boy. He developed anorexia during his early teens and became so thin that his parents feared he might die. Nadia recalls him arriving one summer at the Moorea airport. "When I saw him come off the plane I just burst into tears," she says. "He was 15 years old and he weighed less than 80 pounds."

Alarmed, Nadia returned to Sunnyvale. Patrick began gaining weight, and later enrolled in a YMCA weight-lifting program. By his senior year at Homestead High School, McCaffrey was big and strong enough to play cornerback on the football team. According to parents and friends, though, he spent the rest of his life trying to overcome a self-image as the proverbial weakling at the beach, and some say that may have played a role in his decision to join the National Guard.

McCaffrey did not consult his father, with whom he discussed most important things in his life. "If he had asked me I would have advised him against it," Bob McCaffrey says. Nadia McCaffrey, who now operates a nonprofit grief counseling program and has become a leader in the Northern California antiwar movement, has been a lifelong pacifist and opposed her son's enlistment from the beginning. She says, though, that she was powerless to stop it. "He was like a lion in a cage," she recalls of her son's reaction to watching the terrorist attacks on television. "He just wanted to do something."

The management skills McCaffrey developed in the auto-body shop soon proved useful in Iraq. At Ft. Irwin and later in Iraq, McCaffrey quickly emerged as a leader, receiving a battlefield promotion to corporal only a few days after arriving at Camp Anaconda and a recommendation for promotion to sergeant not long after. When other soldiers were feeling down, McCaffrey buoyed them.

"He had this way of coming up and rubbing my shoulders when I would get stressed out," says Spc. Chris Murphy, a 22-year-old Lake County rock musician who quickly bonded with the older McCaffrey during training at Ft. Irwin. "He'd say, 'Hey man, relax. Calm down.'" "McCaffrey was one of the strongest men in Alpha Company and always one of the first to volunteer for extra duties. If soldiers had problems with an officer, McCaffrey often intervened on their behalf.

After the incident in April, when McCaffrey learned that his Iraqi trainee was among those suspected of attacking the base, he went to his superiors. "Patrick told them they needed to change the way they operated with these people because they couldn't be trusted," Bob McCaffrey recalls from one of his frequent phone conversations with his son. "But nothing happened. He was very disillusioned with the command structure."

Then there was the matter of the heavy workload. The long missions outside the razor wire in the mounting heat of summer took a toll. McCaffrey, trained as a combat lifesaver, felt that the officers were working the men too hard.

The soldiers complained that the 579th, along with the two other California and Washington State National Guard companies assigned to patrol the base perimeter, represented less than 3% of the soldiers at Camp Anaconda but bore the brunt of the danger while other regular military units seemed to enjoy relative safety inside the base.

McCaffrey called his wife on June 21, the eve of an early-morning mission to search for weapons outside the base. "Usually when he called he would reassure me," Sylvia says. "But this time he said, 'Babe, I'm just so tired. They don't let us sleep at night. I just wanted to call and say I love you.'"

DOUBLE-DEUCE DOWN

By June 2004, nerves were on edge at Camp Anaconda. Temperatures during the day approached 125 degrees. Inside the circus-style tents where the soldiers slept, the thermometer seldom fell below 105 degrees. Electricity to run the few air conditioners was erratic. Some took turns sleeping in the generator-powered, air-conditioned computer rooms. On June 16, insurgents launched a heavy mortar attack against the base that hit the post exchange, killing three soldiers and wounding 25 others. With typical dark humor, the soldiers began calling the base "Mortaritaville." No one had had a day off in more than two weeks.

McCaffrey's squad received orders late on June 21 to go on patrol before dawn the next morning. To the weary troops, the squad's nickname of "Double-Deuce" was starting to sound like a bad poker hand. The commander woke them at 3 a.m. By 5, the men were

"outside the wire," trudging through the high brush and farmers' crops, using metal detectors to hunt for weapons caches and other signs of insurgent activities.

The squad regrouped at 10:30, and by then several were showing signs of heat exhaustion. One of the first to fall out was Sgt. Dennis Sarla. McCaffrey administered a saline IV to the sergeant, who then was transported back to base. McCaffrey, wearing a bandana to keep the sweat from dripping into his eyes, took over carrying Sarla's heavy radio, an older model that weighed nearly 75 pounds. No one was surprised that he took the radio in addition to his M-16, grenades and body armor. "McCaffrey always took care of that little bit of slack for other people," says best pal T.J. McClurg. He wanted to carry his team like Riggins had carried the Redskins.

When another soldier fell out, he was replaced by Spc. Bruce Himelright, a 27-year-old native Texan who had been manning the .50-caliber machine gun on one of the transport vehicles parked a mile or so away. After a 20-minute break, the officer leading the patrol, 2nd Lt. Andre Tyson, huddled with the troops. Through a translator, several members of the Iraqi Civil Defense Corps complained that the patrol was wasting its time looking for weapons in the farmlands. Tyson, a 34-year-old Costco manager from Riverside who was fresh out of officer candidate school when sent to Iraq, decided to split the patrol into two squads and follow a roughly parallel course through the brush and overgrown fields.

McCaffrey, who had the only radio, went with the lieutenant. He was joined by Himelright, as well as the Iraqi translator and three Iraqi trainees. McClurg, who was manning one of the Humvees on higher ground closer to the base, stayed in touch with McCaffrey over the radio. McClurg's radio handle was "2-2 Bravo." McCaffrey's was "2-2 Dismount." At one point McCaffrey called to report that his group was near an abandoned Iraqi military police checkpoint near Bakr Village. Before the war, the village was off-base housing for Iraqi air force officers. Now the 400 or so middle-class houses were mostly occupied by squatters.

What happened next is still under investigation by the Department of Army, Criminal Investigation Division. "To protect the integrity of the investigation we won't be able to provide you any details at this time," says Criminal Investigation spokesman Chris Grey, a Pentagon civilian. However, interviews in Iraq and in the U.S. with several Alpha Company soldiers, including Capt. Turner, the company commander and Mountain View computer chip designer, produced the following reconstruction of events:

Walking on the narrow asphalt road near Bakr Village, Tyson and McCaffrey stopped to confer and use the radio. On the village side of the road was a crumbling mud wall, about 5 feet tall. On the other side was a deep, dry irrigation canal. Himelright, trailing behind, knelt on the road with his rifle in ready position facing the village.

As he turned slightly to see what Tyson and McCaffrey were doing, he noticed that two of the Iraqi trainees, looking nervous, had detached themselves 10 yards away from the group, leaving the Americans and the Iraqi translator alone on the road.

Himelright sensed something was wrong, but before he could react he heard a burst of gunfire and felt himself hit in the left hip. According to Capt. Turner, at least one of the Iraqi trainees opened fire on the three Americans from close

range. The bullets struck Tyson several times in the neck and head and hit McCaffrey in the legs and unprotected areas of his upper body.

Wounded, Himelright ended up on his back at the bottom of the dry canal. Looking up into the bright sun, he saw the unidentifiable silhouette of a man standing on the rim of the road. The man leveled his gun at Himelright and fired another burst at the prostrate American. Three AK-47 armor-piercing bullets lodged in Himelright's Kevlar vest. Another round hit his ammunition magazine. Himelright was knocked unconscious by the bullets, but not wounded again. When he revived, adrenaline pumping, he was able to climb the canal wall. He saw the bodies of Tyson and McCaffrey. The radio was broken, so Himelright fired several rounds from his M-16 into the air to call for help.

"I started worrying and calling out on the radio: '2-2 Dismount this is 2-2 Bravo. 2-2 Dismount this is 2-2 Bravo,' but there was no answer," says McClurg, who was sitting atop his Humvee a half-mile away. He became more concerned when he saw military vehicles, including a medic Humvee, headed toward the Bakr Village road. Someone on the radio blurted out that they had found one dead and two wounded. At the time, they apparently thought that one of the downed men was still alive. McClurg listened with dread for the battle roster numbers of the fallen soldiers. "Right off the bat I heard McCaffrey's number," he recalls.

The three Iraqi soldiers who were with the Americans fled the scene. Two of them eventually wandered back into the American base, but the third, reportedly a skilled Russian-trained sniper who served in the Iraqi army, has not been found despite an ongoing search by American forces. It's still not known if other attackers participated in the ambush, perhaps from behind the wall where Tyson and McCaffrey stopped. One villager claims to have seen a blue farm van parked nearby.

So far, military authorities have denied requests for an official report on the incident, including the disposition of the two Iraqi trainees on the patrol who returned to Camp Anaconda. **Citing the ongoing investigation, the military also has declined a request from McCaffrey's father and wife for a formal autopsy report.**

Chris Murphy, one of McCaffrey's best friends in Alpha Company, wrote an account of the ambush that was picked up by several soldier Internet blogs. Murphy also was on the patrol that day, but went with the other group after Tyson split up the unit. In his account, he recalls coming upon McCaffrey's lifeless body sprawled on the asphalt road. In the distance, near the village, curious Iraqi civilians had begun to gather.

"We were supposed to meet back up where the palm trees were," Murphy says. "I remember McCaffrey saying, 'This is [crazy], man. They're not going to stop pushing us until someone gets hurt or killed. Then maybe they'll let up.' That was the last thing I remember him saying."

McCaffrey is buried in Oceanside, his wife's family home, in a cemetery that looks out over the Pacific Ocean. On his headstone, as he requested, are the words "Redskins Forever."

The killed and wounded of Alpha Company

Killed in Action

Sgt. Patrick McCaffrey, 34, Tracy (promoted posthumously)
Sgt. First Class Michael Ottolini, 45, Petaluma
2nd Lt. Andre Tyson, 33, Riverside

Wounded in Action

Sgt. Michael Gilmore, 36, Livermore
Spc. Charles Hayes, 24, San Jacinto
Staff Sgt. Adam Henson, 36, El Centro
Bruce Himelright, 27, Chico
Sgt. Paul Hoffman, 44, Fair Oaks
Sgt. Timothy "T.J." McClurg, 27, Chico
Spc. Anthony Melendez, 29, San Francisco
Staff Sgt. Daniel Nevins, 32, Windsor
Sgt. Frank Papworth, 44, Sonoma
Spc. Harold Parker, 19, Long Beach
Spc. Albert Poindexter, 27, Ukiah
Spc. Jason Rivera, 19, Perris
Spc. Robert Sales, 42, Santa Rosa
Sgt. First Class Norman Valdez, 42, Upper Lake
2nd Lt. Christopher Coles, 26, Maple Valley, Wash.
1st Lt. Matthew Doxey, 28, Seattle, Wash.
Spc. James Huff, 19, Lakewood, Wash.

Human Breast Milk Contaminated By Rocket Fuel Chemical That Damages Babies' Brains; War Profiteers & Government Fighting To Keep It That Way

2.24.05 By Peter Waldman, Wall St. Journal & By JANE KAY, SAN FRANCISCO
CHRONICLE

High levels of perchlorate contaminate human breast milk across the U.S., according to a study by researchers at Texas Tech University, which found lower levels of the contaminant in cow's milk.

The new data, based on 36 human milk samples from 18 states, indicate breast-fed babies ingest more than twice as much perchlorate as the National Academy of Sciences said. was safe in a major report last month.

The main oxidizer in solid-rocket fuel and many other weapons, perchlorate has been detected in water supplies in 35 states. It disrupts the production of thyroid hormone, a crucial biochemical in brain development.

The breast-milk findings raise questions for the Environmental Protection Agency, which officially adopted the National Academy of Sciences' "safe dose" for perchlorate on Friday, yet declined to translate that dose into a drinking-water limit to specifically protect infants.

Also, the number considers exposure to perchlorate only from drinking water and doesn't take into account exposure from food.

Perchlorate has been a hone of contention for years, as regulators try to decide how dangerous it is and whether to compel the Pentagon and defense industry to clean it up.

In 2002 the EPA proposed a strict one-part-per-billion safe limit for the chemical, but the White House, after Pentagon and industry objections, referred that proposal to a panel of the National Academy of Sciences' National Research Council for review. The defense industry maintains perchlorate is safe in drinking water at levels up to 200 ppb.

Last month, the NRC panel recommended a safe limit for perchlorate equivalent to 24 ppb in drinking water; but the panel's chairman, Richard Johnston of the University of Colorado, cautioned that translating that dose into a limit for infants required adjustments to account for their light weight and high volume of fluid intake.

The EPA disagreed, and on Friday announced it was adopting the NRC's so-called reference dose without any drinking-water adjustments for infants. The reason no changes were necessary, the EPA said, was because the NRC dose included a safety factor to shield the most sensitive groups—pregnant women and their fetuses.

But that decision has left infants and small children vulnerable to consuming more perchlorate than the NRC said is safe, critics have said. The Texas Tech study has heightened their concern that the Bush administration has buckled to industry pressure and left infants unprotected against a dangerous and widespread chemical.

"This is not just another study," said Renee Sharp of the Environmental Working Group, an advocacy group that favors strict regulations to compel the Pentagon and its suppliers to clean up perchlorate from the nation's water supply. "It ends the questions about whether women are passing along perchlorate to their kids through breast milk. This will practically force EPA officials to write a drinking water, standard that protects infants—not just healthy adults."

EPA spokeswoman Cynthia Bergman said, the agency was still evaluating the Texas Tech study and would "take into account the real health benefits of breast feeding as we evaluate risks, *if any*, to nursing infants."

According to the Texas Tech study, published yesterday in the journal Environmental Science & Technology, perchlorate was found in all 36 breast-milk samples tested, at an average concentration of 10.5 parts per billion. The chemical was also detected in 46 out of 47 dairy milk samples, at an average level of two ppb. **The researchers found**

that the samples with the highest levels of perchlorate had the lowest level of iodide, confirming fears that perchlorate blocks the absorption of iodide, the essential chemical in thyroid-hormone production.

In the study, perchlorate turned up in breast milk in many states where the chemical isn't believed to be a major contaminant in drinking water.

For example, the two highest breast-milk measurements—92 ppb and 51 ppb—both turned up in New Jersey, and samples exceeding 30 ppb were measured in New Mexico, Missouri and Nebraska.

One possible explanation is that women are ingesting the rocket-fuel component in fruits and vegetables, which get it from tainted irrigation water, experts say. The high levels in the human milk indicate many women concentrate the chemical in their breast tissue.

Based on published EPA assumptions about baby size and fluid consumption, a nine-pound baby drinking breast milk with 10.5 ppb of perchlorate in it would ingest roughly 0.0016 milligrams per kilogram per day of the chemical—or more than twice the NRC/EPA “safe dose” of 0.0007 milligrams per kilogram per day.

“It is obvious that the (NRC/EPA) safe dose will be exceeded for the majority of infants,” concluded the Texas Tech researchers, who were lead by Purnendu K. Dasgupta. At the high end, the researchers said, some breast-fed babies will exceed the perchlorate dose found to cause structural changes in the brains of laboratory rats.

Perchlorate, a salt, can impair a person's ability to take up iodide, a form of iodine and the building block of thyroid hormones that control brain development. High levels of perchlorate in the body also may reduce the amount of iodide in breast milk.

“Perchlorate is not a toxic metal like mercury or lead,” said chemist Purnendu Dasgupta, an author. “Its only effect is to deprive the human body of iodide.”

The need for iodide is particularly important for infants, Dasgupta said.

“The infant has only a 24-hour store of iodide, compared to an adult, who has enough to make thyroid hormone for months. If you inhibit an infant's iodide in a significant manner for any significant length of time, you're going to cause problems.”

Army Depot Cited For Safety Violations “Exposing Workers To Possible Injury, Illness And Death”

February 26, 2005 The Associated Press

The Blue Grass Army Depot has been cited for serious violations of safety procedures, exposing workers to possible injury, illness and death, the federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration has charged.

The depot has until April 11 to correct the conditions. Spokesman Dave Easter said the depot does not dispute the findings and has already told OSHA it cannot make the deadline.

The violations involve the depot's emergency response, emergency action and emergency evacuation plans.

OSHA said the depot failed to conduct emergency drills, share emergency plans with employees and create a plan to keep track of them in an evacuation. **The agency also said workers and supervisors didn't know an emergency plan existed.**

The citations issued Wednesday do not involve the depot's storage operations for 523 tons of aging chemical weapons, but rather the functions on the rest of the site, OSHA area director Ron McGill said. Still, "the workers feel that it's scary to be here without an appropriate emergency action plan," said William Scrivner, a depot safety specialist who is among those who raised concerns about emergency procedures.

The depot has conducted quarterly emergency drills but not for all workers, Easter said.

"Our planning has been for those who are most likely to be impacted by an event based on (wind) conditions on a day-to-day basis," Easter said. "Being able to move all of those people out of 15,000 acres and doing a head count was not exactly a priority. We'll fix that."

The depot, with as many as 1,200 employees, is a major supplier of ammunition to the Army and Air Force for military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan and is the prime supplier of chemical and biological defensive gear for the troops. It also stores and modifies various types of ammunition, and military helicopter modifications are carried out there by a private company.

Craig Williams, director of the Chemical Weapons Working Group, a citizens' watchdog organization based in Berea, said OSHA's findings were ironic considering that tens of millions of dollars have been spent outside the depot on training and public education about how to handle an emergency.

"And here you've got people in the closest proximity (to the chemical weapons) not even being told the basics of what to do in an emergency situation," he said. "That's irrational, and it's quite astonishing."

"The whole complaint that went to OSHA was that there was not a significant effort on the installation to plan for and execute an evacuation drill, that there was not enough education and practice," he said. "We agree with that."

Army Band: Musicians Go To War

Why would someone who has spent a lifetime making music choose to make it with the National Guard? "Well, first of all, you get to play," said Bellanca, "and you also get paid. And it used to be a weekend a month – not a big commitment at all."

Those days, of course, are gone.

February 19, 2005 By Alan Feuer, NEW YORK TIMES NEWS SERVICE

CAMP SMITH, N.Y. – The flute went to war. So did the oboe, the clarinet, the bass, the French horn, the euphonium and a good number of the saxophones.

The 199th Army Band has had to cut back on its repertory these days. After all, it is not easy playing Sousa when half your woodwinds and a quarter of your brass are in Iraq.

"Sergeant, I'm going to need you to cover the tuba part on this one," the conductor told the trombone at a recent rehearsal.

"Yes, sir," came the answer.

The tuba was in Tikrit.

War requires sacrifice from warriors, and for the 199th Band of the New York National Guard, the sacrifices have been musical and more. Fifteen of its 41 musicians were deployed to Iraq last month with the 42nd Infantry Division, the first entire Guard division to be sent into combat since the Korean War.

For those left behind, it has been a winter of enforced virtuosity – not to mention discontent.

"The band's upset," said Chief Warrant Officer Joseph Martellaro, its conductor and commander. "Everybody thought the band was a sacred cow. We all thought there's no way they'll send a Guard band to Iraq."

But the band – or parts of it – shipped out in January with the rest of the division. They now, in military parlance, play "missions," not "performances." They now rehearse in a palace in Tikrit, not at Camp Smith in wooded Cortlandt Manor, 90 minutes north of New York City.

Officially, they were sent to raise morale and entertain the troops. But Army band musicians are infantry soldiers who happen to play music. They left not only with their instruments, but with their guns.

"As an Army band, we're all required to qualify on weapons," Martellaro said in his green-and-black fatigues. "If the combat gets heavy over there, they won't be playing trumpet anymore, if you follow what I mean."

The 199th is the oldest band in the National Guard system. It was created in 1853 as "The Governor's Band" and first attached to the 7th Infantry Regiment of what was then the New York State Militia.

Today, it is made up mainly of high school band directors, music teachers and professional performers. Martellaro, for example, leads a high school band in Highland, N.Y. His French horn, Sgt. Peter Bellanca, teaches music at the College of New Jersey. Sgt. Thomas Gorman plays trombone for off-Broadway theaters and acting troupes in the Hudson Valley. In his spare time, he plays with a group that performs Renaissance music.

The band is typically called upon to play at state military ceremonies. It might perform when a commander leaves a base or at a Veterans Day parade. Two weeks every summer it goes on tour around the region playing outdoor concerts or the occasional NASCAR race. Like all guardsmen, its members gather once a month to practice.

So it was something of shock when the band was told last spring that more than a dozen of its members would be heading to the war. They rehearsed in April, as they do each month, but it was different, even if they would not actually leave for Iraq for a few months. There were hugs, tears and sad farewells. The trumpet told the oboe: "We might never see each other again."

"It's one thing being active duty – you expect that sort of thing," said the second trombone, Sgt. Warren Harrold. "But I think we realize it's different now. When you put on the uniform, you have to be ready, no matter who you are."

On its Web site, the band bade farewell to its members who are now overseas: "It is hoped that they will return to us next January if all goes well. Our thoughts and prayers are with you. Godspeed."

But one line later there was a practical request: "The 199th Army Band currently has openings in all sections."

Still, the question remains: Why would someone who has spent a lifetime making music choose to make it with the National Guard? "Well, first of all, you get to play," said Bellanca, "and you also get paid. And it used to be a weekend a month – not a big commitment at all."

Those days, of course, are gone.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action:

27 February 2005 Aljazeera & (Xinhuanet) & February 28, 2005 (AEDT)

A bomb ripped through the town hall in Hammam al-Alil, 20km south of the main northern Iraqi city of Mosul, killing at least five people and wounding three, security officials said.

The blast at 10.20am killed a guard, a worker and three civilians and wounded another three guards, said Major Abd al-Rahman Ali of the Iraqi facilities protection force.

"We don't know how the explosives were planted inside the building," he added.

The US military said there were eight dead and two wounded in the attack.

Also on Sunday, Iraqi police found the body of a headless woman in Baghdad, with a note attached denouncing her as a spy, security sources said.

The body was discovered at 8am in the western al-Adl district on the road leading out from the capital to the city of Falluja.

A piece of paper, with the word spy written on it, was found near the body of the woman dressed in a black robe.

Four bodies were found of Iraqis belonging to the Badr Organization, the armed wing of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SCIRI), a major Shiite Islamic party, sources said.

The victims were found beheaded in a farm in Latifiyah area, about 30 km south of Baghdad, they added.

Elsewhere, five bodies of Iraqi soldiers were found with their throats cut Saturday night in a car in al-Suwaira area, some 60 km southeast of Baghdad.

Police also found the body of a businessman who was working with US troops.

In Mosul itself, four police officers patrolling in the west of the city were shot dead by unknown attackers firing from a car, a police commander said.

Police said another policeman was killed and one wounded when their patrol came under fire in the Amerli area, some 180 kilometres north of Baghdad.

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

High-Ranking Collaborator Captured

27 February 2005 Focus 1 News

Insurgents have captured a high-ranking from the Iraqi police Colonel Salem Azis Salleh.

An Islamic website has published a videotape today in which Salleh summoned “all employees in the police force and the servicemen to leave their work since the cooperation with the occupiers was apostasy”.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Victory Around The Corner

From: Z
To: GI Special
Sent: February 27, 2005
Subject: victory around the corner

Am so excited that Saddam's half brother has been captured!

All we still have to do is capture Saddam's mother and father (or half mother? half father?) and Iraq will be under control!

No more doom and gloom--hail victory!

In solidarity, Z

The Empire In Decline

<p>There is a notion, as beloved of the European Left as of the yee-hah Right, that America's pocket is bottomless, its Armed Forces countless, its weaponry infinite, and the only possible constraint upon its Government is the will of the people. Europeans speak as though for Washington cost is just not a consideration. This is not true of any empire or nation and has never been true of America; but it is less true today than at any time since the end of the Second World War.</p>

January 22, 2005 Matthew Parris, Times Newspapers Ltd.

WHAT TIME is it for America? If the Boston Tea Party was first light and the Gettysburg Address dawn, where between the sunrise and sunset of empire is the United States now? To judge from his inauguration speech on Thursday, President Bush thinks it is about time for morning coffee: much to be proud of but big tasks — maybe the proudest of all — still ahead. To end tyranny on Earth is no small ambition.

I think it's about half past four. **For America-2005-Iraq, think of Britain-1899-Boer War. Ever-heavier burdens are being loaded upon a nation whose economic legs**

are growing shaky, whose hegemony is being taunted and whose sense of world mission may be faltering. “Overcommitted?” is the whisper.

Not that you would hear it in the din of drums and trumpets.

More display is made in the spending of an inheritance than in its quiet accumulation, and the perfumed blossoms of July and August are heaviest after the nights have already begun to draw in.

Like economic booms or summer solstices, empires have a habit of appearing at their most florid some time after their zenith has passed. Of the rise and fall of nations, history tends to find that the era of exuberance occurs when the underlying reasons for it are beginning to weaken. There is a time lag between success and swagger.

“It was at Rome, on the 15th of October, 1764, as I sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol, while the barefoot friars were singing vespers in the Temple of Jupiter, that the idea of writing the decline and fall of the city first started to my mind,” wrote Edward Gibbon in his autobiography. **It was at Miami airport, on August 17, 2004, as I stood musing for two hours in the aliens queue for fingerprints, while contradictory instructions were aimed at confused passengers by incompetent officials (and two security men started body-searching each other) that the idea that for America the rot was setting in first started to my mind.**

The neoconservative Right dreams about the prospect of a big new US military intervention in Iran, or perhaps Syria, but who stops to ask whether Washington has the troops for such an adventure? The aim would have to be regime change, and that needs ground forces.

The invasion would have to take place at the same time as maintaining the occupation of Iraq. This shows no signs of reducing its call on American forces, materiel or money.

Whether or not you believed Tony Blair when he claimed that American Forces were in urgent need of help from our Black Watch Regiment before Christmas, you can see that as deaths mount and anarchy continues in Iraq, no US president can be thinking in terms of deploying troops away from that country for operations elsewhere.

In 1995, 13.7 per cent of American troops were deployed abroad. Today it is some 27 per cent. America has more than 350,000 troops abroad.

And, worryingly from the longer-term point of view, many of the more significant commitments among that list look like stalemates from the military point of view. No realistic president should see reason to hope that “mission accomplished” can soon be declared in the Balkans, Afghanistan or Iraq. America (and often Britain) is bogged down in such places.

Deservedly or undeservedly, America has lost the tune. Just as happened for Britain during the Boer War, something has gone unaccountably off-key. We British won that South African war in the end by sheer, bloody force; and America will not be “defeated” in Iraq, or, I suppose, anywhere else.

But as armaments are increasingly substituted for arguments, the strain grows. Eventually fatigue sets in.

There is a notion, as beloved of the European Left as of the yee-hah Right, that America's pocket is bottomless, its Armed Forces countless, its weaponry infinite, and the only possible constraint upon its Government is the will of the people. Europeans speak as though for Washington cost is just not a consideration. This is not true of any empire or nation and has never been true of America; but it is less true today than at any time since the end of the Second World War.

For the truth is that the US is in relentless relative decline as an economic power in the world.

The years after the Second World War (the years of the Marshall Plan), when the economies of most of its competitors had been wrecked while its own was growing strongly — were the noontide of American muscle.

The Cold War, because its central narrative was that of a mortal threat from a Soviet giant of equal power, diminished the appearance of American strength, but the narrative was false. The collapse of the rival giant has exaggerated America's apparent strength because it has so much more economic muscle than any single rival.

But for many decades America's share of the world's economic output has been in decline.

Think of a see-saw. America at one end is now easily outweighed by any substantial grouping at the other, and most of those powers are on friendly terms with each other.

America's modesty in 1945 understated its muscle, just as Bushite vanity overstates it today. He has over-reached. His country is overstretched, losing economic momentum, losing world leadership, and losing the philosophical plot. America is running into the sand.

25th ID Vet Says: The American Soldiers Must Know

2.27.05 By Ibrahim Ebeid, Anti-Allawi Group (excerpt). **The author is a US Vietnam era veteran, 25 Infantry Division.**

This Commander in Chief is not telling the truth to the soldiers who were sent to Iraq to die or to be maimed for life. He does not have to worry because he has no family members in any branch of the US military forces to face the danger of dying.

He has friends in Corporate America and family members who are robbing the wealth of the Iraqi people and the American soldiers are paying the price with their blood.

William H.T. Bush, uncle of the president and youngest brother of former President George H.W. Bush, cashed in the St. Louis-based ESSI (Engineered Support Systems) stock options with a net value of nearly half a million dollars.

And what did the American soldiers cash? Absolutely nothing. They were forced to go Iraq to kill and be killed while the Bushes are getting wealthier on the account of the victims.

"Uncle Bucky", as the President calls him, sits on the Board of Directors of this company that is benefiting from the bloodshed of innocent Iraqis and young American soldiers. His company is supplying armors and other materials to the US military. In an earnings report issued recently, the firm disclosed that net earnings for the first quarter ending Jan. 31 reached a record \$20.6 million, while quarterly revenue hit \$233.5 million, up 20% from a year ago. As a result, the company boosted its projected annual revenue to between \$990 million and \$1 billion.

Your Commander in Chief, George W. Bush reminds me of the lies of my Commander Lyndon B. Johnson during the Vietnam War. His irrational policies brought defeat to the United States and unnecessary death to American young soldiers.

President Bush said that the war against Iraq was for the link with Bin Laden, it was a lie. The link is between his family and the family of Bin Laden, they conduct business together.

He said it was for weapons of mass destruction, weapons of mass destruction were not found in Iraq, and certainly the weapons exist in the United States and were used before in Japan, Vietnam and in Iraq. They do exist also in "Israel" the strategic ally of the United States that devoured Palestine and expelled its people into exile with your money and Washington's help and support.

He said that it was for the threat of Saddam Hussein to the World and to America while the real threat is Bush and his blind and fanatic policies. Iraq was a threat to no one, the United States under his father put Iraq under a genocidal embargo that killed a million and a half innocent Iraqis, mostly children under the age of five. And Bush, the son, caused more than 100,000 innocent Iraqis to die in his invasion and more are still dying.

He said that the war was for freedom and democracy but he brought Allawi the butcher and the most reactionary Islamist parties from Iran to terrorize Iraq and spread fear among the Iraqi people.

It is time for America to stand up firmly against the Commander in Chief and bring the soldiers home alive. We do not need to bring 55,000 or more in black bags wrapped with flags.

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.

The Crisis Of The US Army In Iraq

February 2005 Amanecer

To maintain a security force of 150,000 troops in Iraq in long term, the United States would in fact need three times as many soldiers as it has now.

According to military planners, a third of the current troops would be preparing for deployment, a third would be deployed, and a third would be involved in post-deployment work or on vacation.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Cops Feuding In Najaf

27 February 2005 Aljazeera

In Najaf, a feud has erupted over who is in charge of security in the sacred Shia city.

Police chief Ghalib al-Jazairy insists he is still boss even after Baghdad's Interior Ministry appointed Brigadier Abd al-Shahid Abd al-Razzaq to take over the post.

To add to the confusion, al-Jazairy's rage is vented not at al-Razzaq, but at Abd al-Aal al-Koufi, who he believes has been put in charge of overall security in Najaf by his rival, Najaf Governor Adnan al-Zurfi.

"Koufi took control of police stations and he detained four of my relatives who are senior police officers and he released the murderers suspected of killing my two sons," said al-Jazairy.

"He was following the orders of the Najaf governor. He is not a policeman and he has no rank. He is just a supporter of the governor," he said.

Al-Jazairy's sons, also police officers, were dragged off a bus and shot while protecting pilgrims travelling from Najaf to Kerbala during the Shia Ashura ritual about 10 days ago.

But the US-backed governor has accused Jazairy of stirring up problems. "Al-Jazairy is trying to cause trouble and disobeying a decision of the ministry," said Zurfi.

Najaf, a spiritual capital of Shia around the world, is vital to the stability of Iraq, where a Shia political alliance won last month's election.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to John Gingerich who sent this in.]

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