

GI SPECIAL 3A79:

HERE IS THE FUTURE MADE FLESH



**Iraq Veterans Against The War
Rally: Fayetteville, NC 3.19.05**

Diane Green Lent, Photographer. <http://dianelent.com/fayetteville1.html>

“Fight Wars Not War” Ft. Bragg Troops Wearing Peace Buttons

March 21, 2005 By JOHN WALSH, Counterpunch

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

The polls tell us that 56% of Americans want us out of Iraq within a year and 47% want us to begin leaving at once. There is no doubt that the war in Iraq is very unpopular with Americans, but the breadth and depth of that sentiment is not

discussed often enough. And I suspect that the degree to which the war has "touched" the lives of Americans is underestimated.

I found confirmation of what the polls tell us in traveling to Fayetteville, North Carolina, for the anti-war demonstration at Fort Bragg which I am told is the largest military base in the world and the point of departure for many troops going to Iraq.

At the hotel in Fayetteville I stopped for a beer late that night and two guys sat down next to me, both in their twenties. One of them had on a row of peace buttons; my favorite among them was "Fight wars not war." To my surprise, they were not demonstrators but GIs in civies hanging out. They both had gone to college and both enlisted for financial reasons. Neither agreed with the war but both felt they had to go. Sad.

The pro-war ice is kept in place only by the two war parties and it is beginning to crack.

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)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed In Baghdad

24 March 2005 AFP & (KUNA)

A US soldier was killed in an attack south of Baghdad, a statement by the Multinational Forces (MNF) in Iraq said on Thursday.

The soldier, assigned to Task Force Baghdad Mission, was killed south of Baghdad during an attack launched at that area last night.

An interior ministry official said a US soldier had been seriously wounded in a mortar strike on a police station in the capital.

MARINE KILLED IN AL ANBAR PROVINCE

March 22, 2005 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release Number: 05-03-16C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq-- A Marine assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force was killed in action March 21.

Mosul Car Bomb Hits U.S. Convoy; Two U.S. Troops Wounded

24 March 2005 AFP

A car bomb in Mosul hit a US military convoy, wounding two US and two Iraqi soldiers, the military said.

One U.S. Soldier Killed, 3 Wounded In Kirkuk

March 20, 2005 AP & March 21, 2005 ThreeHD

A homemade bomb exploded near the northern city of Kirkuk, killing one U.S. soldier and injuring three others.

Family members said they were advised that the soldier killed in a roadside attack - Sgt. Paul Thomason III - was a member of the 2/278th HHT, S-1 section.

He was originally from Morristown, but the family now lives in Jefferson City.

He was killed Sunday when his vehicle was attacked by an IED, and small-arms fire.

He was married and the couple had four children, it was stated.

He is the first soldier killed in Iraq from the 278th National Guard unit, which includes a number of soldiers from the Chattanooga area.

Jefferson City Soldier Killed

March 21, 2005 (WATE and AP)

An attack on a convoy in Iraq has killed a member of the National Guard's 278th Regimental Combat Team.

Spec. Paul William Thomason III, a 37-year-old husband and father of four kids ages three through 10, was killed on Sunday when a remote control bomb was detonated as his convoy was traveled near Kirkuk. The force threw him from the convoy.

Thomason was the only member of his convoy who was killed. It is the first combat fatality for the 278th since it deployed to Iraq three months ago.

The soldier's wife, Amanda Thomason, says she was playing outside with two of their children Sunday when a woman in uniform along with two police cars pulled up.

"She walked up and she said, 'Are you Amanda Thomason?' and I said, 'Yes, I am. Is he dead?' she said, 'We need to go inside and talk.' And I said, 'No, you need to tell me if he's dead.' And she said, 'yes, he is.'"

"In the back of my mind, I knew it could happen. And I'm sure in the back of his mind, he thought it could happen but we never discussed it," Amanda says.

"I lost my best friend. I loved him so much. He died my hero," Amanda says. "Oh God, he was wonderful. He was my best friend. He always smiling, happy, never met a stranger, loved his children. Oh God, he loved his kids."

Thomason's body will be shipped home in the next five to 10 days. Soldiers in Iraq held a memorial service Monday.

Thomason was a member of the 278th's Troop G, 2nd Squadron in Greeneville. He was due to come home at Thanksgiving. A funeral service will be held for him in East Tennessee.

Amanda says she has plenty of friends and family to help with the kids. The last time Amanda and the kids saw Paul was in November during a 10 day leave. She says she'll make sure the kids never forget him. "We have pictures all around the house that will not be taken down."

Kentucky Guardsman Killed, Four Others Wounded; "Now We Should Let Them Do It Themselves And Get Out"

3.21.05 Associated Press

SPRINGFIELD, Ky. -- Spec. Jonathan A. Hughes' infant son clutched a photo of his father Monday, unaware of the grief around him as others mourned his father's death during a bloody weekend for Kentucky National Guard soldiers in Iraq.

Hughes, 21, of Lebanon, was killed Saturday when his Humvee struck a roadside bomb while he accompanied a U.S. convoy headed to Baghdad's international airport. A fellow Kentucky Guardsman in the same vehicle was wounded.

Hughes' wife, Sara, said he was a "loving husband and a wonderful daddy.

"He was really looking forward to returning home to his family and doing activities with his 9-month-old son who he thought the world of," she said in a statement. "He will be sadly missed by everyone."

Three other Kentucky Guard soldiers were wounded in another ambush Sunday.

Kentucky Adjutant Gen. Donald C. Storm called it "a very difficult weekend."

"These kind of instances just increase our resolve to remedy the thugs and the evil people that commit these kind of violent and evil acts," Storm said. **[Another idiot asshole heard from. Not very "difficult" for him, sitting safely at home babbling silly bullshit about "thugs" and "evil people." He was born 200 years too late. He would have made a great press spokesman for King George in 1780, when similar thugs like Jefferson and Washington were fighting an Empire for their independence. See below what Beverly Durham has to say about this bullshit. But first, here's one more real gem from the asshole.]**

"This is about the future of the way we live here," he said. "Make no mistake about it, this is part of the global war on terror. If the terrorists weren't there when we went in, they're there now." [Yeah. Everybody knows the Iraqis really lust to invade Kentucky. Well, the idiot Storm is right about one thing. Bush and his Imperial terrorist occupation commanders are indeed there now, and weren't there before. That's why the Iraqis are fighting. Duh.]

Flags were lowered to half-staff at Marion County High School in Lebanon, where Hughes graduated in 2002.

Family and friends called him by his middle name, Adam. At the high school, he was remembered as a quiet young man who liked working with his hands.

"He was a really good kid," high school principal Chuck Hamilton said. "He was very conscientious about pleasing people and doing things the right way."

In nearby Lebanon, Beverly Durham said word of Hughes' death spread quickly. "It hits hard when it hits a small town," she said.

Durham said she would like to see American soldiers come home.

"I think it's good that we went over there to help them, but now we should let them do it themselves and get out," she said.

Resistance Attack In Force Injures Six Soldiers Near Salman Pak

March 24, 2005 By ERIC FREEMAN/Telegram Regional Reporter & 3/21/2005
Anatolia.com Inc.

Continued violence in Iraq touched close to home Sunday with reports of injuries received by four Columbus-based Army National Guard soldiers in an enemy attack near Baghdad.

John Harris, 19, son of Marilyn Bobert and Dan Harris of Columbus, is listed as one of the four. He received serious injuries to his head and neck in the attack.

The three other injured soldiers were treated at a hospital near Baghdad and released back to duty, and included another Columbus soldier, as well as one from Omaha and one from Ainsworth.

The four soldiers were deployed with the 1075th Medium Truck Company based out of Columbus. Dorothy Harris of Bellwood confirmed today that her grandson John Harris was one of the injured soldiers.

"I was told that John's head wound came from shrapnel, and that it also injured his left carotid artery in his neck," Dorothy Harris said. "I was told that John was taken to a hospital in Germany, and he should be coming to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, D.C., by the end of the week."

The soldiers came under militant fire earlier this week when they were accompanying units from the Kentucky National Guard along a road 20 miles southeast of Baghdad. U.S. soldiers, ambushed by dozens of Iraqi militants near the infamous "Triangle of Death," responded by killing 26 guerrillas in the largest single insurgent death toll since last fall's battle for Fallujah, the U.S. military said Monday.

In all, six soldiers and seven militants were wounded, and one person was arrested.

After the attack, troops recovered six RPG launchers, 16 rockets, 13 machine guns, 22 assault weapons, more than 2,900 rounds of ammunition and 40 hand grenades from the insurgents.

The high number of deaths in Sunday's daylight battle south of Baghdad was attributed to the large number of attackers, unusual in a country where most clashes are carried out by small bands of gunmen or suicide bombers.

The U.S. military said the Kentucky National Guard units were traveling along a road 20 miles southeast of Baghdad around noon when 40 to 50 militants emerged from a grove of trees and a roadside canal firing automatic weapons and rocket-

propelled grenades. The soldiers returned fire, killing or wounding all the insurgents in a field and driving away those attacking from the canal.

The insurgents had set up an ambush on both sides of the road and were waiting for the supply convoy, which was heading to a military base south of Baghdad.

The convoy was under small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades about nine kilometres ((five miles) east of Salman Pak, when the US military police patrol arrived, said Major Rob Simmons on Monday.

"In recent days, this route has had increased attacks on coalition forces," said Simmons, referring to the road to the capital which is littered with burnt-out cars.

Local Soldier Injured

March 21 By Dylan McCament, Progressive Communications Corp., Mount Vernon, OH

Chad Bittle, a 2002 graduate of Mount Vernon High School, received shrapnel wounds outside Baghdad, Iraq, when a suicide bomber rammed his Humvee on Saturday.

According to his mother, Terry Sims, Bittle is the gunner on the Humvee; one of his main duties is to protect high-ranking officers on convoy missions.

Sims said she received a call from Bittle around six in the morning on Saturday. The incident, she said, happened around noon Iraq time. During the convoy mission, she explained, Bittle was told to keep an eye on a suspicious car that had crossed the middle of the road and stopped off to the side, just in front of the Humvee.

The driver waved, said Sims, to indicate he was cooperating, but soon afterward the car made a U-turn and rammed the Humvee. According to Sims, Bittle said he got off one or two shots before impact.

"Chad said the next thing he knew, he was laying in another soldier's arms," Sims said. She said she has spoken to him on instant messenger and he is currently on bed rest.

Weirdest War Story Of The Year, So Far: Command Reports Rebel Training Camp Destroyed; Guerrillas At Camp Disagree

On Wednesday, an AFP reporter visited the crater ridden site of a camp near Lake Tharthar where rebels moved about in the open. According to a man claiming to be a member of the Secret Islamic Army, government forces had attacked that camp but only killed eleven rebels. The man and dozens of fellow fighters, he said, had not left the area since the firefight ended.

Mar 24 by Chris Shumway, New Standard & AFP

Official descriptions of a clash between Iraqi forces and rebels somewhere northwest of Baghdad on Tuesday vary greatly; US military, Iraqi government and Western media sources nevertheless all cheer a "successful" assault.

US and Iraqi military officials gave inconsistent accounts of what they both say was a major assault Tuesday on a remote rebel training camp. Divergent reports about the nature of the battle and the number of rebel fighters killed raise far more questions than they provide answers.

Reuters initially reported that Iraqi government commandos attacked an isolated camp some 100 miles northwest of Baghdad Tuesday morning. When insurgents returned fire, the commandos reportedly called for US air and ground support.

Colonel Robert Potter, a spokesman for the US Army in Baghdad, told the New York Times, the assault was "one of the largest such engagements that I'm aware of."

An unnamed Iraqi source at a joint US-Iraqi command center in Tikrit told Reuters that Iraqi forces killed 80 insurgents, while only eleven commandos died. **He said the fierce battle lasted twelve hours.**

But Major Richard Goldenberg, a spokesperson for the 42nd Infantry Division, told Reuters the battle lasted only two hours and that seven members of the Iraqi assault force died and just six sustained wounds. He did not say how many rebel fighters died.

The Associated Press also initially reported that commandos killed 80 in an assault on a "terrorist camp" near Lake Tharthar, attributing this information to an Iraqi Colonel named Ahmed Essa. The US military issued a statement saying that 20 insurgents had been captured but did not provide rebel casualty figures, according to the AP.

Lieutenant Colonel Samad Hassan Kamel, an Iraqi commander whose unit reportedly led the assault, later told Reuters that commandos killed 45 insurgents, many of whom he said were Saudis and Syrians. In yet another report, Reuters quoted Sabah Kadhim, a spokesperson for the Iraqi Interior Ministry, as saying that commandos killed 84 insurgents. "Among the dead are Arab and foreign fighters, including Sudanese, Algerians and Moroccans, as well as other nationalities," Kadhim said.

General Adnan Thabet, identified by Agence France Presse as a senior security advisor to the Iraqi Interior Ministry, said 85 insurgents died in what was a seventeen hour assault by Iraqi troops and US aircraft on a camp shared by Ba'ath party loyalists and members of Al-Qaeda.

Thabet added that the raid resulted in no prisoners, but that several militants "escaped by boat" across the lake. Kadhim, the Interior Ministry spokesman, told the AP that twenty boats escaped during the raid.

It appears the assault force may have conducted the raid prematurely. Maj. Goldenberg admitted that the area was not surrounded by security forces until after an uncertain number escaped.

According to the AP, Goldenberg indicated that the raid was somewhat spontaneous, as Iraqi security forces were actually in the area to raid a different target when locals alerted them to the alleged base camp at Lake Tharthar. But the AP also cited an unnamed "Iraqi officer" as saying the site's existence was known for eighteen days in advance, though reports did not indicate what agencies or units were aware of the target before yesterday's raid was planned.

US and Iraqi accounts also diverged on the exact location of the training camp.

According to CNN, US military sources said the camp was located west of Lake Tharthar, along the border of Salahuddin and Anbar provinces. Iraqi officials, on the other hand, said the camp was near Samarra, which is located east of the lake. Finally, the caption on a Reuters photo purportedly taken at the site of the raid refers to the location as "near Tikrit," which is more than 30 miles east-northeast of the northernmost point of Lake Tharthar.

According to the New York Times, Maj. Goldenberg said US and Iraqi forces were still searching the site of the assault on Wednesday, but an Iraqi commando who participated in the raid reportedly told AFP that both Iraqi and US troops withdrew from the site early Tuesday evening.

Insurgents were still manning a training camp in northern Iraq in defiance of a blistering raid by the authorities.

On Wednesday, an AFP reporter visited the crater ridden site of a camp near Lake Tharthar where rebels moved about in the open. One of the fighters, who called himself Muhammad Amer and claimed to belong to the Secret Islamic Army, said they had never left the base.

He denied that scores of his fighters had been killed and said only 11 of his comrades perished in airstrikes on the site.

The man and dozens of fellow fighters, he said, had not left the area since the firefight ended. [Oops.]

Asked about the presence of rebels at the camp late Wednesday, a member of the Iraqi police commandos that took part in the operation said Iraqi and US troops withdrew from the area at about 6.30pm (1530 GMT) on Tuesday.

Also according to the AFP, local hospitals reported no casualties.

There were numerous discrepancies in the accounts given by the rebel and Iraqi security forces. The US military said Thursday it was investigating the new accounts of a rebel presence after what had been reported as a crushing raid.

About 30 to 40 fighters were seen at a lakeside training camp attacked by US and Iraqi forces on Tuesday, an AFP correspondent who visited the site has said.

The correspondent, who travelled with other journalists to the camp at Lake Tharthar, 200km north of Baghdad, said he saw 30 to 40 fighters there on Wednesday.

US military spokesman, Lieutenant Colonel Richard Goldenberger said "More important than the number of insurgent casualties is the fact that we have disabled their capabilities and denied them a safe haven," he said. [The lies get dumber and dumber and dumber. Looks like the "safe haven" is in pretty good shape, entertaining reporters and all.]

The remains of three burnt vehicles were seen on a dusty road leading to the camp in the village of Ain al-Hilwa. A few mud huts were partly destroyed and a few big craters gouged the ground.

Photographic and videotape evidence supporting the various claims by US and Iraqi officials appears to be lacking.

Reuters' photographs show only what appears to be a burned out truck near a lake and a small campsite that looks as though it has been bombed or damaged by fire. A report posted online Wednesday by Associated Press Television mentioned the assault, but did not include any video from the scene.

Street Fighting In Ramadi

FALLUJAH, Iraq, March 21 (Xinhuanet) -- Street battles broke out Monday between US troops and militants in the center of the western Iraqi city of Ramadi, witnesses said.

"Powerful explosions and heavy gunfire resonated throughout the city as fighters and US soldiers used different weapons in the fierce street battles that lasted several hours," local residents told Xinhua.

The US troops blocked the roads leading to the city, and imposed ban on the vehicles movement in the city, some 110 km west of Baghdad, they said.

TROOP NEWS

20+ FT. BRAGG ACTIVE DUTY TROOPS COME TO FAYETTEVILLE RALLY



IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR

Anti-War Rally: Fayetteville, NC 3.19.05

Diane Green Lent, Photographer. <http://dianelent.com/fayetteville1.html>

NC Peace and Justice Org. & March 21, 2005 By Kevin Maurer, Staff writer, The Fayetteville (NC) Observer & 03/19/05 By The Associated Press & March 20, 2005, By Allison Williams, Staff writer, The Fayetteville (NC) Observer

On Saturday, March 19, 2005, over 4000 people gathering in Fayetteville for a wonderful march and rally spearheaded by vets and military families. People came from all over: Tennessee, Florida, South Carolina, Minnesota, DC, Hawaii, New York. Speakers like Lou Plummer, veteran from Fayetteville, and Mike Hoffman, founder of Iraq Veterans Against the War, electrified the audience. [Which is more than the occupation has done for Baghdad.]

At least 20 active duty GIs defied orders from Ft Bragg to come to listen.

Joshua Despain and Hart Vigas wore camouflage jackets with 82nd Airborne Division patches. Both men said they served in Iraq and have left the Army.

“It was a very positive event. We raised public awareness that not everybody believes that you are either with us or against us,” said Charlie Anderson, a member of Iraq

Veterans Against The War. Anderson was a hospital corpsman with the Marines during the war. He lives in Virginia Beach, Va.

Kara Hollingsworth, a member of the Military Families group who spoke at the rally, said she was nervous about taking part in Saturday's protest. She was afraid that she would be viewed as a traitor because her husband is serving his second tour in Iraq with Fort Bragg's 35th Signal Brigade.

"We are all part of the same community, and we all want the best for our soldiers," Hollingsworth said. "We want the same things, but we don't agree on how."

She said her husband is supportive of her stand against the war, but he has a job to do as a soldier.

Perry O'Brien, a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War, said he saw a number of Fort Bragg soldiers in the crowd at the rally. He said he knows of a number of active-duty soldiers against the war and it is up to veterans to give these soldiers a voice.

"It helps them to know that veterans are not abandoning them," O'Brien said. "We are not just waving flags and watching them die."

Michael Hoffman, a co-Founder of Iraq Veterans Against the War who invaded Iraq in 2003 with the Marines, he didn't think anti-war protests undermine the morale of troops facing danger, Hoffman said.

"I've been in Iraq, I've been shot at, you're not thinking about the protests, you're not thinking about yellow ribbons, you're thinking about 'how am I going to get out of this?'" he said.

Anne Roesler, a college professor from California who is a member of the Military Families group, is staying in her son's apartment. It has been empty since he left Fort Bragg for Iraq.

Roesler, who was wearing a pair of her son's desert camouflage pants at the rally, said her son and other soldiers support her for speaking out against the war.

And the efforts are paying off, she said.

"If you had asked me six months ago, I would said I wasn't sure," she said. "Now, there's a definite shift in the wind."

Iraq Veterans At Fayetteville: "Wise, Angry, And Politicized!"

[Interviews by Martin Smith (USMC ret'd) at Fayetteville]

Martin Smith writes: "These are the voices of protest that speak for themselves--these veterans are coming back wise, angry, and politicized!"

3/19/05 Interviews at the Fayetteville Protest

Kellie Dougherty.

Can you tell me your name, rank, and service?

My name is Kellie Dougherty. I was an E5 Sergeant in the National Guard and then the Colorado Army National Guard for eight years and I was released last August, 2004.

Did you serve in Iraq?

Yes, my unit was in Iraq for approximately eight months and then Kuwait for another two. I was in a military police company.

Why are you here today?

I'm here today to show my support for the peace movement and to show to the public and to our government that we want an end to the occupation of Iraq.

What made you come to that conclusion?

I didn't believe the reasons that we were being given to go to war in the first place, and then when I got there and saw the horrible impact that the war and the occupation was having on the population of Iraq and on our own soldiers and all the reasons we were given were false to go to war, so it was people dying and people suffering for lies.

What did you see in Iraq?

I saw that the people were living in extreme poverty. Their situation wasn't getting better when we were there. They're just getting more desperate.

Just things like an overt hostility on the U.S. soldiers' part towards the Iraqi people, and house raids. I know we raided people's houses even when we weren't sure if it was the right person. We searched people's vehicles. There were unintentional things like Iraqi children and families getting run over by our cars. And then just the continued poverty and the unemployment of the people.

What would you say to someone that's thinking of joining the military today?

You can probably count on going to Iraq and maybe talk to a veteran or someone who's been there, because if you just rely on your recruiter, they're just trying to sell you a sales pitch, and they're not telling you the whole truth.

Have you heard of the movement to kick military recruiters off of campuses?

Yes, and I think that's good, because schools are supposed to be places of learning, not places to become militarized, especially on high school campuses.

I think that the recruiters shouldn't be on high school campuses, because basically what they doing is just preying on the lack of opportunities for young people, particularly low income and minority students.

Nicholas Przybyla

Can you tell me your name, rank, and where you served?

My name is Nicholas Przybyla. I was an E3 in the Navy. I served on the U.S.S. Peleliu with the Peleliu Amphibious Ready Group, 13th Marine Special Operations Capable. We did the first initial invasion of Afghanistan from 2001 to 2002.

Why are you here today?

I'm here to stop the war I guess trying to put an end to it and let people know what's going on is total bullshit.

I had a top secret clearance and every day we would receive intelligence briefings twice a day, and it came down towards the end of our deployment that we had killed about twenty suspected terrorists, members of the Taliban.

We got about seven hostages onboard and the total deaths of civilian casualties was about three thousand—most of them were children--, and I just don't think that's a good way to fight a war just to blow the shit out of a country, kill a bunch of innocent people, and then charge into another country that has nothing to do with it.

Towards the end of our deployment the intelligence briefings that we got said that the 13th Marines had Osama bin Laden and all his buddies cornered in the Tora Bora Mountains, and it was only a matter of time before we uncovered them. After we were relieved, we were relieved by the (Bomb Homer Shard) Amphibious Ready Group. They went in and did the same thing that we did, have him even more cornered and after that they just let him go.

All the troops were pulled out and sent to Iraq over bullshit when the real person that was responsible for September 11th was set free. That's a fact.

That's the true intelligence, military intelligence that I received on a day to day basis and they say according to our intelligence the real threat was Iraq. Well I remember receiving those intelligence briefings and that's not the truth at all and I'm starting to think that's all a fact and my personal opinion is that I think the Bush administration wanted bin Laden to go free so that they could scare the rest of the country and just keep them scared and move into Iraq and not be questioned about it.

Did you know anything about Afghanistan before you went over there?

I joined during peacetime--the whole "Navy let the journey begin" thing--I came from a real shit hole in the Detroit area pretty much an abandoned industrial town because all the automotive companies pulled out so we didn't have any money.

I joined the military to try to give my parents a chance to retire.

We got to Darwin Australia on September 11, so we were the first troops deployed to Afghanistan and we didn't hear very much about it. The most vivid thing I can remember

is just to show you how much the troops are brainwashed. When the planes hit the towers we heard that New York and Washington had been attacked and lots of Americans were dead. There wasn't any remorse on the ship, of course they were a couple of exceptions, but the majority of troops though on board were celebrating because they finally got a chance to go to war.

What would you say to someone that might be thinking of joining the military today?
I would say don't do it. It's not worth it. I joined the military and now like I said before sometimes I get people that come up to me and say thank you for your contribution thank you for protecting us and I think that's kind of stupid because we weren't protecting them at all.

Our National Guard is gone. America's weaker than it's ever been on a home front attack, and it's completely pointless to go to Iraq and die over something that serves no purpose. It's completely insane.

Why did you choose to join Iraq Veterans against the War?
I think the main reason why I joined is because what happens is after you're involved in something like that and you know that people are dead from a direct result of you and the rest of your fellow soldiers, and sailors, marines and airmen being there that it just tears you apart inside and I think it's my duty to try and counter-recruit and get people to stop joining up so that they don't have to deal with this the rest of their lives.

It's been about four years since it happened to me, and I still think about it every day. I don't want that for the rest of the year. Look at what Vietnam did. You walk down the street and look at the homeless and almost every single one of them is Vietnam-era age, and it's all happening again.

What do you know about the soldiers that fought in Vietnam?
My good friend's father was a Vietnam veteran and the last thing that he worked really hard after he got out of the military the last thing he wanted to do was have his son join the military, but his son went ahead and did it instead.

The day before his son left to go into the forces, the first time he told us about his tour in Vietnam and he said he just couldn't explain how horrible it was walking through the jungle constantly, just covered in sweat, for nothing coming across your buddy and he's got his mouth sewn shut and went you cut the stitches to open his mouth his testicles come out of it.

Can you describe your Military Occupational Specialty?
My Military Occupational Specialty was photography. All the people from the different branches in service go to the same photography school in Fort Mead, Maryland. One of the courses of training is combat photo investigative photography accident photography.

They trained us for a reason, but when we got to the Middle East and people were coming on board--prisoners of War, injured people, accidents, and stuff like that.

We were take pictures to be translated and to be sent back to the United States and Military Police would come up and erase them from our cameras. And they did that because they were being told to do that. Obviously, I don't think that our

Commander in Chief and all his buddies in office want our people seeing those kinds of images.

I see you have film equipment today. What are your plans?

I'm putting together a documentary that will hopefully get distributed to show the rest of the people that are out there who are feeling alone that the Iraq veterans are here and to come and join up.

We can't be ignored, because a veteran of that war can not be ignored.

You can't say you don't know what you're talking about. I've been many places where there will be somebody talking about you know those guys they go over there and when they come back you don't see the guys that went over there coming back and complaining because know that they've been there they know that it's for a cause.

And I say, excuse me sir, what do you know about the military and he says my dad was in the military or something like that. It's completely ignorant. And I think the media that's being transmitted now days; they all have an agenda behind it. I just want to make this and show people exactly what's going on.

Have you heard about the military recruiters being kicked off some of the campuses around the country?

No, I haven't but I go to a community college in Los Angeles and I see recruiters there on a weekly basis and usually for the most part they're guys that have just joined. They don't know what they're talking about so you can't hold it against them, because they're going through the same brainwashing that we all went through when we were in there.

So what I like to do is put on my cammie jacket and go stand right next to them and while they're passing out pro-join the service documents I hold out documents of peace from Iraq Veterans against the War. I think that I've successfully counter-recruited at least five people.

Tim Talib

Can you tell me your name, rank, and what service you were in?

My name is Tim Talib and I was a hospital corpsman third class in the United States Navy, and I served in Iraq with the Marine Corps?

How long did you serve in Iraq?

I was in country for seven months.

Why are you here today?

I'm here today to protest the on going occupation in Iraq. I believe that it's immoral and illegal under international law and I believe that we went into Iraq that our motivation had more to do with oil and imperialism than to do with Saddam Hussein or weapons of mass destruction which were never found or connections to 9/11 which were never made.

How did you come to that conclusion?

I believed much of that before I went over but my experiences in Iraq reinforced what I'd already believed, particularly with regard to weapons of mass destruction. We spent some of our time searching for WMDs, and nothing was ever found. Nothing was ever brought to light by the Bush administration. Their claims were completely false, and all the NBC (Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical) officers and other people that I talked with in country that were working on WMD searches never found anything either.

Did you have any contact with the Iraqi people?

Yes, I had a good amount of contact with the Iraqi people in the Sunni triangle region so it was mostly Sunnis and a few Shiites. I didn't meet any Kurds at all.

Did your opinion of the Iraqi people differ from what the military said it would be like?

I never believed what the military told me about the Iraqi people to begin with.

I went over there with the belief that the majority of the Iraqi people were good people that they didn't necessarily support Saddam either but they equally did not want us occupying their country and those beliefs were confirmed.

I found that a lot of people in Iraq were intelligent, well educated people who already had some understanding of what they wanted for their country and the democratic processes that they wanted to implement and they didn't need us to come over and force those ideas on them.

What would you say to somebody that might be thinking of joining the military today?

Consider other options. It's not a good idea it's not a good time to be in and you don't want to be forced to participate in an occupation.

Hart Vigas, 11 1/2 Months In Iraq, Army:

I'm here to make reparations.

When you realize that there is no boogeyman, people in Iraq are just like you and me with the same fears and loves and concerns, it just makes too much sense that war is not the answer. It's not supposed to be like this.

We need to make change.

We went out to look at a water construction project, and we had gunships as escorts. Two men with RPGs ran across the road, and I swung my rifle over and as he made it to a house, he froze in the doorway. And I froze with my weapon, and I saw his face, and it was not the monster I was expecting to see. He was a man like me, and I couldn't pull the trigger.

Andrew Plummer, Electricians Mate Third Class, Navy, Served On The USS Eisenhower.

Just discharged. Asked about what he would to say to someone thinking of enlisting:

You think it's a good opportunity. You think you're going to make your life better. You're not.

You think you're going to serve your country. That's not what the military is there for.

You think you're going to make the world a better place. That's not what the military is doing today.

The military is protecting American business interests and killing people to expand our power and generate more wealth for wealthy people in America.

Especially on high school campuses, it's very important to get the military off campus. These kids are 16 and 17 years old. They couldn't even get a car loan without a co-signer, and we have people coming and trying to get them to sign a contract to go kill and be killed.

Joshua Despain; In Iraq A Little Over Six Months:

That slogan (Support the troops) has been eating at me.

I've seen lots of people who have yellow ribbons on the back of their car, and I try to talk to them. The one thing that you can do to support me and the troops is to listen to our voice, and most people who have the mentality support our troops don't want to hear what we have to say about ending the war.

They think that supporting the troops is supporting the war, and it should be the opposite.

Support President Bush and our troops? That's a conflicting statement.

If you're supporting Bush, then you're not supporting our troops. And if you support our troops, you don't support Bush.

Lou Plummer, father of Andrew Plummer, and a lead organizer of the Fayetteville rally, wrote of Despain as he marched to the rally:

"A young man in a red beret and a desert camouflage jacket walked purposefully behind her. The banner he helped carry read 'Iraq Veterans Against the War'. Joshua Despain served in Iraq with Ft. Bragg's 82nd Airborne. A friend died in combat. Questioning the reasons for that sacrifice, Despain refused to return to Iraq after being granted leave in the U.S. The Army quietly discharged him rather than allowing his case to draw attention to the growing discontent among its ranks."

"This war is an obscene reality to the people whose lives are forever changed by it. In a military community it is sometimes difficult to counter the flag-waving stereotype by objecting to the lies and broken promises emanating from

Washington. Those who depend on the military for their housing, medical care and their very livelihoods are to be commended for risking all of that by speaking out.”

FUCK WITH THEM AT YOUR OWN RISK



Diane Green Lent, Photographer. <http://dianelent.com/fayetteville1.html>

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.

For Interviews With Iraq Vets Against The War:

http://websrvr20.audiovideoweb.com/avwebdswebsrvr2143/news_video/5.031805protest_300k.mov

Fayetteville Card Count: 4800

From: Ward Reilly

To: GI Special
Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2005 9:54 AM
Subject: RE: GI Special Announcement 3.22.05

Greetings from Baton Rouge...it was such a special weekend, and I want to tell you what a pleasure it was to meet you, and so many others that I have only an "e" relationship with.

A bit of info that you might find useful is that the organizers had 4800 info cards turned in at the rally, cards that we were all supposed to fill out for the head count (I missed it somehow) which makes that the more-or-less "official" count of the event...so the actual count has to be even bigger...

Again this is based on an actual card count.

It was incredibly nice to be with the heart of the movement, and it is nice to be around 100% real americans for a change, in this sea of despair and idiocracy.

Peace brother....
Ward

Military Wife Becomes Fayetteville War Protester

Today, on the second anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Denise will stand with other military families and Iraq war veterans at a protest in Fayetteville, N.C., home of the Army's Fort Bragg.

[Thanks to Desmond, who sent this in.]

03/19/05 By Moni Basu, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Denise Thomas isn't ashamed to say she lost it the day her only daughter shipped out to the Middle East.

This was her baby girl Shanell — the one she used to call "Thingy-Wingy" and the one who sat scrunched between Denise and her husband, Theartis, in church so they could keep her from squirming. As soon as the last "Amen!" rang out through the sanctuary, Shanell yelled "Yabba Dabba Doo!" and zoomed out the door.

This was Spc. Shanell Thomas of V Corps, 527th Military Police Company, who grew up with scoliosis, a condition that can lead to severe curvature of the spine.

Shanell, 29, had told her mother that an Army doctor had declared her undeployable because of her condition. But with war in Iraq looming, she was ordered to leave.

Denise didn't know what to do.

A military wife for 24 years and a military mom for five, she believed war was justified when the country was in real danger. She believed it was necessary to build a strong military.

But she had doubts about the premise for war in Iraq. And now her little Shanell, whose back made a loud popping sound and who felt pain in 30 pounds of body armor and the weight of her weapon and gear, could die in a war neither she nor her daughter believed was just.

"If you are a mother, and your child is in trouble, you do what you have to to defend them," Denise said. "And that's what I did."

Today, on the second anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq, Denise will stand with other military families and Iraq war veterans at a protest in Fayetteville, N.C., home of the Army's Fort Bragg. Some of the protesters are steadfastly against the war; others just want to help bring the troops home. More than 1,500 U.S. soldiers have died in Iraq.

It's been a long journey for Denise, 48, who rarely commanded public attention unless she was belting out gospel music in church.

Staff Sgt. Theartis Thomas never stood in his wife's way. Not even now, as he, a member of the Army National Guard's 1230th Transportation Company, is heading to Fort Irwin, Calif., where the 48th Brigade Combat Team will train before deploying to Iraq in May.

"She's been a military wife for 24 years," Theartis said. "She's been through the mill. She's earned her right to speak her mind."

From the chaos of the house she recently rented in Covington, Denise organized the first meeting of the Georgia chapter of Military Families Speak Out, an antiwar group mainly for families with loved ones serving in Iraq.

"Many people are afraid to speak out because they think that what they say will get their military family member in trouble," she said. "I've been afraid somebody on the street would punch me out. But I know there are people out there who feel powerless."

Three years ago, she might have sat at home silently. Then, she didn't pay much attention to politics or foreign policy. She never held grand ambitions in life. When she was 9, she had read a magazine story about siblings who were separated after their parents died. She vowed to be a supermom.

She met and married Theartis Thomas in Dublin, a town southeast of Macon. When Denise was pregnant with her second baby, Jeron, Theartis joined the Army, in part because it offered health insurance.

Their travels took them to Army bases in Kansas, North Carolina, back to Georgia and to Germany. Denise didn't like moving around much, but she stood behind her husband. She stood by the U.S. Army.

"I was very proud of my husband," Denise said.

Shanell followed in her father's footsteps and joined the Army five years ago. But Denise couldn't let her go to war with her spinal problem.

At first the rumblings were quiet. Denise talked to her family. Then she began sounding off on Internet discussion sites and wrote to newspapers and TV stations. She said she got either no response or, worse, venom.

E-mails called her unpatriotic or laid the blame on her daughter. "Why'd your daughter join the military if she's not up for combat? What did she expect?"

Denise wrote to lawmakers and even to President Bush, pleading for them to send Shanell home.

"I have an increasing feeling of dread, as if I am out of time," she said in her letter to the White House. "I already can't concentrate, I can't work, and I can't think of anything except getting my daughter home."

She worried that her daughter's back problems would make it difficult for her to handle her weapon properly.

"It would be worse for her to come home knowing she had caused the death of someone she worked with than for her not to come home at all," Denise said. "I was angry they put her in that position."

"If someone is medically unfit, they should be reassigned to a non-combat role. It was a mistake for America to not build up its troop strength before going to war."

As the months went by, the anger consumed her. Outside her window, she saw joggers and neighbors going home in their cars. But in her mind's eye, soldiers in camouflage were dodging bullets in her front yard.

Like other military mothers, Denise prayed. She wrote letters and assembled care packages. She stared vacantly at her computer screen just waiting for a message from Shanell to pop into her inbox. She watched CNN. It was a good day when the anchor announced that there were no new casualties.

One day, she got an excited message from Shanell. "Mama! We were all at the Iraqi police station. Ten bombs fell in the parking lot and nobody got hurt. Nobody got hurt."

That was a very good day.

Denise thought about stopping her medication for high blood pressure. If I die, she thought, then surely they would let Shanell come home for my funeral.

Last year, U.S. Rep. Cynthia McKinney asked Denise to speak at her campaign launching. Denise talked about how she had opposed the Iraq war. It was the first time she had spoken out publicly.

"I think Cynthia McKinney created a monster," she said.

She plastered a color picture of Shanell on a rear window of her minivan. The message read: "I'm in Baghdad. Please get me out."

It won her "who-do-you-think-you-are?" stares." But Denise didn't care. She began speaking at anti-war events.

Then, finally, Shanell came home to her mother after 11 months in Baghdad. Denise's baby girl was safe.

But her campaign didn't end. Today, mother and daughter will raise their voices together outside Fort Bragg.

"I've turned into somebody else," Denise said, almost unrecognizable to herself. "It was something I had to do. It was conviction."

An Appeal From Rose Gentle

[This is a message to Americans from Rose Gentle. Her son was killed in Iraq. She leads a campaign to bring all the Scots and other troops home from Iraq, now. She's asking for letters from Americans against the war she can deliver to Blair. T]

From: Rose Gentle
To: GI Special
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2005 9:36 AM
Subject: Re: GI Special Announcement 3.22.05

CAN YOU HELP ME.

CAN YOU ALL EMAIL ME A LETTER TO MR BLAIR.

I AM OFF TO NO 10 DOWNING ST . SOON I SPEK FOR THE FAMILIES OF
MANY

MEN AND WOMEN RISKING OR LOSING THEIR LIVES IN IRAQ.

FOR ALL OVER.

QUITE FRANKLY I WOULD LOVE TO MEET HIM MYSELF

BUT HE WILL NOT, BUT I HOPE HE HAS THE PLEASURE READING ALL

THE LETTERS I WILL HAND IN.

BRING THE TROOPS HOME.

To send letters, click on:

JUSTICEFORGORDONGENTLE@YAHOO.CO.UK

SCOTLAND.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Local Occupation Cops, Collaborator Troops Kill Each Other

Mar 24 By EDWARD HARRIS, Associated Press Writer

Police mistook a group of Iraqi soldiers wearing civilian garb for insurgents Thursday, sparking a gunbattle that killed five in northern Iraq.

The soldiers in the northern city of Rabia, 90 miles west of the larger city of Mosul, were armed and dressed in street clothes, confusing police, said the region's police chief, Ahmed Mohammed Khalaf.

Three soldiers and two police were killed, while eight were wounded in the 10-minute exchange.

Pipeline Repair Crane Blown Up

March 24, 2005 By David Axe, THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Militants exploded a bomb on one of only two cranes used by the state-run Northern Oil Company to seal breached large pipes. The attack slowed the already weeklong process of repairing damaged pipelines.

Demonstrators Wants Oil Minister From Basra

Mar 24 By EDWARD HARRIS, Associated Press Writer

In the southern city of Basra, more than 200 protesters demanded an individual from their petroleum-rich region be named head of the oil ministry. Some demonstrators even threatened to strike if their demands weren't met.

"Everyone must know that the oppressed and persecuted people of the south refuse to have their interests be ignored," protesters said in a statement given to the provincial governor, Mohammed al-Waeli.

Al-Waeli agreed, saying: "We are eager that the people of Basra and the south have clout in the new government."

Falluja Resistance Attack Kills Four Collaborator Troops

Mar 24 By EDWARD HARRIS, Associated Press Writer & Anatolia.com Inc.

An AFP reporter said shots were heard from the city's northwestern Jolan district and Iraqi police sealed off the district around 1:30 pm (1030 GMT).

At the Jolan district's medical centre, hospital clerk Abbas Ahmed said four dead Iraqi soldiers were brought to the facility.

"There are clashes between the army and police and insurgents, but we don't have a toll yet," the defense ministry official said.

Police patrolled the streets and imposed a sudden, late-afternoon curfew, shouting through loudspeakers: "Close your stores and go home!" They also set up checkpoints and searched cars in the city.

Earlier, a battle broke out in the northern Jolan neighborhood between unidentified guerrillas and Iraqi security [translation: occupation] forces, witnesses said.

"We were surprised to see a large number of Iraqi security forces raiding homes and dragging out young men, maybe for investigations," resident Jamal Mohammed said.

Widespread Resistance Action

Mar 24 & 3.21 By EDWARD HARRIS, Associated Press Writer & 3/21/2005 Anatolia.com Inc. & March 20 (Xinhuanet) & Feza Newspaper Publishing Co & 3.24.05 Middle East Online

A roadside bomb hit an American SUV, commonly used by foreign contractors, near Fallujah on Sunday night, killing all occupants and destroying the vehicle, Xinhua correspondent said.

The attack took place on a road north of Fallujah, some 50 km west of Baghdad.

In Baghdad, guerrillas opened fire on a two-ton army truck transporting soldiers in an eastern neighborhood. The truck overturned, injuring 12 troop members, police Maj. Mousa Hussein said.

An interior ministry official insisted on Monday that 10 guards belonging to interim minister of state for governorate affairs Wael Abdul Lateef had gone missing on Sunday in Warda when Latif's convoy was ambushed south of Baghdad.

An Iraqi soldier was killed in Sherqat, 160 miles north of Baghdad, when two mortar shells landed on their camp, while another soldier died and four others were wounded when an Iraqi army vehicle was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade in western Baghdad, a Defense Ministry official said.

Three Iraqi soldiers were captured near the refinery town of Baiji, south of Kirkuk, as they travelled in a taxi, said Iraqi police.

Further south in Bir Ahmed police said they found the body of Othman Ara, a 44-year-old contractor working with US forces.

In Baghdad's Amiriyah neighborhood, gunmen in two speeding cars fired on an Iraq army foot patrol, killing another soldier and wounding a third, police Capt. Talib Thamir said.

Police also said the director of the Iraqi army's legal department in northern Kirkuk, Lt. Col. Hawas al-Bayati, was shot and critically injured late Sunday outside his home.

Nearby, the head of the Kazimiyah neighborhood police force, Col. Mou'yad Farhan, escaped unhurt when gunmen opened fire on his car, police said. His driver, however, was seriously injured and hospitalized.

In the northern city of Mosul, a bomber slipped into the office of General Walid Kachmoula, chief of the provincial anti-corruption department, and blew himself up inside, killing Kachmoula and two guards.

Iraqi police official Hasan Salih declared that unidentified persons attacked a convoy protected by the US 9 km north of Beyci at 11.00 local time and killed a Turkish driver.

Hours after the bombing, attackers opened fire on the procession bearing Kachmoula's coffin when it was on the way to a cemetery, leaving two people dead and another 14 wounded.

In Baquba, a town northeast of Baghdad, at least four policemen were killed and another two were wounded when a group of guerrillas raided a police station.

A truck bomb blasting at the entrance of an Iraqi barrack in Baquba left 17 people injured. Four insurgents were killed in an ensuing firefight there.

In Samarra, insurgents killed a policeman and wounded three others during an attack. The police found the bodies of an Iraqi army officer and his cousin in the same area.

In the southern city of Basra, reports said an official convoy headed to Baghdad was attacked with no details on the casualties.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**No combat ready unit has ever passed inspection.
No inspection ready unit has ever passed combat.**

[From K]

“If You See Any Politicians”

Fittingly, it's Spc. Stuart Wilf, who sums it up in a printed quote that forms the film's final frame:

“If you see any politicians, be sure to let them know that while they're sitting around their dinner table with their families talking about how hard the war is on them, we're here under attack 24 hours a day ... dodging RPGs and fighting not just for a better Iraq, but to stay alive.”

[From Army Times film review of Gunner Palace, by Chuck Vinch, Army Times 3.21.05]

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.

Received:

Media Request From London

From: hermosh@aol.com
To: GI Special
Sent: Thursday, March 24, 2005 12:03 PM
Subject: MEDIA REQUEST FROM London. uk

My name is Yvonne Ridley and I am a journalist and TV presenter. **If you have any ex-soldiers, their families etc. who have refused to serve/support the war in Iraq please let me know ... especially if they are passing through London.**

I would love to invite them on my show.

Received:

Honoring General Smedley Butler

From: Don Bacon The Smedley Butler Society
To: GI Special
Sent: Tuesday, March 22, 2005 6:40 PM
Subject: Smedley Butler

Thanks for what you're doing. Communicating the truth is essential to our republic.

General Smedley Butler's career is a required subject in the Marine Corps, but Marines usually don't know 'the rest of the story.'

After 33 years of service, including participation in military interventions in China, Central America and Haiti, and two Congressional Medals of Honor, General Butler came to his senses and concluded that war is a racket, conducted mainly for corporate profit.

The Smedley Butler Society is keeping his spirit alive, and his ideas are a powerful message to service members who need to hear the truth.

Can you help us to get his message out to the troops? We're on the web at <http://www.warisaracket.org>

Thank you and keep up the good work.

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: www.gifightback.org,
<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>, www.williambowles.info/gispecial,
<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/gi-special.htm>**

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.