

GI SPECIAL 3A8:

Army Values: “It Is Time To Give The Nation’s Army Back To The People.”

From: Soldier, Iraq
To: GI Special
Sent: Friday, January 07, 2005
Subject: Army Values

Based on the democratic ideals of America, that our nation’s citizens have a voice in the exercise of power, I will act as a soldier on the behalf of the majority, and not in the interest of the few who possess the greatest amount of wealth.

In basic training recruits learn a system called the Army Values, in which they follow as a moral guideline. The Army Values are set up as an acronym that spells out leadership, with a few of the vowels missing.

As I see it our leadership has ignored these rules of principle and have betrayed the standards in which the American people have placed so much pride.

It is time that the United States Soldier regains his dignified role as a defender of freedom and democracy.

It is time to give the nation’s army back to the people.

These are my Army Values

(Loyalty)- The constant allegiance to the American people and the dedication to the liberties of our countries independence.

(Duty)- The obligation that binds a soldier to perform whatever task necessary to complete his responsibilities toward the goals of the American society.

(Respect)- Admiration and fair treatment towards all people and regard for their rights and feelings.

(Selfless Service)- Concern for others welfare before one's own and working for another's benefit without reward. Personal sacrifice.

(Honor)- High standing of character. Exemplifying just action and honest practice.

(Integrity)- Sound and virtuous morality.

(Personal Courage)- Acting on your values despite the consequences or challenge.

I would like to see more soldiers exercise these values in the face of those opposed to a true American democracy.

Fight against greed and authority to do what is right by our nation.

Our leaders goals are not to the benefit of the majority who work themselves into poverty only to provide tax money that pays for their own shackles.

We deplete the strength and welfare of our own countrymen fighting as mercenaries for the elite rich who gain off exploiting government contracts and manipulating the oil market.

Let's put worth in the American flag again. Let's win back our values.

Let's act as patriots,

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

“12 Hour Battle” Reported By Wounded U.S. Soldier: Command, Media Say Nothing About It

January 7, 2005 By Susan Morse, Seacoast Newspapers

SEABROOK - **Mike Cawley, a Seabrook police officer who is serving in Iraq, has been shot through his right arm and hand during a 12-hour battle in Iraq,** according to Seabrook Police Chief David Currier.

Cawley's wife, Barbara, received a phone call from Cawley's commanding officer at 3 a.m. yesterday morning, said Currier.

"He was in a hot zone in Iraq," said Barbara Cawley. "He was just medivaced out of the hot zone."

Currier said he didn't know and Barbara Cawley said she couldn't say where the fight took place.

Six Louisiana National Guardsmen Killed

1/7/2005 The Associated Press

HOUMA, La. (AP) — **Six National Guardsmen, all from Houma and nearby southeast Louisiana towns, were among those killed when a bomb blast struck their patrol vehicle in Iraq.**

The soldiers with Task Force Baghdad were on patrol Thursday evening when their Bradley fighting vehicle hit the explosive, the military said in a statement. Everyone inside the Bradley was killed.

The National Guard identified the dead as three men from Houma: Spc. Bradley Bergeron, Sgt. Christopher Babin and Pfc. Armand Frickey; and three others from the same area: Spc. Warren Murphy of Marrero, Spc. Huey Fassbender of LaPlace, and Sgt. 1st Class Kurt Comeaux of Raceland.

Comeaux had overcome hardship just to get to Iraq. While he was training at Fort Hood, Texas, in May, his father died. He was able to attend the funeral, but soon after was diagnosed with cancer himself.

Troops Search For 7 Dead Friends; "We Had A Normal Life," He Said, "Til We Came Out Here."

January 7, 2005 BY DIONNE SEARCEY, STAFF CORRESPONDENT

TAJI, Iraq -- Soldiers stood at the edge of a reed-lined canal Friday and watched as the vestiges of seven friends were plucked from the murky green water.

A muddy combat boot, a black clip for night vision goggles, a bone fragment. It was a gruesome task that began Thursday night after a giant roadside bomb tore apart an armored Bradley Fighting Vehicle, setting it on fire and flipping it into the shallow canal. The seven soldiers inside -- one from New York and six from Louisiana - died instantly, said Lt. Col. Geoffrey Slack of Mastic Beach.

And thank God for that, he repeated several times as he helped members of Manhattan's 69th Infantry Regiment comb the canal and a nearby field, finding an empty helmet and a part of the curved handle of a 9 mm pistol.

The blast put a waist-deep hole in the dirt road the Bradley had rumbled down as part of a small convoy. The explosion tore out the floor of the vehicle and blew off its hatch. It triggered the heavy ammunition stored inside, setting off rounds that were still popping as fire trucks arrived. When the Bradley landed, it carved out a large pool in a parallel canal.

Friday morning the air still smelled like gasoline. The vehicle had been removed but its leaked fuel made little rainbows on the pool's surface where oil floated in perfect black polka dots. Beneath the water was a fire extinguisher and a desert camouflage pillow that soldiers like to use to soften the bumpy ride in their Bradleys.

The troops took their turns as morbid fishermen, throwing lines with claw-like hooks tied to the end into the canal to snag the items. The mud started to swallow a couple of the men who had to be pulled to safety by comrades.

The soldiers in the National Guard unit made three piles: one for vehicle parts, one for top-secret equipment and one for the victims' personal items. It was up to Spc. Brian Burns, 24, a medic, to collect the human remains. Wearing rubber gloves, he sighed as he gently placed them in a green waterproof bag designed for protecting his rucksack. A close friend was among the dead. Newsday is not identifying the soldier at the request of the U.S. military, which is still contacting family members.

"People are dying here and sometimes I think I could be sitting at home with my family, cooking in a restaurant in a safe place," said Burns, of upstate New York, as he paused from his work.

Back home near Newburg, Burns is a chef. Besides cooking, he loves hunting and hiking and rock climbing and thought that joining the National Guard would give him a chance to improve his skills as an outdoorsman, he said, holding the green bag in his left hand.

"I don't regret coming over here. It's a chance to serve my country."

Then the chef went back to the day's grim task, joining the mailman from Huntington, the college student from Queens, the Coney Island policeman and the Manhattan stockbroker who sifted through the tall, dry reeds and walked the fields on both sides of

the canal, finding charred vehicle parts as far as 50 yards away. Shiny chunks of shrapnel were everywhere, and someone lined them up on the hood of a Humvee.

The bomb must have been huge, soldiers said. This mostly rural area lends itself to effective bomb-making, they said, because insurgents can spend time building complicated devices while going unnoticed and can tap the resources of looters who once helped themselves to the abandoned ammunition stockpiles of a nearby Iraqi Republican National Guard camp.

The blast went off close to the intersection of busy Route Redlegs, named after artillerymen who first secured the area in the spring of 2003. **Slack, commander of the 69th Mechanized Infantry unit, said he typically forbids soldiers from traveling that route because of the bombs that often explode there.** The convoy on Thursday needed only to cross the road as part of its patrol of tiny Awad al-Hussein north of Baghdad, but they didn't make it.

Slack, who runs a tree-cutting business on Long Island, handed a soldier his rifle Friday, dropped to his knees along a muddy embankment and dug in the ground with a small shovel. He didn't want the enemy to find anything they could use for trophies. He and other soldiers pulled from the loose soil part of an ammunition belt and a pair of handcuffs.

"We train for close combat," said Slack, who has been on duty with the Guard since the World Trade Center attacks. "This is unlike anything we've trained for. This is like murder." **[Wrong. This is war, and what happens when you invade and occupy somebody else's country. Not having a navy, air force and two billion dollars a week to spend, Iraqi patriots use what they got. And you'd do exactly the same if you were in their shoes. Ask the British officers what they ran into in 1776. It wasn't "close combat," it was American patriots hiding behind rocks and trees, and running away when you came after them, to live to fight another day. P.S. Who won?]**

For Slack, the loss of so many soldiers is particularly painful because three other members under his command have been killed since the unit deployed in October. In November, Sgt. Christian Engeldrum, 39, a New York City firefighter from the Bronx, and Army Spc. Wilfredo Urbina, 29, a volunteer firefighter from Baldwin, died when a car bomb exploded near their Humvee in Baghdad. Only days later Staff Sgt. Henry Irizarry of the Bronx was killed in another car bomb incident.

The Louisiana soldiers who died Thursday, part of the 2nd Battalion, 156th Infantry Brigade, were folded into Slack's unit for their mission in Iraq. The two groups live and fight alongside each other here, and the New Yorkers said they consider their Louisiana counterparts to be family.

"I can't replace any one of them," said Capt. Michael Kazmierzak, 34, of New Orleans, who leads a company of the Louisiana soldiers. "Most of them are very close to each other and have known each other their whole lives."

One of the men fanning out across a field Friday with trash bags was Sgt. Jose Melecio, 26, who said he was watching a movie the night before when a soldier came in and told him seven of his friends had died.

"I didn't believe it," said Melecio. Just several months ago, he was a student at Bronx Community College. "We had a normal life," he said, "'til we came out here."

The Death Of A Soldier

January 7, 2005 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 022-05

The Department of Defense announced today the death of a soldier.

Sgt. Bennie J. Washington, 25, of Atlanta, Ga., died Jan. 4 in Brooke Army Medical Center, San Antonio, Texas, of injuries sustained Oct. 14 in Ar Ramadi, Iraq, when his military vehicle was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade. Washington was assigned to the 44th Engineer Battalion, 2nd Infantry Division, Camp Howze, Korea.

Soldier With Ties To Springfield Killed



Marcum family/KY3 NEWS

Spc. Joshua Marcum had five children.

1/6/05 Tim Tialdo, KY3 News, and The Associated Press

Sgt. Jeremy McHalfey was eager to go to Iraq.

He was killed by a roadside bomb along with his roommates in Iraq.

McHalfey was one of three soldiers from Arkansas killed in the bombing. The others were Spc. Joshua Marcum of Evening Shade in Sharp County, and Cpl. Jimmy Buie of Floral in Independence County. The Army says they were roommates at Camp Gunslinger in Iraq.

The military says the explosion happened as a convoy was traveling through Baghdad. It injured a soldier from Arkansas and another from New York.

Specialist Christian Kerlen of Batesville, Ark., was driving the vehicle behind the Humvee when the blast hit. He said his vehicle rolled through the dust and he saw the Humvee wobble, hit a pole and then stop. Kerlen said he went to start pulling people out and was unable to recognize them.

Of the soldiers who were killed, McHalfey had the most experience in Iraq. Buie and Marcum went to Iraq as replacements. Another soldier said McHalfey was a hard-charger who wasn't as laidback as the other guys.

Buie, 43, joined the military after high school. He rejoined in August and spent a month training for Iraq duty at Fort Hood, Texas. **He was a mechanic at Mark Martin Ford-Mercury in Batesville and his boss there said he was a hard-working employee.**

Linda LeJeune, Marcum's mother-in-law, said that her son-in-law was a quiet man who wouldn't swear and didn't like to argue. **Marcum was a 33-year-old truck driver and liked to play with his five children who were between the ages of eight and 15.**

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans' benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. 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)

OOPS



01/07/05 StrategyPage's Military Photos: C-130 Crackup

At an American military airfield in Iraq, work was being done on the runway, but no one had bothered to issue a NOTAM (notice to airmen). Aircraft landing during the day were able to avoid the work site, but a C-130 came in at night on December 29th, hit the work area, and was totalled. There were several injuries among the crew and passengers, but no fatalities. **There will, however, be some fatal effects on the career prospects of one or more air force officers (the ones responsible for distributing NOTAM information.)**



TROOP NEWS

Iraq Dutch Troops “In Revolt”

06 Jan 05 EuroSavant

As if there weren't enough troubles already in Iraq, another tribe there is now in revolt. And this is among folks who would ordinarily be among the last you would look to for such trouble, the "good guys," so to speak.

I'm talking here about the 1,350-strong contingent of Dutch soldiers stationed there, and that's a direct quote from the head of their union, the AFMP, W. van den Burg: they're in opstand, or "in revolt."

What that means in practical terms? Increasing talk about some sort of "strike action," whatever that is supposed to look like in the middle of Iraq.

After I first came aware of this story and commenced my usual Dutch press-scanning for it, it turned out that most Netherlands dailies have declined to cover it, at least on-line.

The exception is Allard Besse, of the Algemeen Dagblad and his article Soldiers in Iraq Grumble Over Money, but quite a good exception it is.

And that seems precisely the problem: money, and what soldiers out in the field in Iraq complain is a kruideniersmentaliteit on the part of the Defense authorities - a "green-grocer's mentality."

We get quite an informative mini-lesson here in soldier household economics.

Dutch troops sent to Iraq get extra payments in two forms: 39 euros per day for what the article terms the "extra workload" - taxable - and 27 dollars (yes, US dollars) per day, untaxed, for expenses. Both of those payments are unsatisfactory, claims the aforementioned Mr. van den Burg of the soldiers' union. The dollar-amount for expenses hasn't been adjusted since 1996, back when the greenback was riding high in the world's currency markets. Now that situation is quite different, of course, and with the dollar's fall the purchasing-power of that expenses allocation has also fallen.

But those 39 "workload" euros won't really cut either, and the clue here is to be found precisely in that label:

It's no longer really a matter of "workload" for Dutch troops in Iraq, but rather of being shot at rather often and on rare occasions (so far, thank God) even being killed.

In a similar way to those 27 dollars, that rate of 39 euros was set back when the most Dutch troops could look forward to in the way of real "action" was humanitarian operations; now, in the Dutch union-scale compensation calculus, the greater risks run in Iraq should translate into substantially more of a per diem.

Putting the problem into stark relief is the fact alleged several times in the article that Dutch troops actually earn more extra money going on training to Germany or Norway than they do being sent to the rather hostile current environs of Iraq.

Besse gains such quotes through going beyond union-head Van den Burg to diligently track down both active military personnel and their wives back home to take an attitude-check.

From troops on the ground he gets comments dismissing the combat-pay as a mere "gratuity" that they receive "as hirelings of this government."

From one particular wife back home - whose hubby is in fact a highly-placed officer, so naturally she doesn't want her name used - comes a tale of how the family was promised by the military authorities earnings of around 1,500 euros/month more due to the combat deployment, but somehow has received only about 600/month of that.

But back to *huurlingen van deze regering* - "hirelings of this government."

One might respond: "Of course you are that - what did you think you were?"

Once virtually all European military forces were that, namely back around the Renaissance when cities and states usually found it more convenient to pay others to perform the dirty-work of combat. (Although for some, especially cities, this expedient could come back to bite them as mercenaries actually took over power.)

On the other hand, in the 20th century armies were largely drafted, but often motivated via some sort of nationalist ideology. (Actually, this was the innovation contributed by the late 18th-century French Revolution.)

To take up for examination the Dutch Army's most obvious counterpart in Iraq, the US military could be described as all-volunteer, professional (also "hirelings," if you want), but still largely motivated by a nationalist ideology (namely the 9/11 attacks and the "War on Terror").

What sort of army delivers better combat power? The answer is probably obvious, apart from the sheer superiority in numbers on the ground of the US Army and Marines.

Still, they should watch out for what we could call "creeping Dutchification": the recent refusal by a transport unit to embark on what its personnel considered a "suicide mission" is one sign of that, coupled with the current strain on the moral of the many National Guard and Reserve personnel in-country who never thought that this is what they were signing up for.



ArchAngel Update on Spc. Barron 01-07-05

This is an open letter to the readers of GI Special from Sc. Barron's wife Kim Barron, a fellow ArchAngel.

My name is Kimberly A. Barron.

I am writing this letter to convey my concern over the condition of my husbands, SPC Patrick G Barron, knees. He has been diagnosed with Chondromalacia Patellar, a degenerative condition affecting the cartilage beneath the kneecap. Since Pat has been mobilized, his pain has increased and his limp more pronounced.

My husband will be deploying to Iraq very shortly, and my concerns are for the health and well being of him in such a hostile environment.

He has been cleared for deployment with limitations.

I ask you this: How can anyone deploy a soldier to combat with such limitations as, No lifting or carrying more than forty pounds, no ruck, no walking/running on uneven surfaces, no 3 -5 second rushes under direct or indirect fire? These limitations have me deeply confused as he is 11B, an infantryman, one of the most physically demanding jobs in the army.

He has been on a T-3 profile under the L on the PULHES on the physical profile functional capacity guide. The first one was issued on the very first day he was mobilized and it had a duration of 60 days. Since that time he has been issued 4 more, all 30 day T-3 profiles. He has endured physical therapies, and numerous medications all to no avail. **The problem has not gone away, and will not, as it is a degenerative condition.**

On 06 DEC 2004, he suffered a fall at JRTC in FT Polk LA. The soldier who was standing nearby witnessed this. **He is also an army medic, and he saw as well as heard the noise my husbands knee made when he slipped while climbing out of the back of a hummer.**

The attending P.A. Capt. Eric Rice told my husband that a visit to the emergency room was not necessary and he dispensed Tylenol for pain. The pain my husband was in was excruciating but he felt he had no choice but to carry on, even in great pain.

Upon returning to Ft Hood some two weeks later, my husband then sought out the advice of an emergency room doctor at Darnell Military Hospital, once there he saw Capt. Dale A Spence P.A. who recommended an MRI as soon as possible and an Ortho

consult as well, he then issued Patrick another 30 day T-3 pending aforementioned Consultation and test.

He said that he was worried that Patrick may have torn a ligament because his knees felt "looser" than it should be. The only problem with this is that he has been denied an MRI time and time again.

When he came home for the holidays, I noticed an increased limp as well as obvious pain. I insisted on a trip to our hospital, Uvalde Memorial Hospital, he agreed and was seen by Dr Lewis Christian who concurred with Capt Spence's diagnosis that he needed both an Ortho Consult and a MRI. He gave Patrick a immobilization brace and crutches as well as a prescription for Vicoden.

When Pat returned to Ft Hood after the holidays he was seen again, this time by SRP Capt Jeff H Wright D.O. Captain Wright examined Patrick's knees and told him that all previous diagnosis were wrong, and he didn't have Chondromalacia Patellar, he had something else and it would be cured in 30 days with knees braces, however the braces would not be available until after Patrick was out of the country.

He asked for a MRI and showed paperwork that said that it was needed, he was denied. My question is, who is this man that can change the diagnosis of 5 previous doctors without benefit of X-rays or MRI?

It certainly sounds very wrong to me.

Something must be done for Patrick, and soldiers like him that are at the mercy of the Army's whims.

If all it takes is for the diagnosis of one man to wipe out the previous diagnosis of several other doctors, civilian as well as military then why do we have these doctors to begin with ? It seems to me that we really only need this one!

Something does not sound right to me, is the army so hard up for numbers that they will say whatever is necessary to send them into combat?

Isn't this more dangerous to our Soldiers? We cannot win a war with broken soldiers! We NEED to be sure beyond a shadow of a doubt that these men and women are 100% before sending them to do this country's bidding.

All I ask is that my husband get the needed treatment and his condition be taken care of properly. I am not a doctor, but when faced with the diagnosis or 5 out of 6 saying one thing, and 1 saying that it's something else, I tend to believe the 5. All I ask is that he be re-evaluated by a different doctor and that the necessary tests be administered.

Doesn't it make sense to send our troops into a combat situation well armed? Physically as well and mentally? Why send a medically unfit soldier all the way overseas, only to return him because he shouldn't have been there in the first place. This seems like a waste of tax-payer dollars to me.

My other concern may or may not sound pertinent to you . On Saturday, January 1, 2005 we attended the deployment ceremony at Baylor College in Waco TX. **My husband was to sit with his family in the bleachers, because he was not able to stand the necessary time needed for the ceremony.**

I feel that if a soldier is unable to participate in his own deployment ceremony , because of limited ability to stand up for one hour, that there is defiantly something wrong there. This War will NOT be Won if we keep sending BROKEN SOLDIERS!!!!



More By Brandie Lampin:

Once again we have an out of control Commander that is just thinking of himself and not of his men. He is only thinking of his Combat Infantry Badge and his advancement in the Army.

Kim is a fellow ArchAngel, and we have been working real hard trying to keep her husband from deploying into Iraq. Unfortunately his command left Thursday and is now in Kuwait awaiting further orders.

The case workers for Congressman Cornyn and Senator Hutchison of the state of Texas, just received the information about the last doctor that saw her husband and found it unacceptable.

I too find it unacceptable, because of personal reasons.

You see, I am Brandie Lampin, and if you remember, my husband Sgt. Tony Lampin also had the same medical handicap as Spc. Barron, and he too was forced into Iraq only to be returned because the doctors there could do nothing for his pain, and the constant fight that I gave to right the wrong that his commander made.

To give you just a bit of notice on his situation, further damage did occur to not only his damaged left knee but also his right. So the commander of Spc. Barron, Lt. Colonel Breor, J., is in the wrong for forcing this Soldier into Iraq when 5 doctors say that he should not, not forgetting that he left in crutches.

He too like my husband's commander promises to keep him safe and that nothing will happen to him when this command is an infantry unit.

Once again we have an out of control Commander that is just thinking of himself and not of his men. He is only thinking of his Combat Infantry Badge and his advancement in the Army.

What will be the excuse if, God forbid it was to happen, Spc. Barron was to fall because he could not run in a firefight with the enemy because of his medical situation with his knees?

Not only does he have very bad knees, but Spc. Barron also has loss of hearing do to the last war with Iraq. So not only will he not be able to run for cover, but he would also not be able to hear for the call to run for cover when shouted.

Even his fellow Soldiers feel that he should not be there because of him being medically unfit, and these are Soldiers who will have to keep him by his side in a fire fight if one occurs. You would think that an officer of such a high rank as Lt. Col. of the 2/142 Infantry B. Company, should not only listen to the doctors, but should also listen to his men who march beside Spc. Barron. Like Kim said, "YOU CAN'T WIN A WAR WITH BROKEN SOLDIERS."

ArchAngel would just like to let Lt. Col. Breor know that we are not going to stop fighting for the return of Spc. Barron.

I would like to remind the people who read our articles that if they would like to contact us, you can email us at ArchAngel1BL@aol.com, ArchAngel1BL@hotmail.com , and ArchAngel2KB@hotmail.com

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Official Of Collaborator Party Shot

7 January 2005 Khaleej Times & (AFP)

Insurgents assassinated an official of the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution of Iraq (SCIRI), a Shiite political party. The official was killed Thursday evening in a drive-by shooting at a petrol station in the village of Khalis, near Baquba.

In Samarra north of Baghdad, two Iraqi soldiers and a civilian were killed in clashes with armed insurgents, while an Iraqi security officer in Kut, south of Baghdad, was killed overnight by gunmen.

More Allawi Troops Killed

1.7.05 (AFP)

In Samarra, two Iraqi soldiers and a civilian were killed in clashes with armed insurgents, while an Iraqi security officer in Kut, south of Baghdad, was killed overnight by insurgents.

Gas Pipeline Blown Up Near Tikrit; Baghdad Cut Off

7 January 2005 Khaleej Times

BAGHDAD - Insurgents severed a gas pipeline near Tikrit on Friday, causing a massive fire after setting a charge on the fuel artery running from Kirkuk in northern Iraq to Baghdad, a police source said.

Responding firefighters and civil defence units initially were unable to combat the blaze due to its size, the source said. The attack occurred about 15 kilometres north of the city.

Get The Message?



Residents of the Iraqi city of Fallujah rally in the nearby village of Naimiyah, Friday, Jan. 7, 2005. Hundreds of refugees from the destroyed city demonstrated after Friday's prayers demanding that U.S. troops and Iraqi National Guards leave the city, open

all the roads for residents to go back and pay compensation for those whose property was damaged. The writing on the banner in front says: 'The Mosques and houses of Fallujah prove criminal deeds of the occupation forces.' (AP Photo/Mohammed Khodor)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Turbulent Ground; A History Of U.S. Armed Forces Rebellions

By Martin Smith (Sgt. USMC ret'd)

Introduction

THE MORALE, DISCIPLINE and battleworthiness of the U.S. Armed Forces are...lower and worse than at any time in this century and possibly in the history of the United States [sic]. By every conceivable indicator, our army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and noncommissioned officers, drug-ridden, and dispirited where not near-mutinous...All the foregoing facts—and many more dire indicators of the worst kind of military trouble—point to widespread conditions among American forces in Vietnam that have only been exceeded in this century by the French Army's Nivelle mutinies of 1917 and the collapse of the Tsarist armies in 1916 and 1917.//

Colonel Robert D. Heinl Jr.'s statement, printed in the Armed Forces Journal in 1971, describes how the Vietnam War became a war within, a contested battle ground that pitted troops in a struggle for their survival against a new enemy, the military itself.

During the final years of the U.S. ground war in Vietnam War, the period from 1968 to 1973, the Armed Forces exploded with widespread dissent, protest, and outright rebellion by troops in what became known as the GI Movement.[] The movement's participants defied the most sacred of military codes—the obedience to all orders by a superior officer. Troops ruptured the underpinnings of the military institution and challenged the legitimacy and purpose of the war.

The GI Movement's breadth and diversity defies the traditional narrative of Vietnam anti-war protest.

Documentaries such as Berkeley in the Sixties (1990) and The Weather Underground (2003) and popular films, including Coming Home (1978) and Forrest Gump (1994), portray white, middle-class student radicals that supposedly went too far. Such films reinforce the image of Vietnam protestors as villains that either spat on returning troops

or plotted terrorist attacks on government targets. Similarly in the 1980s, the Rambo series began with the blockbuster, *First Blood* (1982), about a working-class Vietnam veteran fighting the war at home that the military planners supposedly never allowed him to win overseas. “Then I come back to the world and I see all those maggots at the airport. Protesting me. Spitting. Calling me baby killer, and all kinds of vile crap. Who are they to protest me? Huh?” declares Sylvester Stallone’s character, John J. Rambo.

The Rambo character personified working-class anger directed at anti-war protestors who escaped the draft and did not serve in the war. *First Blood* offered scapegoats that resonated with some audiences after the U.S. defeat in the Vietnam War and at the height of the 1981-82 recession in which unemployment reached its highest levels since the Depression. Moreover, by repackaging the history of Vietnam protest as that of a privileged white minority, the dominant cultural memory, presented in such films, silences the wide range of dissenting voices against the war that includes Vietnam veterans.

As Jerry Lembcke points out in *The Spitting Image*, the myth of the disrespectful Vietnam anti-war protestor that spat on returning soldiers is an attempt to attack “those individuals and organizations who dared to dissent, and strips Vietnam veterans of their true place in history as gallant fighters against the war.” The GI Movement therefore challenges contemporary views of whom, which ethnicity, and what class actually opposed the war.

A battle continues in national politics over the historical memory of the war as well. In 1988 at the Vietnam Veterans’ Memorial in Washington D.C., President Reagan claimed that the “dark...night is over” and “morning has come,” declaring closure on the Vietnam War as a “just” and “noble cause.”

Reagan’s “new dawn” symbolized the rise of a revisionist history of the war. His vision included the Vietnam soldier that fought for the “cause of freedom” yet excluded the thousands of troops that battled for the cause of peace. During the U.S. phase of the war, an estimated 1.4 million Vietnamese died; the air war detonated over fifteen million tons of U.S. ordnance; and the military sprayed more than nineteen million gallons of deadly herbicides, including dioxins, which poisoned the country.

Reagan’s “just” and “noble cause” proved a wrong and dishonorable explanation in light of the legacy of service members who protested the war and asked--whose freedom and at what price? The 2004 presidential campaign, likewise, brought the Vietnam War’s memory to the fore. President Bush and John Kerry presented their military service during the war in a disingenuous manner manufactured for television sound bites and campaign commercials. President Bush masked his record of absenteeism during his service in the Texas Air National Guard while John Kerry buried his anti-war activism as a member of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW).

Hidden from the traditional narrative of U.S. history, service members have resisted military service since the beginnings of colonial America.

During the trans-Atlantic maritime trade, sailors engaged in acts of mutiny and piracy and fought against impressments in the Royal Navy. The first known incident of troops murdering their officers in the U.S. occurred in the

Pennsylvania line of the Continental Army on January 1, 1781 due to unpaid wages, harsh punishment, and starving conditions. Irish Catholics revolted against religious bigotry during the Mexican War and formed their own unit, called the San Patricio Battalion, to fight in solidarity with Mexican Catholics. Mass desertions occurred during the Civil War and World War I, and troops filed record levels of requests for conscientious objector status during both World War II and the Korean War.

The GI Movement flourished within the United States during the Vietnam War and developed with an unparalleled level of coordination and communication in comparison to all previous military dissent.

Troops built organizational structures that were multi-racial and that employed diverse tactics to oppose the war. Military members initiated and joined GIs United against the War in Vietnam, launched out of several meetings by Black and Puerto Rican troops at Fort Jackson, South Carolina in 1969. Hundreds of soldiers founded GIs for Peace on August 17, 1969 in a meeting at El Paso's McKelligan Canyon.

The Movement for a Democratic Military (MDM) grew out of a march and protest outside Camp Pendleton, California on December 14, 1969 of five thousand people, including a thousand service personnel. Described in February, 1970 by Marine Commandant General Leonard Chapman as "a serious threat to the defense of this country," MDM united sailors and marines of color and whites around an explicitly revolutionary program. The American Servicemen's Union, organized by Private Andy Stapp, attempted to unionize the U.S. Army and at its peak in 1969 claimed seven thousand service personnel, including women.

Troops stationed in the U.S. contributed to and produced underground newspapers. The Defense Department revealed that by 1972, 245 different GI "undergrounds" had been published. "Don't desert. Go to Vietnam and kill your commanding officer," proclaimed one such West Coast underground. These newspapers offered a means to organize and broaden the movement and generally presented local grievances, anti-war thought, and an anti-racist platform. **According to James Lewes in Protest and Survive, they "provided a unique space where GIs—without fear of retribution—could question the logic, and criticize the praxis, of those who ruled their lives."**

Troops who were stateside engaged in direct action as well. Members of the Armed Forces mutinied on military installations and in the stockades. On November 9, 1972, a major mutiny occurred in the U.S. navy that took place at a San Diego port. Over 120 predominantly black sailors, including a dozen whites, raised the Black Power salute and refused to board the U.S.S. Constellation, an aircraft carrier, in protest of a general climate of institutionalized racism within the Navy.

Troops participated in mass demonstrations as well. The largest such action occurred on Armed Forces Day, renamed by military dissidents as "Armed Farces Day," on May 15, 1971. Hundreds of troops organized protests organized at nineteen separate posts, with little outside assistance.

The GI movement in Vietnam, including support units throughout Europe and Asia, developed in a reciprocal relationship with the stateside movement. ¶ Many returning veterans spoke out and resisted the war as soon as they returned “to the world,” GI slang for going home to the U.S.¶ Troops stationed in the U.S. mailed underground newspapers to troops in Vietnam. In addition, many soldiers encountered their first anti-war or civil rights protest at home before being sent to Vietnam, carrying the ideas of social justice with them. Therefore, the GI movement had an organic connection between the organizing at home and the resistance abroad.

In my research, I focused on the GI movement in Vietnam, which threatened the prosecution of the war and challenges the accepted historical and cultural memory.¶ Why and for what reason did soldiers move from dutiful and loyal insiders to disobedient and rebellious outsiders?

To answer this question is to recognize that the military rests on turbulent ground. It also reveals how the Vietnam War was an “acid bath in which received myths dissolved,” according to Marilyn B. Young, “exposing our darkest fears and anxieties” and the possibility that the military is not a stable institution.¶

The troops’ resistance overseas also raises questions about class and its relationship to the war. Christian Appy’s *The Working-Class War* asserts that eighty percent of the 2.5 million troops that served during the war were from the working class:

Vietnam, more than any other American war in the twentieth century, perhaps in our history, was a working-class war. The institutions most responsible for channeling men into the military—the draft, the schools, and the job market—directed working-class children to the armed forces and their wealthier peers toward college...Thus, America’s most unpopular war was fought primarily by the nineteen-year-old children of waitresses, factory workers, truck drivers, secretaries, firefighters, carpenters, custodians, police officers, salespeople, clerks, mechanics, miners, and farmworkers.¶

In “The Olive-Drab Rebels: Military Organizing during the Vietnam Era,” Michael Rinaldi similarly claims that the military upheaval “helped to imbue a generation of working class youth with a deep-rooted contempt for America’s authority structure.”¶ Yet the resistance by troops and the “working-class war” are rarely seen as an interconnected and dynamic relationship.

In fact, soldiers’ self-activity as working-class resistance complicates both the accepted picture of the Vietnam Anti-War Movement and of labor historiography in general. To include GI resistance as a fundamental segment of the anti-war movement shifts the location of the traditional narrative of dissent from the college campus to the battlefields of Vietnam.

Any study of resistance to war must consider the question of race and the desire for freedom that shaped the contribution to military service by African Americans. The Revolutionary War, fought from 1776 to 1781, had the only integrated fighting force until President Truman’s executive order desegregated the Armed Forces in 1948. In *The Negro in the American Revolution*, Benjamin Quarles argues that during the Revolutionary War, African Americans had no loyalty to country but rather sided with the

opportunity of liberty from bondage. Lord Dunmore's proclamation of 1775 promised freedom to those who served the British Crown, and thus slaves escaped in droves to join the "enemy." In the Continental Army, blacks filled the most menial jobs, typically roles that whites refused. They served on the front line for longer enlistments of up to three years as compared to whites that served for a shorter service in militias.

In the Civil War from 1861 to 1865, African Americans also fought for their freedom. According to W.E.B. Du Bois' Black Reconstruction in America, however, the U.S. allowed Blacks to enlist only when it became a military necessity for victory. The success of the North depended on the arming of Blacks to defend the flag and the "general strike" waged in the South by African Americans who refused to work in the plantation fields and manors.

Many U.S. wars pitted Blacks against other people of color. Actor and producer Danny Glover addresses this issue in the movie *The Buffalo Soldiers* (1999). In the film, Glover portrays the paradox experienced by African American soldiers recently freed from slavery who were part of the military campaigns against Native Americans and the conquest of the western frontier.

The use of blacks by the U.S. war machine to do their dirty work against other people of color raised resistance as well, particularly during the conquest of the Philippines from 1898 to 1902. Henry M. Turner, senior bishop of the African Methodist Episcopal Church, protested the campaign as "an unholy war of conquest." **Many Black soldiers deserted as well, realizing they had more in common with the Filipino rebels than with a country that lynched them back home.**

In other wars, many black leaders encouraged participation of African Americans in the military, rather than opposition to war, as W.E.B. Du Bois did during World War I. Black leaders believed that military service was a means of proving loyalty to the country in hopes of gaining equality. During World War II, Blacks fought under the slogan of a "Double V"—a victory against fascism abroad and against racism at home. Military service brought increased expectations of being considered full citizens when fighting to protect freedom and democracy abroad.

The denial of equal citizenship after fighting in another country, however, proved a radicalizing force. Returning home, African Americans found Jim Crow segregation, lynching, and listless liberals rather than democracy and freedom. In *The Crisis*, the magazine of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) founded in 1910, W.E.B. Du Bois wrote an essay titled "Returning Soldiers" in 1919 blasting the U.S. as a "shameful land."

Du Bois exclaimed, "We are cowards and jackasses if now that the war is over, we do not marshal every ounce of our brain and brawn to fight a sterner, longer, more unbending battle against the forces of hell in our own land." Returning from World War II, many joined the Civil Rights Movement, from the Montgomery Bus Boycott of 1955 to the Selma March of 1965. Others resisted through cultural pride as Black hipsters, sporting the zoot suit in urban centers, such as Detroit and Harlem, during the 1940s.

In Vietnam, the first war in which all units were racially integrated since the American Revolution, the divide of race was no less explosive. Wallace Terry's *Bloods*, an oral history collection of twenty African American Vietnam War veterans published in 1984,

remains a groundbreaking work that exposes how Vietnam was different for troops of color. In addition, the black power movement peaked during the height of the soldiers' rebellion that occurred during 1968-1973. How did black power inform soldiers' resistance? What potential for unity existed across racial lines and on whose terms did it develop?

Another problem relates to the particular politics and leadership that developed amongst the troops. In a 1970 article in the New York Times, Fred Gardner coined the term "survival-politics" to describe how troops avoided being in harm's way and hoped to merely return home. "Survival-politics," however, as a term is limited in explaining the full scope of the resistance on the ground.

In fact, survival-politics could define many social movements in the U.S., including the Civil Rights Movement that witnessed brutal racist attacks, such as police beatings and savage murders, in the segregated South. Likewise, the gains of the labor movement depended on the collective strength of solidarity waged through bitter fights with employers. The "Ludlow Massacre," for example, occurred on April 1914 when the Colorado National Guard killed eleven children and two women during the fight for the United Mine Workers (UMW).

In the Memorial Day Massacre in 1937, police killed ten union members during the strike at the "Little Steel" companies in South Chicago by the Steelworkers' Organizing Committee (SWOC). Survival is literally a concern to U.S. workers. From 1961-1972, for example, 14,000 workers died yearly from industrial accidents in the U.S., the same number of U.S. troops that died in 1968 at the peak of the war.

An understanding of the politics of resistance in Vietnam, therefore, must be more specific. What kind of leadership from below actually developed during the war, and how did soldiers' networks affect their rebellion? **Did resistance differ in the combat zones than in the supply areas and base camps and if so, why?**

[To be continued.]

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.

Subject: Remove From Mailing List

From: Angela G
To: GI Special
Sent: Friday, January 07, 2005 12:30 PM
Subject: Re: GI Special 3A7: A Sergeant Honors His Profession

i have to be removed from ur mailing list...ive been told we cannot recieve any personal email in our school email acct.

Angela G
D----- M.S.
6th Grade Science
7th Grade Volleyball

REPLY:

From: GI Special
To: Angela G
Sent: January 07, 2005

Dear Angela,

OK.

You can also find each issue of GI Special at this web site:
<http://www.militaryproject.org/>

You can look at the plain version or the PDF format, whichever you prefer.

It's a bit of surprise to hear you're getting censored that way after receiving GI Special for over a year now.

Most rules made by people who think the whole world should do what they want tend to be very arbitrary and biased against dissenting opinions and free speech.

Let's suppose George Bush sent you a personal email from the White House.

We both know your school wouldn't crack down on you by waving some silly rule in your face about not getting personal emails. They'd be so delighted they'd probably call up the newspaper and TV station to brag about it.

Well, you have a lot in common with our soldiers, who sometimes have to do what they are ordered to do also, whether it makes any sense or not, like going to Iraq.

Someday, people, including students, will get together and decide what is best for themselves, by voting on things, including rules. Someday, soldiers will elect their officers too. Many did just that during the first American Revolution.

I am not suggesting you defy the rule.

Where I work, at a hospital, we have a union. When something cruel or stupid is done to one of us by a boss, we never do anything alone, because it doesn't work, and somebody acting alone gets squashed. We organize, and do things together.

The same is true for soldiers. Those that act as individuals to defy an officer or an order usually end up in a military jail.

Those that organize with others, quietly, and act together, can stop a war, like they did in Vietnam.

Lesson learned.

Respect,

T

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004**

OCCUPATION REPORT

IRAQI TRADE UNION LEADER MURDERED

Jan 07, 2005 By Doug Ireland, ILCA Associate Member, International Labor Communications Association

Iraqi trade union leader Hadi Salih, International Secretary of the Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions, was tortured and killed in his home in Baghdad Tuesday night--but a Nexis search reveals not a word has yet appeared in the U.S. Press.

"According to a report today from the IFTU, Salih was severely tortured before being put to death. Evidence of torture was visible on his head and body. His hands and legs had been tied. He was blindfolded, then strangled with electrical wire.

On a visit to Europe last year, Salih "outlined the problems facing Iraqi trade unionists including lack of funds, the continued implementation of anti-union laws brought in by the Ba'athist dictatorship and attacks from US forces on IFTU offices."

U.S. Labor Against War issued a statement on Salih's murder which said in part: "In the past three months, IFTU members and rank-and-file workers have been murdered and kidnapped as they tried to carry out normal union activity, or simply do their jobs.

On November 3, four railroad workers were killed, and their bodies mutilated. On December 25, two other train drivers were kidnapped, and five other workers beaten. On the night of December 26, the building of the Transport and Communications Workers in central Baghdad was shelled. Together with the assassination of Hadi Salih, these horrifying crimes are making Iraq as dangerous a place for union activists as Colombia."

"Salih's murder underscores the indifference of the U.S. and its puppet government to the fate of trade unionists in Iraq who are trying to organize workers and collectively bargain for their rights.

"The ultimate source of violence in Iraq is the US occupation. The Iraqi Federation of Trade Unions calls for the end of the occupation and the US war."

The Allawi government is largely hostile to trade unionists of what ever stripe-- and so is the U.S. occupying force.

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

Bush's Heroic Allies Bring Peace And Friendship To The People Of Falluja



Iraqi Guards patrolling in Fallujah (1.7.04 AFP/Hrvoje Polan)

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