

GI SPECIAL 3B69:

**YOU THINK IT'S DIFFERENT THIS TIME?
ENOUGH:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



“One of the most powerful images to come out of the Vietnam War. This photo appeared in the Oregonian newspaper about 20 years ago. The combat photographer was not named.” [Sent to GI Special by Mike Hastie, Photographer & Vietnam Veteran: hastiemike@earthlink.net]

Bush's War Takes Two More

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

Jun 23 By Elizabeth Owens and Lynn Campbell, The Des Moines Register



Sgt. Casey Byers, KIA
(Des Moines Register)

In a little more than a week, Ann and Bill Byers lost both their sons. One died in combat in Iraq; the other was struck and killed by a pickup a few miles from home.

Sgt. Casey Byers, 22, a member of the 224th Engineer Battalion of the Iowa National Guard, died June 11 south of Ramadi when a bomb exploded under his armored Humvee.

Justin Byers, 19, who was scheduled to leave for Iraq himself this fall with an Army Reserve unit, was killed Monday night near here.

Even more devastating news came Wednesday, about an hour before Casey Byers' funeral began in Denison: Justin's death was ruled a suicide.

Crawford County Medical Examiner Dennis Crabb said Justin was upset about his brother's death and his own upcoming deployment.

Because of his brother's death in combat, however, Justin Byers would not have been required to accompany his unit to Iraq.

Evidence at the accident scene and the way Justin had been acting led investigators to conclude that he purposely stepped in front of the pickup, Crabb said.

Justin had acted as family spokesman after his brother died and had written a letter he planned to read at Casey's funeral. When the funeral was held as scheduled Wednesday, Col. Tim Orr, commander of the 2nd Brigade, 34th Infantry Division, read it instead.

'I'm exactly like you'

"I will not lie to you - I was always fighting with my brother, and we never got along," Justin wrote. "My mom said we fought so much because we were very much alike."

Justin recalled that he and his brother joined the military to make money for college but then realized they had a greater cause: defending freedom.

"The military turned us from trouble-makers and little immature kids to respectful men," his letter said.

Justin said he would not cry for Casey because he knew that his older brother had died for a cause he was proud of. But he expressed regret that he never got to say goodbye or apologize for their sibling battles.

"Yes, Casey, I'm exactly like you," Justin concluded.

Tears flowed among the more than 600 people attending Casey's funeral at the Iowa National Guard armory here.

"If there's any regrets, you didn't get to see, hold and touch your precious daughter Hailey," the soldiers' father, Bill Byers, told Casey in a statement read by the Rev. Chris Burtnett. Hailey was born 5½ months ago.

The family has many supporters in this stretch of rural Iowa about 100 miles northwest of Des Moines.

"I just grieve for the family," said Janet Gritten, a family friend. She said she wasn't surprised that the Byerses decided to proceed with Casey's funeral despite Justin's death. "They needed to honor Casey," she said. "Casey was a hero."

Lawrence Thelen, another well-wisher, said he spoke with the young men's parents.

"I gave my sympathy and remorse for Casey, and I asked them about (Justin), and they said that today was Casey's day," he said. "They've got a lot on their shoulders right now. One's bad enough, but two?"

The timing of the departure of Justin Byers' unit for Iraq had not been decided, said Teresa Smith, a unit administrator with the U.S. Army Reserve in Sac City near here.

Smith said Justin Byers would have been covered under the Army's "sole surviving son or daughter" regulation. If one or more children of a family have died in military service, the sole surviving sibling can request a discharge or non-combat duty. Smith said Justin and his parents had been notified about the rule.

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

Soldier From Killingly Dies



6.23.05 By JENNIFER BABULSKY, Norwich Bulletin

KILLINGLY-- Another Connecticut soldier has died in Iraq.

Army Spec. Christopher Hoskins, 21, of Killingly was reportedly killed Tuesday during a combat mission west of Baghdad, according to his family. Family members said they were notified of his death at 6 a.m. Wednesday morning.

Hoskins was a 2001 graduate of Killingly High School where he was a member of the school's wrestling team.

Hoskins was a member of the Army's 2nd Infantry Division and was reportedly stationed in Arramadi, Iraq, west of Baghdad. He served as a driver for a Bradley fighting vehicle and driver and gunner on a Humvee. He was in Iraq for nearly one year.

"He'd give you the shirt off his back," Mayo said of her brother, who she last communicated with a week ago through an online instant message.

His mother said she last spoke with him by phone a week ago.

"That was good," she said Wednesday. "We had great conversations."

Along with his mother and sister, Kristin, Hoskins also leaves behind his brother, Sean, 15, and sister, Erin, 18.

Crown Point Soldier Dies

June 23, 2005 By Brendan McCarthy, Tribune staff reporter

At 23, Nick Idalski had his mind made up: He wanted to be a career military man, his family said. The former emergency medical technician from Crown Point, Ind., enlisted in 2003 because he wanted to help fight the war on terrorism.

Idalski, a specialist in the Army's 2nd Infantry Division, died Tuesday morning in a gunfight outside of Ramadi, Iraq, his family said. They were told he died of several gunshot wounds.

"He was always telling me, 'Mom, don't worry. I've been well-trained and I'm going to do my job,'" his mother, Kim Greenberg, said in an interview. "I didn't worry. I had faith in him."

Idalski graduated from Crown Point High School in 2001 and became an EMT, his stepfather, Richard Greenberg, said.

"He enjoyed helping people," his stepfather said. "He had a heart of gold and wanted to do more."

After researching the military, Idalski met with recruiters and enlisted. He briefly served in the Airborne Division. "Jumping out of airplanes, it was a very Nick thing," his stepfather said.

In May 2004, Idalski was assigned to South Korea. "We were happy about Korea because soldiers usually stay there for a while and don't move," his stepfather said. "But in August, the U.S. moved about 4,000 troops from Korea to Iraq."

His correspondence with his family became sporadic, but he still called home every 10 to 14 days.

"He wasn't a big letter-writer but he would always call if he could," his mother said. "He was always upbeat. You'd never know if he was down."

Idalski had planned to turn his military stint into a career and was optimistic about the future, his family said. The challenge and the sense of service to his country fueled him.

Besides his mother and stepfather, Idalski is survived by his father, Anthony, two brothers, two stepsisters and a stepbrother.

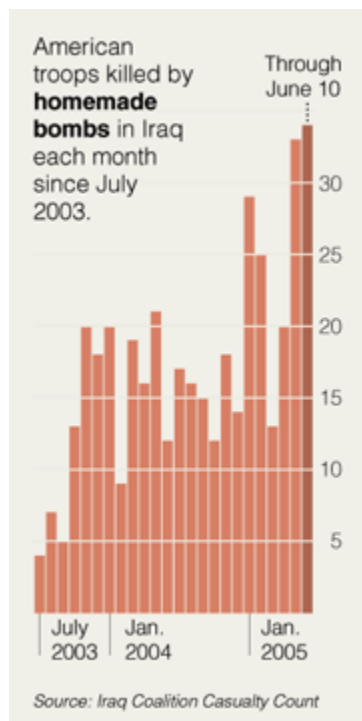
U.S. Convoy Hit In Al Tuz: Casualties Not Announced

6.23.05 John F. Burns and Terence Neilan, The New York Times

North of Baghdad, a car bomb exploded today near an American convoy in Al Tuz, about 70 miles south of Kirkuk, killing three Iraqis and wounding eight, said Maj. Safaa Mawlood of the Third Regiment of the Iraqi Army.

He added that four of the wounded were in serious condition and that the blast damaged an American Humvee.

Cheney Says Resistance Is In Its “Last Throes”



June 23, 2005 Rory Carroll, The Guardian

A shaped charge was believed responsible for last week's attack in Ramadi, which was so powerful it melted a Humvee and showered the remains of five marines onto rooftops.

Blast Damages Japanese Vehicle Near Samawa

June 23, 2005 AFP

A vehicle taking part in Japan's landmark military mission in Iraq has been damaged in a roadside explosion but no-one has been injured.

The pre-dawn blast occurred as four Japanese vehicles were heading to a site where troops were engaged in humanitarian work in the southern city of Samawa.

It is reported all four vehicles returned safely to the base after the blast.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

"I Thought The Taliban Had Fallen"

"I Thought This Was Going To Be A Peacekeeping Mission."

"Someone Is Out There Watching Me."

The battalion in Zabol has been attacked more than 10 times since March. During one bloody seven-hour clash in Zabol in May and in a series of pitched firefights across the south and east since then, the Taliban has revealed itself to be a hardy, resilient foe equipped with machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars.

June 22, 2005 By N.C. Aizenman, Washington Post Foreign Service, QALAT, Afghanistan

When Spec. Nick Conlon and the other members of his infantry battalion learned they would be deployed to the Afghan province of Zabol this spring, many

expected their worst enemy to be boredom. In preparation, Conlon stocked up on more than 20 DVDs, such as "Alien vs. Predator," "X-Men" and "Daredevil."

But in the three months since the battalion set up camp in this isolated, mountainous region of southeastern Afghanistan, Conlon has not had time to watch a single movie. Instead, the battalion has found itself at the center of a heated though somewhat forgotten war that is still underway 3 1/2 years after the extremist Taliban militia was ousted from power.

The Taliban forces, estimated at anywhere from 2,000 to 10,000 fighters, cannot hold territory against U.S. forces.

But the battalion in Zabol has been attacked more than 10 times since March.

During one bloody seven-hour clash in Zabol in May and in a series of pitched firefights across the south and east since then, the Taliban has revealed itself to be a hardy, resilient foe equipped with machine guns, rocket-propelled grenades and mortars.

In Zabol, the fighters appear wary of taking on U.S. troops directly after suffering heavy casualties, but they continue to ambush U.S. patrols with gunfire and improvised explosives -- such as one that claimed the battalion's first fatality, Pfc. Steven C. Tucker, 19, of Grapevine, Tex., on May 21.

Meanwhile, the men of 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry, have had to drastically adjust their expectations.

"I thought the Taliban had fallen," Conlon marveled recently. "I thought this was going to be a peacekeeping mission."

For most members of the battalion, normally based in Vicenza, Italy, home is now a sprawling camp of sheds set on a baking desert plain on the outskirts of the provincial capital of Qalat. Much of their time is spent stalking the enemy in remote valleys and mountains still largely beyond the government's reach.

The high altitude and rocky terrain can feel unforgiving to a man lugging 50 to 100 pounds of weaponry and gear. But the area also offers views of uncommon beauty. Purple and golden peaks gleam in the distance; rushing streams are flanked by blue flowers and fragrant sage.

It was into just such a scene that a Black Hawk helicopter landed on a recent morning, disgorging a group of soldiers led by Lt. Col. Mark Stammer, the battalion commander. Like most overnight missions, this one was partly a goodwill tour to win local support and partly a hunt for a Taliban leader believed to be moving through the area.

The target that day, a sub-commander known as Abdul Akundzada, was thought to control 40 to 60 fighters and was known for threatening villagers who tried to send their children to government schools, according to battalion officers.

A day earlier, one of the U.S. units pursuing Akundzada was ambushed by his men, leading to a firefight.

An Air Force jet was able to find and bombard the Taliban fighters soon after they fled to a hideout in the mountains, killing 12 of them. But Akundzada managed to escape. Stammer thought the Taliban leader might be fleeing north and hoped to intercept him in Badamtoy, a hamlet of half a dozen mud-walled compounds.

He and his men jumped out of a helicopter ready for battle, crouching in a wheat field and training their weapons on potential enemy positions. But Badamtoy's mostly elderly male inhabitants offered no resistance.

Encouraged, Stammer instructed an Afghan interpreter to ask the village elder if the soldiers could rent a compound for the night. Abdul Satar, a man with a long beard and white turban, readily agreed.

As soon as he reached the courtyard, Stammer, a tall, broad-shouldered man who looks like a football coach, took off his helmet and beckoned his host's children to gather around as he pulled donated stuffed animals and pencils from his backpack.

"Where are the girls?" Stammer asked, as a throng of little boys pressed around him. "I want to make sure the girls get these, too." The women of the household huddled in a dusty corner, peeking out from under the bright red and green scarves with which they traditionally hide their faces from strangers.

"Okay, now let's lay a little love on the grown-ups," Stammer said, and ordered his radio operator to call for an air drop of supplies including blankets and sacks of beans.

Next, he asked the battalion's doctor, Maj. Brian Sleigh, and some of the medics to offer their services. The villagers eagerly lined up. Most had curable ailments -- diarrhea or viral infections in the case of the children, cataracts in some of the men. But Sleigh noted that even if he could arrange for drugs to be delivered, there was no doctor or pharmacist to administer them. Instead Sleigh mostly handed out painkillers.

"I can't cure you, but I can give you something to help with the pain," he said to patient after patient.

By now, Stammer judged the ice sufficiently broken to instruct an interpreter to ask Satar the question on everybody's mind: "Have you seen any Taliban around here?"

"He says the Taliban haven't been through for months," the interpreter responded.

The assertion was nonsense, Stammer said. "But that's okay," he added peaceably. In a region where informing could cost a person his life, Stammer said, a villager who lied about the militia's whereabouts was not necessarily a Taliban supporter.

So Stammer moved on to what he called his "unity" speech. He stressed that the U.S. military was there only to help the Afghan people, and he urged Satar to organize villagers to present their needs to Zabol's governor and vote for an official representative in parliamentary elections scheduled for September.

Satar smiled and nodded. But one of the interpreters said afterward that the elder later confided to him that even this modest proposal was too risky.

"He told me, 'If I do that, I won't stay alive very long,' " the interpreter recounted. "He said, 'You guys are very nice. But you only come around once in a while. The Taliban will come here as soon as you are gone.' "

Within hours of the unit's arrival, the village men were pressing green tea and freshly baked bread on their visitors. Some even started trying on the soldiers' helmets, wrapping their turbans around them to hearty chuckles all around.

Stammer was pleased, but also a touch suspicious.

"Why are these people being so nice to us?" he muttered to the operations officer, Maj. Doug Vincent. "We've been in villages where people wouldn't spit on us if we were on fire in their living room. But these people are being over-the-top nice."

"I don't know, sir," Vincent said. "Do you think maybe they have someone in town and they don't want us to do a cordon and search?"

"Think about that," Stammer said. "Also think about whether they are trying to set up an ambush."

Stammer and his men had ample reason to be wary. Several soldiers on the mission had been on patrol with 14 Afghan policemen on May 3 when they stumbled upon a gathering of 60 to 80 Taliban fighters, triggering one of the most intense battles in Afghanistan since 2001.

As that fight unfolded, the U.S. team of six scouts and a medic, in two armored Humvees, was ordered to keep the enemy from retreating before ground and air reinforcements arrived. The team managed to do it during 2 1/2 hours of relentless fighting, during which no one was killed but one Humvee was hit by a rocket and burst into flames.

Yet even once the battalion's reaction force was flown in, the Taliban fought on for four hours, killing one Afghan policeman and wounding six U.S. soldiers and five Afghan police officers.

In the end, the American and Afghan forces prevailed, killing nearly 40 Taliban fighters and capturing 10. Battalion soldiers who participated said they felt proud to have put their training to use.

But many now carry the sort of memories that often haunt veterans of major wars -- the surprised, all-too-human look on an enemy fighter's face as seen through a rifle scope just before he is blown apart, or the stress of repeatedly driving into hails of rocket fire with no expectation of surviving.

"Afterward, my wife asked me what was going through my head," said Sgt. Michael Ortiz, the medic who was with the ambushed scout team. "I told her, 'Everything. Just every single thing you can imagine.' "

Back in Badamtoy, Stammer and his men were settling in the next morning for a long wait for a helicopter to ferry them back to the base when their banter was interrupted by one of the radio operators. A report had just come through that Akundzada might be in a village called Kawti, just a few miles north.

Stammer instantly switched into battle mode, directing his men to draw up plans for a multi-pronged assault including Afghan security forces and to arrange for Chinook helicopters to transport them to the site.

A few hours before sunset, the group trekked up a hill to board a Chinook. But the new village turned out to like the previous one: a series of humble, mud-walled compounds occupied by passive, if slightly less welcoming, farmers. Akundzada had slipped through their fingers again.

Soon, Stammer was back on the radio, ordering another food drop to win over the people of Kawti while his men searched for smooth ground on which to unroll their sleeping bags.

Ortiz steeled himself for a long night of watching the stars. Like many soldiers who experienced the fierce fight of May 3, he had been unable to sleep for several nights afterward.

Now, Ortiz said, he had no trouble falling asleep indoors. "But not outside. Not where I know someone is out there watching me."

TROOP NEWS

Bring This President Down

The invasion of Iraq "cost my family a price too dear to pay and almost too much to bear:" the death of her son, "who was killed to line the pockets of already wealthy people and to feed the insatiable war machine that has always devoured our young."

Randy Hall, Staff Writer/Editor, CNSNews.com

The mother of a soldier who was killed in combat in Iraq told an anti-war rally near the White House on Thursday that President George Bush "doesn't deserve our allegiance."

Cindy Sheehan, whose son, Specialist Casey Sheehan, was killed in an ambush in Baghdad on April 4, 2004 told participants at the rally that her appearance at the hearing was intended to remind congressmen "what their constitutional responsibilities are.

"They swore to uphold the Constitution of the United States. They don't pledge allegiance to the president. He doesn't deserve our allegiance," she said to applause from the crowd.

"And he doesn't deserve to go back to Crawford, Texas," Sheehan continued. "He deserves to go to prison for what he did."

Joining Sheehan onstage at the rally were other members of her organization, each of whom had lost a family member in the fighting in Iraq. "This is the happiest day I've had since my son died," Sheehan said.

The invasion of Iraq "cost my family a price too dear to pay and almost too much to bear:" the death of her son, "who was killed to line the pockets of already wealthy people and to feed the insatiable war machine that has always devoured our young."

The final speaker at the rally was Ann Wright, a former U.S. State Department official who resigned in March 2003 to protest the invasion of Iraq.

Wright had a practical recommendation for those in attendance: "We need to have an anti-war vigil, 24 hours a day, until this war ends," she said before asking others to either join her in front of the White House or support her efforts to "bring this president down."

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 Veterans Against The War! Banner Leads New Orleans Demonstration

June 23, 2005, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Forwarded from networker Ward Reilly to all on VVAWNET:

Greetings from Ward...

I'm happy and proud to say that the Iraq Veterans Against The War (www.ivaw.net) banner, carried by New Orleans Iraq vet and IVAW members Michael Cuzzart and Charlie Anderson of Virginia Beach, was first in line at our "SOULstice Experience" demonstration in New Orleans on June 18th.

The weekend opened with a premier showing of the documentary film "Jazz Funeral For Democracy" at the Canal Place theatre on Friday night.

The crowd was smaller than our usual for unknown reasons, at least in comparison to our Jazz Funeral For Democracy counter-inaugural, but those that came were treated to a dynamite post-march line-up of speakers, including Cindy Sheehan of Gold Star Families For Peace, fresh from her historic meetings in Washington, Charlie Anderson of IVAW, Megan Finn of Palestinian Solidarity, Pat Dooley a 1st Cav. combat vet(67-68), and Bob Smith a 3-tour Green Beret in Vietnam...many other vets marched.

Between speakers were four bands that donated their time to the effort put on a dynamite show at the Blue Nile club in the French Quarter.

IVAW's banner was followed closely by the VVAW banner, carried by Bill Perry and his wife...Veterans For Peace, Code Pink, CAWI, Palestinian Solidarity, and C3 of New Orleans also marched and carried their colors.

Another demonstration and Depleted Uranium forum was held in Covington, La. on June 15th, featuring VFP member Dennis Kyne, Desert Storm vet, and Bob Smith and Ward Reilly of VVAW and VFP.

50 citizens packed Sally Dunn's Art Gallery after the demonstration, and heard from the panel on DU and the recent Louisiana DU legislation.

A huge thanks goes to Bill Perry, Cindy Sheehan, and Charlie Anderson for coning so far to join us for the SOULstice Experience, from Philadelphia, Virginia Beach, and Washington DC.

450 More Vermont Troops Off To Bush's Anbar Slaughterhouse

June 23, 2005 By WILSON RING Associated Press Writer

MONTPELIER — About 450 Vermont Army National Guard soldiers are preparing to leave the United States for the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan.

The largest group, about 400, is preparing to leave Mississippi later this week for Kuwait as part of the 3,500-member 2nd Brigade Combat Team, which is part of the 28th Infantry Division led by the Pennsylvania National Guard.

The soldiers should arrive in Iraq early next month, said Vermont National Guard spokeswoman Lt. Veronica Saffo.

The Iraq-bound soldiers will serve in Iraq's Anbar Province, said their commander, Lt. Col. Mark Lovejoy of the St. Albans-based 1st Battalion of the 172 Armor Regiment.

Most of the soldiers come from Lovejoy's 1/172, although a number come from the 3rd Battalion of the 172nd Infantry, a National Guard mountain warfare battalion based in Jericho.

The Vermonters are headed to Iraq as combat soldiers.

Top General In Iraq Says Cheney Full Of Shit: Some Republicans Say Public Turning Against The War

June 23, 2005 By LIZ SIDOTI, Associated Press Writer & By Will Dunham, Reuters & By Sidney Blumenthal, The Guardian UK

WASHINGTON - The top American commander in the Persian Gulf told Congress on Thursday that the Iraqi insurgency has not grown weaker over the past six months, despite a claim by Vice President Dick Cheney that it was in its "last throes."

Gen. John Abizaid's testimony came at a contentious Senate Armed Services Committee hearing at which Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld clashed with members of both parties, including a renewed call by Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts for him to step down.

As to the overall strength of the insurgency, Abizaid said it was "about the same" as six months ago.

Even some Republicans expressed open skepticism with U.S. policy in Iraq, with U.S. deaths now surpassing 1,700 since the war began in March 2003.

Republican Sen. Lindsey Graham of South Carolina said declining public support for the war was becoming a chronic problem. "And I don't think it's a blip on the radar screen. We have a chronic problem on our hands."

On June 21, a Gallup poll reported that Bush's approval rating was collapsing along with support for the war. Only 39% of Americans support it.

"The decline in support for the war is found among Republicans and independents, with little change among Democrats." (Since March, Republican support has fallen 11 points to 70%.)

Thought For The Day

July 2005 Funny Times

Science executive Douglass Carpenter (of the high-tech defense contractor Quantumsphere), on the difficulty of convincing the Pentagon to graduate to weapons made of "nanometals," which pack much more explosive power than current weapons:

"Getting the government to change the way they kill people is difficult."

Bullshit Walks

If all those dignitaries and puffed-up politicians and self-important diplomats were so sure that Iraq was going to be a success story, why didn't they meet in Baghdad rather than Brussels? And of course, we all know the answer.

23 June 2005 By Robert Fisk, The Independent (UK)

So we are going to support the myth. As the headless bodies are found along the Tigris, as the mortuaries fill up, as the American dead grow far beyond 1,700 - and, let us remember, the Iraqi dead go into the tens of thousands - Europe and the rest of the world still support the American project.

The Brussels summit was - and of course I quote our good friend Mr Kofi Annan, secretary general of the United Nations - "a clear sign that the international community will be determined and dedicated to (the Iraqis) on the tough walk ahead".

Condoleezza Rice says she wants more Arab ambassadors in Baghdad. I bet she does. When King Abdullah of Jordan promises to send his man to Iraq "as soon as it is safe", you know that the Arabs have understood the situation in a way the Americans have not. Who wants to be a late ambassador? Who wants to put his head on the block in Baghdad?

We are to be, so the myth-makers of Brussels claimed yesterday, "a full partner in the emergence of a new Iraq", to prove that "the people of Iraq have plenty of friends". Oh yes indeed. Except that most of these "friends" dare not visit Iraq (like the putative Jordanian ambassador) lest they have their heads chopped off.

The representatives of more than 80 countries are urging the elected Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jaafari to reach out to Sunnis - the same Sunnis who are destroying American and Iraqi lives on a shocking scale across the country - but the official line, so cringingly enunciated by the BBC last night, was that "top diplomats" (I like the "top" bit) had "thrown their weight behind US efforts to build a democratic Iraq". Only the word "efforts" suggested the truth.

If all those dignitaries and puffed-up politicians and self-important diplomats were so sure that Iraq was going to be a success story, why didn't they meet in Baghdad rather than Brussels? And of course, we all know the answer.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

U.S. Command's Recruiting-For-The-Resistance Campaign Comes To West Baghdad



An Iraqi woman is humiliated as her house is searched during a US operation in the western Al-Bcriya neighbourhood of Baghdad June 22, 2005. REUTERS/Thaair Al-Sudani

**The Resistance Has Eyes
Everywhere:
*400,000 Auxiliaries And Support
Personnel***

According to a U.S. Special Ops source, who required anonymity because of the sensitivity of his work, the insurgents include an estimated 1,000 foreign jihadists, 500 homegrown Iraqi jihadists, between 15,000 and 30,000 former regime elements and as many as 400,000 auxiliaries and support personnel.

June 27 By Scott Johnson and Melinda Liu, Newsweek

In the long run, the insurgents' most powerful weapon may be one that is practically silent: a vast network of infiltrators, spies and recruiters.

According to intelligence officials in Baghdad, whose clearances bar them from speaking publicly, Iraq's security services have hundreds of "ghost soldiers"—members who vanish, sometimes for months on end, but continue to draw their pay.

The fear is that they are working for the insurgency while keeping up their ties in uniform.

Early on, when training procedures were still being defined, U.S. forces tried to institute a program to screen Iraqi recruits. According to officials who worked on the program but were not cleared to talk publicly about it, the process began with a preliminary interview with the enlistee. If he passed, vetting agents went on to do a background check on the individual as well as on key family members. But with pressure on to find an exit strategy for Iraq—and to build significant Iraqi forces fast—a lot of doubtful characters seem to have slipped through the cracks.

Gaps in the process were quickly exploited in a strategic campaign of infiltration by the insurgency.

Over dinner last week in a fashionable Baghdad neighborhood, Iraqi officials were shaking their heads over news that 176 Iraqi police officers were found to have terrorist connections in the past two weeks.

"Their fingerprints were found on bomb debris examined by specialists," said one official, requesting anonymity because he wasn't cleared to talk to media.

"The Americans (have been) taking fingerprints from bomb cars and matching them with police records."

But Iraq's Security minister, Abdul Karim al-Inizi, says the ones who got caught are only a fraction of the total number of infiltrators.

"A number way bigger than that is still active and still in service," al-Inizi told NEWSWEEK. He's especially concerned about moles from Saddam Hussein's elite intelligence corps, the Mukhabarat. "They penetrated easily because (the former Iraqi) government brought them back without asking enough questions."

Inizi criticizes the Americans, too, for failing to cultivate reliable Iraqi sources and ignoring repeated warnings about the loyalty of the Iraqis they had recruited. "Yes, they needed to have sources with the former regime," Inizi says. "But they needed other sources of information as well."

New insurgents seem to spring up faster than the allied forces can cut them down. The Coalition has announced the killing of some 15,000 insurgents over the past year. Nevertheless, official briefers have recently estimated that between 12,000 and 20,000 insurgents remain active.

According to a U.S. Special Ops source, who required anonymity because of the sensitivity of his work, the insurgents include an estimated 1,000 foreign jihadists, 500 homegrown Iraqi jihadists, between 15,000 and 30,000 former regime elements and as many as 400,000 auxiliaries and support personnel.

All told, the insurgency is believed to include upwards of 40 reasonably distinct groups that sometimes join forces for particular operations.

No one in U.S. intelligence seems ready to say the fight is hopeless. But no one is sounding very optimistic, either.

Assorted Resistance Action

Jun 23 AFP News & By Alastair Macdonald (Reuters) & By Frank Griffiths, The Associated Press & John F. Burns and Terence Neilan, The New York Times

North of Baghdad, three Iraqis, including two soldiers, were killed when a bomber driving a tractor blew himself up against a military convoy in the village of Albusayla.

Police said a car bomber killed three policemen and seven civilians when he drove at their patrol in the central commercial district of Karrada around 7 a.m. (0300 GMT).

Two other cars exploded in the same area, several minutes apart, one near a Shi'ite mosque. Police and medical sources put the number of wounded at between 23 and 50.

The Army of Ansar al-Sunnah said in an Internet statement it had carried out the three bombings in a joint operation with the Islamic Army in Iraq and the Mujahideen Army.

It said it had exploded a car bomb at a convoy of Iraqi police and when other police vehicles gathered around the blast site, "they entered into the mujahideen ambush where two other cars were detonated." The group later said it exploded a fourth car against Iraqi police in the same area, killing seven.

A car bomb detonated by remote control hit an Iraqi police patrol in Tuz Khormato, north of Baghdad, killing one policeman and wounding seven civilians, police Brig. Gen. Sarhad Qadr said.

Nearly 40 people died in a rash of car bombings in Iraq's capital over a 12-hour span, including two coordinated blasts early Thursday that killed 15 and wounded 28 in a central Baghdad shopping district, police said.

Five police officers were among the 15 dead.

The Baghdad bombings provided fresh evidence of the insurgents' ability to strike with impunity in the heavily protected capital, where US and Iraqi forces hunt insurgents patrol around the clock.

In Baghdad, a sniper shot and killed two soldiers who were protecting a strategic intersection in the western district of Amiriya, an Interior Ministry official said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

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**

The Things He Won't Talk About

23 June 2005 By William Rivers Pitt, Truthout Perspective

With the revelation of the secret Downing Street Minutes, which exposed the fact that George Bush and Tony Blair had decided to invade Iraq in April of 2002, a heated debate has blown through media, congressional and activist circles.

The decision to go to war in Iraq was made before any public debate was initiated, before the United Nations was brought into the conversation, confirming that Bush's blather about wanting peace and leaving war as the last resort was just that: blather.

So why did we go?

Threaded through the discussion was the belief that Bush and his petroleum-company allies lusted after Iraq's oil. There was also the idea that Bush wanted Saddam's head because of the "unfinished business" left by his father in 1991. Some whispered that Iraq had intended to change the monetary basis of its petroleum dealings from the dollar to the Euro, an action that would have spelled financial disaster for the boys in Houston. Finally, many believed Bush ramped up a war push in order to give Republicans a flag-waving platform to run on in the 2002 midterms.

All of these were on the table as reasons for an invasion, though most of them were not included in public debate.

Yet the real reasons behind this war, the real reasons for many of our military actions over the years, were never discussed.

As with almost everything we deal with today in the foreign policy realm, the real reasons we invaded Iraq harken back to World War II and the Cold War.

When the United States jumped into World War II, President Roosevelt ordered the American economy be put on a wartime footing. This was a sound decision: the country had to speed its industrial capabilities up to a sprint in order to manufacture a huge fighting army out of whole cloth. The action was successful beyond measure. The economy was invigorated, the war was won, and in the process the military/industrial complex, so named by President Eisenhower, was established as a power player in the American economy.

In 1947, President Harry Truman put forth the Truman Doctrine, a broad policy of foreign intervention to combat the feared spread of Communism around the world. The Doctrine was essentially created by a small band of men like Paul Nitze, who were the precursors of what we now call neo-conservatives. Nitze, it should be noted, was the mentor of Paul Wolfowitz, who went on to be the mentor of Donald Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney.

The establishment of the Truman Doctrine, the establishment of the "permanent crisis" that was the Cold War, required that the American economy remain on a wartime footing.

There it has remained to this day, despite the fall of the Soviet Union and the collapse of the threat of a global communist takeover. Ten thousand books have been written on this subject, on the impact of our wartime economic footing upon domestic policy, the environment, global affairs and politics. In the end, however, the fact that our economy is set on a wartime footing means one simple thing.

We need wars.

Without wars, the economy flakes and falls apart. Without wars, the trillions of dollars spent on weapons systems, military preparedness and a planetary army would dry up, dealing a death blow to the economy as currently constituted. Without wars or the threat of wars, the populace is not so easily controlled and manipulated.

Let us be clear, however. When I say "we," I do not refer to your average working man and woman on the street. The man running the shoe store or the woman managing the bar does not need war to remain economically viable. The "we" I speak of is that overwhelmingly wealthy and powerful few who have wired their fortunes into the manufacture of weapons, the plumbing of oil, and the collection of spoils through political largesse.

These are the people who need war. They need it to pile up the contracts from the Pentagon, to enrich the banking institutions that protect them, to pay the lawyers

who defend them, to pay the lobbyists who sustain them, to purchase the politicians who champion them, and to buy up the media that hides them from sight.

The economic need for war creates the required excuses for war. The "permanent crisis" of the Cold War motivated the United States to support the Shah in Iran, a decision that led to the Islamic Revolution and the establishment of Iran as a permanent enemy. The Cold War motivated **us** to support Saddam Hussein financially and militarily as a bulwark against Iran. The Cold War motivated **us** to establish the House of Saud in Saudi Arabia to ensure a steady supply of oil. The Cold War motivated **us** to support Osama bin Laden and the so-called "Jihadists" in Afghanistan in their fight against the Soviet invaders.

Put plainly, the "permanent crisis" of the Cold War created a cycle of military self-justification. **We** build enemies with arms and money, and then **we** destroy them with arms and money, thus keeping our wartime economy afloat.

The Cold War ended more than ten years ago, but **we** still need war, and we need that "permanent crisis" to continue the cycle of military self-justification. If a legitimate war is not available, **we** will create one because we have to. **We** have our new "permanent crisis," which **we** call the War on Terror, another turn of the cycle created by an attack that **our** foreign policy and war-justifications of the last 50 years made almost inevitable.

We need wars. That's why we are in Iraq.

This invasion and occupation of that nation has given **our** economy the war it needs, and has also created the justification for future wars by creating legions of enemies in the Mideast and around the world. **Our** wartime economy will tolerate no less.

Talking about Bush's lies regarding weapons of mass destruction, or about bringing democracy to the region, or about the dollar-to-Euro transfer, or about the midterm elections, is window-dressing. We invaded Iraq because we had to. This is the elephant in the room, the foreign policy reality nobody talks about.

If you want peace, work to change the underpinnings of *our* economy. Until that change is made, there will always be wars, invasions, and lies to bring such things about. It is what it is.

[Despite the little disclaimer, he keeps on and on about "we." That's bullshit. It's "they" who need the wars, not "we" unless, of course, you're one of them. And even Pitt can't speak the dreaded word, can he? "Imperialism." So he doesn't want to name the elephant either. And how, exactly, does he propose to "change the underpinnings of our economy"? Leaving aside the fact that it's not "our" economy, does he really think that happens by way of another Empire-loving Democrat like Kerry, that Pitt pushed in our faces last year, or is he for taking it to the streets? Who knows. No answer.]

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Welcome To Liberated Iraq: Thousands Imprisoned Without Charges Or Trial: U.S. Occupation Command Refuses Iraqi Demands To Release Them



Iraqis demonstrate in the streets of Najaf, Iraq June 21, 2005. Thousands demonstrated demanding that the Iraqi authorities release the Iraqis who are kept in detention centers since April and August of last year. (AP Photo/Alaa al-Marjani)

May 29, 2005 By Su'dad al-Salehi, Al-Hayat,

The four-member commission formed by the “United Iraqi Alliance” for the release of Iraqi detainees said that the multinational forces “stall their release and refuse to refer their cases to (Iraqi) justice, under the pretext that it is ‘not competent.’

They refuse to charge the majority of the detainees who are prisoners of opinion, arrested for their patriotic stance, which means that their practice does not differ from that of the previous (Baathist) regime.”

Falah Hassan Shneishel MP, a member of the commission, said that “the political representative of the US embassy in Baghdad promised repeatedly to contact his superiors in order to settle the issue of the detainees, without any result.”

He explained that the commission demanded that the cases of the detainees be referred to Iraqi justice and that they be charged so that they could be tried, but “the multinational forces rejected the demand.”

He added that “the commission has also demanded the release of women and children detained in the occupation’s prisons, but its demand was also rejected.”

He made it clear that the demands concern the release of prisoners of opinion and patriotic stances, and do not include those who are involved in violent actions against civilians.

The MP maintained that “the stalling and temporizing that US forces have practiced went as far as refusing to allow the prisoners’ relatives, or the judicial committee formed to follow the matter, to visit the detainees to check their situation and their cases.” He added:

“The way US forces behave has become the continuation of the way the (Baathist) previous regime used to deal with political prisoners, a fact that increases the hatred toward these forces.”

The MP said that the number of detainees belonging to al-Sadr’s Current reached 350 and that their names were given to the Iraqi Government, affirming that the majority of them were arrested “preventively and they have not been charged with any accusation until now.”

He added that the four-member commission have asked the Government, in a memorandum given to the National Assembly, to apply article 15 of the Transitional Administrative Law which stipulates that “nobody can be arrested for more than 24 hours without being charged” and that “no one can be arrested for their religious or political opinions.”

He asserted that the detainees belonging to al-Sadr’s Current are “prisoners of opinion and patriotic stances” and fall therefore under the article referred to, adding that they are presently detained in the prisons of “Buka” in Basra, “Badush” in Mosul and “Abu-Ghraib” in Baghdad, and that the conditions of their detention are “very bad and harsh,” and that the Government should order their release.

Sheikh Muhammad Taqi al-Mawla, a member of the commission and a leader of the “Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq,” told Al-Hayat that the multinational forces detain in their prisons thousands of Iraqis, including many women and children, without charging them, and that the Government and the National Assembly are acting for their release.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Rumsfeld Rejects Notion Iraq War Is A 'Quagmire'

BUTT-UGLY MORON



(AP Photo/Dennis Cook)

[Thanks to PB who sent this in. He writes: RUMMY: OF COURSE ITS NOT A QUAGMIRE YOU MORON, ITS A COMPLETE AND UNMITIGATED DISASTER.]

Jun 23 By Will Dunham, Reuters

Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld on Thursday rejected a senator's assertion the Iraq war had become a quagmire, but warned Iraq's government not to delay political developments such as drafting a constitution.

Rice Says U.S. Empire Can Be Defeated In Iraq: DC Terrorist Admits Bush “Death Knell” Coming



Photo by Thierry Roge/Reuters

June 23, 2005 By HAMZA HENDAWI, Associated Press Writer

“Terrorism can be defeated in Iraq,” U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said. “And when it’s defeated in Iraq, at the heart of the Middle East, it will be a death knell for terrorism as we know it.”

NO. 3 TERRORIST ACTUALLY NO. 9, BIN LADEN SAYS Mastermind Unveils Organizational Chart in Latest Terror Tape

June 22, 2005 The Borowitz Report

In a new terror tape broadcast today, al-Qaeda mastermind Osama bin Laden dismissed the importance of an al-Qaeda terrorist currently in U.S. custody, claiming that the terrorist, Abu Faraj al-Libbi, was not the No. 3 man in al-Qaeda but was actually only No. 9.

Mr. bin Laden took to the airwaves of the Arabic-language al-Jazeera network to downplay Mr. al-Libbi's capture, saying that the terrorist had been demoted from No. 3 to No. 9 last autumn and that his role in the international terror group was "largely administrative."

Using a PowerPoint presentation of al-Qaeda's organizational chart, the world's most wanted man offered viewers a rare glimpse into the structure of the highly secretive terror network.

According to the chart, Mr. al-Libbi had no terrorists of any consequence reporting to him and had been given the somewhat nebulous title of "community liaison."

"Furthermore, Abu Faraj al-Libbi no longer has an al-Qaeda expense account and does not get reimbursed for mileage," Mr. bin Laden said.

But in Washington, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld questioned Mr. bin Laden's tepid appraisal of Mr. al-Libbi's importance, saying that if the captured terrorist was not in fact No. 3, he was "at least No. 5 or No. 6."

Supporting his position, Mr. Rumsfeld added, "We have credible intelligence indicating that Mr. al-Libbi was al-Qaeda's Employee of the Month in April."

Elsewhere, in the latest development in the Schiavo case, medical experts said that the brain of Florida Gov. Jeb Bush was half the size of a normal one.

Received:

“Their Stories Break My Heart.”

From: JF
To: GI Special
Sent: June 23, 2005

Dear GI Special,

A few issues ago you published one of Lt. Col. Karen Kwiatkowski's essays on the present regime, "Unleashing the Resistance". I don't know if you saw it, but there's another on her website, "Blowing the Whistle for Freedom". Her last words in the interview :

Interviewer: If you had an opportunity to address the families of every soldier killed in Iraq, what would you tell them?

Karen Kwiatkowski: Many deaths in many wars are pointless and in the end serve only as unnecessary sacrifices and individual tragedies in vain pursuit of some misguided government policy.

Rudyard Kipling said it a hundred years ago, with his Epitaph: "If any question why we died, tell them, because our fathers lied."

That's not very comforting.

My heart goes out to these families, and they have a right to expect accountability and honesty from the President and the Congress. They should insist that the President go ahead and for the very first time, honestly explain why we are in Iraq.

It is about nationally directed economics (not the free market), guaranteed noncompetitive American contracts, puppet governments, Israel's security and Likud Party dreams of leveraging the U.S. military for Israel's own strategic interests, petrodollar security, and hedging the future China threat - especially if someday we decide not to pay them for all the T-Bills they've been soaking up so we can go play war around the world today.

It is about changing our military footprint out of Saudi Arabia into a more central and convenient, operationally cost-effective Iraq.

It's about how Bush feels in being a "War President" - a big change from his alcohol-drenched and cocaine-satiated days in the Air National Guard.

It's about never having to read an intelligence report that challenges your preconceptions or disrupts your agenda.

I cannot imagine their pain, and it breaks my heart.

Thanks for the good, long article on the "Three Young Men From Derby, Kansas", Ryan Cox, Joe Herndon, Dusty McGaugh.

Their stories break my heart.

Received:

“The Letters From Soldiers Are Particularly Moving”

From: SB
To: GI Special
Sent: June 23, 2005
Subject: Re: GI Special 3B68: Family History

Great work with GI Special. I am continually amazed that you can put such a great publication together so often.

Definitely one of the best sources of information on the war/occupation and its impact on soldiers, their families, and Iraqis.

The letters from soldiers are particularly moving.

Solidarity
S
ISO - New Haven

REPLY:

Not so amazing; lots of troops, veterans, military family members, activists and organizers, just like you, keep the news coming in. GI Special reports as best as possible, but you and others fighting back make the news. Respect, T

Received:

Keep Up The Good Work.

From: McAdams, Daniel
To: GI Special
Sent: June 23, 2005

Just happened upon your website.

Very interesting and well-done. Keep up the good work.

-Daniel

Daniel McAdams

National Security/Foreign Affairs
Office of Congressman Ron Paul, M.D.

203 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20015
Tel: 202-225-2831
<http://www.house.gov/paul>

Web Copies:

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

The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://gi-special.iraq-news.de>, <http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>,

www.williambowles.info/gispecial,

<http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/gi-special.htm>

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for purely educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. Go to: <http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml> for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

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.