

GI SPECIAL 4A7:



[Graphic: Soldiers X, Y and Z]

**“I Sunk In My Chair. I
Wished I Could Rip My
BDUs Off. I Felt Sick.”**

From: Soldier X
To: Spc Y
Sent: November 02, 2005
Subject: to Spc Y from Soldier X

Hello Comrade,

I hear that you are being sent into this bull shit war zone. I would love to stay in touch with you and maybe our connection would be mutually beneficial. Here is a little bio on me so you know who you are speaking to.

I joined the Army a month before Sept. 11th to get out of the dead end rut I managed into back in Colorado.

My father was a Vietnam Vet who, after retiring from 20 long years as an engineer, died from cancer that was cause by Agent Orange exposure in Nam. Joining the service is something I vowed never to do. But, I was a high school drop out going into his mid twenties and I started to panic that the doorway of opportunities was snapping shut.

I became a Cavalry/Scout (19-Delta) and thought I would be racing around the woods in Humvees and camping with the boys. Instead I got desert heat and IEDs.

I was deployed in Kosovo when the war kicked off in Iraq. Actually I was on leave from Kosovo headed home for two weeks of R&R. I was on lay over at Dallas/Ft.Worth airport as Bush's 48 hour threat for Saddam's surrender ran out and Bradleys started crossing the line.

As I watched Baghdad exploding on TV the people all around me were on their feet cheering like the Cowboys just won the super bowl.

I sunk in my chair. I wished I could rip my BDUs off. I felt sick.

I had a gut feeling things were a bit foul. And, as the war continued on during those two weeks, I gathered a good deal of literature on the subject of war and peace and the middle-east. I filled a duffel bag full of books and when I returned to Kosovo I began to educate myself on American policy and why other countries might hate us.

I started to see America from the outside in. Have you ever seen a home movie of yourself and realized how ridiculous you acted, looked or sounded? That was my new perception of America. I was embarrassed and humbled. But, I also realized that I was what I was. I had a responsibility to change what I could.

I returned to my home duty station the summer of 04' with six months to prepare for a year in Iraq. As odd as it might seem, I became a sniper at the International Interdiction Course ran by NATO snipers. I debated long and hard with my friends and self about actually going to Iraq. I weighed pro (very few of those) and cons and justified running and staying. Finally time ran out and almost still undecided and a bit afraid of being punished, I went to war.

A short stay to climatize in Kuwait at Camp New York I convoyed up into Baquaba, Iraq, which became my AO for the entire year.

I started to experience what I had a gut feeling about and the books taught me it was the real deal. It was an ugly and vulgar display.

I saw and took part in atrocities and civilian death.

I saw corruption and the values of good men degraded into that of animals.

I watched first hand as the most powerful nation in the world was manipulated by our leaders into a brutal occupation for the profit for a minority elite.

As the guilt, shame and trauma built I started to write letters explaining what I was going through. I started with the punk band the Bouncing Souls and a few other sources. My friend Bryan the bassist asked to display my writings on his bands web page and called it "letters from Iraq". I think they are still there www.bouncingsouls.com I believe?

As the guilt, shame and trauma built I started to write letters explaining what I was going through. I started with a punk band I listened to and a few other sources. My friend, the bassist, asked to display my writings on his bands web page and I agreed.

Then other people started picking them up. Thomas at GI Special was one of the main outlets for my expression.

Then I developed my own blog with a few other soldiers from near by bases. We called it Fight To Survive, and the FTS name doubled for Fuck The System.

Those writings can be found at www.ftssoldier.blogspot.com.

The writings helped in many ways.

First it was a coping mechanism to deal with the rage and emotions I felt about the war. It just felt good to rant.

Second it provided me a way that I felt my taking part in the war could be justified.

Like, if I was a witness for many people in the real world than there was one good reason to be there.

Third it gave me a connection to the outside world and that was what may have kept me sane in the end.

I can already tell that you are a gifted writer.

You might wish to run from this war, or stand up an oppose it. Both are great and noble options. I have friends now that have done both and are doing well.

Some have spent time in prison and some have not.

But, it is a hard road either way you go.

If you choose to go to Iraq, there is nothing wrong with that either. You might never be convinced of that, but it is something that I live with and so can anyone else.

If you do go however, I suggest you continue writing, to me, to Thomas Barton or to the world.

I was caught eventually for my blog, so I am not sure if that is the best way to go. But, if you keep your identity hidden, and are wise to omit details that might narrow down your unit and location. I think it is relatively safe.

If you write back with any concerns I would be happy to help out. If you just want to write that is cool too.

I have an interesting job now working on Veteran issues.

Hopefully we will find a way to stop the war all together?

I am plugged in to the Peace movement and Non Profit Groups. I also have a handful of friends still in the service.

I would love to stay connected to you just drop me a note sometime,

Soldier X

"Bush isn't intelligent enough to run a lemonade stand".
Soldier X, 1.10.06

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

Ohio Soldier Dies: Army Explanation Makes No Sense:

1/5/2006 The Associated Press, AUSTINTOWN, Ohio

A 19-year-old soldier from Ohio died of natural causes shortly after he arrived in Germany from Iraq, where he had spent the past year with his Army unit, his father said.

John Steenge said authorities told him that his son, Pfc. John Matthew Steenge, suffered a "*natural death due to stress*" and that there was no trauma. [There is no such medical explanation. Ask any competent doctor or coroner.]

Steenge was a multichannel system operator with the 17th Signal Battalion based at Kitzingen, Germany. He died Dec. 25, two days after returning to Germany from Iraq.

OH-58D Kiowa Shot Down Near Mosul: Two Killed



The crumpled wreckage of a U.S. military OH-58D Kiowa helicopter lies on its side, Jan. 13, 2006, in Mosul. (AP Photo/Nick Wadhams)

[Thanks to JM and David Honish, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in. David Honish writes: ***Heavy MG's shooting down armed helicopters that travel in pairs is not a scattered insurgency, it is highly organized resistance.***]

Jan. 13, 2006 NICK WADHAMS, Associated Press & By Nabeel Nooredeen, Reuters & Aljazeera & By Nick Wadhams, Associated Press

MOSUL, Iraq - A U.S. Army reconnaissance helicopter went down in al-Sukar district, north of Mosul Friday, killing its two pilots, and a senior officer said it may have been shot down.

The armed OH-58 Kiowa was on a combat air patrol with another Kiowa when it went down.

Witnesses at the scene in the city of Mosul said they saw fighters fire on the two-seater aircraft with heavy machineguns.

Children told soldiers that the sound of gunfire came from three or four directions and that the helicopter was flying erratically, possibly trying to evade it.

The helicopter looked like it crashed on a muddy plateau and then cartwheeled down a 25-foot embankment that was sloped at about a 45-degree angle. It came to rest in an area strewn with garbage.

Layth Shems al-Din said he was working in his butcher shop when he heard shots that he recognized from his service in the Iraqi army as coming from a heavy machine gun.

“At the same time, there was a helicopter hovering at a low level and after that I heard a strange sound from the helicopter, and then I heard the sound of a crash, but not an explosion,” the 29-year-old told an Associated Press reporter by telephone.

He and Ayad Abdul Razzaq, a 35-year-old manager of a tourist agency, said the crash occurred as the helicopters flew over Mosul’s al-Sukar neighborhood. They said the aircraft went down near the al-Sayegh mosque.

Razzaq said that after hearing the “strange sound, smoke came from the helicopter before it fell.”

Army Lt. Joe Vanty, 32, of West Hartford, Conn., said it was “very credible” that the aircraft was shot down.

Vanty’s platoon heard small arms fire and went toward the sound. The platoon came under fire from four directions and he said two helicopters were seen overhead. Shortly afterward, the soldiers were told one had gone down and they moved in that direction.

Maj. Richard Greene, executive officer of the 172nd Stryker Brigade’s 2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, said the helicopter “was responding to small arms fire being taken by Iraqi police.

Lt. Gen. John Vines, chief of the Multi-National Corps Iraq, told Pentagon reporters that there were indications the crash was due to hostile fire.

Both pilots died in the crash, said Lt. Col. Barry Johnson, a U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad.

Injured Soldier Coming Home

January 13, 2006 DEAN BOHN, THE SAGINAW NEWS

Pvt. Russell J. Richards can shake the Iraqi sand out of his boots -- he's returning to the bluegrass of Kentucky.

The 2004 Arthur Hill High School graduate wounded by a roadside bomb in Iraq is recuperating at the Military Medical Facility in Landstuhl, Germany.

His name is on a manifest for the next planeload of soldiers returning to the United States, said Cathy Gramling, a spokeswoman with the U.S. Army base at Fort Campbell, Ky.

"Praise the Lord," said his mother, Jacqueline L. Richards, 38, of Saginaw.

Military officials earlier had told her that her son was going back to Iraq after a brief hospital stay, she said.

The 19-year-old Saginaw soldier suffered a concussion, a closed head wound and two ruptured eardrums. The explosion -- at 9:30 a.m. Jan. 6, Iraqi time -- stopped his heart, but a fellow soldier revived him. Richards said he's lost 70 percent of his hearing and has partial vision in his left eye.

Her son is assigned to Company C, 1st Battalion of the 327th Infantry with the 101st Airborne. His unit deployed from Fort Campbell to Iraq in November, and the Army sent Richards to join the unit during the first week of December. v

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



12,26.05: US soldiers of the 1st battalion 327th infantry regiment check the spot where an Improvised Explosive Device blew up as they were driving along a country road on the outskirts of the northern city of Hawijah. (AFP/Filippo Monteforte)

TROOP NEWS

“Someone Had Stepped On A Buried Mine That Exploded.....They Were Walking In A Mine Field! He Said Nothing Was Left....Except An Arm....A Leg.....Fingers.....”

[Thanks to Ward Reilly and NB who sent this in.

[NB writes: Something you might include, that's been passed to me by Cindy Sheehan. (Here's a thought: if Bush gets impeached and is found guilty, surely he'd make a good leader of a mine detecting squad! They'd surely need his services in Angola or somewhere, and Condi (whom I'd give a non-combatant role) could provide the entertainment, as she's good at thumping a piano!)

From: Casey's Mom [Cindy Sheehan]
Sent: January 09, 2006
Subject: PASS THIS AROUND

PLEASE PASS THIS AROUND

This is from a friend of mine whose son is in the Army, stationed in Baghdad.

And the Peace Community is accused of not supporting our troops???

This is fuing barbaric and we are letting this stuff continue in our names.**

Excuse my language, but my friend almost became a Gold Star Mom on the 27th.... but for the grace of god or whatever, she didn't.

Our government is creating Gold Star Moms at a very rapid clip and the Iraqi people that they are killing or turning into people who have to fight to survive is obscene.

What are we willing to do to stop the inhumanity and war crimes?

Cindy

[Excerpts from the letter referred to above follow:]

****WARNING**** FYI.....This is pretty graphic.....

I was thrilled yesterday to wake to an email from Micah. The last correspondence I had from him was the email on Dec. 26. Then 2 guys in his battalion were killed and one wounded on the 27th (the wounded soldier has since passed away from his injuries).

All communications were shut down until notification of their deaths by the Army to their families....but still no word from Micah. I knew that he would contact us as soon as he could...but that didn't make the waiting any easier. He emailed yesterday to reassure me that he was "fine"....which of course I was glad to hear. Then he called me later in the day.....

It was wonderful to hear his voice....be able to talk to him.

I asked him about the incident that ended those 3 guys lives.....ages 26, 23, and 20. He said he hadn't planned on telling me about it, but then knew that I already knew about it...aware that I had received the email from the military explaining why we may not be hearing from our soldiers.

I asked him if he knew what happened....he hesitantly told me....."Yes".....he was there when it happened! That....I wasn't prepared for.

He wanted to spare me the details....but Micah and I can and do talk very frankly about everything.....I knew he needed to talk to someone about it....so I told him not to hold anything back. I told him I already know he is in harms way, I know there are horrible things going on there....things I can't even imagine.....but I wanted to know....and I wanted him to be able to talk about it with me.

He said it was their first mission since arriving in Baghdad. A group of them had to walk through a field to a "destination".

He said just in front of him....about 100 yards was an explosion. Someone had stepped on a buried mine that exploded.....they were walking in a mine field! He said nothing was left....except an arm....a leg.....fingers.....

They continued walking....then a second explosion.....the next two victims. They radioed for a helicopter that was not to come. So they were instructed to turn back and walk BACK thru the field.....9 hours they walked.....4 1/2 one way....4 1/2 back....nothing accomplished.....3 lives lost. The tension and fear that your next step, placement of your foot would be you.....your friend at any moment.....

This is our war.....

Why not take a high school class out on the edge of the expressway and have them run back and forth....who gets hit does...who's lucky enough not to....well is just lucky.

It was horrifying knowing he witnessed it, knowing he was filled with fear and images that will stay with him forever.

I asked him about the Iraqis.....the Iraqi soldiers he was with. "Their crazy" was his reply. He said that morning a dog was running down the street and an Iraqi man beat it to death with a shovel then threw it on the side of the road. He said, "That's normal here."

I immediately knew when I started talking to him that he had a cold.....he said, "Yeah, I do, but I'm ok."

I asked if he was eating good....what did they have for them to eat?....

American food....Iraqi food?

He said they get ONE meal a day. A "meal" that is either a 6 inch cold pizza, or well, he had 5 cold chicken wings one day, oh and a hotdog one day....well a lone hotdog....no bun.

One meal a day!!!

He said they have 2 microwave ovens that are broken and a toaster oven that doesn't work well....the government is apparently spoiling them!

It's like the Twilight Zone or some parallel universe.....a bad dream that upon waking makes no real sense....

He took his first shower yesterday.....his first since Dec. 20. That was good he said.

The Army is wondering why no one wants to join??? Why no one wants to go back???

Are the American people really that dense to think that we are doing the right thing.....doing good?

The government wants to spin this into that they're protecting us from terrorists.....payback for 9/11. Osama Bin Ladin is no where near Iraq! So is anyone on his trail?

Our government is mistreating our soldiers and we stand back and watch.....well not really because we don't see THIS on the news. We only see what they want us to see.

Micah is already skinny as a rail.....how do they expect a 20 yr old boy to live on what they are feeding them?

Guess it doesn't matter much....why waste food on people you make walk thru mine fields? Doesn't this sound a little like the Holocaust?

So.....Micah says....he's "ok". I'm sorry to vent but THIS HAS TO STOP!!!!

PLEASE!!!!!! Email, write, call your congressmen, state representatives....etc.

I don't want to wait over the next year for a knock at my door....and I don't want one more mother, wife, family member to either.

And I voted for Bush.....TWICE! You don't see the Bush twins in Iraq.....no manicures or shopping sprees.

Don't want to ruin your day.....just want to get you thinking.....and MAD!!!

Send what you can to our troops....they definitely need it...apparently especially FOOD!!!

Please feel free to forward this email to anyone and everyone you can!

I feel helpless.....I want to jump on a plane like that 16 yr old from Florida and grab my son and bring him home.....

Ample Grounds For Mutiny In Any Army: New Jersey Reservists Tricked And Betrayed: Grabbed For Iraq Duty With No Notice: Can't Say Goodbye To Families

1.13.06 WCAU TV PHILADELPHIA

A group of local Army reservists said it has been switched into one of the most dangerous assignments in Iraq, and it claims it's been given just five days' notice to spend up to two years in Iraq.

NBC 10 News reported that the reservists said they're ready to leave their civilian lives and absolutely want to serve their country, but said they thought they would be given more time to put their affairs in order.

"I mean, I do what the Army tells me to do," said one reservist. "But, what they did to us is a slap in my face."

The Army reservists, who've been based out of Camden, N.J., for years, did not want to be identified because they expect retaliation from speaking publicly. However, they feel so wronged and so worried that they feel there's no choice.

"I'm loyal to the Army," said another reservist.

"I've done what they've wanted me to do, and then they go and do this? I can't see my family members to say my final good-bye?"

"I'm a human being first," said a reservist. "So, to be treated more or less like cattle, I think that's wrong."

The reservists are members of the 667th Quartermaster unit and trained as reservists once a month to fuel tanks and trucks. In August, they say they were told it was likely they'd be going to Iraq in the next year, but no date was ever given.

Last week, 16 of them got orders to head to Fort Totten in Flushing, N.Y., for what they believed was basic training.

When they got there, they were told that they were volunteers, and they were not on any rosters or lists. The reservists said they were somehow "volunteered" to be truck drivers in Iraq, and they were given five days to report back for up to two years of duty.

"That's one of the most dangerous jobs over there," said a reservist.

"They're training you for 30 days, boot camp for 30 days, that's some training, right?" said a reservist.

"You don't have enough time to get your life in order," said another reservist. "You have to do your power of attorneys, you have to let your job know, let your family know.

"It's just not enough time."

**“I Am Not Going To Listen To
Another Fucking Major Who
Has Lost His Soul”
“You Generals Are Fucking
Cowards”**

January 13, 2006 Via John Zutz, Vietnam Veterans Against The War
Subject: Out of the Marines

*From: Craigslist.org
This posting to a friend*

Date: Fri Dec 16 22:09:56 2005

Why I am getting out of the Marines

As I sit here I am still shaking. I can't take much more of this shit.

I am a Marine Pilot.

Not that it means anything anymore.

Today was another safety stand down put on by the mother fuckers in DOSS.

Why?

Cause another one of my friends is dead and gone.

Why?

Cause he flew his shit into the water that's why.

Why'd he do that?

Cause the mother fuckers that "be" i.e. the boys at the top have lost their fucking minds and can't say no.

"Sir the aircraft are at 13% readiness, we don't have anything up."

"That's not my problem, we got a FRAG, get it done."

"Sir, none of our pilots are current to do this."

"Currency? Currency is for pussies. Just do some pattern work before you go, you'll be fine."

"Sir, the maintainers have been working non-stop 12 on 12 off for weeks now, we can't keep this pace up?"

"Rest, Marines don't need rest, they are tough. Tell them to drink some coffee and get these planes up."

"Sir, I've been in the tube for the last 10 hours, the weather was shit, and I haven't seen my wife in 2 weeks, can I work on this tomorrow?"

"No, I am going on leave Captain, I need that power point done by tomorrow, oh wait your on the schedule. Well, I guess you better get working."

"Sir I don't have the crew rest to fly this."

"Crew rest? What's crew rest. Your day doesn't start until the engines do, never mind that I had you in here this morning doing mindless bullshit."

I hate you Marine Corps. I hate you.

You push us and push us and ask us to do more. But there is no more.

You can take your \$18,000 dollar bonus and shove it up your ass!

I am not staying. I am not flying this shit anymore. I am not going to go and break the rules for you anymore.

I am not going to turn motors when I know the maint. log books aren't worth the paper they are written on.

I am not doing your fucking log run in this weather when you can't even get me the bare minimum flight time to keep my skills up. I am not going to anymore safety stand downs about leadership and seatbelt use.

I am not going to listen to another fucking Major who has lost his soul and cares more about the taste of his coffee in the morning than if his people had time to even eat chow today.

I will not do this.

I will not get another phone call about a friend of mine who is now dead, because you bend the rules to make mission, because you can't say NO to anyone.

We are broke damn it.

We don't have the people, we don't have the parts.

Hell, what kind of fucking military organization has the commanding officer tell his officers they need to go out and buy toilet paper for the head because we ran out?

Fuck this. I am out.

Berger, you were the best man, you shouldn't have died like that.

Kerns, you were a funny dude. I am sorry I couldn't see you buried, or have the courage to write your Mom and Dad about what nice guy you were. Murphy, why would you sign up for that shit! Your kids will never get to know what an awesome guy you were.

I am in tears I am so frustrated. I wish you were still around, but I won't die like you.

I won't be some number on CNN's death 'o meter. I won't contribute to this madness of telling the Wing we can do it when we are so far on our ass we can't see the light of day.

You Generals are fucking cowards.

You know it's broke, but you won't say no will you.

I did my part, and that's all I can do.

Fuck you Marine Corps.

I am not the only one that feels this way.

Let's see where your retention is when the planes are so broke dick nobody can fly them, no matter how many rules you break to keep them up.

Fuck You!

Scum In Command Torment And Throw Away Sgt. With Stomach Cancer:

**“That A Soldier Isn't Worth What You
Really Say He Is, I Mean, To Me, It's
Basically A Slap In The Face”**

January 10, 2006 NBC10.com

WILMINGTON, Del.: Everything Reggie Tyler knew and loved has been gradually stripped away after he was diagnosed with stomach cancer.

Tyler has spent 26 years in the Army and National Guard, NBC 10 News reported. The Army has now denied Tyler disability benefits.

"They did another scope and a biopsy and that's when they discovered the cancer," Tyler said. "That to me was a shock. Stomach cancer?"

The military sent Tyler, a supply sergeant, to Walter Reed Army Hospital, where he underwent radical surgery. But when the phone rang in his hospital room, it signaled a bureaucratic nightmare to come.

"Eighty percent of your stomach is gone and someone's asking, 'When are you coming back to work?' And you just had six hours' worth of surgery."

Tyler's bosses at Ft. Dix couldn't find his hospital orders and his paychecks began stopping.

"Each time, that put my family further and further in debt," Tyler said. "I had to go to the point of having the Delaware National Guard pay my rent because my pay was behind."

The crushing blow for Tyler, who had 26 years of military honors, was being told he would get no disability benefits because he no longer had cancer.

Unable to work and faced with how to support his family, Tyler said the Army offered him a modest cash buyout, which he said desperation forced him to take.

"That a soldier isn't worth what you really say he is, I mean, to me, it's basically a slap in the face," Tyler said.

"I can't support my family the way that I was brought up to be as a man. This hurts me."

Pentagon To Families Of Iraq Troops: Just Laugh Off The War

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

January 13, 2006 From: MFSO Office

Dear Military Families,

Below is an article that appeared this morning in USA Today titled "Pentagon to families: Go ahead, laugh," about a Pentagon training program for National Guard families.

It was sent to us by a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War; an outraged Massachusetts National Guard soldier recently returned from Iraq, whose wife and two children are long-time members of MFSO.

The article says that the Pentagon thinks the appropriate response of National Guard families to the stress of the war in Iraq is to walk like penguins, waddling and flapping our hands like fins, and tells about the Pentagon's training program to help families learn to do this.

If you would like to write a response to this article in the form of a Letter to the Editor, you can email it to: editor@usatoday.com or fax it to 703.854.2053. USA Today states that Letters to the Editor have a greater chance of being printed if they are 250 words or less. If you do send a letter, please email a copy to Military Families Speak Out at mfso@mfso.org Thank you.

We believe that "When the stress of the war in Iraq becomes too severe" (a direct quote from the article below) we need to come together in our communities and across the country, support each other through all we are going through, and raise the demand louder and stronger than ever: "Bring 'em home now, and take care of them when they get here!"

In Peace and Solidarity, and not laughing here,

Nancy Lessin and Charley Richardson for Military Families Speak Out
www.mfso.org
www.bringthemhomenow.org

1/12/2006 By Gregg Zoroya, USA TODAY

When the stress of the war in Iraq becomes too severe, the Pentagon has a suggestion for military families: Learn how to laugh.

With help from the Pentagon's chief laughter instructor, families of National Guard members are learning to walk like a penguin, laugh like a lion and blurt "ha, ha, hee, hee and ho, ho."

No joke.

"I laugh every chance I get," says the instructor, retired Army colonel James "Scotty" Scott. "That's why I'm blessed to be at the Pentagon, where we definitely need a lot of laughter in our lives."

Scott, 57, is certified as a laughter training specialist by the Ohio based World Laughter Tour, a group that promotes mirth as medicine. It touts scientific research that suggests chuckling can boost the body's immune system and decrease stress hormones.

A Pentagon spokeswoman, Lt. Col. Ellen Krenke, says the Pentagon is committed to the program and values Scott's skills. "We sent him to the training," she says.

The laughter program was Scott's idea. It costs the military virtually nothing, because Scott already travels to states as a director of military family support policy.

He has taught National Guard family group leaders in Alaska, Kansas, Oklahoma, Texas and Idaho, and will do so in Michigan, Pennsylvania and Florida, he says. Another laughter trainer is working with folks in North Carolina.

"We believe our program prevents hardening of the attitudes," says Scott, in one of his wordplay aphorisms that beg for a rimshot. The founder and chief executive of the World Laughter Tour is psychologist Steve Wilson, who calls himself "Cheerman of the Bored."

"The guiding principle is to laugh for no reason. And that's one of the reasons it works so well for military families," Scott says. "There's a lot they have to be stressed over, a lot of worries, a lot of concerns."

As foolish as students might feel, Scott says he's lost only one participant: a Marine sergeant major who, Scott says, fled the room with a bad case of the giggles.

Mary Frances Booth, the wife of a retired soldier, took the class last year and is an ardent devotee.

She and her two daughters, Meaghan, 10 and Sarah, 8, were sobbing after Booth dropped her husband at the Boise airport Sunday; he was headed for Afghanistan for work as a civilian contractor, she says. Then Booth called for one of the laughing drills.

"They rolled their eyes at me and thought, 'Mom's on her laughing thing again,' " Booth says. "(But) it made it a little bit better."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

January 14, 2006 AFP & Reuters

Five Iraqi policemen were wounded and two killed when a car bomb exploded on Friday in Baquba, security officials said.

ISKANDARIYA - A police patrol found the body of a policeman blindfolded and with his hands tied behind his back near the town of Iskandariya. He had been shot in the head, police said.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

How It Is

1.1.06 Riverbend, Baghdad, blogspot.com [Excerpt]

"I guess the Iraqis who thought the US was going to turn Iraq into another America weren't really far from the mark: we too now enjoy inane leaders, shady elections, a shaky economy, large-scale unemployment and soaring gas prices."

To Sir, With Grenade:

“Mutiny Is The Conscience Of War”

“The History Of Mutiny Is A History Of Conscious Rebellion Against Military Hierarchy”

Mutineers may also “infect” civilian populations with “fake bravery” and the “underdog principle” leading to “substantial challenges to other (non-military) forms of authority.”

January 24 2004 Contributed by: Admin, submitted by curious george brigade: Infoshop.org [Excerpts]

“Mutiny is the Conscience of War” (Common Graffiti by Soldiers in the trenches of World War I)

“Mutiny: (v.) Rebellion against lawful authority” (Webster's Dictionary)

The history of mutiny is a history of conscious rebellion against military hierarchy.

The study of mutiny is far more instructive than the study of the tired, imperial victories of states and their murderous armies. Since the first documented mutiny against Julius Caesar by Gallic conscripts over two thousand years ago, mutineers have played an important role in checking the absolutist and militaristic dreams of would-be emperors.

Mutinies have occurred in every major war on every continent. There is an undeniable thread connecting mutineers throughout history to our modern day struggles: rejection of totalitarian authority and a fierce demand for freedom.

Mutinies aren't merely random acts of disgruntled soldiers, mutinies are political uprisings.

“Discipline is the soul of an army.” (George Washington)

Most writings on mutinies come from official military reports and tribunal transcripts. Despite these biased reports, the authorities cannot deny or erase why mutinies have for so long kept generals from getting a restful sleep.

The Vietnam “conflict” was marked by full-scale mutinies against the U.S. military. When an American soldier in Vietnam killed a superior officer, the term “fragging” came into use. Although the term simply meant that a fragmentation grenade was used in the murder, it later became an all-encompassing term for such actions.

Many pacifists would argue in favor of staying out of the military but activists with the courage to spread their ideas in the ranks and the courage to put a bullet in an officer's head could potentially be as effective as yet another peace demonstration in Washington, D.C. Diversity of tactics, indeed.

Vietnam mutineers were more sophisticated than their ancestors, in both their use of media and non-hierarchical structures to ferment mutiny.

At best count, there were at least 144 underground newspapers published on or aimed at U.S. military bases in this country and overseas. These journals were not mere gripe-sheets that poked fun in the "Beetle Bailey" tradition against the brass but intelligent and passionate calls for resistance.

"In Vietnam," writes the Ft. Lewis/McChord Free Press, "the Lifers, the Brass, are the true Enemy, not the Viet-Cong."

Another West Coast sheet advises readers: "Don't desert. Go to Vietnam and kill your commanding officer."

They even developed proto-infoshops right on military bases in the U.S. and abroad. By 1971, there were at least 11 (some military researchers suggest as many as 26) on-base antiwar "coffee houses" which supplied GIs with rock music, cheap coffee, antiwar literature, how-to tips on desertion, and similar disruptive counsels while serving to organize deeper resistances inside the armed forces.

All of this agitation and organization led not only to newspapers, infoshops, and the frequent fragging of officers, but also to the serious crippling of the U.S.'s ability to wage war in Vietnam.

In 1970, the Army had 65,643 deserters, or roughly the equivalent of four infantry divisions, and a yearly increase of 12% in the Desertion/Refusal Rate (DRR). Despite having some of the most repressive laws, liberal use of executions, and a 230% increase in the number of Military Police Officers, the U.S. Army was initially helpless to stop the spreading mutiny in its ranks.

In addition to mass desertions and specific fraggings, soldiers used sabotage to disrupt the military.

RAND Corp., one of the more intelligent neurons of the modern dinosaur brain, suggests that the inherent strength of the modern day mutiny undoubtedly lies "in the strength of a decentralized model. Mutineers, leaderless and without any tangible gains other than venting a deep resentment, are especially immune to traditional control structures."

The report, based on recent mutinies in the Georgia Republic and mutinies in Russia's failed invasion of Afghanistan, goes on to say that mutineers are immune to traditional patriotic propaganda and calls for civil service.

The report suggests that mutineers may also “infect” civilian populations with “fake bravery” and the “underdog principle” leading to “substantial challenges to other (non-military) forms of authority.”

KILLING OFFICERS AN ARMY TRADITION

By Steve Hesske, Infoshop.org [Excerpts]

Steve Hesske is a Vietnam era vet who teaches writing and works as a freelance writer in Montana. He writes:

U.S. Army officials have been quick to spin the puzzling, horrifying attack on his own superiors allegedly perpetrated by "Muslim soldier" Sgt. Asam Akbar, described as a disgruntled platoon leader with an "attitude." The assault by fragmentation grenades and automatic rifle fire left 12 soldiers wounded and one dead at Camp Pennsylvania, a 101st Airborne base camp at Kuwait City, Kuwait on the Iraqi border.

The next day George Heath, a civilian spokesman for the 101st, spoke from the unit's Fort Campbell, Kentucky headquarters, "Incidents of this nature are abnormalities throughout the Army, specifically the 101st."

I'll leave it for someone else to figure out how accurate Heath's statement is regarding today's Army.

However, I can tell you that not that long ago attacks, very similar to the one at Camp Pennsylvania, on U.S. Army officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) by their own men were common even in the 101st Airborne.

When an American soldier killed or attempted to kill one of his superiors in Vietnam the act was called fragging because the weapon of choice, as is the case in Kuwait City, was a fragmentation grenade.

As the Vietnam conflict dragged on the Army rank and file, including many draftees, resorted to a variety of methods to endeavor to kill their superiors, so fragging became a comprehensive term that indicated any attempt on the life of an officer or non-commissioned officer (NCO) by one or more of their subordinates. These attempts, as you shall see, were often successful.

Despite strident denials of its existence that continue to this day, fragging is a significant part of America's involvement in the Vietnam war, especially the latter years of that involvement.

According to 27-year army vet and former Vietnam combat commander Lt. Col. Robert Heintz Jr. writing in 1971 in ARMED FORCES JOURNAL, "With extreme reluctance (after a young West Pointer from . . . Montana was fragged in his sleep)

the Pentagon has now disclosed that fraggings in 1970 have more than doubled (to 109) from the previous year."

Texas A&M historian Terry Anderson adds, "During the years of '69 down to '73 we have incidents of fragging, that is shooting or hand grenading your NCO or officer who orders you out into the field. The U.S. Army itself does not know exactly how many . . .officers were murdered, but they know of at least 600 cases, and they have another 1400 who died mysteriously." According to Anderson, in the latter stages of America's stay in Vietnam, the Army was not at war with a Vietnamese enemy but with itself.

Perhaps the most infamous fragging incident in Vietnam actually involved the 101st Airborne when that unit's Lt. Col. Wendell Honeycutt ordered and led a fruitless, costly charge on Hamburger Hill, high ground with no strategic value. The U.S. took horrible casualties but "won" the hill, only to abandon it a short time later.

Hamburger Hill is often viewed as a key event in bringing home the idea for officer and enlisted man, for Green Beret and peace protestor, for young and old all across America, that the country's involvement in Vietnam was futile and pointless.

In the aftermath of Hamburger Hill, G.I. SAYS, one of many underground papers published by enlisted men in Vietnam at the time, offered a \$10,000 bounty for the killing of Lt. Col. Honeycutt who, despite the heavy losses incurred by the 101st, bragged that he had been successful in his mission which was to kill the enemy and destroy his equipment.

The colonel, despite several attempts on his life, probably mostly done by his own men, completed his Nam tour and returned home safely.

Bounties on the heads of reckless, clueless field commanders who thought nothing of putting their troops in harm's way then became commonplace in Vietnam, but with much lower price tags, usually in the \$50 to \$1000 range.

Hamburger Hill was not the only mutinous incident involving the 101st Airborne in Vietnam.

A couple of years after the bloody battle for the worthless hill, 13 black soldiers with the 101st became known as "the Phu Bai 13" after they refused combat orders, forcefully took over a barracks and issued a list of demands, some of which were met by the brass.

Congressional hearings held in 1973 estimated that less than 3% of all NCO and officer deaths in Vietnam between '61 and '72 were the result of fragging. But this percentage only took into account those killings done by actual fragmentation grenade.

The practice of fragging in Nam expanded to include handguns, automatic rifles, booby traps, knives and bare hands as weapons of choice for increasingly pissed off enlisted men. The Judge Advocate General's Corps (the Army's legal branch) estimated that only about 10% of all fraggings resulted in someone being charged.

It should be noted that fraggings and other insubordination in the Army spiked at a time when, according to Col. Heinl, writing in '71, "The morale, discipline and battle worthiness of the U.S. Armed Forces are, with a few salient exceptions, lower and worse than at anytime in the century and possibly in the history of the United States. By every conceivable indicator, our Army that remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having . . .refused combat, murdering their own officers and NCOs, drug-ridden and dispirited when not mutinous."

Today's "All Volunteer Army of One" often seems to be the antithesis of the preceding description or so we are told, so it seems, every minute of every day. To be fair, saturation television coverage has given me the impression that many of today's soldiers are dedicated, disciplined, sharp, committed to the mission.

But there are negative universals in all warfare.

Lousy nutrition. Cramped, dirty, awful living conditions. Terrible weather. Unreasonable often senseless demands made by supervisors.

And what Michael Herr describes in DISPATCHES his new journalism account of Vietnam, " . . .long periods of boredom punctuated by moments of stark terror."

It took years of bad policy, pointless bloodshed and half-witted cowboy field commanders in Nam for fragging to manifest itself.

Two years ago, in a piece about outbreaks of mutiny in America's military, Kevin Keating noted, "The crisis that racked American society during the Vietnam war . . . wasn't profound enough to create an irreparable rupture between the rulers and the ruled, or to give rise to a full-fledged revolutionary crisis. The U.S. was still coasting on the relative prosperity of the post WWII economic boom. Life wasn't as bad for as many people as it is now, and that's why U.S. involvement in a similar protracted ground war could have a much more explosive impact on American society."

[W]ith the U.S. now the moral arbiter for the world and a global policeman for capitalistic law and order, even an all-volunteer force will begin to feel the profound strain of such an undertaking, mostly because the American class distinction between the ruler/planner (the corporate elite) and the ruled/worker (lower to middle class) remains intact from the time of Vietnam.

If Iraq turns out to be a war that the U.S. can't win quickly or simply walk away from, then combat refusals, equipment sabotage and fraggings would become anything but abnormalities.

I offer this speculation with no sense of anticipatory glee, but there it is.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

Saddam's Palace Looted By Iraqi Collaborators After Bush, Rumsfeld And Idiot Col. Said (Accurately) That The Handover A Symbol Of U.S. Progress In Iraq

"I think what we're seeing as we're able to leave the areas and turn them over to the Iraqi government, we're giving more responsibility back to the Iraqi government," said Lt. Col. Barry Johnson, a U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad.

Jan. 13, 2006 By Ellen Knickmeyer, The Washington Post

BAGHDAD - On Nov. 22, the top U.S. military and civilian leaders in Iraq handed over Saddam Hussein's most lavish palace compound to the safekeeping and control of the new Iraqi army and government, in a ceremony whose intended symbolism was as impossible to ignore as the military brass band.

"The passing of this facility is a simple ceremony that vividly demonstrates the continuing progress being made by the Iraqi government and their people," said Col. Mark McKnight, commander of 1st Brigade Combat Team, 3rd Infantry Division, who handed the keys to the palaces to the governor of Salahuddin province.

But in the days after American forces and the Iraqi brass band pulled out of the circular palace drive on a bluff overlooking the Tigris River, local officials now say, looters moved in, ripping out doors, air conditioners, ceiling fans and light-switch plates from some of the compound's 136 palaces, leaving little more than plaster and dangling electric wires.

The culprits are some of the same Iraqi security forces and officials to whom Americans transferred control, police and the governor say.

"Thank God we were able to save the walls from the looters, because everything else was stolen," Gov. Hamed Hamood Shekti said by telephone.

Shekti, like police officials, blamed Iraqi soldiers at the palaces and his own deputy. "The palace was turned over to the Iraqi army units in the presence of Deputy Governor Abdullah Naji Jabara," he said. "Two weeks later I heard the place was looted. Now who can I accuse of the looting?"

The full extent of the alleged looting could not be determined. A provincial police commander, Lt. Col. Mahmud Hiazza, said soldiers and officials stripped at least some palaces that had been occupied by U.S. officials. "Also, there were some palaces not occupied by Americans," he said. "Even in those palaces, everything was gone."

A trip to one of the palaces appeared to substantiate the allegations. A witness, visiting one palace now used by Iraqi police, found officers working in offices stripped of their baseboards and doors, with holes where some air conditioners had sat and plaited wiring in place of electrical switches.

According to local officials, the Iraqi troops responsible for the alleged pillaging came from elsewhere, including the northern city of Mosul.

Over several days after the transfer of control from U.S. to Iraqi hands, furnishings from the palaces turned up in one local market for sale by the truckload, said a Tikrit resident, Rashid Juburi.

U.S. military spokesmen, some expressing surprise, said this month that they had not known of the alleged looting spree after the handover.

"I think what we're seeing as we're able to leave the areas and turn them over to the Iraqi government, we're giving more responsibility back to the Iraqi government," said Lt. Col. Barry Johnson, a U.S. military spokesman in Baghdad.

Gen. George W. Casey Jr., commander of U.S. forces in Iraq, and U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad were among the dignitaries who choppered out to Tikrit for the handover ceremony in November.

In addition to the high-ranking officials in attendance, the event was notable for an incoming mortar round that sent dignitaries, brass band members and many of the soldiers diving to the asphalt.

Shekti, the governor, said in his remarks that day that the handover highlighted "many national aspirations and goals. The first aspiration is the day when all multinational forces will be able to leave Iraq. The second aspiration is convincing the court of world opinion that the people of Iraq are able to manage their affairs independently."

As the band played, Jabara, the provincial official accused of the looting, ran the Iraqi colors up the flagpole.

In Washington, the Bush administration trumpeted the handover.

"The Iraqi forces are becoming more capable on a daily basis, and so this was, I think, an important example of that process moving forward," State Department spokesman Sean McCormack said that day.

"It was, I think, symbolically important that this was a handover of one of Saddam's former palaces that he built in his home town, and now Iraqi forces that truly represent the will of the Iraqi people are now going to have control of that palace."

Some saw the U.S. emphasis on the Tikrit handover, also cited in speeches by President Bush and Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld, as an assurance that U.S. and Iraqi troops were indeed moving toward the day when all of Iraq would be turned over to its own forces and officials.

Police first entered the palaces about 20 days after the Americans left, said Maj. Subhi Nadhum, a deputy commander of a police emergency unit in the area. "Iraqi forces were the only forces inside the presidential palaces after the Americans left," Nadhum said. "During those 20 days the deputy governor and members of the governing council were going back and forth" among the army commanders at the palaces.

Hiazza, the provincial police commander, said he started investigating immediately after police first entered the palaces. "I found everything was looted, even the electrical switches," he said.

When Hiazza formally accused Jabara and some members of the provincial council in connection with the alleged looting, authorities abruptly transferred Hiazza north to Baiji, an insurgent hotbed.

"The reason they transferred me is definitely I will get killed there," Hiazza said. He resigned instead.

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)

**U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE
IN HIGH GEAR;
RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED
RESISTANCE THAT IS**



(Photo: The Children Of Iraq)

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqis over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign" and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any changes being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**The Traitor Bush Approved Spying
On Americans Before 9/11**

13 January 2006 By Jason Leopold, Truthout Perspective

The National Security Agency advised President Bush in early 2001 that it had been eavesdropping on Americans during the course of its work monitoring suspected terrorists and foreigners believed to have ties to terrorist groups, according to a declassified document.

The NSA's vast data-mining activities began shortly after Bush was sworn in as president and the document contradicts his assertion that the 9/11 attacks prompted him to take the unprecedented step of signing a secret executive order authorizing the NSA to monitor a select number of American citizens thought to have ties to terrorist groups.

James Risen, author of the book State of War and credited with first breaking the story about the NSA's domestic surveillance operations, said President Bush personally authorized a change in the agency's long-standing policies shortly after he was sworn in in 2001.

"The president personally and directly authorized new operations, like the NSA's domestic surveillance program, that almost certainly would never have been approved under normal circumstances and that raised serious legal or political questions," Risen wrote in the book.

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