

GI SPECIAL 4A12:

**HOW MANY MORE FOR BUSH'S WAR?
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



Philippine Army soldiers carry coffin of U.S. Army Sgt. Myla Maravillosa Jan. 19, 2006 in Inabanga, in Bohol province in central Philippines. Sgt. Maravillosa, a native of the country was the first female Filipino American killed in Iraq. (AP Photo/Pat Roque)

**Support The Men And
Women Speaking Out
Against The War From
Within The Armed
Forces:**

All Out For Ft. Bragg March 19!

Fayetteville, North Carolina. Home of Fort Bragg, the 82nd Airborne, and Pope Air Force Base

March 18 Organizing Committee: march18@ncpeacejustice.org 919 360 2028
Initiated by Fayetteville Peace With Justice and the NC Peace & Justice Coalition

On March 19, 2005, over 4,000 people marched and rallied in Fayetteville, NC, on the 2nd anniversary of the war in Iraq to support military families and veterans speaking out.

On March 18 & 19, 2006, the 3rd anniversary of the war in Iraq, plan to attend events in Fayetteville NC, a critical opportunity to show support for the men and women speaking out against the war from within the Armed Forces. Real support for the troops still means that we Bring Them Home Now!

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

British Soldier Wounded In Basra Bombing

01/19/06 Evening Echo

A British soldier was wounded in a roadside bombing today in the southern Iraqi city of Basra.

The soldier was wounded at about 8am local time in the blast while on patrol in the city, 340 miles south-east of Baghdad, a military spokesman said.

There was a second blast in the same area about two hours later. No injuries were recorded.

Aberdeen Mercenary Dies in Iraq

01/18/06 AP

Officials say an Aberdeen man was one of two American civilians killed in a roadside bombing Wednesday in Iraq.

42-year-old Roland Carroll Barvels and another American were working as International Police Liaison Officers for DynCorp International when a roadside bomb hit their convoy near Basra, killing both of them.

According to the company, Barvels was a law enforcement officer for 17 years with several departments in South Dakota. He was most recently serving with the Aberdeen Police Department until he began his one-year mission with DynCorp in November 2005. The two men were assigned to the Civilian Police Advisory Training Team, part of a unit that is training

U.S. Command Helps Resistance ID And Kill “Dozens” Of Collaborator Troops

Jan 19, 2006 Times Argus & (Xinhuanet)

BAGHDAD, Iraq: The horror began after American and Iraqi forces cordoned off part of a highway north of Baghdad following the deadly crash of a U.S. helicopter.

With traffic directed onto narrow dirt roads, insurgents turned the area into a killing field. They set up makeshift checkpoints, grabbed motorists and slaughtered about 40 over a two-day period, police said.

A local tribal leader, Mohammed al-Khazraji, told The Associated Press he saw "dozens of corpses" strewn over the ground Wednesday, victims of the insurgents' culling.

"Hundreds of people were detained by the militants and many were killed all because of a helicopter crash that killed two Americans," al-Khazraji said.

Thirty people were dragged from their cars Wednesday and shot dead execution-style in farming areas in Nibaei, a town near Dujail, about 50 miles north of the capital, said police Lt. Qahtan al-Hashmawi.

"Most of the victims were Iraqi policemen, soldiers or commandos," he said.

Another 11 men were killed in similar fashion Tuesday and dumped about a mile from Nibaei, said another policemen, Capt. Ali al-Hashmawi.

Many people have been abducted or killed by unknown gunmen in checkpoints in the fields around the main road between Baghdad and Tikrit, some 170 km north of Baghdad.

The Iraqi army and police found early Thursday about 30 bodies in an open area north of Meshahadah town, some 40 km north of Baghdad, he said.

"Most bodies belong to the Iraqi army and police, including two officers, and some were government employees," he said

Notes From A Lost War:

“They Bash Open Doors, Shout Their Targets Awake And Bind Their Hands With Thick Plastic Restraints Called Zipcuffs”

“What A Disappointing Night”

January 16, 2006 By Nick Wadhams, Associated Press [Excerpts]

MOSUL, Iraq — The Iraqi informant is a new source, but his tip seems solid: The chief financier of a Mosul terrorist cell, a gas station owner, lives in the neighborhood. He is wealthy enough to afford two armed guards to accompany his son to Mosul University.

Now, at 1:13 a.m., under a light drizzle, 25-year-old Lt. Mark Brogan and 13 men from his platoon crouch behind a wall, waiting for the signal to storm the house. The informant claims the financier and his son are inside. The two bodyguards, almost certainly armed, might be there as well.

At last, 16 minutes later, the company commander in a Stryker armored vehicle down the block orders the soldiers to move. The men hustle to the gate in the wall surrounding the house next door. A ladder goes up and three soldiers clamber over. They open the gate from the inside and the rest of the men stream in, crowding next to a small sedan parked inside.

Sgt. John Alvarez, the squad leader, puts his M-4 carbine to his shoulder and runs to the door, ready to smash it in.

A man stands in the doorway waiting for him.

“Down!” Alvarez shouts at the silhouette. “Get DOWN!”

Brogan and Alvarez's unit is Alpha Company of the 4th Squadron, 14th Cavalry Regiment, nicknamed the "Assassin Troop," and known for the giant skull painted on plywood hanging outside the bombed-out building they call home at Forward Operating Base Courage.

They profess not to be frightened of the night's raid. They have executed more than they can count, and the operations usually go smoothly. They bash open doors, shout their targets awake and bind their hands with thick plastic restraints called zipcuffs. The captives are fitted with blacked out goggles and taken to base for questioning.

But the raid this night will be a little more complicated.

Earlier, at the base, Capt. Matt Eberhart, the 30-year-old company commander, instructed Brogan's team to go strong into the house thought to belong to the terror cell financier.

Yet he has also told the team to then conduct a calmer "cordon and knock" at the house next door, where an old man acquainted with the source lives with his grandson. Neither is to be detained. Intelligence indicates the two houses are connected.

"We're just making sure we're not going in there and shooting the grandfather in the head," Eberhart, of Lincoln, Neb., tells Brogan, of Kingsport, Tenn. "If we do that we lose the source, because I get the sense there's a connection between him and the source."

Brogan's platoon of just over 30 soldiers seems unfazed by their mission, though there's palpable anxiety as the men assemble beforehand to prepare. They smoke cigarettes and cigars, dip tobacco and laugh. It's cold and raining hard.

As the platoon members joke, Sgt. Curlee Kelley, 28, of Stuttgart, Ark., tests them on what to do if things go wrong.

What if they enter the house and a member of their team goes down? Eliminate the threat and then help the fallen man. What happens if the bodyguards start tossing grenades and firing AK-47s from the second story? Call for the Stryker out in the street to open fire with its heavy machine gun.

They are reminded again not to damage the houses. They expect to find women and children in both.

Make sure to separate the military age males from the rest. A blue Opel sedan in the garage means the bodyguards are probably there.

"What do we do with children, do we zipcuff them or is there an age limit?" a soldier asks.

Kelley says his men must use their judgment: anyone able to fire a weapon ought to be zipcuffed. Another soldier asks about older girls and women.

“They’re old enough to fire weapons, but we’re not going to be doing women like that,” Kelley says. Handcuffing women is considered an insult in Arab society and the soldiers don’t want to engender ill will.

Alvarez, 26, of San Jose, Calif., leads the squad that will be first into the house. It will be his job to breach the door, putting him in the greatest danger by being first to confront anyone inside.

Alvarez, who wants to join a police SWAT team when he leaves the service, says he’s not afraid. “We’re in the Army. This is what we do,” he says, grinning from beneath a black watch cap pulled low just over his eyes.

Just outside, four Stryker vehicles idle with their rear hatches open. The soldiers from Assassin Troop swill energy drinks or coffee and smoke. At 12:54 p.m., the Strykers leave the base.

“Just remember. If something happens, eliminate the threat,” Kelley tells them. “It ain’t no one-man show. John Wayne and Clint Eastwood ain’t in the Army.”

The man who confronts Alvarez at the door of the first house does not resist. In seconds, he is zipcuffed and sprawled on the floor. Alvarez sweeps through the kitchen, past a mixing bowl filled with parsley and a pail of orange rinds in the sink.

Into the living room, where a burning kerosene lantern illuminates a sleeping woman in her early 20s. She screams as Alvarez moves through a doorway to the bedroom where an old man sleeps with his wife and across into another living room.

“First floor is clear,” Alvarez says.

Two soldiers charge up the stairs where they confront a 4-foot hatch that leads to another bedroom. They rush in, waking up a woman, a man and four children, including a teenage girl who begins sobbing “Oh, mama, mama” over and over. The family is shepherded downstairs to sit next to the old man, who has begun to rock back and forth, mutter and wheeze.

“Second floor is clear,” Staff Sgt. Michael Johnston, 29, of Basin, Wyo., announces.

Staff Sgt. Steven Doolittle, of Chelsea, Okla., and the oldest man in the platoon at 32, tells the old man to be quiet.

“He is my grandfather, he is sick. What do you want?” the young woman shouts in accented but flawless English. Doolittle is silent.

Alvarez and his team head through the back garden to the house next door, where intelligence says the source’s elderly acquaintance lives. U.S. troops watching from other buildings have told him there is movement on both floors. Once inside, he radios for help. Wailing can be heard in the background.

“We got the baby issue up here, we need personnel,” Alvarez reports to Brogan.

A few minutes later, the team returns to the first house with three women, two babies and a man who claims he worked for KBR, the Halliburton subsidiary, until a year ago, but quit because it was too dangerous. The man tells them he heard the commotion at his neighbor's house and opened his gate because he was afraid they would smash it down.

The soldiers didn't find the informant's friend or his grandson.

Doolittle brings the man they did find into the kitchen to kneel on the floor with two other males, one of whom is the son of the elderly man in the next room. Two bespectacled soldiers from the 172nd Stryker Brigade's intelligence unit, who ask not to be identified because of their work, approach the three men.

"I need you to tell me: Has your father ever done anything with terrorists? Has he supported them? Has he told them what to do, has he even led to them?" one interrogator asks.

The question is repeated in Arabic by a military translator. The man who says he once worked for KBR smiles, closes his eyes and shakes his head slowly, almost patiently. None of the three look particularly frightened, just tired.

"He is a peaceful man who stands in the doorway and spends the day tending the garden," the KBR man says of the 75-year-old in the living room.

Eberhart comes in from his command vehicle. He is not convinced. He suspects that the old man is not the financier, but the leader of the terrorist cell himself. Their names match, and the old man could be exaggerating his poor health. He could also be the quiet influence behind the cell, not directly involved in attacks.

"You got to think mafia," Eberhart says. "The older you are the more respect you get." [You got to think Captain Eberhart is a fucking paranoid idiot.]

He orders the old man to be taken to a U.S. base and leaves the house to look for the man's third daughter who wasn't there with her two sisters when the soldiers broke in. She might know something more.

Kelley has his men begin to search the house, slowly sifting through cabinets, drawers and closets. They come across the family's one weapon, a pistol, and collect nine \$100 bills along with the equivalent of several hundred more dollars in Iraqi dinars.

Yet as the search progresses, something doesn't seem right.

The old man was in the first house, not the second. There is no one who fits the description of the financier, and no one who could be his college-age son. And the three men on the floor don't look much like bodyguards.

All three men in zipcuffs deny owning a gas station. One says he is a civil engineer. Their identification cards back them up.

The search turns up nothing suspicious. One seized document is a mimeograph copy of an English class reading: "Further examples about the basic patters in English: Palmer and Crystal ate the meat (hungrily) (in their hut) (that night)."

As Brogan paces the room, a call comes in. It's Eberhart. He tells them to release everyone and get back into their Strykers.

An intelligence officer back at headquarters has decided the old man doesn't match the cell leader's description. Kelley and his crew are told to return everything that has been collected and packed into a black plastic trunk, and leave.

Sgt. Juan Castellanos, 26, of Willow Creek, Calif., lays out everything at the feet of the old man sitting in the living room, including the cash.

Brogan orders his men into the room along with the three Iraqi men, who are cut free. They rub their wrists, inflamed and red from the zipcuffs.

With his masked interpreter beside him, Brogan looks to the Iraqis and U.S. soldiers surrounding him.

"We apologize for the inconvenience tonight. We had bad intelligence and believed there was terrorist activity here. All your items have been returned. We are not taking anyone tonight and we are returning all your items," he says.

"Normally we get good intelligence and we catch the bad guys that are trying to hurt you guys. I hope that everyone is OK and we didn't cause any stress." [Do you believe that one? Let some Iraqi soldiers do that to his family, and come up with bullshit like that, and see how he reacts.]

One of the Iraqi men tells him gently that everyone just wants to go to bed and for the Americans to leave them in peace. Brogan nods. The teenage girl is still crying.

Outside, a light rain still falls, but not enough to ground the Kiowa OH-58 scout helicopters that buzz overhead.

Brogan's men climb into the Strykers. His attention turns to the radio. Eberhart has tracked down and woken up the third daughter and her story holds up. The tipster was wrong. The people in the two houses have no connection to the terror cell leader or its financier.

Castellanos lights a cigarette as the Stryker lurches off. It is just before 3 a.m.

"What a disappointing night," he says.

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

**IMPOSSIBLE MISSION
FUTILE EXERCISE
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



U.S. Marines patrol a road leading to the nearby Euphrates River near Hit December 29, 2005. (Gunnery Sgt. Keith A. Milks/Handout/Reuters)

TROOP NEWS

**Italy To Pull All Troops Out Of
Iraq:
1000 Go Home By June**

January 19 2006 Independent Online

Rome - Italy will withdraw 1 000 of its 2 600 troops in Iraq by June and aims to finish its mission there by the end of this year, Defence Minister Antonio Martino said on Thursday.

Italy, which has the fourth largest foreign contingent in Iraq, faces a general election next April where the unpopular Iraq war is likely to become an issue.

Most Italians and all opposition parties were opposed to the troop deployment.

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



Widow Rosali Rodon, left, is presented with a box containing an American flag and the honor medals of her husband, U.S. Army Sgt. Jason Lopez Reyes, at his burial ceremony in his hometown of Hatillo, Puerto Rico, Jan. 18, 2006. Lopez died of wounds sustained Jan. 5 when a roadside bomb exploded near his convoy on the outskirts of the Iraqi capital, Baghdad. **At least 47 Puerto Rican soldiers have died in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars since 2001.** (AP Photo/Andres Leighton)

Gen. Pace And His Fellow Joint Chiefs Of Staff? “Cowardice And Dereliction Of Duty”

[Thanks to Alycia Barr, who sent this in.]

The more Americans reflect on the nature of the occupation ongoing in Iraq, the more they wrestle with the notion of how they would respond if a foreign power put its troops on the ground here at home. The answer, of course, is obvious. It is hard to recruit Americans who know that if they were in the shoes of the Iraqis,

they would be doing the exact same thing as the insurgents: fighting with every tool available to drive out the foreign occupier.

01/18/06 By Scott Ritter, AlterNet [Excerpts]

The generals who criticize Congressman Murtha would do well to study recent history, especially some of the historical lessons drawn from books that they themselves encourage mid- to senior-level officers to read.

Since its publication in 1998, U.S. Army Col. H. R. McMasters' "Dereliction of Duty," an indictment of the Joint Chiefs of Staff for the escalation of the Vietnam War, has been required reading for a generation of U.S. military leaders.

Drawing upon recently declassified documents, McMasters outlines the betrayal of the American military during the Vietnam War by its own leaders, the general officers of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who put their own career ambitions ahead of the welfare and well-being of their troops, allowing the politicization of the Vietnam War to occur to the point that a war all knew to be unwinnable (and unjust) was sustained for many years by those afraid to speak out lest they threaten their career and reputation.

Gen. Pace and his fellow Joint Chiefs of Staff are the current manifestation of the same cowardice and dereliction of duty McMasters chronicled in his book, a trend that leads one to question whether there are any generals today who possess enough honor to speak out against a war, and its underlying policies, that not only destroys the men and institutions they represent as leaders, but threatens the very nation they are sworn to defend.

McMasters, a major at the time of the publication of his book, is an officer of great courage and conviction, not to mention considerable military talent. He commanded an armored unit during the 1991 Gulf War, which engaged the Iraqi Republican Guard in a ferocious battle known as "73 Easting."

More recently, McMasters commanded the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment in Iraq, where he participated in combat operations in northern Iraq, including a decisive battle in September 2005 for the city of Tall Afar, a city of some 200,000 people about 260 miles northwest of Baghdad and only 40 miles from Syria.

This battle, Operation Restore Rights, was one of several waged by the U.S. military and its erstwhile Iraqi government allies against Iraqi insurgents in an effort to demonstrate that the Iraqi military was taking a lead in security and stability operations inside Iraq. In a briefing to journalists shortly after the fighting in Tall Afar wound down, McMasters referred to the insurgents as "terrorists" who were drawn to Tall Afar because of its location along routes between the Iraqi city of Mosul and Syria. According to McMasters, the "terrorists" considered it a good place to incite sectarian and ethnic violence and chaos that would preclude Iraqi governmental control.

When the terrorists took over Tall Afar, McMasters said, they replaced all the imams from the mosques with Islamic extremists, replaced all teachers from the schools with people who "preached hatred and intolerance," and kidnapped and murdered large numbers of people. "The enemy here did just the most horrible things you can imagine," McMasters said, "in one case murdering a child, placing a booby trap within the child's

body, and waiting for the parent to come recover the body of their child and exploding it to kill the parents."

In the end, McMasters said, the "terrorists" who once ran the western Iraq city of Tall Afar were routed by American and Iraqi security forces.

The operation began in early May of 2005, McMasters noted, but fighting reached a climax in September. About 5,000 Iraqi security forces and around 3,500 U.S. troops participated in Tall Afar operation, according to McMasters, who noted that a "pall of fear" has been lifted from Tall Afar.

McMasters, in extolling the victory in Tall Afar, noted that the United States is employing "the right strategy" to defeat insurgents in Iraq by building up capable Iraqi security forces, including police, to eventually take over from coalition troops.

The colonel said the American people should be very proud of U.S. service members in Iraq, noting that they and their coalition and Iraqi partners have "the enemy on the run." The Iraqi people should know that America is "going to stand by them" until the insurgents have been defeated, McMasters said.

If one were ignorant of Col. McMasters' curriculum vitae, one might be excused for thinking that Gen. Pace or one of his clones had given the briefing, so in lock-step was the briefing with the political message being issued from the White House.

According to McMasters' simplistic briefing, one would believe that the "terrorists" had imposed themselves on the people of Tall Afar, and not the U.S. military.

Tell that to the Hassan children, orphaned by the U.S. Army in January 2005, when their car was shot up at a U.S. military roadblock inside Tall Afar.

"If it were up to me, I'd kill the Americans and drink their blood", 14-year-old Jilian Hassan, who survived the shooting, is quoted as saying afterwards. The Hassans were Turkmen, natives of Tall Afar.

I'd like to ask Col. McMasters what his sentiments would be if foreign troops shot up his car while he drove home in his own hometown, killing members of his family. I'm certain they would echo that of young Jilian.

But McMasters will be the first to tell you that there are unforeseen consequences to war, first and foremost being the tragic reality of what the military euphemistically refers to as "collateral damage" among the civilian population.

But I will tell you that another casualty of war is the truth, and McMasters, the man who took the Joint Chiefs of Staff to task for their lack of honor when it came to selling the Vietnam War, seems to have taken a page directly from his own book.

McMasters failed to mention that his operation was an eerie repeat of a similar operation fought in Tall Afar almost exactly one year prior by members of the U.S. Army's Stryker Brigade in September 2004.

As with that effort, Operation Restore Rights found virtually no foreign fighters in Tall Afar, only Iraqi Turkmen native to the city. Almost all of those killed or captured during the battle for Tall Afar were native Turkmen.

McMasters also glosses over the reality of the Iraqi military, which fought alongside the U.S. soldiers in Tall Afar. Drawn primarily from the ranks of the Kurdish Peshmerga, who were (and are) waging their own pogrom of ethnic cleansing against Turkmen in the area of Kirkuk, the Iraqi military was engaged in nothing less than the wholesale terrorizing of an innocent civilian population which the U.S. military, including McMasters, allowed to be categorized as "criminal."

Iraqi Defense Minister Sadoun al-Dulaimi, a former lieutenant colonel in Saddam Hussein's army who fled Iraq in 1986, commenting on the "battle" of Tall Afar, said that it would be used as a model as his forces attacked other insurgent-held cities in quick succession. "We are warning those who have given shelter to terrorists that they must stop, kick them out, or else we will cut off their hands, heads and tongues as we did in Tall Afar," al-Dulaimi said.

Within a month of McMasters' press conference, U.S. forces in Tall Afar were trying to win over the deeply traumatized Turkmen population. Meetings were held with local school officials on how to reopen schools closed since the fighting in September.

Most of the schools had been destroyed or damaged in the fighting, and those that remained intact served as barracks for the occupying U.S. military forces that remained behind in Tall Afar.

School officials asked when the Americans might leave, so that they could return to a sense of normalcy. The U.S. military made it clear that the security situation in the city will dictate when the soldiers will leave the schools. "We hope we can leave those schools as soon as possible, but we do not want to do so too early and allow the criminals to come back," a U.S. military officer said.

Left unsaid was the reality that the "criminals" the officer referred to are in fact the very citizens he claims to be protecting.

As McMasters and others know, the vast majority of the "terrorists" killed and detained during the fight for Tall Afar were natives of that town simply fighting to defend their homes.

Like young Jilian, however, there can be little doubt about what will motivate them for the foreseeable future: a burning desire to drive out an occupying force, that destroyed their homes and slaughtered their fellow townspeople.

In an effort to win back the "hearts and minds" of the citizens of Tall Afar, Col. McMasters' 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment participated in a program in mid-November 2005 to distribute blankets to help ward off the cold of the coming winter. This action was reported by the Department of Defense's new "Defend America" website, part of a propaganda effort to feed to the American people the "good news" coming from Iraq.

Tell that to the citizens of Tall Afar, who know that a few blankets and repaired schools can't undo the damage done by a brutal occupation run by officers like Col. McMasters who have lost all sense of history or responsibility when it comes to waging war in Iraq.

When Col. McMasters was a major, he authored a book that made me proud to say I was an officer in the service of the armed forces of the United States of America.

Today, I cannot in all good faith say I share these sentiments.

Col. McMasters seems to have forgotten the lessons Maj. McMasters penned in his book "Dereliction of Duty."

After reviewing Col. McMasters' words and deeds regarding Tall Afar, I wonder if he could write such a book today, or instead has he become so enamored with his rank and position, and with his seemingly upward mobility in the ranks of the U.S. Army, that he has forgotten the important lessons he drew from the failure of leadership exhibited by the Joint Chiefs of Staff during the Vietnam War.

One could easily confuse Col. McMasters' briefing regarding operations in Tall Afar with similar briefings offered years ago by colonels concerning operations in the Au Chau Valley, or outside Danang, or anywhere else in Vietnam, just as one would have no problem drawing a direct comparison with the politicized posturing of the Joint Chiefs of Staff during Vietnam with the similar behavior of Gen. Pace and his colleagues today regarding Iraq.

I am hopeful that the current course undertaken by America can be reversed, and that someday (soon) Americans can enlist with pride in a military not only sworn to defend the Constitution, but also actively engaged in legitimate activities designed to do just that.

The only "way of life" being destroyed today in Iraq is the Iraqi way of life, and the force responsible for this devastation is the U.S. military.

The insurgency being waged in Iraq today is not anti-American, but rather anti-occupation.

The more Americans reflect on the nature of the occupation ongoing in Iraq, the more they wrestle with the notion of how they would respond if a foreign power put its troops on the ground here at home. The answer, of course, is obvious. It is hard to recruit Americans who know that if they were in the shoes of the Iraqis, they would be doing the exact same thing as the insurgents: fighting with every tool available to drive out the foreign occupier.

We knew when we joined the military that we had a social contract with our fellow Americans.

We who served would forego the comforts and freedoms of civilian life so that we could guarantee that those very same civilians could live as Americans.

We also knew that, when the time came, America would support us by not only providing us with the wherewithal to wage war, but also ensure that before asking us to make the ultimate sacrifice in defense of a cause, that it was a cause worthy of that sacrifice.

Today, that contract lays broken and violated.

America went to war in Iraq on the basis of false premises.

Our troops fight and die for a cause most Americans cannot identify with.

And the U.S. military is engaged in domestic spying operations against the very citizens it is sworn to defend.

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.

Army Sounds Retreat: Fewer Troops, More Rotations With Less Rest At Home

The reduction of combat brigades "will put strain on the Guard even greater than it is today, because we will have to rotate more frequently," said retired Brig. Gen. Stephen M. Koper, president of the National Guard Association in Washington.

January 19, 2006 By Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post Staff Writer

The Army announced yesterday that it will cut six National Guard combat brigades -- or up to 24,000 infantry and other combat troops, as part of an effort to ease budgetary pressures and shift manpower into homeland defense missions.

In addition to scaling back the guard's combat brigades to 28 from 34, the active-duty Army will add one fewer combat brigade than it had planned, ending up with 42 instead of 43, Army Secretary Francis J. Harvey told a Pentagon news briefing yesterday.

The changes suggest that budgetary pressures are exerting limits on the expensive manpower increases that the Army initiated in recent years in its struggle to meet demands in Iraq and Afghanistan.

They also reflect recruiting difficulties, as well as a greater National Guard emphasis on homeland missions in the wake of Hurricane Katrina.

Curbing the growth in Army combat brigades could give troops less time than officials had hoped between war-zone rotations, officials said.

The reduction of combat brigades "will put strain on the Guard even greater than it is today, because we will have to rotate more frequently," said retired Brig. Gen. Stephen M. Koper, president of the National Guard Association in Washington.

Harvey said the Army has not yet been able to achieve its rotational goal for active-duty brigades of spending one year in a war zone and two years at home; instead units are spending 15 to 22 months at home, he said.

On the 3rd Anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq

Walkin' To New Orleans

VETERANS AND SURVIVORS MARCH FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE From Mobile to New Orleans March 14-19, 2006

***FROM THE GULF COAST TO THE PERSIAN GULF
EVERY BOMB DROPPED ON IRAQ EXPLODES IN NEW
ORLEANS***

The shocking images of devastation in the wake of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita may be fading from television news but the crisis on the Gulf Coast is still with us. It's like the government's ban on film of planes unloading flag-draped coffins at Dover Air Force Base--pictures or no, US troops and Iraqis are still dying, day in and day out.

The corporate media hasn't done much in depth reporting that shows the connection between a multi-trillion dollar illegal war abroad and the shameful failure of our government's moral, economic, and political response to Katrina. Everyday people in this country, however, sense that they are connected.

<p>Military families and veterans of Iraq, Vietnam and other military adventures, together with hurricane survivors, intend to make that connection crystal clear on an epic march down Gulf Coast Highway 90, heading into the heart of New Orleans on the third anniversary of the war.</p>

The ongoing crisis on the Gulf Coast and the connection that Dr. King made between the "giant triplets of racism, militarism and economic exploitation" will be impossible to ignore.

At the call of the Mobile, Alabama chapter of Veterans For Peace, members of VFP, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Gold Star Families for Peace and Military Families Speak Out will conduct, a six-day, 135-mile march from Mobile across Mississippi to New Orleans. Thousands of hurricane survivors and community residents along the route are expected to walk with us.

The marching veterans and military families aim to build relationships with the surviving members of communities devastated by the Katrina-Rita disaster. Our actions will proclaim our solidarity with them, not only as acute victims of a "natural" disaster but also of structural racism in the United States.

As we walk down the coastal highway, veterans who have ourselves been the instruments of death and destruction abroad and who have become witnesses against war as a matter of conscience, will speak out and act as a conscience for the nation in a region of the deep South still shaped by slavery, segregation and the monumental freedom struggles of the 1960s.

For veterans this will be both a spiritual pilgrimage and a political action

We will demand real empowerment for Gulf Coast hurricane survivors and for the Iraqi people.

We will demand the immediate withdrawal of all US troops from Iraq.

Bring Them Home Now! And as they come back, we demand decent health care, employment, housing and education for them, including Depleted Uranium testing and post-traumatic stress (PTSD) treatment.

We will demand that the US government provide funds for all Katrina families to be reunited and returned to their homes. Bring Them Home Now!

And we demand that hurricane survivors have the right to plan their future free from the dictates of the corporations and their politician front men in Washington D.C. and on the state and local level, too.

This march is a reminder to the leadership of the US, regardless of party affiliation, that the majority of American people now oppose the war.

"Staying the course" while people continue to die and while resources spent on an unjust and failed policy are desperately needed on the Gulf Coast of the United States, is simply not acceptable.

WE NEED YOUR HELP TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN!

While the march itself will be made up mainly of veterans, Gold Star and other military families, and hurricane survivors, all concerned citizens are invited and encouraged to

attend the final leg, heading into a mass rally in New Orleans on March 19, the third anniversary of the invasion of Iraq.

We need financial support to conduct this march, and we need it now. To donate, go to www.ivaw.net or www.veteransforpeace.org and follow the donation instructions. Note that your donation is for the

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action



A vehicle destroyed by a roadside bomb in Basra January 18, 2006. The bomb killed two U.S. mercenaries and seriously wounded a third. REUTERS/Atef Hassan

Jan 19 (KUNA) & RTÉ 2006

The Iraqi police station in Zubair in southern Basra came under attacks by rockets Thursday, a police spokesman said. There were no human casualties.

The spokesman told reporters three Katyusha rockets were fired at the Zubair station by unknown gunmen.

Police in Iraq now say that at least 22 people were killed and 26 others wounded in a double car bomb and suicide bomb attack in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad.

Police said a car bomb hit a police patrol and, simultaneously, a suicide bomber walked into a coffee shop next to the patrol and blew himself up.

Police earlier said that policemen and civilians were among the dead.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**“The Sense That The World Is
Not A Safe Place Is Not A
‘Disorder.’**

**“It Is An Accurate Perception”
KIA IN ALABAMA
(In Memory Of Douglas Barber)**

Let me explain something, as a veteran myself of eight conflict areas, and something that Doug discovered in Balad. The sense that the world is not a safe place is not a "disorder." It is an accurate perception. Post-traumatic stress is not a disorder. Calling it that earns it a place in the DSM IV, professionalizes and medicalizes this very accurate perception that the world is not safe, and that life is not a comforting film convention.

1.19.06 By Stan Goff Via vvawnet

"All is not okay or right for those of us who return home alive and supposedly well. What looks like normalcy and readjustment is only an illusion to be revealed by time and torment. Some soldiers come home missing limbs and other parts of their bodies. Still others will live with permanent scars from horrific events that no one other than those who served will ever understand." - Douglas Barber, 2005

On January 16th, after having talked quite normally on the phone with at least two other people that same day, Douglas Barber, a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) living in Lee County, Alabama, changed the answer message on his telephone.

"If you're looking for Doug," it said in his Alabama drawl, "I'm checking out of this world. I'll see you on the other side."

He then called the police, collected his shotgun, and went out onto his porch to meet them. From the sketchy reports we have now, it seems the police wouldn't oblige him with a "suicide by cop" and tried to talk him down. When it became apparent he wasn't able to commit cop-suicide, 27-year-old Douglas Barber did an about face, rotated the shotgun and killed himself.

There is a hell of a lot that we just don't know about how this happened. I talked to Doug on the phone earlier this month, and he described how excited he was to have joined

IVAW, how he looked forward to taking up the pen and speaking out. Others had spoken with him only days and hours before he permanently quieted the chaos in his head. None of the "classic" signs of suicidal thinking were manifest. He was gregarious and upbeat, playful.

We know he had been prescribed medication.

When he came back from Iraq, having served with the 1485th Transportation Company, a National Guard unit federalized to compensate for the extreme combat overstretch in Iraq, he was diagnosed with severe post-traumatic stress (PTSD), and the Veterans Administration medical system leans toward drugs.

In fact, they frequently shazam PTSD into something called "personality disorder," which can be treated with drugs.

One veteran I know was prescribed Paxil which made him feel suicidal, and when the VA insisted that it worked, this kid switched to his own anti-depressant, marijuana, which he says works better than the Paxil and doesn't make him feel like killing himself.

If one has a personality disorder, you see, then the "pathology" has no relation to one's job, like participating in the occupation of Iraq.

The etiology exists somewhere within the individual, like a genetic disorder that was missed during induction, missed by one's units, and missed during medical pre-screening for deployment into Mesopotamia.

We don't know if Doug was taking medication, or had stopped taking medication, or even what medication he had been prescribed.

We do know that he was a truck driver, and that his job in Iraq was driving supply convoys along the shooting gallery between Baghdad Airport and LSA Anaconda in Balad -- a giant military base -- a veritable city -- that is subject to so many mortar and rocket attacks that the troops have renamed it Mortaritaville.

We do know, from Doug's interviews, that the stress of those convoys, each confronting its participants with the possibility that this could be one's last road trip, were hard on Doug.

In July 2003, his convoy was hit with an improvised explosive device, and the mortar attacks at Anaconda were so regular that they were almost a weather pattern. But Doug said there was something else that was even harder on him. When the grunts came in, they would describe how many civilians they'd killed.

When Doug was in a traffic jam one day, feeling very vulnerable, and the US units dismounted to clear the traffic jam, angry and afraid and waving weapons at the civilians, a woman in a bus held up her baby for them to see... like that window-sign we see in cars on American highways -- "Baby on Board." Only she wasn't cautioning other drivers to be careful. She was trying to prevent an armed attack that could kill her child.

Doug may have decomped from medication, I don't know. That could have contributed to his suicide. It's possible.

He fought with the defunded, Bush-administration VA for two years trying to get counseling, and trying to get authorization for his disability. It's very difficult to be a "productive member of society" when one fears sleep, and when one has lost meaning.

I read a book on post-traumatic stress once. Rape is the most common cause, then combat. It said that trauma disrupts one's sense that the world is a safe place, that trauma destabilizes our sense of meaning.

Let me explain something, as a veteran myself of eight conflict areas, and something that Doug discovered in Balad. The sense that the world is not a safe place is not a "disorder." It is an accurate perception. And the sense of meaning many of us enjoy is an illusion, a cruel construction that normalizes the orderly activity of the suburb and nurses our children on simple-minded, Disney-fied optimism pumped through television sets in a relentless data stream.

Post-traumatic stress is not a disorder. Calling it that earns it a place in the DSM IV, professionalizes and medicalizes this very accurate perception that the world is not safe, and that life is not a comforting film convention.

Calling it an individual "disorder" cloaks the social systems responsible for experiences like Vietnam and Iraq.

And it renders invisible the fact that Douglas Barber was not merely a suicide.

Douglas Barber was nurtured on the illusions that secure our obedience, but when the real system needed to demonstrate to the rest of the world just how unsafe our nation could make them as the price of disobedience, the vile carnival barkers of the Bush administration, like administrations before them, did not recruit the children of Martha's Vineyard or Georgetown.

They went, as they have always done, to places like Lee County, Alabama, where simple people have formed powerful affective attachments to the myth of our national moral superiority.

When that word view, that architecture of meaning, collapses in the face of realities like convoy Russian roulette, and women holding babies up to prevent being shot, and daily stories of slaughter by the people one sleeps with, the profound betrayal of it is not experienced as some quiet, somber sadness.

It is experienced like bees swarming out of a hive that has been broken, as a howling chaos. So we quiet it with marijuana, alcohol, heroin, and even shotguns.

The most fortunate of these survivors find one another.

Doug had recently joined IVAW, where our veterans not only establish mutual support networks of plain love and care with one another, but where they can

engage in the most "therapeutic" activity of all: fighting back against the criminality that sent them there in the first place.

We arrived too late for Doug.

We were going to meet him in Birmingham later this month to involve him in the planning for a from Mobile, Alabama to New Orleans, and serve as the conscience of a nation that will spend trillions to drop bombs on Iraqis, and use a hurricane in the Black Belt as a pretext to accelerate gentrification.

So when we launch out of Mobile in March on this 135-mile trek, we will carry Douglas Barber with us.

Stan Goff is a retired Special Forces Master Sergeant. He is the author of three books; "Hideous Dream: A Soldier's Memoir of the US Invasion of Haiti" (Soft Skull Press, 2000), Full Spectrum Disorder: The Military in the New American Century (Soft Skull Press, 2004), and Sex & War (Soft Skull Press, 2006 [to be released soon]) www.softskull.com. He is the military affairs editor for From The Wilderness <http://www.fromthewilderness.com/>, and writes foreign policy analysis for Sanders Research Associates.

He is a member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War www.vvaw.org , Veterans For Peace www.veteransforpeace.org, and Military Families Speak Out www.mfso.org.

His son is in the active duty army and is in Iraq now for the third time. Goff is on the coordinating committee of the Bring Them Home Now! campaign www.bringthemhomenow.org , and advises Iraq Veterans Against the War www.ivaw.net on organizational development. His blog is called "Feral Scholar."

A Call To America: Dare To Make A Principled Stand

As someone who willingly took an oath to follow legal orders and to use his actions to correct any conditions deemed detrimental to the integrity of the service, Sgt. Benderman saw clearly the actions of this war to be detrimental to the honor of the soldiers who had volunteered to serve and filed his conscientious objection to it.

From: Monica Benderman
Sent: January 16, 2006 10:44 PM

By Monica Benderman. Monica Benderman is the wife of Sgt. Kevin Benderman, wrongfully imprisoned for being a Conscientious Objector to war.

Terrorism is the use of fear tactics to coerce others to bend to your will or way of thinking. Terrorists employ threats as a means of controlling the actions of others.

The root of terrorist actions lies in simple aggressive behaviors, often referred to as disciplinary actions, designed to scare a person enough to make them “tow the line” and follow directions even when the directions lead to a violation of their own ethical principles.

The most severe acts of terror are far less prevalent than those with less harmful physical results, and yet their foundation lies in a society’s willingness to accept the simpler, less noticeably damaging acts as part of life, and turn a blind eye to the lasting effects.

People only want to recognize terrorists as those who commit the most heinous of threatening acts. Our society seems to not want to see the simple acts of terrorizing that can happen to all of us, that ARE happening to all of us right here in our own country. Eventually, we must realize that it is the fact that we have allowed ourselves to be apathetic toward these actions that the systems by which our country operates have now become corrupt.

Americans are deserting their duty to their country, and their Constitution, every time a member of government, a member of the military or a member of our community uses fear-based threats to cause them to run away rather than stand for what they believe.

Americans desert their country and the foundations upon which it was built every time they believe it is another’s responsibility to bring about the changes necessary to keep our country strong; every time they run and hide to keep from facing the challenge of standing against a corrupt policy or law.

Government institutions, community projects, and military policies will remain corrupt as long as Americans are willing to avoid their responsibilities.

Those people who have been elected to serve the citizens of the United States will only act according to the manner in which those they serve demand that they act. If the people are apathetic, those in government are going to believe that we do not care. If the people do not care, there is no reason not to take advantage of what those in government have been given; an open checkbook with only one signature needed.

The American people, as a whole, are responsible for the threatening acts that have been used against us. The American people let their guard down.

We were told that our country was secure, and so we lazily believed, not wanting to use the effort to see for ourselves. We learned the hard way that the security we were

promised was nothing more than smoke and mirrors. Now, we blame the government, but it was the American people who did not step up and hold the administration accountable to its words.

Fear-based speeches and fear-based actions become simple acts of terrorizing against the American people. Continued assertions of threats of violence against the security of our country are being used to coerce our citizens into believing that we must continue the destructive road on which we now travel.

Americans can stop the forward progress of this threatening direction.

Americans **MUST** do this if we hope for America to remain the country our founding fathers envisioned.

All Americans must take a stand to defend our Constitution – a defense that does not need to happen at the end of an M-16. To bring about these changes, Americans cannot desert when the orders given are questionable and the consequences of making them right are more difficult than we want to handle. Even the smallest action matters in correcting laws that violate our constitutional rights. Every person who takes a stand will add one more brick to the foundation of principle that needs to be rebuilt in order for our country to get back on track.

In December 2004, Sgt. Kevin Benderman filed his Conscientious Objection application as a demonstration of his moral opposition to a military action with ramifications that violated our Constitution and the Law of Land our government is legally bound to follow.

He made a legal demonstration of principle supported by the Army Regulation 600-43, which allows soldiers to have a change of conscience and be released from duty because of it.

Sgt. Benderman had seen war firsthand and became committed to taking a stand against any future participation in the use of violence to solve our differences with others.

Sgt. Benderman did not desert his unit; he did not run from his sworn duty. He stood his ground for what he believed, and expected nothing more than that the Army would follow its own regulations and afford him the rights allowed under the US Constitution which he had sworn to defend.

By the very act of taking a stand against war and the administration's policies directing it, Sgt. Benderman continued to fulfill his duty as an American soldier in defending the Constitution and the right to Freedom of Choice it guarantees all citizens.

Sgt. Benderman volunteered to serve in the US Army, and did so without question for 10 years of honorable service. His service for those ten years, and his actions during his combat tour in Iraq demonstrate his commitment to duty and to the lawful orders given by commanders as they apply to the defense of our Constitution and our country.

When the orders given and the faulty leadership demonstrated by his command called into question his personal principles, Sgt. Benderman exercised his rights as a human being and citizen of this country.

As someone who willingly took an oath to follow legal orders and to use his actions to correct any conditions deemed detrimental to the integrity of the service, Sgt. Benderman saw clearly the actions of this war to be detrimental to the honor of the soldiers who had volunteered to serve and filed his conscientious objection to it.

From the onset of his application the lack of integrity in the command of his unit showed itself. His commander refused to process his application violating an Army regulation. His chaplain chose to debate the issue with Sgt. Benderman rather than assist him, another ethical violation of Sgt. Benderman's rights.

Without benefit of an investigation into the trumped up charges threatening to be brought against Sgt. Benderman, the acting Commander of the installation where he was stationed pre-determined Sgt. Benderman's guilt and used his influence to encourage the prosecution to see that all actions led to a stiff sentence against Sgt. Benderman, regardless of the final decision on which charge to impose.

This action was then openly publicized as an attempt to threaten any other soldiers who might consider making the same objection to war as Sgt. Benderman.

Throughout the trial process threats of further legal action and additional charges were made in an effort to cause Sgt. Benderman to plead guilty to a crime that he did not commit.

He refused and the threatening acts continued. The command was angry for Sgt. Benderman's committed stand on principle brought their own actions into question and caused them to fear what would happen if they did not bring this soldier back into their control.

Sgt. Benderman is now in prison convicted on the basis of misrepresentations and conflicting testimonies. His court martial process serves as testimony to the corrupt system of justice now presiding in our US military.

The easy course would have been to run away, to hide and pretend that life was simple and peaceful. The easy course would have been to change a name, to move to another country justifying it by declaring the Constitution of this country to be dead and the government too far corrupt for change to happen. The easy course would have been to desert.

But desertion would only mean giving up. It would mean the work of generations of American pioneers who came before would be tossed away as if it didn't matter.

It would mean forgetting history. It would be a disservice to all those who toughed out the difficult times of building the foundations for this country in which we now live. It

would mean dishonoring the sacrifice of every person who ever gave a part of their life to make the home they believed in, America, something to be proud of.

Guns, missiles and pre-emptive wars against the peace are not going to make us secure and they are not going to stop terrorist acts.

Americans will stop terrorist acts when they finally dare to face their fears and take a stand against the threats being made against them and demand that the foundation on which this country was created be restored.

The easy course or the path to principle: which road will you choose?

Monica Benderman is the wife of Sgt. Kevin Benderman, wrongfully imprisoned for being a Conscientious Objector to war. Please visit www.BendermanTimeline.com and www.BendermanDefense.org to learn more.

Monica and Kevin may be reached at mdawnb@coastalnow.net

As We Speak



First stages of military recruitment. Lying is the number one sales pitch.

Mike Hastie

Vietnam Veteran

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

From: Mike Hastie

To: GI Special

Sent: January 16, 2006

Subject: As We Speak

I pulled this out of my hat, because I had to. As far as the rightwingers go, you must be having an impact. Maybe I'll see you on 60 Minutes. We just need a bullet-proof van and some heavy dudes.

Mike

Believe it or not, whenever I feel I can't take the insanity any longer, I read some Holocaust literature.

I have done this many times. So, off to Powell's book store I go. Sometimes I just sit on a stool and look at all the books in the Holocaust section. Then, I reach for a book, and start reading.

I usually read a story about a concentration survivor, and what gave them the will to keep going.

I vividly recall the time I visited Dachau in 1954, when I was nine years old.

I have learned one thing: The difference between the survivor and the non-survivor, is the survivor has the ability to adjust.

When everything is reduced to minute to minute survival, there emerges a strength that goes beyond the intellect.

When I was in a corner of a padded cell of a psychiatric hospital, I found that strength.

When your face is drowning in a puddle of booze, or you are slapping the shit out of a friend's face to give them color, so they can pass through the selection process, the Einstein's turn into fools.

At that moment, the experience outgrows the intelligence.

Mike Hastie

Vietnam Veteran

January 16, 2006

Same Old Same Old: **“Our Enemy Was Not The People We Had Been Sent To Kill, But The Government That Had Sent Us There”**

JANUARY 19, 2006 Via vavawnet, BY FRED WILCOX, GUEST WRITER, The Ithacan
[Excerpt]

A faded yellow poster hangs on my office wall. It shows an American soldier with one foot planted in Vietnam, the other stepping upon Nicaragua. The poster's caption reads: "From My Lai to Managua. The World Knows Who The Real Terrorists Are!"

The text, written by Vietnam Veterans Against the War, addresses “those in the U.S. military, draft age youth and all others who would answer the call to defend the Empire”

It continues: “Shipped off in the name of duty, honor and patriotism we found ourselves being terrorists for U.S. Imperialism. Many of us came to realize that our enemy was not the people we had been sent to kill, but the government that had sent us there ...”

Vietnam Veterans Against the War did not mince words.

These young soldiers had gone off to war believing they were fighting to free the Vietnamese people from communism.

They returned home convinced that they had been used as hired killers to expand the American empire: “They wanted us to be John Waynes, full of pride in the Empire as we murdered our way through Southeast Asia.

“Today that same government wants you to be Jon Rambo, as it prepares to blaze its way across Central America, the world and onward into the mushroom clouded future.”

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.

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out
All GI Special issues achieved at website <http://www.militaryproject.org/> .

The following have also posted issues; there may be others:

<http://gi-special.iraq-news.de>, <http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>,
www.williambowles.info/qispecial, http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/,
<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/gi-special.htm>

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