

GI SPECIAL 4C5:

Behold The Burning Bush



Indian protesters burn a poster of Bush during a protest in Bhopal March 1, 2006, where thousands of civilians were choked to death by fumes from a U.S. chemical plant. REUTERS/Raj Patidar

**“I’m Done”
“I Am Not Fighting For
Anyone's Oil Agenda”**

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

Tina Garnanez interviewed by Christine Ahn, Women of Color Resource Center, War Times; Tiempo de Guerras

"I was a lost Native," Tina Garnanez reflected on her journey in the Army.

Tina grew up on a Navajo reservation and attended public school in Farmington, New Mexico. The only daughter of five children raised by a single mom, Tina enlisted when she was 17, to get money for college.

"I wanted to attend college, and I knew that between my family situation and being from the reservation, I had few options to get a college education."

Tina was stationed in Kosovo in March 2003 when U.S. planes started bombing Baghdad.

In July 2004, Tina was deployed to Iraq. Tina had already completed her tour of duty, but the Army can extend a soldier's enlistment through a policy known as stop-loss.

As a medic in Iraq, Tina transferred patients from the ambulances into the hospital where she saw the high cost of war. "I saw disfigured bodies, limbs blown off, soldiers who lost their sanity."

She also traveled with convoys delivering medical supplies to bases. On one of these convoys, Tina barely escaped an explosion. A bomb exploded and dust, rocks, shrapnel flew everywhere.

"I was so angry. Not angry at the Iraqis, but angry at the reason I was there. For what, I asked myself? My mom would have received a triangle-folded flag in exchange for her only daughter."

She knew at the moment that she could no longer serve in this war. "I'm done," she said, "I am not fighting for anyone's oil agenda."

Tina is home in Silver City, New Mexico, honorably discharged. "I really wish I never went into the military. I now have Post-Traumatic-Stress-Disorder. I jump at everything." Many of her fellow soldiers returned home damaged and disillusioned, if they returned at all.

Tina says she speaks to a lot of high school students about why the recruiters target poor, minority students. These youth are looking for a way out, out of the ghetto, out of poverty, out of places where there is little hope for advancement. "The military is not the only option but it's usually only the military recruiters that are there in schools."

"Some people call me unpatriotic when I speak out against the war. Now that's interesting: to call a veteran unpatriotic. I support the troops. They are my brothers and sisters."

Tina has struggled to understand how she as a Native American could be part of the same machine that nearly exterminated the Native Americans. "Broken treaties. Forcing us on reservations. I was a lost Native."

But Tina Garnanez has found her way as part of a growing movement of soldiers speaking out against the war in Iraq.

Tina Garnanez will be a main speaker at "BREAKING RANK: Women of Color Soldiers Speak Out!" on International Women's Day March 8 in Oakland, California.

The event is sponsored by the Women of Color Resource Center
<http://coloredgirls.org> Wednesday, March 8, 2006, 6:30-9 pm, First Unitarian Church, 685 14th Street, Oakland, Sliding scale \$5-\$10, no one turned away for lack of funds.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Greensburg Soldier Dies



Spc. Davila

2.23.06 By Mark Anderson, The Kiowa County Signal

A young man from neighboring Kiowa County became the fourth member of the Kansas National Guard to die in Iraq earlier this week, when 29-year-old Spc. Jessie Davila was killed by a roadside bomb Monday.

A 1995 graduate of Greensburg High School, Davila was a member of Company A, 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry, which deployed to Iraq last fall with around 500 troops.

He becomes the 25th Kansan overall to die in Iraq since the conflict began nearly three years ago.

With official word of Davila's death coming from the state adjutant general Tuesday, news of his fate was circulating amongst employees of the county courthouse in Greensburg by mid-morning yesterday.

Leaving Greensburg shortly after graduation to begin his military career, Davila is fondly remembered by those who knew him best, including USD 422 counselor Sue Greenleaf, whose son Patrick was a classmate and close friend of the former Marine.

"He was in our home a lot and always a pleasure to have over," Greenleaf recalled. "I'll never forget his crooked smile.

"Jessie was quiet and unassuming, but knew from early on he wanted to be a Marine. He was, after high school, and he was a good one."

According to Greenleaf, Davila joined the Guard after having finished his stint in the Marines. Married once, Davila leaves behind a four-year-old daughter.

Headquartered in Kansas City with units in Wichita and Lawrence, the 2nd Battalion, 137th Infantry operates the Joint Visitor's Bureau, meaning it's responsible for providing security for high level visitors passing through Iraq, as well as localized security in areas near Baghdad.

Bomb Blast Injuries Kill S.C. Marine

Feb. 23, 2006 Chuck Crumbo, The State

A 31-year-old Marine from Columbia died of injuries suffered when the vehicle he was driving struck a bomb near Baghdad, the Defense Department said Wednesday.

Staff Sgt. Jay Collado, a 12-year-member of the Marines, became the 39th member of the military with S.C. ties to die in the Iraq war.

The Pentagon statement said Collado died Monday, but did not indicate when the blast occurred.

Collado, who the military said was from Columbia but whose home base was the Marine Corps Air Station at Camp Pendleton, Calif., was a member of the Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 267, Marine Aircraft Group 39, 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing.

He was serving his second deployment to Iraq, assigned to the Army's 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, according to a Marine Corps news release.

Collado entered the armed services at the Military Entrance Processing Station at Fort Jackson on Feb. 16, 1994. He was promoted to staff sergeant Nov. 11, 2002.

Collado's awards included the Joint Meritorious Unit Award, three awards of the Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, two awards of the National Defense Service Medal, the

Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal and the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal.

Family Mourns Marine Killed On Valentine's Day

Feb 19, 2006 (AP)

IRVINE, Calif. A Marine killed in Iraq on Valentine's Day is being mourned in his hometown of Irvine.

Lance Corporal Michael Probst, 26, died in a roadside bomb blast while on patrol near Abu Ghraib. His unit, based in Twentynine Palms, arrived in Iraq in September, and his squad had been searching for insurgents. He had been injured in another bomb blast the month before his death.

His parents said Probst dropped out of Cal-State Chico to join the Marines two years ago. He served as a tank gunner and driver in Iraq.

Probst's parents said their son, who was also a musician, talked about completing college after the Marines.

“Situation In Iraq Gets Progressively More Dangerous For Helicopters To Operate” No Effective Defense Possible

[Thanks to Don Bacon, The Smedley Butler Society, who sent this in.]

“The longer we stay in this conflict, the greater the ability of the insurgents to counter our countermeasures with their technology,” says Steve Greer, a retired Army command sergeant major, and professor of unconventional warfare at American Military University.

March 2006 By Sandra I. Erwin, National Defense Magazine.org

Technology so far has proven to be of little use in protecting Army helicopters from the ravages of small arms and rocket propelled grenades, military and civilian experts contend.

The Army has spent nearly \$2 billion outfitting helicopters with high-tech sensors and flares that help foil shoulder-launched missiles, but none of these devices can prevent choppers from getting shot out of the sky by rocket-propelled grenades and automatic rifles, which are among the preferred weapons of Iraq's insurgency.

"The longer we stay in this conflict, the greater the ability of the insurgents to counter our countermeasures with their technology," says Steve Greer, a retired Army command sergeant major, and professor of unconventional warfare at American Military University.

Of the last three helicopters downed in Iraq, one, a Kiowa Warrior reconnaissance aircraft, was shot down by small-arms fire.

The latest war emergency funding request by the Defense Department includes funds to replace at least 100 helicopters that were lost to crashes, enemy fire and training mishaps last year.

More than 400 helicopters operate in Iraq today, according to unofficial accounts.

While a number of technologies have been proven successful in deflecting shoulder fired heat-seeking missiles, none exists today that can protect from RPGs or standard rifle rounds, Greer says. "There's no way to defend from small-arms fire other than visual recognition and maneuvering away from the line of fire."

RPGs and small-arms rounds fall under the category of "dumb munitions," which are unguided and far more difficult to counter with technical solutions, says Kernan Chaisson, senior electronics analyst at Forecast International, a market intelligence firm.

"You have high-tech protective equipment, but sometimes it doesn't do you any good," he says. "It's a real predicament for aviation. The threat they face, it's hard to do anything about."

In environments such as Iraq, the best protection an aviator has is his own dexterity, says Lou Hennies, a retired major general who commanded the U.S. Army Safety Center. "You have to use pure skill and cunning when you are dealing with this."

The Army builds its aircraft with inherent ballistic tolerance so they can survive small-arms hits to the airframe and, as has been the case in many combat situations, to allow the pilot to land the aircraft even when it's been greatly damaged, Mundt says.

New helicopters also are built with self-healing fuel tanks and fiber-optic technology that minimizes the reliance on cables in the flight controls, which makes the gearboxes less vulnerable.

Despite these improvements, determined enemies eventually figure out the helicopter's weak points, Chaisson says. "You can make helicopters more ballistically tolerant; that protects the cabin. But if the rotor, tail or other vital areas are hit, you have a real problem."

When Iraq's insurgents began targeting truck convoys, the Army rushed to shield its trucks with steel plates. In the aviation world, it's not that simple, says Hennies. "You can't up-armor a helicopter." The added weight likely would keep the aircraft from flying.

As the situation in Iraq gets progressively more dangerous for helicopters to operate, the Army's best option is to reassign as many reconnaissance and surveillance missions as possible to unmanned aircraft, Greer says.

The Army, he says, should "keep pilots out of the air and put technology in the air so we can see."

IMPOSSIBLE MISSION; FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



U.S. soldiers stand outside a Shiite mosque destroyed by a car bomb, Baghdad March 1, 2006. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Brave Bush Spends 4 Hours In Afghanistan

3.2.06 Washington Post, March 2, 2006

On the ground for only four hours while en route to India, Bush met with troops at Bagram air base, participated in a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the new U.S. Embassy in Kabul and ate lunch with Karzai and other Afghan officials.

Resistance Greets Bush With More Attacks

March 2 (Xinhuanet)

One Afghan soldier was killed and two others wounded as they came in contact with militants in the troubled southern Helmand province on Wednesday, commander of southern corps said Thursday.

"Clash and exchange of fire between militants and soldiers of Afghanistan National Army (ANA) in Greshk district yesterday afternoon left one ANA soldier dead and wounded two others," General Rahmatullah Raufi told Xinhua.

Few vehicles of ANA were also damaged during the firefight.

Commenting on militants' casualties, the General said that the enemies also received casualties but could not give the exact figure. [Too busy running to count.]

Afghan troops in a similar skirmish in the neighboring Zabul province on the same day, Raufi added arrested three rebels.

The incident coincided with the visit of President Bush to Afghanistan where he held talks with President Karzai and assured Washington's firm support to the rebuilding of post-Taliban nation.

Fight Against Occupation "Bigger And More Menacing"

3.2.06 New York Times

Four years after the Taliban were ousted from power by the American military, their presence is bigger and more menacing than ever, according to police and government officials, village elders, farmers and aid workers across southern Afghanistan.

U.S. Military Officials Say Afghan War Getting Worse: Collaborator Government Unable “To Control Territory Beyond The Capital Of Kabul”

03/02/06 The Seattle Times Company

Military officials in Washington and Afghanistan said insurgent attacks rose sharply last year and are likely to worsen in 2006.

A military vehicle was damaged by a roadside bomb during the fighting in Afghanistan's central province of Uruzgan in which seven suspected Taliban guerrillas were captured. .

In testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Lt. Gen. Michael D. Maples, appearing with Director of National Intelligence John Negroponte, said attacks within Afghanistan were up 20 percent between 2004 and 2005, suicide bombings increased "almost fourfold" and makeshift bombs, similar to those used in Iraq, had "more than doubled."

Negroponte, in his prepared remarks, acknowledged that "the volume and geographic scope of attacks increased last year," but he added, "the Taliban and other militants have not been able to stop the democratic process" being undertaken by the central government of President Hamid Karzai.

Maples' comments about Afghanistan followed numerous attacks and bombings in recent months that have underscored the government's inability to control territory beyond the capital of Kabul, particularly in southern areas that have long been Taliban strongholds.

One of the most disturbing trends has been a surge in the number of suicide bombings, which were rare in Afghanistan before the Taliban regime was toppled.

Maples also pointed to a rise in the use of so-called improvised explosive devices, typically roadside bombs that can be detonated remotely.

TROOP NEWS

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



Sgt. Gregson Gourley, is loaded into the hearse Friday, March 3, 2006, in Midvale, Utah. Gourley was one of four soldiers killed last week when their Humvee hit a roadside bomb in Iraq. (AP Photo/Douglas C. Pizac)

Rumsfeld At It Again: Says Exposing Pentagon Media Fraud Has “Chilling Effect” On Media

2006/03/04 LA Times

The U.S. military plans to continue paying Iraqi newspapers to publish articles favorable to the United States after an inquiry found no fault with the controversial practice, the top U.S. general in Iraq said Friday.

After the program's existence was revealed in an article in The Times three months ago, White House officials said they were “very concerned” about the practice of paying Iraqi newspapers to publish unattributed articles written by members of the American military.

At the same time, Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld recently defended the program during a speech at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, saying it was an innovative tool for countering a “campaign of disinformation” by Iraqi insurgents.

Rumsfeld also criticized media coverage of the program, saying the reporting had created a “chilling effect” on efforts to improve the way the U.S. communicates with foreign audiences [by paying to plant fake media reports, that is].

LIAR TRAITOR

SOLDIER-KILLER DOMESTIC ENEMY UNFIT FOR COMMAND



[Thanks to PB, who sent this in: Billmon.org]

Marine Says Command Shitbrains Blocking Iraq Troops Email And Web Site Access:

+

How To Evade The Blocks

[Thanks to Anna Bradley, who sent this in.]

What are we fighting for if not the right of all men and women, Iraqi or American, Insurgent or Marine, Sunni, Kurd, or the other one, to hear minute-by-minute

updates of Anna Nicole Smith's appearance before the Supreme Court or read birthday cards to disgraced lobbyists?

3.1.06 Wonkette.com

Folks, our fighting boys need your help. Here's the email we received today from one of them:

Just to let you know, the US Marines have blocked access to "Wonkette" along with numerous other sites such as personal email (i.e. Yahoo, AT&T, Hotmail, etc), blogs that don't agree with the government point of view, personal websites, and some news organizations.

This has taken effect as of the beginning of February.

I have no problem with them blocking porn sites (after all it is a government network), but cutting off access to our email and possibly-not-toeing-the-government-line websites is a bit much.

Initially all web blocking was done locally at the hub sites in Iraq. If you wanted a site "unblocked" you just had to email the local administrator with a reason (like, "I'd like to read my email, please."), and if it wasn't porn or offensive, they'd allow it.

Now, all blocking is done by desk weenies at the USMC Network Operations Center in Quantico, VA, who really don't care if we get our email (or gossip) out here, as they get to go to happy hour after working 9 to 5 and go home to a nice clean, warm home with a real bed! (Sorry, I'm a little peeved.)

Apparently, when you try to view, say, Condi Rice doing crunches from Iraq, you get this error message: "Forbidden, this page (<http://www.wonkette.com/>) is categorized as: Profanity, Personal Pages."

Profanity? Fuck yeah.

Personal? It is now.

What is this, Red China?

What are we fighting for if not the right of all men and women, Iraqi or American, Insurgent or Marine, Sunni, Kurd, or the other one, to hear minute-by-minute updates of Anna Nicole Smith's appearance before the Supreme Court or read birthday cards to disgraced lobbyists?

Anyone know who we're supposed to appeal to about this? Call our Representatives? Should we all send lengthy emails to Romenesko?

(Psst, hey Marine <http://tor.eff.org/>)

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.

“After It Happened, Bill’s E-Mails Started Changing” “This Isn’t Fun Anymore”

Mar. 04, 2006 Commentary by CHUCK FREDERICK, Duluth News Tribune

After being slammed with seven pieces of shrapnel, three of which are still buried in his forearm and shoulder, Bill Vaughn of rural Eveleth is probably about the only one who wouldn't say he's a hero.

“I hope no one thinks of me like that. I’m just a normal guy,” Vaughn, 56, said more than two months after receiving the only Purple Heart in the 58-year history of Duluth’s 148th Fighter Wing.

Vaughn had the medal pinned to his lapel in December as more than 1,000 wing members, their families and others leaped to their feet and filled the Hermantown Middle School gymnasium with thunderous applause.

“Everyone erupted,” the wing’s Capt. Chris Cloutier recalled.

“The entire place acknowledged what he went through,” said Lt. Col. Penny Dieryck.

Vaughn, a mountain of a man at 6 feet-1 and 240 pounds, reacted with a grin. He looked a bit embarrassed, but also touched and proud.

“I was just pretty much stunned,” he said. “They’re a great bunch of people. It’s amazing how much the 148th sticks together like a big family.”

The big family made big headlines in April when news broke that more than 400 of the wing’s 1,100 members (the 148th is one of the 10 largest employers in the Twin Ports) would be deployed for up to 120 days in Iraq, Kuwait and elsewhere in support of the war in Iraq.

The deployment was the largest in Duluth since World War II. And it was the first time the 148th deployed an “aviation package” of members and F-16 fighter jets to an active combat zone.

Some wing members served individually or in small groups in 10 locations, including Afghanistan, Germany and Italy. Most, though, served together at Balad Air Base, about 50 miles north of Baghdad.

That base is where Vaughn, a hydraulics technician who maintains the F-16s landing gear and flight controls, was assigned. He served with a crash recovery crew that also included a unit from Italy.

In the real world, the grandfather is a mechanic for North Shore Railroad in Babbitt. He maintains locomotives and track. He formerly was a heavy-equipment mechanic in Virginia.

“A normal northern Minnesota guy,” Vaughn calls himself. He fishes and hunts and lives deep in the woods with his wife of 36 years, Alice. The two travel, especially enjoying winter trips to Florida.

On June 1, Vaughn was driving a tractor-trailer from a machine shop, where it had been repaired, to an alert facility across Balad Air Base, where it was to be put back into use. Driving slowly and carefully, he hardly flinched at the concussion of an enemy mortar. It detonated about a football field away from his truck.

“After you’ve been mortared pretty much every day for a month you don’t think about it anymore,” he said.

A moment later, though, another mortar exploded, this one just outside his driver’s side door. The sandy earth erupted, rushing at him with grit and debris and shards of metal. And pain.

“It was just a big flash,” Vaughn said. “It pretty much blew me to the other side of the truck. It all happened so fast, I didn’t even know what hit me. I was knocked out.”

When he came to, he noticed a severed vein in his left forearm gushing blood. Others administered first aid. Then they rushed him to a hospital on base.

Doctors stopped the bleeding and removed four pieces of shrapnel, one each from his neck, forearm, left armpit and shoulder. They decided to leave three other pieces where they were: one deep in a muscle in his shoulder and two others lodged against a bone in his forearm. The doctors feared doing more damage than good by attempting to remove the pieces.

“They may still work their way out on their own,” Vaughn said.

That night, he called home to tell his family what had happened. He and Alice spoke quietly for several minutes.

“I’m glad you’re taking it calmly,” he said to her.

“Well, you’re talking to me,” she replied, “so you must be OK.”

Only later, when Alice called their three grown children to tell them what happened ; Michael in Ramsey, Minn., Gina Anderson in Eveleth and Heidi Turnbow in Biwabik -- did the tears and fears and worries gush out. She had come close, too close, to losing him.

“They just got real concerned, a little scared,” Alice understated, recounting the reactions of her children and six grandchildren.

“After it happened, Bill’s e-mails started changing,” she said. “He was always so upbeat, but then he started commenting about how he was ready to come home, that ‘this isn’t fun anymore.’”

After a mere two days in bed and still unable to hear very well, Vaughn decided to get up and return to his crash recovery crew. “There was nothing to do (in the hospital), and I hated that,” he explained. “You can’t just lay around and feel sorry for yourself.”

The 148th will be on the bubble again in 2007, eligible for deployment to Iraq or elsewhere.

Vaughn’s hoping he won’t be with them.

He’s scheduled to retire from the Air National Guard in October after 17 years of traditional, one-weekend-a-month and two-weeks-a-year service. He could still be called to active duty, however, for up to about six months after that, he said.

“I really doubt they’ll need me,” said Vaughn, who also served four years of active duty with the Navy after graduating from high school in South Dakota.

“They should have enough people. It all depends on numbers. If they have enough, then us older guys won’t have to go.”

Back home in the woods since the Fourth of July, right where he wants to be and wants to remain, Vaughn said he’s suffering few lingering effects from the mortar attack. He does think about what happened from time to time and he has had a couple of nightmares. But, “I’m a pretty easy-going guy,” he said. “I don’t think it’ll ever bother me, what happened. Since I’ve been home, I’ve just shut it all off.”

And turned it into something positive. “It was a good day,” he now says of June 1. “I walked away from it.

“That’s what counted.” To a normal guy, and to a hero.

How Bad Is It? Sailor Dad, 59, And Sailor Son Called Up From IRR To Go To Iraq Desert

2.27.06 Newport News Daily Press

A 59-year-old father and his 28-year-old son, both military veterans, have been recalled from the individual ready reserve and are training together in a Navy customs inspection battalion at Cheatham Annex in Yorktown, Va.

In the coming weeks, Brian and Chris Smith, along with nearly 450 other sailors, will head to the Iraqi desert.

She Says Her Son “Died In A War Based On Lies, For Nothing”

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in]

My son was on foot patrol when the bomb exploded. This was to minimise casualties should they come in contact with an improvised explosive device. The only vehicles available to them were fibreglass Jeeps; there were no armoured Land Rovers.

March 2, 2006 Pauline Hickey, The Guardian (UK) [Excerpts]

Dear Prime Minister,

Ref: Sgt Christian Ian Hickey of the 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards, who became 97th fatality of the Iraq conflict

As a parent yourself, you will be aware that the most precious thing we have in our lives is our children.

Until four months ago, I had been blessed with two grown-up sons. I still cannot get used to speaking about one of my sons in the past tense.

My youngest son Christian, 30, was a member of the armed forces; he was an exceptional character, full of fun, with great sense of humour and was a generous, caring person who brought the best in people. He was an excellent soldier, who had progressed rapidly through the ranks, and became full sergeant at the age of 29.

Since the death of my son on October 2005, three days before his tour was to end, I have started to question why the invasion of Iraq occurred.

My son's remit in Iraq was as a "peacekeeper", helping with the rebuilding of schools and the infrastructure, and training the Iraqi police to enable them to maintain stability in the future. At the time of his death, Chris was the platoon commander and was responsible for clearing a safe route for a large convoy.

The Iraqi police have been implicated in the death of my son, from a roadside bomb. There will be no further investigation as they were spoken to, photographed and searched, then allowed to go as an Iraqi police service lieutenant colonel arrived and confirmed their identities. It makes nonsense of our involvement with them, as their own chief of police says that he can only trust 25% of his own men. This suggests that the remainder is made up of insurgents who would think nothing of killing coalition troops.

My son was on foot patrol when the bomb exploded. This was to minimise casualties should they come in contact with an improvised explosive device.

The only vehicles available to them were fibreglass Jeeps; there were no armoured Land Rovers.

The British government had sent a consignment of armoured Land Rovers for the Iraqi police prior to my son's death. His commanding officer spoke out about this following my son's death, as he had requested the essential Land Rovers but was turned down on the basis that they were not suitable for the roads.

Would the Iraqi police not have been using the same roads as the troops?

I understand that your wife, Cherie Blair, has a government bulletproof vehicle. I would question who is at most risk: British troops in a war zone or your wife driving around London?

Does the British government not have a duty of care to the troops in Iraq?

My son had to purchase his own boots before going out to Iraq as the standard army-issued boots were unsuitable and melted in the intense heat.

The British troops were known to the American troops as "the borrowers" due to their lack of equipment and short supplies.

When the death of the 100th soldier was announced on television, I was appalled to hear that instruction had come from you not to hype up the significance of the number. If this is correct, you have little humanity and do not deserve an army who are not able to question the politics and decisions made, but have to go where they are told.

I was interested to hear about Maya Anne Evans, who was arrested for peacefully reading out the names of the dead soldiers, including my son, at the Cenotaph. She was arrested by 14 police officers, received a criminal record, and was fined £100.

A Ministry of Defence poll found that up to 65% of Iraqi citizens supported attacks on British troops, less than 1% thought allied military involvement was helping their situation, and 82% were strongly opposed to the presence of coalition troops in their country.

For nearly two years, the British public has been inundated with US and British "exit strategies". You should not need such a strategy when the above statistics speak for themselves, and the Iraqi people want us out.

It is time to bring the troops home and let the people of Iraq decide their own future.

The west cannot enforce a democratic government upon them. The occupation of Iraq has not achieved anything positive; the people are in a worse situation now than under Saddam Hussein. We have lost 103 dedicated soldiers.

They died in a war based on lies, for nothing, and it has robbed them of a future.

From the information I have collated, the legality of the invasion is questionable, and questions must be asked and answers given.

I feel it is important that, as the prime minister and the person who made the ultimate decision to invade Iraq, sending some of our troops to their death, you should have a moral duty to answer the soldiers' families' questions.

I would welcome the opportunity to meet you for such discussion.

As far as I am aware, neither you nor any government representative has attended any of the soldiers' funerals or visited the many injured. (This was recently reported as 230, while in January 2005 the figure stood at 790. I am sure who does the figures, but perhaps they should be redeployed.)

The true cost of this war in terms of wasted lives of both Iraqis and of coalition troops, and the true, undisclosed financial cost, far outweigh any gains.

We cannot police the whole world because they do not agree with us or will not cooperate with us.

I await your response with interest.

MORE:

Blair Says God Agreed He Should Attack Iraq: Gold Star Mom Rose Gentle Says She's "Quite Disgusted"

04 March 2006 By Andy McSmith, Independent News and Media Limited

Tony Blair has proclaimed that God will judge whether he was right to send British troops to Iraq, echoing statements from his ally George Bush.

Explaining how he managed to live with the decision to go to war in Iraq, Mr Blair replied: "If you have faith about these things then you realise that judgement is made by other people. If you believe in God, it's made by God as well."

Roger Bacon, who has been trying unsuccessfully to meet Tony Blair since his son, Major Matthew Bacon, 34, was killed in Iraq, said last night: "This would explain why he won't see the parents. How can he speak to us when God told him to send the troops out to Iraq so our sons could be killed?"

And Rose Gentle, whose son Gordon was killed in Basra in 2004, said she was "quite disgusted" at the comments made by the Prime Minister. The Military Families Against the War campaigner said: "How can he say he is a Christian? A Christian would never put people out there to be killed.

"A good Christian wouldn't be for this war. I'm actually quite disgusted by the comments. It's a joke."

“The Military Sees Acts Of Consensual Gay Sex As More Horrifying Than Killing A Prisoner”

March 2, 2006 by Joanne Mariner, by FindLaw.com [Excerpts]

Military justice was in the spotlight twice last week: first for violence, then for sex. It was a discomfiting juxtaposition, given that the soldiers who engaged in sex were facing severe punishments, while those responsible for violence were largely not.

On Wednesday, Human Rights First released a damning new report on the government's failure to hold to account military and civilian officials responsible for the deaths of detainees in U.S. custody. It examined the cases of detainees like Abed Hamed Mowhoush, a former Iraqi general who was stuffed into a sleeping bag, wrapped with electrical cord, and suffocated to death.

In a typical outcome, a low-level officer responsible for Mowhoush's abuse received a written reprimand, a fine, and 60 days of restrictions on his movements.

The sentence might seem shocking in its leniency but it was also, in the context of detainee abuse, unusual in having been imposed at all. To date, none of the other soldiers implicated in Mowhoush's killing have even been brought before a court-martial.

Of course when the military wants to prosecute a case, when it feels its core values have been offended, it knows how to do it.

Two days after the Human Rights First report was issued, the army announced that it was charging three soldiers under the Uniform Code of Military Justice for engaging in sex acts in a video shown on a Web site.

The soldiers face courts-martial for sodomy, pandering and engaging in sex acts for money.

The contrast is clear and, unfortunately, the sentencing outcomes are predictable.

The military apparently sees acts of consensual gay sex as more horrifying, and more of a blot on its image, than sickening and unjustified acts of violence.

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



IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

“Anger At The Americans And The Iraqi Government Found Its Way To Pulpits On Both Sides Of The Shiite-Sunni Divide”

03/04/06 By ALEXANDRA ZAVIS, Associated Press

In much of the country Friday, worshippers walked in peace to mosques to offer prayers and listen to sermons, in which some imams, both Shiite and Sunni, called for unity and an end to violence.

“There is no difference between Sunni and Shiite,” Sheik Hadi al-Shawki told Shiite worshippers in Amarah, 180 miles southeast of Baghdad. “We have to unite and not let the terrorists divide us.”

But anger at the Americans and the Iraqi government found its way to pulpits on both sides of the Shiite-Sunni divide.

In Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad, thousands of Sunnis gathered in the Grand Mosque, spilling into the streets and courtyard around the nearby Askariya shrine. Cleric Ahmed Hassan al-Taha accused U.S. forces and their allies of stoking the tension between majority Shiites and minority Sunnis.

“Iraqis were living in harmony until the occupiers and those who came with them arrived in this country. They are responsible for igniting sectarianism,” al-Taha said.

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

Assorted Resistance Action

03/04/06 By ALEXANDRA ZAVIS, Associated Press & AlJazeera & (Reuters)

BAGHDAD: A mortar round landed near a building in the green zone 15 minutes after the Interior Minister Bayan Jabur had given a news conference there, a source from the Interior Ministry said. No details of casualties or damage were available, they said.

A Shiite [collaborator] lawmaker was seriously wounded when guerrillas fired on his car near Basra. An aide for Qasim Attiyah al-Jbouri was killed and two bodyguards injured, police Capt. Mushtaq Kadhim said.

The attack against al-Jbouri, a member of the Islamic Dawa [collaborator] Party, Iraq Organization, was the second in 10 days.

Attackers in two speeding cars on Saturday chased down his two-vehicle convoy on a road just north of Basra and opened fire, Kadhim said. Al-Jbouri's four-wheel drive vehicle overturned after it was hit with several bullets and the attackers fled, he said.

Six policemen were injured when a roadside bomb exploded near their patrol in Baquba, police said.

Three policemen were injured when a car bomb detonated near a police checkpoint in southeast of Baghdad, police said.

A car bomb near a police checkpoint wounded three police officers in the town of Salman Pak, southeast of Baghdad, on Saturday, police said.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE

END THE OCCUPATION

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



[Thanks to PB, who sent this in:Sinkers.org]

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

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

Oh Please

03 March 2006 By David Swanson, Truthout Statement [Excerpts]

The Iraq War is a pure war, a war for the sake of war.

Congress is debating whether to spend another fortune on it, another fortune that could completely remake this nation if spent on useful projects, *and Congress has no reason for the war.* [Hello? Oil? You know, that stuff that Iraq has the second largest deposits of in the world? Remember? Congress, not being composed of blind idiots, knew that was what the war was about from the start.]

The reason is purely that the media won't like you if you vote against a war, but there's no actual reason for the war; not the weapons of mass destruction that Bush always knew weren't there, not the ties to 9-11 that Bush always knew did not exist on behalf of a ruler who, anyway, is no longer in power, not reducing terrorism which has been increased by this war, not improving global relations when this war has driven global opinion of the US to a record low, not preventing a civil war which the US attack and occupation have created, not supporting the troops when most of the troops want to come home, and almost half of them openly admit to pollsters that they don't know why they're there. **[He doesn't get it at all. "The reason" has nothing to do with "the media." The reason is that Congress wholeheartedly supports and defends the U.S. Empire. That's their job. They're doing their job. Their criticism of Iraq is that it didn't work. Had it worked, they would have all loved it. Duh.]**

This is a pure war, but the vote for more funding will not be a pure vote. It will include nothing that the Iraqi people need, unless you think they're longing for larger prisons. But, it will include crumbs for all sorts of noble excuses to vote buckets of taxpayers' money for war; things like Hurricane Katrina relief, VA benefits, etc.

But any Congress member or Senator who claims to be voting for a war that neither Americans nor Iraqis want because of the crumbs for good things had better be signed onto Congressman Jim McGovern's bill to simply end funding for the war.

Otherwise that Congress member or Senator is a hypocrite and a murderer lacking the nerve of a Texas idiot to stand up and say, "I am a murderer, what are you going to do about it?"

Because, let's be clear: *an aggressive war without UN sanction*, whether marketed on a mountain of lies or not, is a crime and the legal equivalent of mass murder.

[So, an aggressive war *with* UN sanction is OK? The UN is nothing but a smokescreen great Imperial powers hide behind while they slaughter whom they please: UN sanctions on Iraq killed millions. That's why Iraqis consider themselves at war with the UN, and its representatives, and why the resistance attacks them. They are right to do so. T]

MORE:

It's The Oil, Stupid

<p>The real reason for staying in Iraq, the one we are never told about, has to be involved with oil because that is what Iraq does, it produces oil. Oil is the national</p>
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business of Iraq, it is a series of scattered giant oilfields with sand poured on top! Why else would the 200,000 men soldiers be there?

Please also note that with all the Democrat political neo-objections and anti-war posturing, not one congressman I know of has dared to bring up the oil motive.

March 04, 2006 Straitgatemistry.org via JH, Anti-Allawi Group [Excerpts]

"Should we pull out or stay, should we 'cut and run' or finish the job we started." We hear every reason examined and discussed: every one except the real reason, oil. And please notice, we never see the oil wells or plants in Iraq.

None of the reasons for staying make much sense when given a little thought.

For instance, we are supposed to believe it is not macho to walk away from a fight we have started. But we citizens did not start the fight with Iraq and they did not start it with us, our government started it on purpose, and citizens suffer for it and pay for it.

Not one elected American official has died in Iraq to my knowledge. And with all the publicity why is it we never see an oil well doing what they do?

We could tick off the reasons we are told for the wars one by one, but you already know them, you hear them every day too, except for the one real reason that makes perfect sense.

The real reason for staying in Iraq, the one we are never told about, has to be involved with oil because that is what Iraq does, it produces oil. Oil is the national business of Iraq, it is a series of scattered giant oilfields with sand poured on top! Why else would the 200,000 men soldiers be there?

Fox News presented a shocking but all too typical example of how oil-o-phobia infects Democrats, the Administration, and the big media with chicken virus on Sunday, December 4. News host Chris Wallace interviewed neo-war opponent, Democrat Barbara Boxer and Presidential Security Adviser Stephen Hadley.

Chris Wallace hurled creampuff questions at the guest about Iraq. The pat logic for staying was debated. One of several silly arguments is, "We owe it to the Iraqis to finish the job of democratizing them," inane because the country is now in civil war over our presence.

But the one real reason for staying is never uttered by any side, OIL, oil, oil. Not one reference was made to any oil related word, such as "petroleum" on the Chris Wallace show, you would not know oil exists. If you find this hard to believe, so did I, but it's not even unusual, it's the norm in press encounters.

When someone is trying to fool you the first thing they lie about is their motive.

If you can be convinced the Warmaker has a noble motive, you may have forgiveness and even support. You may even defend the liar for having good intentions even when he is caught red-tongued, if there seems to be no evil motive.

The Warmakers can't justify their motive for being in Iraq so they hide it under a media blackout, and the press also must forget there is oil in Iraq, so powerful is the force of their purse.

The people of Iraq have shown that they are willing to die for what they consider theirs; the Warmaker's private armies do not have the stomach for such a conflict without our full military support.

Simply stated, the revolt against the occupation (called "insurgency") is a revolution to get back the national wealth of the country.

Oil and water are the natural assets of Iraq.

Every Iraqi benefited in some way from oil, even under the petty tyrant Saddam Hussein who was a small time assassin compared to our own Warmakers.

Do you need proof that our troops stay to protect the oil profiteers?

Ask yourself "When did I last see a press report on or a film about the oilfields in Basra or northern Iraq, or anywhere else in the country for that matter?"

The answer is probably "never." This writer has not seen one since the 1991 withdrawal from Kuwait when we saw distant panoramas of burning oil wells on the horizon as far as the eye could see. Then, Brown and Root, Halliburton and others, came in to put out the fires, and the Warmakers have never left.

Why don't Don Rumsfeld and Dick Cheney pose for photo ops beside a drilling rig, refinery or pumping station in what is the second largest oil reserve in the world?

The answer is simple. THEY DON'T WANT YOU TO REMEMBER THE OIL.

If the news does not show oil, and our President does not mention it, it does not exist.

Then there is no motive for perpetuating an American created civil war in a cage.

Please also note that with all the Democrat political neo-objections and anti-war posturing, not one congressman I know of has dared to bring up the oil motive.

Democrats also voted for the war, and they look to war business for their reelection. To buck the war is politically acceptable, so long as appropriation of the oil fields is not mentioned as a motive for having gone to war.

To Halliburton, the Seven Oil Sisters, and all the armament makers, Iraq's oil fields are very real. The "War on Terrorism" is too good a deal to just walk away from.

Our controlled press is also afraid of Halliburton, the seven oily Sisters and their slick lesser brats.

Don't expect your TV anchor to tell you we are staying the course to make Iraq safe for Wall Street's Warmaker enterprises and international bankers.

Blackwater Corporation mercenaries are paid at the rate of about a \$1000.00 per day to watch the black stuff flow from the ground, as it flows in few other places in the world, at a production cost of only pennies per barrel. No wonder industrial America wants you to guard their newfound empire, acquired with bombs and bullets you paid for.

Yes, it is time to cut and run, cut our military death losses and the Warmakers' profits.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW 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)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to John Gingerich, who sent this in.]

GEORGE BUSH: POLITICAL GENIUS

The Commander-in-Chief Speaks

[Thanks to Don Bacon, The Smedley Butler Society, who sent this in.]

Bush: "I believe that a prosperous, democratic Pakistan will be a steadfast partner for America, a peaceful neighbor for India, and a force for freedom and moderation in the Arab world." March 3, 2006 For Immediate Release, Office of the Press Secretary, The White House

Earth to Bush: Pakistanis aren't Arabs.

Imperial Democrats And Republicans

Overwhelmingly Approve Law To

Keep Spying On Citizens

Mar 2 By Thomas Ferraro, Reuters

Capping months of partisan wrangling, the U.S. Senate gave final congressional approval on Thursday to renewing the USA Patriot Act, which expanded the government's power to track down foes in the war on terrorism.

The Senate endorsed the overall measure 89-10.

First enacted shortly after the September 11 attacks, the Patriot Act broadened the ability of the U.S. government to obtain private records, conduct wiretaps and searches and share information.

One change would allow individuals to challenge gag orders when they have been subpoenaed to produce personal information. But they would have to wait a year to do so.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

GET THE MESSAGE?



A protest against Bush in the southern Indian city of Chennai, March 2, 2006.
REUTERS/Babu

100,000 Demonstrate In New Delhi Against Bush Visit

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

March 1, 2006 Times of India -

NEW DELHI: Tens of thousands of people waving black and white flags and chanting "Death to Bush!" rallied on Wednesday in New Delhi to protest a visit by US President George W Bush.

Crowd estimates varied, but one police officer said as many as 100,000 people, most of them Muslim, had gathered in a fairground in central New Delhi ordinarily used for political rallies, ahead of Bush's arrival late on Wednesday.

Among the speakers was Raj Babbar, who said: "Whether Hindu or Muslim, the people of India have gathered here to show our anger. We have only one message: killer Bush go home".

Many here object to US policies, especially the invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Wednesday's protesters carried placards that read: "Bully Bush, Go Home", and "Death to America, Death to Bush".

Received:

Afghanistan

From: Alycia A. Barr [Iraq veterans' mom]
To: GI Special
Sent: March 04, 2006
Subject: Afghanistan

If anyone doubts the validity of Mr. Ralls comments on Afghan war suggest they go to: www.channel4.com/player/playerwindow.html?id=33467&vert=news. Then have them explain why they would consider those kinds of actions legitimate.

By the by, has anyone taken note of another interesting bit of information in the Zogby International poll concerning the fact that 85% of our troops serving in Iraq believe it is "to retaliate for Saddam's role in 9/11 attacks" and 77% also believe MAIN or MAJOR reason for being there is "to stop Saddam from protecting al-Qaeda in Iraq"?

Wonder who would have put such foolish notions into their heads?

In Peace and Humanity,
Alycia A. Barr

REPLY: The old explanations linger, but that story reported 72% of the troops say get out of Iraq by the end of the year, and nearly 30% declared for immediate withdrawal, and that's the new reality. T

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

http://robinlea.com/GI_Special/, <http://gi-special.iraq-news.de>,

<http://www.williambowles.info/gispecial/2006/index.html>

http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/, <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>,

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

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