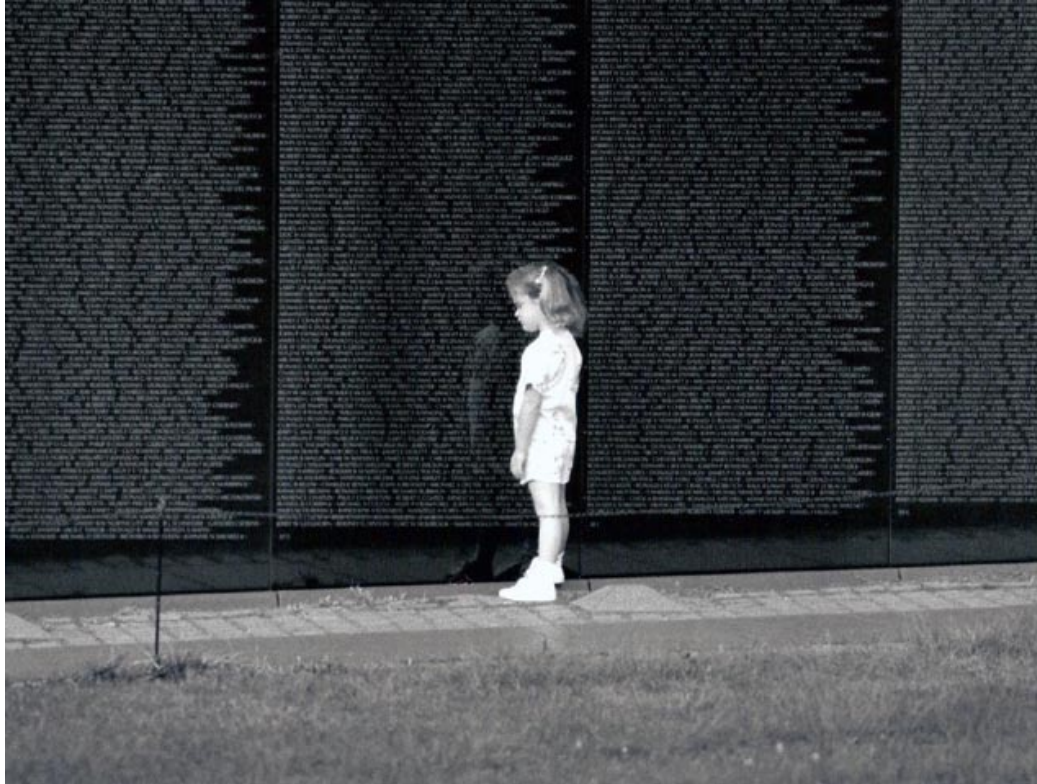


GI SPECIAL 4D7:



Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

**“As God walks atop this Wall and weeps,
I hear him say, ‘These were my sons.’**

**The sound of his tears fall silenced,
As hands are washed in the Potomac,
And it runs red with waste!**

**The Pontius Pilates of the new Rome,
Repeat history on full automatic.”**

**Nicholas James Weber
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)

Malevolent Power At Fort Sill: The Army Slays Its Own: Drill Sgt. Langford; Bully, Coward, Worthless Piece Of Stinking Dog Shit

Soon after, a soldier who'd been sitting on watch at the mental ward, whom deVarennnes nicknamed Pvt. Gopher, committed his own small act of defiance in front of Drill Sgt. Langford and was ordered to "take a knee", meaning to genuflect. As he'd recently had knee surgery, he told Langford that he wasn't able to do that, whereupon the drill sergeant kicked his legs out from under him, sending him to the floor screaming. A first sergeant on the scene ordered the others to turn away, and just as at Abu Ghraib; told them they didn't see anything.

April 5, 2006 By JoAnn WYPIJEWSKI, CounterPunch

No IED, no insurgent force, no lurking Talib killed 21-year-old PFC Matthew Scarano sometime between 9 PM Saturday and 4:45 AM Sunday, March 19.

He wasn't in Iraq or Afghanistan or even, despite his rank and year-plus of service, in the United States Army, at least as full membership in that force is officially construed.

Matthew Scarano died in his bunk, in the barracks of Bravo Battery 95th, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, but he was as surely a casualty of the War on Iraq as any of the 2,318 US soldiers killed in action.

In 2005 he had injured his shoulder during basic training, and on March 1 of that year entered the netherworld of Fort Sill's Physical Training and Rehabilitation Program, or PTRP.

More than a year later he was still there, no closer to being healed but still subject to the restrictive rules and routine humiliations associated with basic training, still plagued by what he described in an e mail of March 7, 2006, as "chronic, piercing and sometimes debilitating pain".

The Army considered PFC Scarano a trainee; he and the 39 other soldiers in PTRP at Fort Sill considered themselves prisoners.

PTRP is where the Army, desperate for bodies in a time of war, puts broken enlistees whom it is committed neither to cure nor to release, nor even to respect as soldiers and human beings.

There they are warehoused, in anticipation of the time they manage to recuperate, pass the grueling PT (physical training) test and can be sent to battle; or fail the test, try again, fail again, stumble through the bureaucratic labyrinth until the point they are chaptered out or medically discharged.

All were injured in basic training or advanced individual training and so have yet to be granted "permanent party" status in the Army, even those who have been in service for six months or longer, when that status is supposed to be automatic. In military hierarchy this makes them lower life forms, which is how they've been treated at Fort Sill.

Shortly before Scarano's death, the inspector general at Fort Sill had been forced to undertake an internal investigation of the program for assault and abuse of soldiers, inadequate medical attention, command irresponsibility and overall incompetence.

To that list (which I should note is unofficial) they may now add negligence and wrongful death.

As of March 20, the Army wouldn't comment on its investigation or on what killed Scarano, but in the week prior, his comrades in the PTRP barracks say, Army doctors had doubled the dose of his pain medication, Fentanyl, an analgesic patch 80 times more potent than morphine, whose advertised possible side effects include difficulty breathing, severe weakness and unconsciousness.

On the night of March 18, according to Pvt. Richard Thurman, Scarano appeared quite pale and weak. The soldier, however, had been in the program for so long -- longer than anyone else in terms of continuous service -- and was often so visibly suffering or so drugged up as to drool and gaze vacantly that his infirmity on this particular night did not cause special alarm.

Shortly after lights out, at 9, Pvt. Clayton Howell noticed that Scarano was lying on his bad shoulder and turned him so he would not be in greater pain when he awoke. At that time Scarano was breathing.

When lights came on the next morning and everyone else had risen from their bunks, Howell again went to Scarano; by then he was dead.

What happened next typifies the trapped situation of injured soldiers at Fort Sill's PTRP.

Someone handed Pvt. Thurman a cell phone, saying, "Call your mom." He didn't say, Call the medic, or the chaplain, or the sergeant, or anyone on post. Phoning at all meant breaking the rules, as did having a cell phone, contraband for soldiers in PTRP. Thurman crouched in a corner and amid the near-panic of the barracks hurriedly dialed his mom, Pat deVarences.

DeVarenes, an apprentice dog groomer who lives near Sarasota, Florida, is about the only person the PTRP soldiers can confidently regard as their advocate.

In January, concerned for the well-being of her son Richard and the other men, she began posting reports on a web log she set up called onlyvolunteers.blogspot.com. As a result of those reports and her relentless appeals to Fort Sill's Public Affairs Office, inspector general, others in the Army and her Congressman, Connie Mack (whose office initially told her there was nothing it could do), the aforementioned investigation was begun in February.

By March 5 some changes, notably the removal of a sadistic drill sergeant, the introduction of a Medical Center liaison to monitor the troops' medical needs, the suspension of punishing physical tasks and the restoration of weekend on-post passes, had been instituted. At a briefing with relatives and friends at the start of Family Weekend on March 10, the Fort Sill cadre were all smiles, assuring the soldiers' loved ones that PTRP was a "work in progress" and that each man would get the individualized treatment or therapy he needed.

Now talk of reform and progress sounds empty, the corpse of PFC Scarano the latest accusation against an Army up to its ears in complaints of abuse, dehumanization, torture and worse.

As deVarenes wrote earlier on her blog in "An Open Letter to members of the cadre who can't stop laughing and to those who claim to have no knowledge of any abuse": "I'm beginning to understand a great deal more about how (the tortures at Abu Ghraib) must have come to happen. It all starts when you have no loyalty or compassion for your own men, your own soldiers."

Before reviewing the most egregious abuses recently visited upon injured recruits at Fort Sill, it is necessary to understand the benchmark for normal at PTRP.

As deVarenes neatly puts it, "Imagine basic training that never ends."

By the old Army standard, the nine weeks of basic training will "break you down to build you up". Lately there have been some changes in that approach, driven by Army psychologists who reckoned that breaking the spirit accomplishes little beyond creating emotional wrecks or sadists. No longer are new recruits regularly addressed as "ladies" or "shitsacks" or subjected to the "shark attack" of drill sergeants screaming top volume into their ears on the bus the moment they arrive. But the regimen of absolute control and arbitrary rules is unchanged, which is why it is time-limited and why even the most hardened soldier will tell you, "Hell, no, I wouldn't want to do it again".

In PTRP, where soldiers have been stuck for months, time seems to have been stopped. The men live in long, narrow barracks that can sleep 42 in bunk beds.

They must stand in formation, on crutches, in pain, four times a day in all kinds of weather, sometimes for 20 minutes to an hour, at the drill sergeant's pleasure. They may not smoke, drink, look at porn, go off post, have sex, have soda from a machine or have any food except during set mealtimes. They may not have cell

phones or laptops, may use approved electronic devices only at certain hours, and must compete to use the outdoor pay phones in the 35 minutes to an hour that is allowed after dinner. On weekdays, they may not go anywhere on post except with permission and an escort. At times they have been impressed to enjoy "mandatory entertainment" -- a Southern rock concert, the Superbowl, Christian concerts.

When first processed into PTRP, they are not given individualized therapy plans, and doctors at the Medical Center are too stretched to have much time for them, so they use a gym and may sit in a windowless closet-like room to apply ice, but until recently had no sustained medical guidance.

They must carry canteens for no other reason -- because these are disgusting and no one drinks from them -- than to advertise their low status.

Their dining hall is festooned with nutrition posters that would suit an elementary school. The bathroom in the auditorium they sometimes use is filthy and looks as if it's been decorated by a deranged Martha Stewart, with an Americana wall strip of Teddy bears, apple pies and the flag. Elsewhere, walls are dominated by rugged propaganda posters, battle scenes, life-size blow-ups of soldiers and invocations to "Live the Army Values".

Periodically the PTRP barracks is subject to what its drill sergeants call a health and welfare check, "better known as a shakedown", says Pvt. Thurman. Drill sergeants enter the bay, ordering the men to empty their drawers and lockers. Bedding is stripped, mattresses upended, vent covers unscrewed.

During one of these routines, Thurman, who's been in PTRP since November of 2005, was discovered to have a pack of cigarettes and a lighter and was given an Article 15, or nonjudicial punishment, and a fine of \$270. Almost everyone who's been in PTRP for any length of time has received an Article 15 for something.

Although the cadre says only "motivated" soldiers are accepted into PTRP, that toys as much with truth as saying everyone in the Army is a volunteer. Soldiers injured in training cannot un-volunteer. They cannot say, "On second thought, I'd rather not ruin my leg" or ankle or back or shoulder, and go home.

After he was seven months in the Army, doctors discovered that Pvt. Thurman has flat feet, once an automatic disqualifier, but Pvt. Thurman cannot leave. He actually completed basic training and advanced individual training in November. At the time he had stress fractures in his ankle, and because he couldn't run as required for the final PT test, a post doctor prescribed an alternate walking event.

He graduated with ceremony, but that same day the Army changed its mind. An officer pulled him and two other soldiers aside and told them walking wasn't good enough and they were being sent to PTRP; there, to satisfy formal requirements, the three were "ungraduated".

In pro forma questioning Thurman had been asked if he wanted to go to PTRP.

"No", he said.

The inquiring officer wrote on his file, "Soldier is unmotivated", and "Soldier is cleared for administrative action", meaning nonjudicial punishment or court martial.

"Lack of motivation is a punishable offense in the US Army", Thurman says, so the cadre's job is to talk soldiers into motivation.

They threatened Thurman with being recycled back to day one of basic training. After eight months in PTRP another soldier, who had completed eight weeks of the nine-week basic course before he was injured, opted to do just that to get out of this supposed rest and rehab program.

"You have an area you can be in. If you leave that area without permission you can go to jail", Thurman explains. "You have people over you with unquestioned power, and your daily life is at their will. Everything's a privilege."

Using the phone is a privilege. Going to the PX on the weekend is a privilege. And as in prison, privileges can be taken away. The culture breeds tormentors and tattle-tales among the inmates -- soldiers who haze their comrades, who report on others for piddling infractions like drinking a Coke from the soda machine for the imagined benefit that might bring the snitch.

"I liken being here to being incarcerated", Scarano wrote to deVarenes less than two weeks before his death. "And it often helped during the bleaker points in PTRP history to think of it as such: I'm far from being any kind of expert on the subject, but perhaps it was a psychological self-defense mechanism to try to perceive what was going on as being punitive in nature."

The soldiers have been ordered not to speak of events that are part of the ongoing investigation, so as not to jeopardize it, but enough was put on the public record earlier via deVarenes' blog to indicate that punishment and not therapy or rehab was in fact the program.

What follows is drawn from her reports.

In January a Drill Sgt. Langford was put in charge of the soldiers at PTRP, and he arrived spitting vinegar, telling the men, as deVarenes recaps, "You're worthless, you're malingerers, you're scared, you're useless, you're not soldiers".

Every day, addressing men keenly aware of their failure, he picked at the scab of vulnerability. He cancelled their weekend on-post passes, confining them to the small area around their barracks, and ordered that on weekdays they could not sit on their beds except during the three hours of free time from 6 PM to 9 PM. He assigned them jobs around the post, which while aggravating some of their injuries at least gave the soldiers one place where they are treated as responsible grown-ups.

In January, before the first Family Weekend, the drill sergeant ordered the men to clean and wax the floor of their barracks. After they did it once, moving the heavy bunks and wall lockers in and out of the room, he declared the job inadequate and ordered that they

get down on their knees with small scrapers and remove every speck of old wax. Out and in went the furniture again.

A soldier with a herniated groin dared not slack off in the moving operation lest he and everyone else incur extra abuse for his offense.

One night another drill sergeant, by the name of Bullock, decided to have some fun with the soldiers and give them a taste of sleep deprivation, ordering them to line up in formation outside every hour from 10 PM to 2 AM. After each line-up they could not simply fall on their bunks fully dressed for the next time because he ordered that they present themselves in different apparel.

Soldiers on sleep medication were pulled from their beds by their comrades and hustled into line, since if everyone did not appear at formation, everyone would be punished.

At the most recent Family Weekend, Drill Sgt. Bullock was still on premises, still wearing his Smoky the Bear hat, still in apparent good standing.

As she was receiving word of these abuses, deVarenes was trying to get someone to care. Rep. Connie Mack's office told her Richard would have to fill out a form before it could act, and since that was impossible, the door slammed. John McCain's office sent her a form letter saying he'd need something in writing from Richard. John Kerry's office never replied at all, which was the most common response she got from members of Congress.

Then an injured soldier simply lost it. He'd been in PTRP for several months, was declared healed and sent upstairs to the Fitness Training Unit, or FTU, where uninjured soldiers who couldn't pass the PT test go through exercise drills to pass it.

But his injury prevented him from doing the required exercises, and in the hopelessness of the situation he cut himself up, smeared himself with excrement and marched out of the barracks naked except for his socks and boots. He was packed off to a mental ward for a few days and put on suicide watch. He is now awaiting a discharge, though after his freak-out the Army gave him one more chance to fail just to assure itself that he wasn't faking.

The soldier's breakdown shook the others in PTRP, and that night Pvt. Thurman called his mother and said, "You've got to find a way to help us."

Soon after, a soldier who'd been sitting on watch at the mental ward, whom deVarenes nicknamed Pvt. Gopher, committed his own small act of defiance in front of Drill Sgt. Langford and was ordered to "take a knee", meaning to genuflect. As he'd recently had knee surgery, he told Langford that he wasn't able to do that, whereupon the drill sergeant kicked his legs out from under him, sending him to the floor screaming. A first sergeant on the scene ordered the others to turn away, and just as at Abu Ghraib, told them they didn't see anything.

Earlier some of them had tried to report abuses to the medical center, to mental health counselors, to highers-up. Now they'd been ordered to shut up, meaning any action they might contemplate would be in direct violation of an order.

Pvt. Thurman was not aware of his mother's blog at that point, and after hearing from him she decided caution was the way to catastrophe.

"I was no longer afraid", she told me, "because I felt that at the moment that assault occurred, the dice were rolling for all of these guys. I thought, 'The lunatics are running the asylum, so I have to do everything I can do, and if I have to go by God trooping around and getting arrested outside the Fort Sill gates, I will do that.' At that point I felt nobody's kid was going to be any safer for not saying anything -- on the contrary."

Apart from her own posts, she spent \$300 in ads on other popular websites, and, as she put it, "the hits kept coming".

It is illegal for a drill sergeant to strike a soldier, but Langford was not arrested. It is illegal to cover up a crime, but the first sergeant remains in his position.

Langford was removed as a drill sergeant; he "lost his hat", as they say on post. Whether he suffers any further indignity or punishment depends on the outcome of the current investigation.

Yet for all this intervention, PFC Scarano still perished.

The inspector general did not know about the death until deVarenes e-mailed him. The base commander didn't know until Monday. On that day, a spokeswoman at Fort Sill's Public Affairs Office said she couldn't tell me anything about the soldier's death "because I've never heard of that person". In death as in life, this soldier didn't count for much in the Army.

In his March 7 e mail to deVarenes, thanking her for "becoming our champion when no one else would", he wrote:

"My injury is degenerative and getting worse.

"I was lied to about surgery, as were many others, and it was brought to the attention of the Inspector-General that the medical community had been telling us that we face courts-martial or severe forms of non-judicial punishment if we declined the surgery suggested to us by the doctors here at Fort Sill. This has since been demonstrated as a bald-faced lie.

"I was told that I'd receive arthroscopic shoulder surgery initially, which had little chance of success, and when that failed I would receive a full shoulder replacement, after which my left shoulder would be essentially disabled for the rest of my life.

"Just a little rudimentary research into the subject revealed that there are countless other, infinitely more promising options available to me in the civilian

world, which I choose to explore, instead of being a guinea pig to a medical system I have no faith in, whatsoever.

“This is the same medical system which has botched surgeries and performed procedures without the patient's knowledge. I guess their rationale is that up until recently, the patients, in our case, were under the impression that we had virtually no input in the matter, anyway.

"I've recently been told, by our case worker, that I'm getting an MEB (Medical Evaluation Board hearing) but as of now my consultation is pending. I've heard no further word yet but am hopeful that as a result of the controversy caused by the attention garnered by your blog, I'll be out of here soon. I am a casualty of a broken system; I fell through the cracks of the bureaucracy that is the system which all of us must go through.

"I am a living symbol of the failure of the system and after having been ignored for so long, despite trying to raise as much attention as I could, I might finally be able to get on which my adult life after spending over a third of it in PTRP, deprived of everything from being able to be with my family, to fundamental physical needs such as sleep and recuperation from my injury, to the basic human freedoms and creature comforts which I will never again take for granted."

Scarano was working on a more formal document right before he died, trying to understand cognitive dissonance, the psychological process of accommodating when what one knows or believes to be true collides with a contradictory reality.

At Family Weekend in March, Private Howell who has been in and out of PTRP for fourteen months, gave deVarenes a paper he was working on, compiling the complaints of Bravo Battery and reflecting on his own predicament.

Toward the end of it, he wrote:

"For the initial 9 weeks of basic training I can understand the hazing and ruthless treatment, but not for over a year.

"I used to be able to cope by listening to music, calling people on a hidden cell phone, or talking to my friends in the bay. But now they will no longer let me talk to my friends or listen to music on the radio, and they found the hidden cell phone and confiscated it. If I was just able to do anything to mentally get away from this place I would. Just to forget who I am and what I am doing day in and day out. An hour or two of disassociation is the only way I was able to put up with the meaninglessness and mindless bullshit and torment of being here 'on duty' 16 hours a day.

“The only way to describe my life is sorrow, loathing, spitefulness, depression, and endless torturous misery. Nobody is willing to help improve our treatment or listen to our complaints.

"I joined the army to make a difference and to help other people. Now I am being held prisoner, doomed to a fate worse than death.

"At one point I know I had a purpose. At one point I know I cared. I do not know when I lost it and if I will be capable of ever possessing it again. I do not think I have shown any of the army values for a very long time. I believe I projected the image that I cared for many months and it was just an act; but it was all that I could do. I am being set up for failure and have been for weeks.

"The fact that this unit will not follow regulations does not inspire hope or willingness to comply with any orders or any of their bogus policies. In my opinion none of the cadre show any of the army values to any of the soldiers here. That is just my opinion and I may not see the whole picture.

"On exodus (the name for Christmas break) I came back with renewed motivation that I have not had since basic training. Drill sergeant Frazier and Langford managed to snuff out all of my hope and drive within the first few days we were all back.

"I will try to do my best, but I cannot manage a positive thought for very long. The army values did mean something to me at one point even though it is just propaganda on paper.

"I have always known it was just propaganda, but they are a good base for morals if people would lead by example.

"In conclusion I hope this paper reaches somebody and they read it in whole and are not too judgmental. I also hope I can improve myself and the situation that I am in. Perhaps I can be what they want me to be. Perhaps I can fulfill my enlistment and be productive, but that is not realistic.

"And it is not what I really want; all I want in this world is to be anywhere but here.

"I believe that I have permanent physical and psychological damage from this place. If I could describe this place in 2 words it would be 'Malevolentia Imperium.'

"1 Malevolentia: Latin, malevolent; having or exhibiting ill will; wishing harm to others; malicious. Having an evil or harmful influence

"2 Imperium: Latin, can be translated as 'power'. In Antiquity this concept could apply to people, and mean something like 'power status' or 'authority', or could be used with a geographical connotation and mean something like 'territory'."

It is estimated that 15 percent to 37 percent of men and 38 percent to 67 percent of women sustain at least one injury due to the rigors of basic training.

Although Fort Sill's is believed to be the worst, the Army has PTRP units also at Fort Knox, Fort Jackson, Fort Leonard Wood and Fort Benning.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed In Beiji

April 6, 2006 The Associated Press

A soldier was killed Thursday when an explosive detonated near his vehicle in Beiji.

U.S. Patrol Hit By IED In Ramadi: Casualties Not Announced



Iraqi children around the wreckage of a humvee at the scene of a roadside bomb April 6, 2006 in Ramadi. (AP Photo/Bilal Hussein)

4.6.06 Reuters

A U.S. patrol was struck by a roadside bomb south of Ramadi, the U.S. military said. There were no reports on the number of casualties.

Too Few Dead & Maimed U.S. Troops To Suit Them?

U.S. Commanders Unroll Fresh Blind Stupidity: Trying To Pick A Fight With Heavily Armed & Well Organized Sadrist Troops

Apr 6, 2006 Deutsche Presse-Agentur

The governor of Karbala said Thursday that he was ceasing cooperation with US troops due to the arrest of 16 Karbala residents who were transferred to an undisclosed location on Tuesday.

In a meeting Thursday governor Akeel al Khazaali told the chief of US troops in Karbala, general Don Hugh that 'US forces must respect our bilateral agreements and ensure that this violation is not repeated.'

In light of the arrests, Shiite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr distributed a written statement in Karbala stating: 'US forces are attempting to provoke us so as to lead the Sadrist movement into a confrontation with the purpose of attacking us.'

Sadr also called on the Iraqi government to push for the 16 detainees to be released.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



American soldiers secure the site of a roadside bomb explosion April 5, 2006 in Baghdad. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

U.S. Supply Truck Mortared

KABUL, Afghanistan:

Gen. Abdul Rahman Sayedkhail, chief of Parwan province, about 40 miles north of Kabul, said a mortar landed a little more than half a mile from the main gate at Bagram Air Base, north of the capital, Kabul, and destroyed a truck delivering food to U.S. military personnel there.

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of U.S. Army Warrant Officer Steven Shephard, 30, is carried to the graveside service in Purcell, Okla., July 6, 2005. Shephard was one of two pilots killed in an Apache helicopter that crashed June 27 in Iraq. (AP Photo/Sue Ogrocki)

SPREAD THE WORD

Sir! No Sir! On ABC Show



From: David Zeiger
Sent: April 06, 2006 1:16 PM
Subject: Sir! No Sir! on Ebert and Roeper

Dear friends,

"Sir! No Sir!" will be one of the films featured and reviewed on the ABC show "Ebert and Roeper at the Movies" this weekend.

Check your local listings for the time and day it airs in your area.

Tell your friends, spread the word, fire up the TIVO, and don't miss it!

Below is the current list of theatrical openings of "Sir! No Sir!" Keep checking our web site for openings in your area, as new bookings are coming in daily.
<http://www.sirnosir.com>

Thanks,

David Zeiger

APRIL 7
THE RED VIC MOVIE HOUSE
1727 HAIGHT STREET
SAN FRANCISCO, CA
(415) 668-3994
www.redvicmoviehouse.com

APRIL 7
THE GRAND LAKE THEATRE
3200 GRAND AVE.
OAKLAND, CA
(510) 452-3556
www.renaissancerialto.com

APRIL 19
THE IFC CENTER
327 6TH AVE.
NEW YORK CITY, NY
(212) 924-7771
www.ifccenter.com

APRIL 28
THE STARZ FILM CENTER
9th STREET AND AURARIA PARKWAY
DENVER, CO
(303) 893-3456
www.denverfilm.org

APRIL 28
THE ORPHEUM THEATRE
216 STATE STREET
MADISON, WI
(608) 255-0605
www.orpheumtheatre.net

MAY 5
LAEMMLE MONICA 4
1332 2ND STREET
SANTA MONICA, CA
(310) 394-9741
www.laemmle.com

MAY 5
LAEMMELE PASADENA PLAYHOUSE
673 EAST COLORADO BLVD.
PASADENA, CA
(626) 844-6500
www.laemmle.com

MAY 5
REGAL TOWN CENTER 6
4245 CAMPUS DRIVE
IRVINE, CA
(949) 854-8818
www.regalcinemas.com

MAY 12
REGAL FOX TOWER STADIUM
846 S.W. PARK AVE.
PORTLAND, OR
(503) 225-5555
www.regalcinemas.com

MAY 12
THE BELCOURT THEATRE
2102 BELCOURT AVE
NASHVILLE, TN
(615) 383-9140
www.belcourt.org

MAY 12
LANDMARK MIDTOWN ART
931 MONROE DRIVE
ATLANTA, GA
(678) 495-1424
www.landmarktheatres.com

MAY 19
LANDMARK E STREET CINEMA
555 11TH STREET NW
WASHINGTON, DC
(202) 452-7672
www.landmarktheatres.com

MAY 19
REGAL ARBOR CINEMA @ GREAT HILLS
9828 GREAT HILLS ROAD
AUSTIN TX
(512) 231-9742
www.regalcinemas.com

MAY 22
(ONE NIGHT ONLY)
THE ELKS THEATRE
512 6th STREET
RAPID CITY, SD
www.elkstheatre.com

"Sir! No Sir!" combines exceptional artistry and insightful analysis with great story telling. This is no facile agitprop piece, but a careful dissection of a growing

military rebellion that permanently altered American society, but has largely been forgotten. **International Documentary Magazine**

Nominated for the Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary
Audience Award Best Documentary--Los Angeles Film Festival
Jury Award Best Documentary--Hamptons International Film Festival
Jury Award Best Film on War and Peace--Vermont International Film Festival
Nominated for a Gotham Award and International Documentary Association Award

www.sirnosir.com
Displaced Films
3421 Fernwood Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90039
323-906-9249
323-913-0683 fax
www.displacedfilms.com

Lessons Not Learned

People like Bush, Cheney, Rice, and all of the others who continue supporting this war, are not just repeating the mistakes from 40 years ago. Every day when they wake up and do the same thing, they are repeating the mistakes of last week and of yesterday.

From: Diane Rejman
To: GI Special
Sent: April 05, 2006 12:44 AM
Subject: Lessons Not Learned

Speech given at an anti-war rally in Palo Alto, CA, commemorating the third anniversary of the start of the war in Iraq:

Diane Rejman is a member of Veterans for Peace, Chapter 101 in San Jose. She served in the US Army from 1977-80. She holds an MBA from Thunderbird, the American Graduate School of International Management, and is listed in Who's Who in America. She can be reached at: yespeaceispossible@yahoo.com

**I led the crowd in the chants representing the messages of the day:
"US out of Iraq!"
"Bush out of Washington!"**

Isn't it heartbreaking that our country hasn't learned from history? That we don't learn from our mistakes?

**40 years ago, things weren't all that different:
"US out of Vietnam!"**

"Nixon out of Washington!"

Last month I visited Vietnam with Global Exchange. That war is not yet over for the Vietnamese.

The legacy of our war on them is still visible.

In the early part of my trip, I told a fellow traveler that the civilian massacre at My Lai was not an anomaly, that our troops routinely destroyed villages all over Vietnam. She replied, "I hope that's not true."

Later in the trip, we were told that in Quang Tri province, in the center of the country along the demilitarized zone, of the 3,000 villages there only 11 were left standing by the time the Americans left. We also learned about the potential millions of pieces of unexploded ordnance such as land mines and cluster bombs, left behind by Americans, that continue to kill and maim innocent civilians.

Just three weeks before our arrival, an elderly couple was killed when a mine, deteriorated by age and weather, went off under their house while they were sleeping.

At one point, our tour bus was traveling south of Hanoi, through the beautiful countryside full of rice fields. The fields stretch out to the horizon, and I saw Vietnamese people working in them, bent over planting the rice piece by piece.

I saw what looked like fish ponds all over. I asked our tour guide about them. He said, "Those aren't fish ponds. They're bomb craters." (remnants of the US bombing raids)

Our tour guides made a point of telling us that Vietnam, a third world country, had successfully fought off occupying forces of three permanent members of the UN Security Council - China, France, and the United States.

For decades, they came under attack by the most sophisticated weapons available. They fought back with some weapons captured from the French (and paid for by the US), with bicycles and bamboo, and their hearts. When you're fighting for the soul of your country, you don't need B-52 bombers and WMDs to win.

So let's look at what's happening in Iraq. They, too, are fighting for the soul of their country. And their weapons are much more sophisticated.

If we lost to a country fighting us with bicycles and bamboo, how could we possibly think we can win against a people fighting with IEDs and rocket propelled grenades? How can we possibly believe we can win?

We MUST learn from history.

The most difficult parts of my trip were the visits to the military museums. In three museums - two in Hanoi and one in Ho Chi Minh City, there are displays of American aggression. There are displays on the use and effects of Agent Orange, napalm, bombings, burning villages, and massacring civilians. The horror of these images is overwhelming.

I felt glad the Vietnamese drove these people out.

The pain for me then surfaced because "these people" were representatives of my country.

And then in the nearby rooms were posters commemorating things like the 2,000th American plane shot down. Parts of these planes are on display, along with photos of airplane parts being pulled from lakes, and of American pilots being taken prisoner.

How was I supposed to feel? These were Americans being shot down and taken prisoner. But they were the aggressors, destroying a population and a country. Destroying people who had done nothing to us. We are doing the same thing in Iraq.

We are bombing and destroying hospitals, schools, markets and homes. If you hear anybody say, "I hope that's not true," assure them it is! I've heard similar museums have already been built in Iraq reflecting damage done during Desert Storm by weapons such as depleted uranium, which we are still using.

We train our young people to commit these atrocities. And now our soldiers are returning home from Iraq with the same kind of psychological turmoil US soldiers from Vietnam still suffer with.

No - we have not learned from history.

People like Bush, Cheney, Rice, and all of the others who continue supporting this war, are not just repeating the mistakes from 40 years ago. Every day when they wake up and do the same thing, they are repeating the mistakes of last week and of yesterday.

We MUST learn how to learn from history and stop repeating these mistakes!

It's time for the US to get out of Iraq.

Bring the troops home NOW! Alive and in one piece!

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.

Rumsfeld Tells Press He Is Brain Dead

April 6, 2006 Washington Post

Secretary Rumsfeld said he doesn't know what Condoleezza Rice was referring to when she said last week that the U.S. had made thousands of "tactical errors" in handling the war in Iraq.

Helen And Sylvia, The New Face Of Terrorism

[Thanks to NB, who sent this in.]

06 April 2006 By Nigel Morris and Jonathan Brown, The Independent (UK)

Two grandmothers from Yorkshire face up to a year in prison after becoming the first people to be arrested under the Government's latest anti-terror legislation.

Helen John, 68, and Sylvia Boyes, 62, both veterans of the Greenham Common protests 25 years ago, were arrested on Saturday after deliberately setting out to highlight a change in the law which civil liberties groups say will criminalise free speech and further undermine the right to peaceful demonstration.

Under the little-noticed legislation, which came into effect last week, protesters who breach any one of 10 military bases across Britain will be treated as potential terrorists and face up to a year in jail or £5,000 fine. The protests are curtailed under the Home Secretary's Serious Organised Crime and Police Act.

Campaigners expressed their outrage yesterday at Charles Clarke's new law, which they say is yet another draconian attempt to crack down on legitimate protest under the guise of the war on terror.

In October last year a protester in Whitehall was convicted for merely reading out the names of British soldiers killed in Iraq.

And at the Labour Party conference in September the Government suffered severe embarrassment when Walter Wolfgang, a veteran peace activist who survived the Nazis, was detained for heckling Jack Straw.

Mrs John and Mrs Boyes, who have 10 grandchildren between them, were held by Ministry of Defence police after walking 15ft across the sentry line at the United States military base at Menwith Hill in North Yorkshire.

They were held for 12 hours before being released on police bail. They will learn whether they are to face prosecution when they return to Harrogate police station on 15 April.

"We thought this was a really important issue and we just had to challenge it," said Mrs John, who was nominated for a Nobel Peace Prize last year. Mrs Boyes, who was cleared by a jury at Manchester Crown Court in 1999 of causing criminal damage to a British nuclear submarine, said: "I am quite willing to break the law and prepared to be

charged and to go to prison. The Government thinks it can do whatever it wants and that it has a passive public which accepts whatever it throws at it. I find it very worrying."

The women, who have been arrested more than a dozen times between them, went equipped with a hammer and a small pair of bolt cutters as well as placards declaring their opposition to the new law.

They had prepared statements denouncing United States military policy and expressing their support for the people of Diego Garcia and the Chagos Islands, who were evicted from their homes to make way for US military bases.

Similar restrictions will be announced soon on selected non-military sites such as royal palaces and government buildings. The Ministry of Defence said the sites had been chosen because they had been the scene of regular protests. A spokeswoman said: "Persistent activity by protesters places them at risk of being mistaken for terrorists. It also unnecessarily diverts police resources ... People will still be allowed to protest outside sites. This legislation is about keeping police focused on the job they are paid to do."

Shami Chakrabarti, the director of Liberty, said: "When does a peaceful protester become a trespasser? In a free society, when does he become a criminal? In Britain in 2006, only one man - the Home Secretary - will now decide instead of Parliament and the court. Just when our politicians lament the demise of participatory democracy they increasingly criminalise both free speech and protest."

Mrs John described the new law as a "kick in the teeth for the Magna Carta" and said the need for opponents of the Government to take direct action was greater now than ever.

"We have seen two million people standing in Hyde Park and Tony Blair had no compunction in ignoring them. Even though there are huge numbers of people who oppose what the Government is doing, the only effective protests have been where direct action is taken. We have to demonstrate at the bases where the killing capacity exists - we have to attack it at source. These are the eyes and ears of the US war fighting machine and they are on our soil."

Before Mr Clarke's announcement military police only had the power to escort protesters off the military sites and prosecute them for civil trespass.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

April 5 (Reuters) & April 6, 2006 The Associated Press & Al Bawaba 7 Reuters

A policeman was killed by guerrillas while he was heading to work in Hawija, police said.

A translator with Polish troops was killed and his nephew wounded on Monday by guerrillas wearing police commando uniforms in Diwaniya, police said.

In Kirkuk, assailants killed a policeman near his house late Wednesday, police said.

One bomb went off near a police patrol in western Baghdad, killing a policeman and wounding five, officials said. A second bomb exploded when another group of police arrived at the scene, injuring two additional policemen.

North of Baghdad, an Iraqi army patrol was also hit by a roadside bomb, killing one officer and wounding five soldiers outside the city of Baqouba.

A car bomb also exploded near a joint patrol of Iraqi army and U.S. troops west of Baghdad, killing seven, one of them an Iraqi policeman, the Iraqi army said. The attack took place in Amiriyat al-Falluja area southwest of Falluja.

Guerrilla fighters seriously wounded a captain in the Iraqi army in the eastern part of Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Iraq Is Not In Civil War; Iraq Is Under Occupation

The dichotomy between continued occupation and civil war leaves the anti-war movement speechless as neither alternative is desirable. It must be remembered, however, that this dichotomy is as much a fiction as the many others that have sought to justify the American occupation.

March 31, 2006 LAITH AL-SAUD, Counterpunch [Excerpt]

Opponents of the war must be sensitive to what it means to say Iraq is in civil war.

It means that Iraqis are an enemy to themselves, not the occupational forces.

Until recently, every time the possibility of civil war in Iraq has come up it has never been in conjunction with a discussion about an American withdrawal, but rather as a reason for the Americans to remain.

So long as we describe Iraq in terms of civil war we miss the more fundamental point that Iraq is under an illegal occupation.

The civil war premise can only elicit two possible political outcomes: First, the premise asserts that the Iraqis are enemies of one another, thus the US occupation must continue to keep the peace.

This absurd suggestion not only fails to acknowledge how we arrived at the current level of violence but also actually absolves the Bush administration of its heinous crime of invading Iraq in the first place. The occupation is presented as more of a peace keeping mission than what it actually was, a blatant act of greed and destruction.

The other political outcome is to suggest that Iraq should ultimately be broken up, an option that has persisted beneath the surface of American policy and also seeks to satisfy imperial ambitions. Dividing Iraq into three countries helps eliminate a potentially independent Arab-Muslim state and, I would argue, the most important such state, as greater economic independence in the Middle East and North Africa could actually develop around it.

Iraq is not in civil war; Iraq is under occupation.

Some parties have acquiesced in American dominance and cooperated with the American authorities in an effort to gain power, others have not and have violently opposed Iraqis who have.

What there is in Iraq is a political spectrum where at one hand there are those adamantly opposed to the occupation and at the other those who support it, a tension that becomes more entrenched the longer troops remain.

With the increased emphasis on a "civil war" in Iraq the narrative is taking a momentous turn and casting a shadow on the continued presence of hundreds of thousands of occupying troops; meanwhile casting greater light on the supposed tensions within Iraqi society.

Equally shaded by the new narrative of civil war are the ideologues and politicians, lifted to power by the US, who have been imposing a sectarian framework on the country from above since the beginning.

The dichotomy between continued occupation and civil war leaves the anti-war movement speechless as neither alternative is desirable.

It must be remembered, however, that this dichotomy is as much a fiction as the many others that have sought to justify the American occupation.

It must be remembered that the root of current developments in Iraq is the illegal invasion and occupation of the country; the occupation must be eradicated if one sincerely hopes to keep the peace in Iraq.

OCCUPATION REPORT

2003: Sowing The Wind 2006: Reaping The Whirlwind



US soldiers take a group of arrested Iraqi citizens into the main US compound to be held for questioning. Baghdad 2003. AFP/Cris Bouroncle)

[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.]

[But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?]

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

**“Foreign Service Officers Are To
Be Sent Out Like Tethered Goats
To The Killing Fields”
“Helicopters On The Roof?” Asked An
Official**

April 6, 2006 Sidney Blumenthal, The Guardian [Excerpts]

Since the Iraqi elections in January, US foreign service officers at the Baghdad embassy have been writing a steady stream of disturbing cables describing drastically worsening conditions.

Rather than being received as invaluable intelligence, the messages are discarded or, worse, considered signs of disloyalty.

Rejecting the facts on the ground apparently requires blaming the messengers. So far, two top attaches at the embassy have been reassigned elsewhere for producing factual reports that are too upsetting.

The Bush administration's preferred response to increasing disintegration is to act as if it has a strategy that is succeeding.

"More delusion as a solution in the absence of a solution," said a senior state department official.

Under the pretence that Iraq is being pacified, the military is partially withdrawing from hostile towns in the countryside and parts of Baghdad. By reducing the number of soldiers, the administration can claim its policy is working going into the midterm elections. But the jobs the military doesn't want to perform are being sloughed off on state department "provisional reconstruction teams" (PRTs) led by foreign service officers. The rationale is that they will win Iraqi hearts-and-minds by organising civil functions.

The Pentagon has informed the state department it will not provide security for these officials and that mercenaries should be hired for protection instead.

Internal state department documents listing the PRT jobs, dated March 30, reveal that the vast majority of them remain unfilled by volunteers. So the professionals are being forced to take the assignments in which "they can't do what they are being asked to do", as a senior department official told me.

Foreign service officers are to be sent out like tethered goats to the killing fields.

When these misbegotten projects inevitably fail, the department will be blamed. Passive resistance to these assignments reflects anticipation of impending disaster, including the likely murder of diplomats.

"Did you ever imagine in your wildest dreams that after Vietnam we'd be doing this again?" one top state department official remarked to another last week.

Inside the department, people wonder about the next "strategy" after the hearts-and-minds gambit of sending diplomats unprotected to secure victory turns into a squalid fiasco.

"Helicopters on the roof?" asked an official.

How It Is

April 3, 2005 Treasure of Baghdad [Excerpt]

Few days ago, a friend of mine was caught in the middle of cross fire in Yarmouk neighborhood. He had to hide in one of the shops whose owner hesitated to accept for a minute until my friend begged him. He swore he saw armed men walking freely in front of one of the mosques.

They were fighting the Iraqi army until the sheikh of the mosque called on the armed men to stop fighting. "We told you to fight the Interior ministry commandoes, not the National Guards.

These are our friends, not enemies," my friend heard the Sheikh of the mosque calling through the mosque's loudspeaker. Can you just imagine that? What kind of state is this?

If the Iraqi army, which the US military said is improving, was not able to control one neighborhood, what should I expect?

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

BUSH CALLS PARALYSIS OF IRAQI GOVERNMENT A SIGN OF DEMOCRACY President Hails Partisan Wrangling, Inaction

April 4, 2006 The Borowitz Report

President George W. Bush said today that the infighting and partisan wrangling that have brought the Iraqi government to a standstill are "signs that true democracy has taken root in Iraq."

At a White House briefing, Mr. Bush said the fact that the newly formed government of Iraq is in the grip of paralysis shows that American-style democracy can be successfully exported to a Middle Eastern nation.

"It took the United States government hundreds of years to attain the level of inactivity we currently enjoy," Mr. Bush told reporters. "The Iraqi people have achieved that in just a matter of months."

While Mr. Bush praised the Iraqis for establishing such key democratic institutions as partisan squabbling and gridlock, he cautioned that much work needs to be done before Iraq can be considered a true democracy.

"Iraq still has not had a major campaign fundraising scandal," he noted.

He said that key elements of a democracy, such as indicted lawmakers and disgraced lobbyists, were still largely missing from Iraq's political landscape and need to take root there.

In order to kick-start those democratic institutions, Mr. Bush said he was sending Rep. Tom DeLay (R-Tex) to Iraq to teach Iraqi legislators how to become indicted and disgraced lobbyist Jack Abramoff to teach Iraqi lobbyists how to disgrace themselves.

"Only when Iraq has its own disgraced lobbyists and a president who denies ever knowing them can it be considered a truly democratic nation," Mr. Bush said.

SATAN APPEARS IN NORTH CAROLINA:



"The marines that I have had wounded over the past five months have been attacked by a faceless enemy. But the enemy has got a face. He's called Satan"
US Marine Colonel Gareth Brandl. Charlotte, N.C., April 6. (AP Photo/Chuck Burton)

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

DOING IT THE FRENCH WAY



A group of students invade the railway tracks as police stand by at the Gare du Nord train station, in Paris, April 6, 2006. Students and unions have been in a week-long standoff with the conservative government over the law, which will make it easier for companies to fire young workers. (AP Photo/Remy de la Mauviniere)

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that

you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

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

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

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

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

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.