

GI SPECIAL 4E15:

BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE



Carlos Arredondo holds a portrait of his son during an anti-Iraqi war rally outside the White House in Washington May 13, 2006. Arredondo's son, U.S. Marine Cpl. Alexander Arredondo was killed in Najaf by a sniper in August 2004. REUTERS/Yuri Gripas

**Pentagon Traitors
Devise Exciting New
Way To Kill More U.S.
Troops:**

Col. Ritchie Confirms Sending Mentally Disabled Back Into Combat “Driven In Part By A Troop Shortage”



SOME DAY, Trisha Fish says, she will have to tell Chance, now 7, that his father committed suicide in Iraq. She says she finds herself rehearsing what she will say. “Your Daddy went to war and he saw a lot of things and they broke his heart. They broke his spirit. They changed who he was.” (MARK MIRKO) Mar. 17, 2006

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer and James Starowicz, who sent this in.]

Some service members who committed suicide in 2004 and 2005 were kept on duty despite clear signs of mental distress, sometimes after being prescribed antidepressants with little or no mental health counseling or monitoring, the Courant reported.

The Army's top mental health expert, Col. Elspeth Ritchie, acknowledged that some deployment practices, such as sending service members diagnosed with post-traumatic stress syndrome back into combat, have been driven in part by a troop shortage.

May 14, 2006 By LISA CHEDEKEL And MATTHEW KAUFFMAN, The Hartford Courant & AP [Excerpts]

At least 11 U.S. service members who committed suicide in Iraq in 2004 and 2005 were reportedly kept on duty despite exhibiting signs of psychological problems, according to a recent newspaper report. In at least seven of the cases, superiors were aware of the problems, military investigative records and interviews with families indicate.

U.S. military troops with severe psychological problems have been sent to Iraq or kept in combat, even when superiors have been aware of signs of mental illness, a newspaper reported for Sunday editions.

The Hartford Courant, citing records obtained under the federal Freedom of Information Act and more than 100 interviews of families and military personnel, reported numerous cases in which the military failed to follow its own regulations in screening, treating and evacuating mentally unfit troops from Iraq.

Although The Courant determined that a spate of six suicides occurred within eight weeks last year, from late May to July, there is no indication that the military took steps to respond to the cluster.

Twenty-two U.S. troops committed suicide in Iraq last year, accounting for nearly one in five of all non-combat deaths and the highest suicide rate since the war started, the newspaper said.

Some service members who committed suicide in 2004 and 2005 were kept on duty despite clear signs of mental distress, sometimes after being prescribed antidepressants with little or no mental health counseling or monitoring, the Courant reported.

Those findings conflict with regulations adopted last year by the Army that caution against the use of antidepressants for "extended deployments."

"I can't imagine something more irresponsible than putting a soldier suffering from stress on (antidepressants), when you know these drugs can cause people to become suicidal and homicidal," said Vera Sharav, president of the Alliance for Human Research Protection, a New York-based advocacy group. "You're creating chemically activated time bombs."

Besides causing suicides, experts say, gaps in mental health care can cause violence between soldiers, accidents and critical mistakes in judgment during combat operations.

Although Defense Department (website) standards for enlistment disqualify recruits who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, the military also is redeploying service members to Iraq who fit that criteria, the newspaper said.

"I'm concerned that people who are symptomatic are being sent back. That has not happened before in our country," said Dr. Arthur S. Blank, Jr., a Yale-trained psychiatrist who helped to get post-traumatic stress disorder recognized as a diagnosis after the Vietnam War.

The Army's top mental health expert, Col. Elspeth Ritchie, acknowledged that some deployment practices, such as sending service members diagnosed with post-traumatic stress syndrome back into combat, have been driven in part by a troop shortage.

Col. Elspeth Ritchie, the top psychiatry expert for the Army surgeon general, said that while the Army is reviewing the 2005 suicides as a way to gauge its mental health efforts, "suicide rates go up and down, and we expect some variation."

"The challenge for us ... is that the Army has a mission to fight. And, as you know, recruiting has been a challenge," she said. "And so we have to weigh the needs of the Army, the needs of the mission, with the soldiers' personal needs."

Commanders, not medical professionals, have final say over whether a troubled soldier is retained in the war zone.

"Your average commander doesn't want to deal with a whacked-out soldier. But on the other hand, he doesn't want to send a message to his troops that if you act up, he's willing to send you home," said Maj. Andrew Efaw, a judge advocate general officer in the Army Reserves who handled trial defense for soldiers in northern Iraq last year.

From March 2003 to October 2005, only 6.5 percent of deploying service members who indicated a mental health problem were referred for evaluations; overall, fewer than 1 in 300 deploying troops, or 0.3 percent, were referred.

That rate of referral is dramatically lower than the more than 9 percent of deploying troops that the Army itself acknowledges in studies have serious psychiatric disorders.

In addition, despite its pledges in 2004 to improve mental health care, the military was more likely to deploy troops who indicated psychological problems in 2005 than it was during the first year of the war, the data show.

The Courant found that at least seven, or about one-third, of the 22 soldiers who killed themselves in Iraq in 2005 had been deployed less than three months, raising questions about the adequacy of pre-deployment screening. Some of them had exhibited earlier signs of distress.

Also, at least three soldiers who killed themselves since the war began were deployed despite serious mental conditions, including bipolar disorder and schizophrenia.

The military relies increasingly on antidepressants, some with potentially dangerous side effects, to keep troops with known psychological problems in the war zone.

Military investigative reports and interviews with family members indicate that some service members who committed suicide in 2004 and 2005 were kept on duty despite clear signs of mental distress, sometimes after being prescribed antidepressants, including a class of drugs known as SSRIs.

Some service members who experienced depression or stress before or during deployments to Iraq described being placed on Zoloft, Wellbutrin and other antidepressants, with little or no mental health counseling or monitoring. Some of the drugs carry warnings of an increased risk of suicide, within the first weeks of their use.

In one case, a 26-year-old Marine who was having trouble sleeping was put on a strong dose of Zoloft, an SSRI that carries a warning urging doctors to closely monitor new patients for suicidal urges. Last April, within two months of starting the drug, the Marine killed himself in Iraq.

Those anecdotal findings conflict with regulations adopted last year by the Army cautioning that antidepressants for cases of moderate or severe depression "are not usually suitable for extended deployments."

Also, the military's top health official, Assistant Defense Secretary William Winkenwerder Jr., indicated in testimony to Congress last summer that service members were being allowed to deploy on psychotropic medications only when their conditions had "fully resolved."

The use of psychiatric drugs has alarmed some medical experts and ethicists, who say the medications cannot be properly monitored in a war zone.

The Army's own reports indicate that the availability and use of such medications in Iraq and Kuwait have increased since mid-2004, when a team of psychiatrists approved making Prozac, Zoloft, Trazodone, Ambien and other drugs more widely available throughout the combat zone.

The military is sending troops back into combat for second and third tours despite diagnoses of PTSD or other combat-related psychological problems, a practice that some mental health experts fear will fuel incidents of suicide and violence among troops abroad and at home.

Although Department of Defense standards for enlistment in the armed forces disqualify recruits who suffer from PTSD, the military is redeploying service members to Iraq who fit that criteria.

The practice, which military experts concede is driven partly by pressure to maintain troop levels, runs counter to accepted medical doctrine and research, which cautions that re-exposure to trauma increases the risk of psychological problems.

"You think it's a stigma to be sent home from the Iraq war? That might be the line they're using" to justify retaining troops, said Dr. Arthur S. Blank Jr., a psychiatrist who formerly served as national director of the Veterans Administration's counseling centers. "I wouldn't say that."

"You have to become comfortable with things we wouldn't normally be comfortable with," said Bob Johnson, a psychologist in Atlanta who counseled soldiers last year as chief of combat stress control for the Army's 2nd Brigade. "If there were an endless supply, the compassionate side of you just wants to get these people out of here. They're miserable. You can see it in their faces. But I had to kind of put that aside." **[Let's "kind of" ship this worthless piece of shit to Iraq. After all, "you have to become comfortable with things we wouldn't normally be comfortable with." Let's see how "comfortable" he finds that. What a marvelous first hand research experience for such a distinguished, honorable clinician. Why, with luck, he might even run into one of the emotionally fucked up soldiers he sent back, late some night.]**

Military data show that deaths in Iraq due to all non-combat causes, such as accidents, rose by 32 percent from 2004 to 2005.

Of the more than 500 non-combat deaths among all service branches since the start of the war, gunshot wounds were the second-leading cause of death, behind vehicle crashes but ahead of heart attacks and other medical ailments.

At least seven troops who are believed to have committed suicide in 2005 and early 2006, and one who has been charged with killing a fellow soldier, were serving second or third tours in Iraq. Some of them had exhibited signs of combat stress after their first deployments, according to family members and friends.

Some soldiers now serving second tours in Iraq say they are wrestling with debilitating PTSD symptoms, despite being placed on medications.

Jason Sedotal, a 21-year-old military policeman from Pierre Part, La., returned home in March 2005 after seven months in Iraq, during which a Humvee he was driving rolled over a land mine, badly injuring his sergeant. After completing his tour, Sedotal was diagnosed with PTSD and placed on Prozac, he said.

Last October, after being transferred to a new unit, he was shipped back to Iraq for a one-year tour. During a short visit home last week, he described being wracked by nightmares and depression and convinced that "somebody's following me." When he conveyed his symptoms to a doctor at Fort Polk in Louisiana last Tuesday, he said, he was given a higher dose of medication and the sleeping pill Ambien and told that he was to go back to Iraq.

"I can't keep going through this mentally. All they do is fill me up on medicine and send me back," he said. "What's this going to do to me in the future? I'm going to be 60 years old, hiding under my kitchen table? I'm real scared."

More than 378,000 active-duty, Reserve and National Guard troops have served more than one tour in Iraq or Afghanistan, representing nearly a third of the 1.3 million troops who have been deployed, according to Department of Defense statistics.

That repeat exposure to combat could dramatically increase the percentage of soldiers and Marines who experience PTSD, major depression or other disorders, some experts say.

While the 2005 jump in self-inflicted deaths was as pronounced as the 2003 spike that had stirred action, Army officials said last week that there were no immediate plans to change the approach or resources targeted to mental health.

Ritchie insisted the military works hard to prevent suicides, but said that is a challenge because every soldier has access to a weapon. **[True enough. Perhaps, if instead of suicide, one or more of these wrecked troops uses a weapon to scatter some commanding officers' brains over the floor, the policy will change.]**

MORE:



Army Spec. Jeffrey Henthorn

Roll Call:

Army Spec. Jeffrey Henthorn;

Army Pfc. David L. Potter;

Army Spec. Michael S. Deem;

Pfc. Jason Scheuerman;

Army Pfc. Samuel Lee;

Pfc. Steven Sirko;

Army National Guard 1st Lt.

Debra A. Banaszak;

**“It’s The Same As Vietnam. All
They Care About Is The
Numbers In The Field,” He Said.**

“That's All That Matters, Having The Numbers.”

5 14 By LISA CHEDEKEL And MATTHEW KAUFFMAN, Hartford Courant [Excerpts]

Among the troops who plunged through the gaps in the mental health system was Army Spec. Jeffrey Henthorn, a young father and third-generation soldier, whose death last year is still being mourned by his native Choctaw, Okla.

What his hometown does not know is that Henthorn, 25, had been sent back to Iraq for a second tour, even though his superiors knew he was unstable and had threatened suicide at least twice, according to Army investigative reports and interviews.

When he finally succeeded in killing himself on Feb. 8, 2005, at Camp Anaconda in Balad, Iraq, an Army report says, the work of the M-16 rifle was so thorough that fragments of his skull pierced the barracks ceiling.

In a case last July, a 20-year-old soldier who had written a suicide note to his mother was relieved of his gun and referred for a psychological evaluation, but then was accused of faking his mental problems and warned he could be disciplined, according to what he told his family. Three weeks later, after his gun had been handed back, Pfc. Jason Scheuerman, of Lynchburg, Va., used it to end his life.

Also kept in the war zone was Army Pfc. David L. Potter, 22, of Johnson City, Tenn., who was diagnosed with anxiety and depression while serving in Iraq in 2004.

Potter remained with his unit in Baghdad despite a suicide attempt and a psychiatrist's recommendation that he be separated from the Army, records show. Ten days after the recommendation was signed, he slid a gun out from under another soldier's bed, climbed to the second floor of an abandoned building and shot himself through the mouth, the Army has concluded.

While many families of service members who died of non-combat causes say they are not familiar with military deployment policies, some question whether the military knowingly put their loved ones at risk.

Among them are relatives of Army Spec. Michael S. Deem, a 35-year-old father of two, who was deployed to Iraq in January 2005 despite a history of depression that family members say was known to the military. Shortly before Deem deployed, a military psychiatrist gave him a long-term supply of Prozac to help him handle the stress, his wife said.

Just 3½ weeks after he arrived in Iraq, Deem died in his sleep of what the Army later determined was an enlarged heart "complicated by elevated levels of fluoxetine" - the generic name for Prozac.

Family members of some troops whose deaths have been labeled suicides complain that the military has given them limited information about the circumstances of the deaths. Some have had to wait more than a year for autopsies and investigative reports, which they say still leave questions unanswered.

Barbara Butler, mother of **Army National Guard 1st Lt. Debra A. Banaszak, 35, of Bloomington, Ill.**, said she has trouble understanding why her daughter would have taken her own life in Kuwait last October, as the military has determined. She said that while Banaszak, the single mother of a teenage son, was proud to serve her country and had not complained, the stresses of the deployment may have exacerbated her depression.

"She was used to being in charge and being a leader, but never in these circumstances," said Butler. "If the Army is right that she did this, it was nothing she would have done ordinarily. It was that war that brought it about."

Some autopsy and investigative reports obtained by The Courant make clear that service members who committed suicide were experiencing serious psychological problems during deployment.

In the months before **Army Pfc. Samuel Lee, of Anaheim, Calif.**, killed himself in March 2005, an investigative report says, the 19-year-old had talked to fellow soldiers about a dream in which he tried to kill his sergeant before taking his own life, and of kidnapping, raping and killing Iraqi children.

Three times, a soldier recounted in a sworn statement, Lee had pointed his gun at himself and depressed the trigger, stopping just before a round fired.

But two of Lee's superiors gave statements saying they did not realize Lee was having trouble until the day he balanced the butt of his rifle on a cot, put his mouth over the muzzle and fired.

But a number of other reports on 2004 and 2005 suicides indicate that military superiors were aware that soldiers were self-destructing.

Ann Scheuerman, mother of the soldier who shot himself after his suicide note was discounted by Army officials, said her family has had a frustrating time getting the military to acknowledge mistakes in the way her son was treated.

"We wanted to make sure that whatever protocol they have in place is used, and if it doesn't work, fix it," Scheuerman said. "And to date, we're just not getting anything at all.

"Nothing can bring back my son," she said. "But if something can be done to prevent any more deaths, then if I offend a couple of people, I'll go ahead and apologize up front. Go ahead and come after me, but something needs to be done."

Family members of **Jeffrey Henthorn, the Choctaw, Okla.**, native, are concerned that the Army ignored blatant warnings that Henthorn was suicidal.



Jeffrey Henthorn in Iraq with a young girl he befriended. He told family members he was tormented by memories of having shoved a boy off a moving tank and watching the boy's limp body slip under the wheels.

An investigative report into Henthorn's death contains statements indicating that Henthorn's "chain of command" was aware that he had tried to harm himself in November 2004 - by slashing his arm "intentionally, in a (horizontal) manner" - in the weeks leading up to his second deployment to Iraq, while he was stationed at Fort Riley in Kansas.

Then, soon after his deployment in December, a distressed Henthorn took his gun into a latrine in Kuwait and charged it, in what fellow soldiers feared was a suicide gesture. Although his superiors at the scene grabbed the weapon away, his platoon sergeant returned the gun the same day, after talking to Henthorn for about a half-hour, according to a sworn statement. The platoon's first lieutenant was notified, but there is no indication that Henthorn was referred for a mental health evaluation or counseling.

Eighteen days later, after crossing into Iraq with his unit, Henthorn finished what he had started.

"If you lock yourself in a latrine for 10 minutes with your gun and threaten to hurt yourself, you don't just get your gun back. You get relieved of duty and sent home," said Henthorn's father, Warren, who is still struggling to understand what happened to his only son.

"It's the same as Vietnam - all they care about is the numbers in the field," he said. **"That's all that matters, having the numbers."**

Some troops and their families say the military has not made good on its pledge to make mental health care easily accessible in the field.

Summer Lipford of Statesville, N.C., said she urged her son, **Pfc. Steven Sirko**, to talk to a counselor in April of last year, after he complained in a phone call from Iraq that he was having nightmares, losing weight and not sleeping.

"I asked Steven, 'If you're having dreams that are so (messed) up, why don't you go talk to somebody?'" Lipford recalled. **"He said, 'Yeah, Mom, like that's gonna happen.' He said it was an act of God to get to see somebody."**

Four days later, Sirko, a 20-year-old medic, injected himself with vecuronium, an anesthetic that causes muscular paralysis, and died of an accidental overdose, according to what the military has told Lipford.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Baghdad Roadside Bomb Kills Two U.S. Soldiers

May 14, 2006 AP

BAGHDAD, Iraq: Two U.S. soldiers were killed Sunday by a roadside bomb, the U.S. command said in a statement.

The military said the two soldiers, whose identities were withheld pending notification of next of kin, were killed at about 8 p.m. in east Baghdad.

Another Wisconsin Soldier Reported Killed In Iraq

May 14, 2006 (AP)

PLEASANT PRAIRIE, WI A 22-year-old soldier from Pleasant Prairie has been reported killed while on active duty in Iraq, according to an area funeral home.

A family member of U.S. Army Spc. Eric D. Clark told the Kenosha News on Friday that Army representatives had delivered the news that he died. But details of the circumstances surrounding the death this week had not been released by the military.

An obituary sent to the Kenosha News by the Piasecki-Althaus Funeral Home in Kenosha said Clark was on active duty in Baghdad. The obituary was to be printed in Sunday editions.

Doug Reindl, dean of St. Joseph Interparish Junior High, said he learned of the death when Clark's stepfather called school Friday morning to explain why Clark's younger brother, a seventh-grader, would not be in school. Clark graduated from St. Joseph in 1997.

"Just before he left he stopped in to say goodbye," Reindl said. "He came in with his uniform on and he was getting ready to go.

"Everyone here is just really shook. I'm not just saying this just because he is gone," Reindl said. "He was really a good kid. You're looking at almost 10 years ago now that he had graduated, but he has been back about once a year since. You don't have a lot of students who do that."

Sgt. Eugene Washington, assigned the past five years to a Kenosha recruiting office, said he remembered Clark worked at a nearby Pizza Hut when he enlisted in the Army.

"The guy was really excited about joining and serving his country," he said.

There have been 54 military personnel from Wisconsin killed in the Iraq war.

Two British Soldiers Killed By Roadside Bomb Near Basra

14/05/2006 Telegraph Group Limited

Two British soldiers have been killed and another injured in a roadside bomb attack in southern Iraq, the Ministry of Defence has confirmed.

The attack happened north of Basra as the troops carried out a routine patrol in an armoured Land Rover.

The troops involved were members of the 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment.

A British helicopter recovered the men, who were taken to a military hospital.

The 2nd Battalion Royal Anglian Regiment has been based at Ternhill, Shropshire, since 2005. The MoD said the regiment's role in Iraq was "security sector reform" - training members of the Iraqi police, army and customs.

The regiment recruits in Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Lincolnshire and Bedfordshire. It was previously based at Ballykelly, in Northern Ireland.

U.S. Convoy Attacked In Mosul:

Casualties Not Announced

5.14.06 THOMAS WAGNER, Associated Press Writer

In the city of Mosul, a bomber rammed a U.S. military convoy, killing two Iraqi bystanders and wounding nine, said police Brig. Abdul-Hamod al-Jibori. U.S. forces closed off that area, there were no immediate reports of U.S. casualties.

Oh Shit Dept.

14 May 2006, By Patrick Cockburn in Arbil, Independent News and Media [Excerpt]

In Baquba in Diyala province last week, US soldiers fought anti-occupation resistance forces who were all wearing government uniforms and riding in camouflaged vehicles.

THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPREHENSIBLE REASON TO BE IN THIS EXTREMELY HIGH RISK LOCATION AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT THAT A CROOK WHO LIVES IN THE WHITE HOUSE WANTS YOU THERE, SO HE WILL LOOK GOOD.

That is not a good enough reason.



U.S. Marine Cpl. Daniel Spall, of Indianapolis, New Jersey, leads a patrol in Karmah, April 25, 2006. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Kandahar Occupation Base Attacked

May 13, 2006 KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (CP)

Suspected Taliban militants launched explosives against the main coalition base in southern Afghanistan on Saturday, the fifth such attack since Canadian troops arrived in Kandahar earlier this year.

There were no injuries in the two explosions at the Kandahar airbase, which occurred just before 9 p.m. local time.

The last four attacks have been Soviet-made 107-millimetre rockets, which have a range of about nine kilometres. Mortars have a shorter range.

Lundy confirmed that both rounds hits the base.

The attacks have not fallen into a predictable pattern. Three have occurred between 2 and 3 a.m. and one occurred during daylight.

The last attack happened on April 23, just seven hours after a previous attack.

Most of Canada's 2,300 troops in Afghanistan are based at the airfield. Soldiers from the U.S., Britain and the Netherlands are among the many countries based in Kandahar.

Assorted Resistance Action

May 13 (Xinhua) & 14 May 2006 AFP

Taliban fighters shot dead a provincial intelligence officer in southern Afghanistan.

This is the second officer of the provincial intelligence department falling victim to Taliban attack in Afghanistan's troubled Helmand province in a month.

The deceased was on way home from his office after finishing his duties for the evening when he was intercepted by two armed men. The militants sprayed bullets at the officer who died on the spot. The assailants managed to escape on motorcycles.

A senior police officer said the deceased was living in Lashkargah, capital of the Helmand province.

Taliban are carrying out targeted killings in the southern region, including Helmand, Kandahar, Zabul and Ghazni provinces. Several intelligence and police officers, school teachers, pro-government religious scholars, NGOs' workers and health staffers have so far been killed in such attacks.

At least seven people, including four policemen, were injured in two successive bomb blasts in northern Afghanistan.

In a separate incident, a roadside bomb explosion in Afghanistan's northern Baghlan province narrowly missed a convoy of foreign peacekeepers on Sunday.

The bombs were detonated by a remote control device within minutes of each other in central Baghlan, interior ministry spokesman Yousuf Stanizai told AFP.

"This morning, there were two bomb explosions. Four policemen and three civilians were wounded," Stanizai said Sunday.

Taliban have not been active in Baghlan like the southern parts of the country.

Unknown armed men targeted a vehicle of local employees of the United Nations in the western Herat province, killing two persons and injured another on Friday, an official at the office of Interior Ministry spokesman confirmed Saturday.

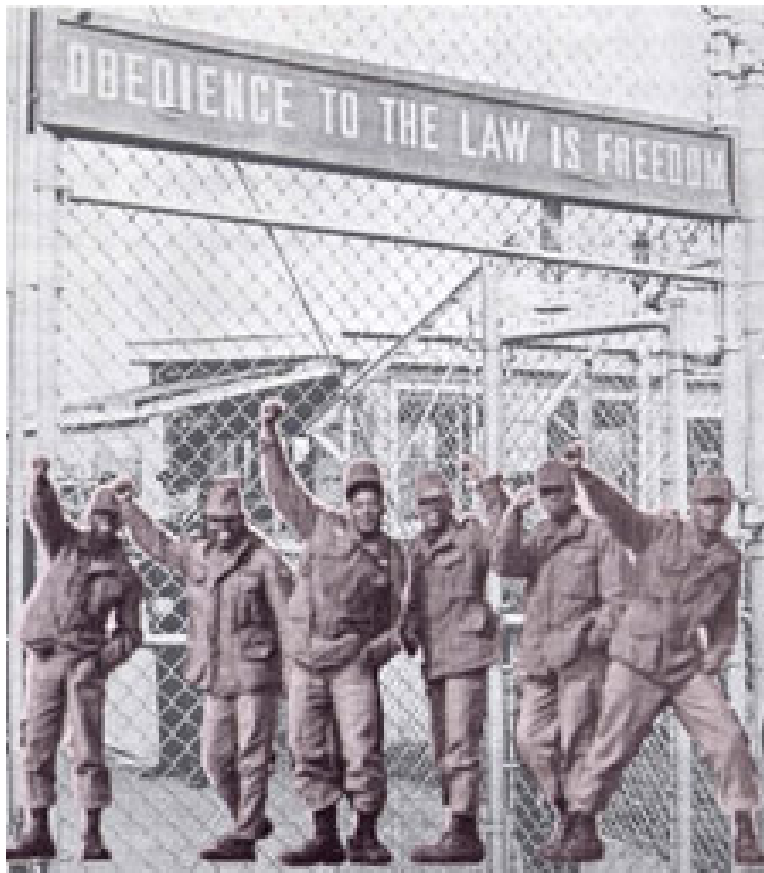
TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of Lance Cpl. Robert Moscillo, of Salem, N.H., following a memorial service at the Marsh Corner Community Church, May 12, 2006, in Methuen, Mass. Moscillo was killed in Iraq. (AP Photo/Lisa Poole)

When Troops Rebelled Against An Imperial War: “Goddamn, Did I Do That? Did I Actually Live In That Shit? Did This Government Push Me Into This Shit?”



2 May 2006 by Cynthia Fuchs, PopMatters Film and TV Editor

The fact that Sir! No Sir! closes with the Coup's "Captain Sterling's Little Problem" is not a little disturbing. The track is sharp and the lyrics are relevant, but its utter appropriateness for a film about the GI antiwar movement during the Vietnam war underlines the awful sameness of then and now.

For, even as the documentary makes the case that the history of the movement has been revised to suit subsequent political and cultural agendas, the language in current

news reports and official statements about the war in Iraq is sounding alarmingly like the language deployed back in the 1960s and '70s.

Directed by David Zeiger and narrated by Troy Garity (whose mother, Jane Fonda is a prominent interview subject), *Sir! No Sir!* traces the movement's development by way of the usual talking head interviews and artifact displays. As the Shirelles sing "Soldier Boy" and a plane soars away from a Southeast Asian jungle, the point of view shot suggests not the romance promised by the soldier's girl back home, but the brutal devastation left behind by U.S. munitions. War, the documentary establishes right off, is mythic and ruinous.

The stories that follow are specific and sadly repetitive, in the sense that they all revolve around the personal discovery that the mythic part is all too calculated, a means to make victims of aggressors and vice versa.

The stories of troops' resistance begin small, at the level of personal decisions to refuse orders. And it's not hard to see why men and women were inspired to resist.

The official and sometimes under-the-radar tactics are astonishing -- at once inept and ferocious. Dr. Howard Levy, a dermatologist in the army, recalls his orders, to train Green Beret special forces to administer dermatological "band-aids" of help to villagers' children (say, treatments for impetigo), in order to "win hearts and minds," at the same time that U.S. forces were daily "bombing the hell out of 'em." When he found the training he was providing "immoral and medically unethical," and stopped providing it, he was court-martialed and spent three years in prison.

Donald Duncan (U.S. Army Special Forces) became famous in 1966 when he refused to participate anymore in what he describes as "sickening" practices, including handing over prisoners to ARVN (South Vietnamese Army Regulars) forces, who would torture them (photos show prisoners hung upside from a tree and held at knifepoint). Duncan appears on a 1966 *Ramparts* magazine cover with the caption, "I quit!", as he says he found the U.S. military's cynicism "really sickening part of it."

These early resisters, both describing their protests as "personal," soon give way to organized efforts to make clear GIs' misgivings about the war as a mission (its lack of direction, planning, and sense) and the specific tasks they were ordered to perform on a day to day basis.

At times the documentary rehearses once well-known and now mostly forgotten information: Tet 1968 was a "turning point," as the North Vietnamese demonstrated that it had civilian supporters against the U.S.

By July of 1968, GIs in San Francisco -- named the Nine for Peace -- claimed sanctuary in churches and chained themselves to priests (considered a first antiwar protest organized by GIs).

Many resisters, including those who went AWOL, were imprisoned in the Presidio stockade. Marches and other public demonstrations followed, including the dissemination of leaflets at military bases, picketing, marches, and newspapers and broadsheets (including the memorable "Worm's Eye View," a paper named for the "lowest" perspective, and the acronym for "We Openly Resist Military

Stupidity"), and, in the case of the Presidio 27, a sit-in in the prison yard following the shooting death of Michael Bunch, a young GI who was trying to escape. With this sit-down, Garity says, "The GI movement had arrived."

While the documentary notes that the movement was for a long time piecemeal, and separate from other anti-war and civil rights movements of the era (the Black Panthers, for one), its participants borrowed strategies and gathered steam (after all, it had years to develop, as the war went on and on).

GI coffeehouses drew attention within the military, and some high-profile cases drew national attention (as when Louis Font, a West Point and Harvard graduate, refused to go to war and lost his career: "Thirty-four years later," he says, "I know I did the right thing."

Other right and costly things featured in Sir! No Sir! include the 1971 Winter Soldier investigation, organized by Vietnam Veterans Against the War (some footage appears in this film; the original film version will finally be available on DVD this month from New Yorker Video).

For several days, GIs testified to atrocities they had perpetrated and witnessed in Vietnam. As Joe Bangert (U.S. Marines) says, it "wasn't really in defense of (Lt. William) Calley (singled out for punishment following the My Lai massacre), but going after the notion that the policies of the U.S. military created things like My Lai."

Bangert says the point was to expose "the truth": "You can't put up a smokescreen and say, in the words they used back then, it was an 'isolated instance of aberrant behavior'... Calley was doing precisely what we were told to do when we were in Vietnam, essentially? Which is, kill them all, and sort it out later."

With these testimonies and increased visibility of VVAW, Joe Urgo says, "You weren't just coming home saying, 'I'm against the war.' You're saying, 'This is what we did. This is how we did it. This was a crime, this was wrong.'" And this process, he says, "helped people to really cross the bridge and to see us in a way that the antiwar movement hadn't really seen GIs before."

Antiwar GIs were at the time categorized as traitors and troublemakers.

Billy Dean Smith was arrested for fragging his commanding officer, in a trumped up case that left him -- even after he was acquitted, in dire emotional and other straits (he ended up living on the streets and is currently imprisoned).

As it collects documents, photos, and memories, Sir! No Sir! insists that we remember what happened, as much as possible.

Those recording their memories include David Cline (wounded three times in country), Keith Mather (who went into exile in Canada for 18 years), and Randy Rowland, all U.S. Army and outspoken critics of the war.

As Cline puts it, following an incident in Vietnam where he was shot and then congratulated for killing his shooter, he was struck as he looked at the dead man's face and wondered about his family, by the fact that his government was "lying to

the American people. I couldn't be silent. I felt that I had a responsibility to my friends, to the country in general, and to the Vietnamese."

Folks back home also felt responsibilities, including Jane Fonda, who appears here in archival footage as well as in her very fine home (a marked contrast with the meager surroundings of the vets), speaks not as "Hanoi Jane," but as a welcome celebrity contributor to a movement.

She traveled with a group called FTA ("Fuck the Army") to raise consciousness and expose spreading antiwar sentiment; as she said at the time, the group was "not trying to tell the people on the bases anything they don't know."

At times, in assembling so much information, the film leaves some connections vague. Long Binh Jail (LBJ), the primary incarceration center in Vietnam, produced repeated uprisings in 1967 and 1968, including riots when Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated.

Such dissent was not precisely part of an organized movement, and in fact, more likely represented the ways that the inmates -- some 90% black inmates (the film notes that in this, the prison resembled facilities in the U.S.) -- were reacting to racism in the military and back home.

The military successfully repressed news of what went on at LBJ, so that to this day, precious little information is disseminated.

While Sir! No Sir! does not go into detail about LBJ, it does make this important point, that "history" was and continues to be rewritten.

While this process certainly allows catastrophes like the war in Iraq to go on (the six generals' recent stand-up against Rumsfeld draws on this notion, with Lt. General Greg Newbold using the Who's "Won't Get Fooled Again" to make the case that with history forgotten or, more often, revised, that military and civilian "deciders" make mistakes again and again).

The current U.S. wars, including "tactical errors" and growing opposition to them, suggest that the reworking of history is an ongoing, even standard practice.

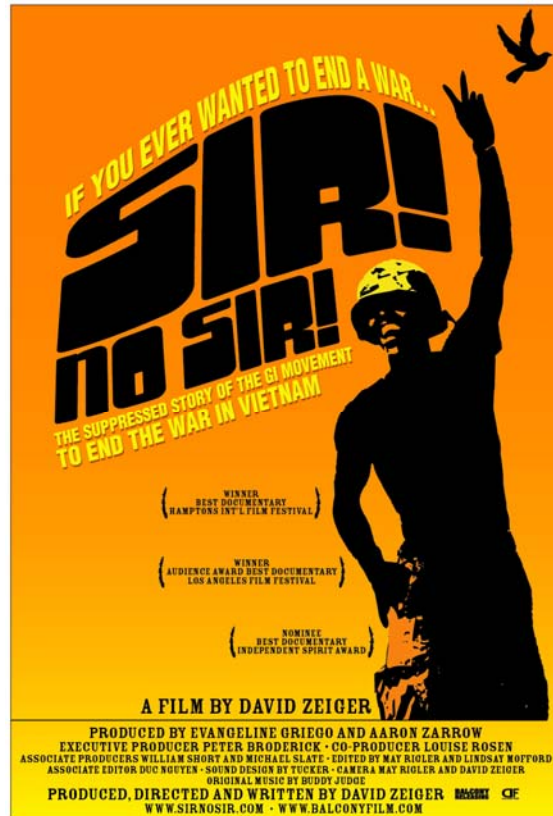
As Sir! No Sir! presents the memories of those who stood up, it puts official pronouncements in perspective, such as Kissinger's infamous declaration, "We believe that peace is at hand," even as the administration was secretly bombing in Cambodia.

The point here, as ever, is the discrepancy (even the collision) between history and memory, the public and personal experiences that all reframe the war.

In the end, though, truth and reconciliation -- however disparate these may be -- remain crucial.

As Terry Whitmore, a Marine who escaped to Stockholm during the war, now says it, "Then you think about this shit man, and you say, 'Goddamn, did I do that? Did I actually live in that shit? Did this government push me into this shit?'"

Terrible questions, they are also necessary.



Sir! No Sir!:
At A Theatre Near You!
To find it: <http://www.sirnosir.com/>

MORE:

“FORGET NAM”

[Thanks to Michael Letwin for sending in.]

David Connolly served honorably in Vietnam with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment. He takes pride in having been, and continuing to be, a Vietnam Veteran Against the War. His collection of poems, *LOST IN AMERICA*, was published by Viet Nam Generation, Inc. & Burning Cities Press in 1994.

“FORGET NAM”

for Jerome Banks and William Wiesle

By David Connolly

**“Ratshit” and “Weasel” and me,
are behind this dike,
and Charlie is giving us “what for”
“Ratshit” lifts his head, just a little,
Just enough for the round
to go in one brown eye and out the other,
and he starts thrashing
and bleeding and screaming
and trying to get
the top of his head
to stay on,
but we have to keep shooting.
A B-4Q tunnels into the dike
and blows “Weasel” against me;
he doesn’t get the chance
to decide whether or not
to give up and die.
Now I’m crying
and screaming, “Medic”,
but I have to keep shooting.**

**At this point, I always wake,
and big, black Jerome,
and little, white William,
my brothers
are not dying beside me,
even though I can still
smell their blood,
even though I can still
see them lying there.**

**You see, these two
have been taking turns
dying on me,
for these twelve years.**

**And still people tell me,
“Forget Nam.”**

**Sir! No Sir!:
At A Theatre Near You!
To find it: <http://www.sirnosir.com/>**

Fast Forward To 2006:

**David Cortright Speaking
on the GI movement
Author of "Soldiers in
Revolt"**



"War is Hell"

**Friday, June 2nd
South Hampton Roads YWCA
5215 Colley Avenue
7:00 p.m.**

*Sponsored by: Veterans For Peace and the Norfolk Chapter of
Amnesty International. For more info: citizensailors@yahoo.com.*

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.

Another Wounded Soldier Treated Like A Criminal By Pentagon Scum

“The military was quick to pursue me for debts that were their mistakes, and they were extremely slow in correcting their errors,” Taylor testified.

May 08, 2006 By Michelle Tan, Army Times staff writer [Excerpts]

Brandy Taylor received a Purple Heart for injuries suffered during a March 2003 mortar attack in Iraq.

Almost a year later, the former Army Reserve specialist got a call from a collection agency telling her she owed the government money.

That January 2004 phone call began an almost two-year struggle that, Taylor says, pushed her into debt and damaged her credit rating: all for money she didn't owe, or that the Army mistakenly overpaid her in the first place.

Taylor testified that she continued to have her paychecks automatically deposited into her bank account while she recovered from her injuries, but her pay was no longer tax exempt because she was no longer in a combat zone. She later learned that she owed the government \$600 because she was overpaid hardship duty pay.

The government's debt collector also told her she owed \$975 of her enlistment bonus because her unit listed her as being absent without leave.

“I never went AWOL,” Taylor said. “The collection agent hounded me for months.”

“The military was quick to pursue me for debts that were their mistakes, and they were extremely slow in correcting their errors,” Taylor testified.

“I was made to feel like a criminal. I was a 24-year-old war hero and shouldn't have had to deal with this.”

“Once a pay problem happens, it can take months and years to solve. The best thing is to prevent them,” said Gregory Kutz, director of forensic audits and special investigations at the GAO.

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.

THIS IS WHAT TRUE COURAGE LOOKS LIKE:



Iraq war veteran, Army soldier David Adams of Carbondale, Ill., sheds honorable tears for a lost comrade, whose death in Iraq prompted him to oppose the Iraq War, during an anti-war demonstration, May 13, 2006 on the National Mall in Washington. Other members of Iraq Veterans Against the War console him. (AP Photo/Lauren Victoria Burke)



Rally against the war: May 13th, 2006 By Karen Bradley, Code Pink Alert.org



IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Basra Rallies Against Collaborator Governor



Iraqi residents demanding the resignation of the collaborator governor of Basra, May 14, 2006. The governor of the oil-rich southern Iraqi province of Basra said he suspended its chief of police on Saturday, accusing him of links to forces resisting the occupation. REUTERS/Atef Hassan

Assorted Resistance Action



A damaged police vehicle after a roadside bomb attack in Kirkuk May 14, 2006. Eight Iraqi soldiers were wounded on Saturday when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol. REUTERS/Slahaldeen Rasheed

May 14 (KUNA) & (Mail & Guardian) & THOMAS WAGNER, Associated Press Writer & (Reuters)

The convoy of the Iraqi Foreign Minister, Hoshiyar Zebari came under an armed attack in the remote hilly area of Hamreen area near Kirkuk, during which three of his bodyguards were killed and four others were wounded.

A security source in the Interior Ministry said that the convoy carrying the bodyguards of the Foreign Minister was attacked by armed men, while it was confirmed that Zebari was not among those in the convoy.

The sources indicated that an explosive device blew up while a convoy of civilian vehicles transporting bodyguards of the foreign minister was driving through heading for Baghdad. Shooting broke out after the explosion by unidentified arm men, during which two of the bodyguards were killed and three others wounded.

Sources in the Foreign Ministry denied that Zebari was in the convoy, affirming that Iraqi officials usually travel by plane to Iraq's Kurdistan cities, especially after resuming operations in Suleimaniyah and Irbil airports.

Three policemen were killed when their patrol was targeted by a bomb in the neighbourhood of Adhamiyah in north Baghdad. Ten civilians and three other police officers were injured.

An attack targeting a checkpoint manned by Interior Ministry forces in Tayaran Square in central Baghdad killed two and wounded five.

Insurgents in the far north of the country, in the restive city of Mosul, clashed with police in the city centre, leaving one police officer dead and three wounded.

East of the capital in Balad Ruz, near the Iranian border, an army patrol responding to a distress call from the home of an army lieutenant colonel was hit by a roadside bomb, wounding five soldiers.

To the east of Mosul, in the oil rich-city of Kirkuk, a bomb shortly after midnight wounded eight police officers on patrol, four of them seriously. Two police vehicles were destroyed.

A bomb exploded near al-Mustansiriya University in northeastern Baghdad, killing one civilian and wounding 11 people, including three policemen, police said.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION

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)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“Support The Troops?”

From: David Honish, Veterans For Peace
To: GI Special
Sent: May 14, 2006
Subject: Support The Troops?

My other Senator, John Cornyn is so arrogant that he refuses to accept emails from constituents. Any written letters to him have also gone unanswered. I assume that he is only interested in mail that contains a check with at least four zeros in it?

"Congress.org" <no-reply@congress.org> wrote:

Subject: Support The Troops?
To: "Congress.org" <no-reply@congress.org>
From: "Congress.org" <no-reply@congress.org>
Date: Sun, 14 May 2006 17:00:42 -0400 (EDT)

Thank you for using Congress.org Mail System

Message sent to the following recipients:

Senator Hutchison
Representative Burgess
Mr. President
Message text follows:

David Honish
415 Pierce Street
Denton, TX 76201-6027

May 14, 2006

Is it not ironic that the Republican party lays claim to the 'Support The Troops' slogan, and then fails to support them?

Can you explain to me why after over three years of a war in Iraq based upon lies about nonexistent WMD's, that our service members are still dying as a result of performing the traditional tank mission of convoy escort in hostile territory in humvees instead of tanks?

I must confess my chagrin to discover that the Disabled American Veterans rank my Texas Congressional delegation rather poorly. Senator Hutchison is ranked as voting in support of DAV issues only 50% of the time, which is considerably better than Senator Cornyn's 33% rating, and far better than Representative Burgess' 0% rating. Is that how you folks support the troops?

By contrast, Houston Representative Sheila Jackson Lee and Austin Representative Lloyd Doggett are both rated as voting 100% in support of DAV issues.

As an Army veteran, I find it hard to ignore such ratings by the DAV.

While I am no fan of the Democratic Party in general, clearly the Republican Party regards military personnel as nothing more than cheap labor to impose corporate control over petroleum resources.

Yeah, that one has worked out real well for you.

Price gouging and profits are up for your oil corporation campaign contributors.

I'm sure you all are laughing all the way to the bank on that one.

Only problem is that many folks are now in a position of having to choose between food, medical care, and gasoline on modest incomes with shrinking buying power. The price

of oil affects everything in a strong negative impact. The current high price of oil is primarily a reflection of military and political risk in the Middle East oilfields.

THE CURRENT ADMINISTRATION IS RESPONSIBLE FOR CREATING THIS PERCEIVED RISK WITH THEIR FOOLHARDY POLICY OF INITIATING WAR IN VIOLATION OF INTERNATIONAL LAW BASED UPON LIES ABOUT NONEXISTENT WMD's.

The Republican Party is going to be held accountable for this in the next several elections. You can fool some of the people all of the time, but...

Sincerely,
David Honish

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://imagineaworldof.blogspot.com/>; <http://gi-special.iraq-news.de>; 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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