

GI SPECIAL 4E20:

UNCONQUERED, UNCONQUERABLE: TIME TO COME HOME, NOW



An Iraqi boy throws a rock at a British armoured vehicle at the scene of a roadside bomb attack which destroyed a British vehicle in Basra May 20, 2006. REUTERS/Atef Hassan

***An Honorable Soldier
Speaks The Truth:
“He Said He Didn’t Agree With
Sending The Guard To The Border”
“I Think A Lot Of It Has To Be
Political”***



Army Spec. Narciso Zapata from Task Force Alamo, 3rd Battalion, 141st Mechanized Infantry, just recently returned from a year-long deployment to Afghanistan is pictured inside the Texas National Guard Armory in Weslaco, Texas on Friday, May 19, 2006.

He has spent the past three years serving in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan.

'Three tours, three years,' he said. 'I'm glad to be back. I think it'd be nice to spend time at home, spend a little time with my wife.'

He said he didn't agree with sending the Guard to the border but would go if asked.

"I think the federal agencies are doing an excellent job,' he said. 'I just don't see the need for it."

"I think a lot of it has to be political."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

S. Dakotan Dies: Alexandria Man Killed After Projectile Struck His Convoy In Baghdad

May 10, 2006, DAN HAUGEN, The Argus Leader

Year after year, Greg Wagner listened to his father read a list of Alexandria's fallen soldiers. And when his father died, the town's Memorial Day service tradition once went to Wagner.

When veterans meet this year at the town's auditorium, they will hear Wagner's name, not his voice.

Wagner, 35, died Monday when a projectile struck a convoy he was leading through a Baghdad neighborhood.

The National Guard staff sergeant was serving with Yankton's Battery C, 1st Battalion, 147th Field Artillery. He led a team whose mission included training Iraqi police officers.

"He was a true military man, and you could pick that up just by looking at him," said Al Blankenship, outgoing commander of American Legion Post 41 in Alexandria.

Wagner was active with the organization only for the past few years, Blankenship said, but he always attended Memorial Day services with his father, who also was in the military.

"He took great pride in what he was doing. I think a lot of it comes from his dad," Blankenship said.

Wagner signed up for the National Guard in 1989 after he graduated from Hanson High School in Alexandria.

Until deploying with the Yankton company in October 2005, he worked full time as a heavy equipment mechanic at a National Guard maintenance complex in Mitchell.

The mission in Iraq was his first tour of overseas duty.

The eve of Wagner's deployment was a humid, early fall night spent slapping mosquitoes and watching his old high school football team with family and friends.

"Greg came out to congratulate us on the season we were having," said Jim Haskamp, who got his start as Hanson football coach when Wagner was a player. Haskamp said what comes to mind more than anything else when he thinks of Wagner is loyalty, and he applied it to his country as he did his football team.

"You could chew him out for something, and he'd come back and thank you for trying to make him better," Haskamp said.

Hanson Principal Jim Bridge also ran into Wagner that night in Montrose.

"I thought it was odd that he was there," Bridge said.

The principal said Wagner told his family if they wanted to see him before he left, they'd have to join him at the game. "Football was the thing he probably liked most. He loved football," Bridge said.

Wagner's family requested privacy Tuesday and did not wish to comment.

"The whole month of April and rolling into May has been very hard on the U.S. military," said Major Orson Ward, a spokesman for the South Dakota National Guard.

The device used against Wagner's convoy differs from the improvised explosive devices used in many of the insurgent attacks, Ward said. The "improvised fired projectile" is a rocket or mortar round launched toward targets.

Also injured during the incident were two other soldiers from Wagner's unit whose names were not released by the military. Bridge said those soldiers also are from Alexandria.

"This touches a lot of people. We're a small town, so everybody knows everybody," Bridge said. "We have a lot of sad hearts right now."

Funeral arrangements were pending Tuesday evening.

Janesville Soldier Is Killed



This undated photo provided by the U.S. Army shows Sgt. Nathan J. Vacho, 29, of Janesville, Wis. Associated Press

MAY 10, 2006 GEORGE HESSELBERG, Wisconsin State Journal

Army Sgt. Nathan J. Vacho, 29, of Janesville, a father of two daughters and the son of a career soldier, died Friday in Baghdad from injuries received when a homemade roadside bomb detonated near his vehicle.

He had been in Iraq for less than two weeks, and was on his second patrol, a family friend said. Two other soldiers also died in the explosion, the military said Tuesday.

Vacho, a 1995 graduate of Ladysmith High School, enlisted in the Army Reserve in 1998 as a firefighter. At the time of his death, he was assigned as a health-care specialist, for the 489th Civil Affairs Battalion, based in Knoxville, Tenn. He had been assigned in 2005 to the 330th Medical Brigade based in Madison.

Vacho's connection to the military probably didn't surprise anyone in Ladysmith. His father, John Vacho, also a Ladysmith native, is the Army Reserve command sergeant major of the 88th Regional Readiness Command at Fort Snelling, Minn.

"You ain't going to find a more patriotic soldier," John Vacho said Tuesday of his son.

Nathan Vacho's term of service ended March 23, but the Army kept him on, his father said. The soldier had told his father he was planning to re-enlist anyway because he wanted to stay in the Army for 20 years and make a career of it, as generations of Vacho men before him had done, the elder Vacho said.

"He says, 'You know, this is what we do,' and I said, 'I know,'" said John Vacho, who has been in the Army Reserve for 32 years.

When the two last spoke April 30, Nathan Vacho told his father he was being sent to the infamous "Triangle of Death" area south of Baghdad. "I said, 'Son, be careful. Don't cut no corners.' "

John Terrill, a family friend and longtime editor of the weekly Ladysmith News, said Nathan Vacho was home to visit family at Easter, and he had left Fort Bragg for Iraq on April 25.

John Vacho returned from Iraq in February 2005, and gave a moving speech at last year's Memorial Day ceremonies, talking about the difficulty of telling a family of a soldier's death, said Terrill.

"It was such a moving speech I printed it, word for word," said Terrill.

Nathan Vacho got military training and experience in the civil air patrol during high school. "He loved gliding, he wanted to glide, so he built a glider. He had a penchant for technology and a zest for life," said Ladysmith High School guidance counselor Jackie Pederson. He was on the football team and the school newspaper staff, she said.

Nathan was a fun-loving person who touched everyone around him, his father said.

"If it wasn't happening when he walked into a room, it was happening when he left," he said.

The Ladysmith High School choir and band will dedicate tonight's spring concert to Nathan Vacho.

In addition to his father and mother, Carol, of Ladysmith, Vacho is survived by his wife, Amanda, who declined comment; daughters, Emma Grace and Bayli Ellen, of Janesville and Colfax, Wis., and a sister, Ashley.

Two British Soldiers Wounded In Basra: Resistance Attacks Against British Forces “A Cause For Concern” [!]



A youth runs away with a piece of metal armour from a burning British military vehicle after a roadside bomb attack in Basra, May 20, 2006. (AP Photo/Nabil al-Jurani)

May 20 (KUNA)

Two British soldiers were wounded in an attack in Basra, southern Iraq, that targeted their patrol vehicle, said the British Defense Ministry Saturday.

A ministry spokesman said in a press statement that the soldiers had been on a routine mission when they were ambushed and attacked with hand grenades and explosives, but said that the wounds they sustained were not serious and that they had been taken on the military base for treatment.

The vehicle had burned completely as a result of the attack, he said.

Meanwhile, the BBC quoted spokesman for the British forces in Basra Major Sebastian Muntz as saying that recent attacks against British forces were a cause for concern.

Three Fergus Falls Area Soldiers Wounded

5/20/2006 The Associated Press

An explosion in Iraq this week left three soldiers from the Fergus Falls area injured.

All three are with the Minnesota National Guard's 136th Infantry unit in Fergus Falls.

A company spokesman says they were injured when a bomb went off near their Humvee last Monday.

Two of the soldiers were treated and released. The third -- Sergeant Matthew Bye from Dalton -- suffered more serious injuries, including a broken leg and shrapnel wounds that required surgery.

Bye is being treated at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany. He'll be sent back to the U-S to recover.

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



U.S. soldiers at the scene of a bomb attack in Baghdad May 8, 2006. A roadside bomb and a car bomb exploded in quick succession wounding four policemen, in an ambush in eastern Baghdad. REUTERS/Ceerwan Aziz

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

US Soldier Dies In Uruzgan Gunfight With Afghanistan Militants: 6 More Wounded; “Situation Is Still Perilous In The Southern Provinces”

20 May 2006 The Scotsman & By NOOR KHAN, Associated Press Writer & (KUNA) &
HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS RELEASE
Number: 06-05-02CA

A US soldier was killed and six others wounded during a firefight with militants in Afghanistan, the US-led coalition said today.

Lt. Tamara Lawrence, a U.S. military spokeswoman, said the U.S. soldiers were conducting a joint patrol with Afghan forces in the Cahar Cineh District in Uruzgan Province when they encountered enemy fighters about 10 a.m. Friday.

The six wounded soldiers were in stable condition, the military said.

The death yesterday brings to at least 26 the number of US military personnel killed in Afghanistan this year.

In the western city of Herat, an explosion ripped through a vehicle carrying a former warlord, Amanullah Khan, wounding him and two others, said Gulam Sarwar Haydari, the city's deputy police chief.

Afghanistan southern parts are highly volatile over the past four days. During scattered clashes in the southern provinces in the past four days, around 150 people, including Taliban, Afghan police and military personnel and a few civilians, had been killed.

Situation is still perilous in the southern provinces and reports of scattered clashes are arriving here from areas in Helmand, Zabul, Uruzgan and Kandahar provinces.

“C'est Une Catastrophe” Two French Soldiers Killed In Helmand, Another Wounded:

50 Collaborator Troops Cut Off And Missing: Of 20 Vehicles In Convoy, Only 6 Escape Resistance Attack

05/20/06 AFP & By NOOR KHAN, Associated Press Writer

Two French soldiers of the special forces were killed and third was wounded at the time of engagements in Afghanistan Saturday, one learned in Paris from French military source.

Insurgents crouching among fields of grapevines and wheat opened fire on a half-mile long convoy of Afghan army trucks as they snaked their way slowly along a dirt road with reinforcements.

Deux soldats français des forces spéciales ont été tués et un troisième a été blessé lors de combats en Afghanistan samedi, a-t-on appris à Paris de source militaire française.

L'armée afghane restait sans nouvelles samedi d'une cinquantaine de soldats isolés en territoire ennemi à la suite de nouveaux combats violents avec des talibans dans le sud du pays, a indiqué un commandant sur le terrain.

Tandis que la coalition internationale ne confirmait la mort que de quatre soldats afghans, le commandant a déclaré qu'il était "possible que nous ayons essuyé de lourdes pertes".

"C'est une catastrophe", a-t-il ajouté sous couvert de l'anonymat.

Les combats sont survenus quand un convoi de vingt véhicules de l'armée afghane a été pris d'assaut dans la province d'Helmand (sud) samedi matin. Le convoi revenait d'une autre zone de combats toute proche où des affrontements avaient déjà eu lieu vendredi soir.

Seuls six véhicules ont réussi à s'échapper tandis que les autres se sont retrouvés derrière les lignes ennemies, avec une cinquantaine de soldats. On ignorait quel était leur sort, a précisé le commandant depuis le lieu des combats.

"Ce matin (samedi), les forces de la coalition et l'ANA (Armée nationale afghane) ont été impliquées dans affrontements avec des combattants ennemis dans la province d'Helmand. Quatre soldats de l'ANA ont été tués et douze blessés", a indiqué la porte-parole de la coalition, le lieutenant Tamara Lawrence.

Un porte-parole des talibans a fait état de cinq morts dans les rangs des rebelles. Des renforts étaient en route et un soutien aérien a été demandé, a indiqué le général Rahmatullah Raufi, commandant en chef de l'armée dans le sud.

De nouveaux combats acharnés ont éclaté vendredi soir entre une centaine de soldats afghans et environ autant de talibans dans la province méridionale de Helmand. Samedi, tandis que les échanges de tir se poursuivaient, ils avaient déjà provoqué la mort de deux soldats afghans et de six talibans, selon des responsables militaires.

The insurgents ambushed the convoy in the trouble-plagued Sangin district of the southern province of Helmand.

Millbury Soldier Is Killed In Combat

May 11, 2006 By Ralph Ranalli and Megan Woolhouse, Boston Globe Staff

WORCESTER

When the time came for Brian Moquin to sign for a second hitch in the Army, his grandmother, who had helped raise him in her Millbury home, begged him to say no.

"I told him: 'Don't join this time; it's too dangerous right now,'" Elsie Moquin said yesterday in a telephone interview, sobbing gently as she recalled the conversation.

"Grandma, I have to," she recalled him saying. "I have to go fight for my country," he said. "They need me."

The Department of Defense announced yesterday that Moquin, a 20-year-old private from the Army's 10th Mountain Division, was among 10 soldiers killed in Afghanistan on Friday when their CH-47 Chinook helicopter crashed during combat operations.

Peter Bissonnette, who is engaged to Moquin's mother, Tracy Vaillancourt, said the family was reeling from the news, delivered to their Worcester home by two Army officers in dress uniform about noon Saturday. The last time Vaillancourt spoke with her son was a few months ago, close to her birthday, he said.

He called her on a satellite phone, but after only a few minutes, the connection was lost.

"She didn't even get a chance to say goodbye or I love you," Bissonnette said.

Vaillancourt said she was in Chicago on a business trip when an Army officer called her on her cellphone and told her of the death of her only child, the Associated Press reported.

In an interview at her home, Vaillancourt told the Telegram & Gazette in Worcester that her son "was too young" to die in war.

"He just wanted to do something to make everybody proud," she said. "I'm very proud of him."

Bissonnette remembered Moquin as a young man who was still finding his way. He had dropped out of high school and obtained his GED before enlisting.

"He was looking for some direction," said Bissonnette, a Worcester police officer. "I kind of pointed him in the direction" of the Army.

One of Moquin's friends, Adam Labbe of Millbury, said Moquin joined the military because he "had nothing else to do."

"He was stuck," said Labbe, 18. "He wanted to straighten his life out."

Family members and friends said Moquin could have done a lot of things. He was an accomplished artist and musician who wrote poetry. He loved skateboarding and was unfailingly loyal to his friends.

"He was one of the best friends you could ever have," Labbe said.

In recent years, Moquin had become a tattoo enthusiast, getting seven tattoos in a single week after coming home from basic training.

During a telephone interview yesterday, Labbe disclosed that he and six friends were in the Skin-Graff Tattoo studio in Worcester, getting tattoos in memory of Moquin. Labbe said his was a modified 8-ball design with the words "Bruiser" and "RIP Brian M. Moquin Jr. 1986-06."

Labbe, a drummer, also said that he and Moquin, a guitarist and vocalist, played in a local band, "Coordinates; Cartesia." A mutual friend had stood in as the band's singer from the time of Moquin's enlistment, but the arrangement was always considered temporary.

"But I guess it's permanent now," he said.

“The Americans And Their Slaves Are Trying To Boost The Morale Of Their Troops”

May 20 By Robert Birsell, Reuters

The governor of Kandahar province, Assadullah Khalid, told a news conference on Friday that three senior Taliban members had been captured in the fighting.

He declined to identify them.

The BBC reported on Friday that Taliban military commander Mullah Dadullah had been captured by international forces in Kandahar.

The one-legged Dadullah is a member of the Taliban's 10-man leadership council and is regarded as being close to the fugitive top leader, Mullah Mohammad Omar.

A man saying he was Dadullah telephoned Reuters late on Friday and denied he had been caught.

"I am Mullah Dadullah. The reports about my arrest are ... a pack of blatant lies," said the man, who sounded like Dadullah.

"The Americans and their slaves are trying to boost the morale of their troops," the man said. The Taliban refer to the Afghan government as slaves of the United States.

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of Cpl. Stephen Bixler at Sacred Heart Church in Suffield, Conn., May 17, 2006. Bixler, 20, a member of the 2nd Reconnaissance Battalion, 2nd Marine Division, 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force, was killed in action in Iraq on May 4th. (AP Photo/Jessica Hill)

“All Of This So I Could Get My Family A House”

May 19, 2006 By Tony Perry, L.A. Times Staff Writer [Excerpt]

"Baghdad ER," set for broadcast Sunday on HBO, is about the Army medical personnel in Iraq who are dedicated to giving wounded soldiers, Marines and sailors a choice to survive even with the most horrendous of wounds — often blast injuries that would have been instantly fatal in previous wars, before advances in combat medicine and protective armor.

One soldier seems angry at himself for getting hurt because it will separate him from buddies who need him. Another is still dazed at a buddy's death. "I looked over and he was gone," he says in a flat, ghastly voice.

Another, being wheeled into surgery, asks plaintively if his genitals were destroyed in the blast that destroyed his Humvee.

A wounded National Guard member muses about why he joined the guard and found himself in Iraq: "All of this so I could get my family a house."

Japan Getting Troops Out Of Iraq “Beginning In June”

May 20 AFP

Japan has begun making arrangements with the United States, Britain and Australia on a possible withdrawal of its troops from Iraq beginning in June, a press report has said.

The move Saturday was initiated as the southern Iraqi prefecture of Al-Muthanna, where the troops are stationed, was expected to regain authority from the multinational force by the end of June, the daily Yomiuri Shimbun said in its evening edition.

Japan, which renounced war under a US-imposed 1947 constitution, has some 600 troops in Iraq on its first military mission since World War II to a country where fighting is under way.

Japan may make a decision on the troop withdrawal as early as June and immediately start pulling out the troops, initially to neighbouring Kuwait, the daily quoted government sources as saying.

Sir! No Sir!:
**“As The War Grew In Size, So
Did The Number Of People Who
Opposed The Mission”**



2006-05-19 Marjorie Baumgarten, Austin Chronicle

Although Hollywood, to this day, remains skittish about making movies that concentrate on America's Vietnam war experience, our country's popular imagery of the anti-war movement remains robust due to the peaceniks' overall absorption into the iconography of the American counterculture of the Sixties and Seventies.

Yet the story of the war's most crucial naysayers, the soldiers in the barracks and on the front lines, remains largely unseen and untold, a situation the documentary Sir! No Sir! goes a long way toward rectifying.

The film provides a window into the conversations and debates that occurred among soldiers on military bases and while in country, opinions shaped and altered by first-hand experiences and knowledge.

Sir! No Sir! presents a focused history of the GI anti-war movement, beginning in the Sixties as a series of individual acts of conscience by servicemen who reached their own conclusions about America's early involvement in Vietnam, conclusions which led to courts-martial, stockade time, and desertions.

As the war and the number of conscripts grew in size, so did the number of people who opposed the mission.

Sir! No Sir!, however, is not the story of the draft dodgers or resisters but rather the story of those already who were already dog-tagged and shipped out before their misgivings

and resistance developed. This is the story of the pirate radio stations, the underground newspapers, the coffeehouses that emerged near the U.S. bases, and the Vietnam Veterans Against the War.

Brought into particularly sharp relief is the history of the coffeehouses as alternative centers for military persons to associate and share ideas outside the confines of the base. It's a history well-known to the filmmaker, David Zeiger, who was a civilian actively involved in running Killeen, Texas' Oleo Strut, the era's coffeehouse by Fort Hood (named after the shock absorbers in helicopters).

The film's generous amount of archival material about the happenings at our nearby Fort Hood makes the material especially illuminating on a local level. While a great number of former servicemen are interviewed for the film, their largely one-on-one recollections and testimonies are greatly magnified by the massive amount of archival visual footage presented here.

Jane Fonda (whose son Troy Garrity narrates the documentary) is also interviewed in the present day about her involvement with the FTA tours she famously conducted with Donald Sutherland and others who toured throughout the U.S. and Vietnam as a sort of countercultural alternative to Bob Hope's USO tours.

Also terribly revealing is the information contributed by interviewee Jerry Lembcke, whose book *The Spitting Image* finds no actual cases of GIs being spat upon by anti-war protesters upon their return, a myth that prominently resurfaced during the recent buildup to the war in Iraq.

Apart from the valuable history that *Sir! No Sir!* offers, the corollaries between its subject matter and the current anti-war movement in America are impossible to ignore.

These days, as America's struggle to win the hearts and minds of the world's citizenry continues unabated, and the Army's Fort Hood can be found just down the road from Cindy Sheehan's Camp Casey in Crawford, the distance separating the past from the present becomes little more than a desert mirage.

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

Guantanamo Detainees Rebel, Fight Guards

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

20 May 2006 Aljazeera & May 19 By BEN FOX, Associated Press Writer

Six prisoners have been injured at the US prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, after battling guards with makeshift weapons.

Military officials said on Friday that the clash erupted on Thursday. Earlier in the day, three detainees in another part of the prison attempted suicide by swallowing prescription medicine they had been hoarding.

The battle was one of the most violent incidents reported at the isolated prison, where the US holds about 460 men suspected of links to al-Qaeda or the Taliban.

Most of the detainees have been held for more than four years without charge.

Navy Rear Admiral Harry Harris, the prison's commanding officer, said: "This illustrates to me the dangerous nature of the men we have detained here."

[So, according to the logic of Rear Admiral Harris, when you lock people up in a really shitty prison for four years, having charged them with nothing at all, and tell them you can keep them locked up forever, and they rebel against all this shit, that proves you were right to lock them up.

[What a shame this worthless piece of shit was born too late. He would have done a really fine job making comments to the press for Hitler, or Stalin, and no doubt would have used the armed rebellion of the Jews of the Warsaw ghetto against the Nazi exterminators to tell the world, "See, that proves we're right to exterminate Jews. Look at how violent they are!" He merely mouths the excuses offered by every tyrant since Caligula. We torment you. You rebel. That proves we were right to torment you. That kind of logic is incapable of rational discussion. Which is why people are right to rebel against it with all available force at their disposal, wherever they may be. T]

The turmoil at the detention centre perched above the Caribbean on a US Navy base in southeastern Cuba began on Thursday morning, when a detainee who failed to show up for morning prayers was found unconscious in his cell, Harris said.

Tests indicated he had taken an overdose of drugs similar to the anti-anxiety drug Xanax. He was hospitalised in a serious but stable condition.

Early in the afternoon, guards searching the prison for contraband prescription medicine found another detainee "frothing at the mouth" from an overdose of drugs.

He was also hospitalised in a stable condition, the admiral said.

In the early evening, guards had spotted a detainee in Camp Four, a medium security, communal-living unit for the “most compliant” prisoners, apparently preparing to hang himself with a bed sheet tied to the ceiling of the room he shared with nine detainees.

Army Colonel Michael Bumgarner said that the detainees, who had made the floor slippery with faeces, urine and soapy water, attacked 10 members of Guantanamo's quick-reaction force with fan blades, pieces of metal and broken light fixtures when the team went to investigate.

For several minutes the detainees appeared to have the upper hand, knocking some of the soldiers to the ground in the struggle, Bumgarner said.

Outside, Guantanamo officials mustered 100 more guards before the force gained control using pepper spray, unspecified physical force, five blasts of a shotgun that fires rubber pellets and one shot from a non-lethal weapon that Bumgarner said fires a sponge-like projectile.

Detainees in two other units of Camp Four began damaging security cameras, light fixtures and other items in their rooms in a show of support for those engaged in the melee, officials said, doing an estimated \$110,000 in damage.

Six detainees had minor injuries and no guards were injured, Harris said. The prisoners involved were moved to a higher security area.

Defence lawyers said the suicide attempts reflect increasing despair among detainees.

Joshua Colangelo-Bryan, a lawyer for a detainee from Bahrain who has repeatedly tried to kill himself, said: “Under these circumstances, it's hardly surprising that people become desperate and hopeless enough to attempt suicide.”

Guantanamo officials said there had been 41 suicide attempts by 25 detainees but no deaths since the camp opened.

MORE:

Hollywood Shitbrains Censor Movie Poster About How Prisoners Guilty Of Nothing At All Got Sent To Guantanamo

5.17.06 Washington Post

The Motion Picture Association of America, which approves publicity materials for the films it rates, has rejected a poster advertising a film about the U.S. detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

It shows a man hanging by his handcuffed wrists, with a burlap sack over his head and a blindfold tied around the hood.

The image appeared in advertisements for the new film "The Road to Guantanamo," a documentary that follows the fate of three British men imprisoned at Guantanamo for more than two years before being released with no charges ever filed against them.

***Thief In Command:* Top Air Force General Gave Retired Air Force General Millions: FBI Investigating; Fraudulent Contract Cancelled**

May 19, 2006 By MARK SHERMAN, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON

The FBI is investigating the award of a \$50 million publicity contract for the Air Force's Thunderbirds aerial stunt team to a company with ties to a recently retired general, military and law enforcement officials said Friday.

The Air Force canceled the contract with Strategic Message Solutions in February, after two losing bidders complained that the company had an unfair advantage, including its decision to make retired Gen. Hal M. Hornburg a partner, according to a federal lawsuit over the contract.

Pentagon regulations require that any fraud investigations possibly involving high-ranking military officials be referred to the bureau. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because the investigation is under way.

Strategic Message Solutions, based in Plymouth Meeting, Pa., and its president, Edward Shipley, sued the government in February, demanding that the contract be reinstated.

While lauding the company's services and Shipley's role in developing the publicity package, the lawsuit describes an unusual chain of events that includes a purported decision by Gen. T. Michael Moseley, the Air Force chief of staff, to provide Shipley an immediate \$8.5 million in federal funds in April 2005, without any request for bids for the work.

At the time, Moseley was the Air Force's No. 2 officer.

The work subsequently was put out for bids. Shipley's company initially was awarded a five-year, \$49.9 million contract to "provide audio, visual and concert quality sound production presentation" on the Thunderbirds.

"A protest of the award was made to the Government Accountability Office on Jan. 17. An Air Force review of the protest determined contract termination was appropriate," the Air Force said in a statement in February.

The Arizona Republic newspaper reported extensively on the controversy in March, saying it had documents that showed Moseley steered the contract to Shipley.

Strategic Message Solution's bid was nearly twice that of a competing proposal, the newspaper said.

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)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

May 20, 2006 (CNN) & By Lutfi Abu Oun and Mariam Karouny, Reuters

A gunbattle between police and insurgents in western Baghdad left two Iraqi civilians dead and two Iraqi police commandos wounded. The fighting broke out in the al-Jihad neighborhood Friday afternoon, Baghdad police said.

In the town of Qaim, near the Syrian border, a bomber detonated his explosive-packed vest inside a police station killing five policemen and wounding 10, police said.

The death toll from clashes between police commandos and insurgents in Jihad District, southwestern Baghdad, rose to six civilians killed and five wounded, interior ministry sources said. Two police were among the wounded.

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

***Happy Iraqis Showing Deep Love For
Occupation Troops: #1***
**Here They Provide Precious Gasoline
For Their War Vehicle**



Iraqis standing on a bridge look down as one of them pours petrol onto a burning British military vehicle after an attack which wounded two British soldiers in Basra, Iraq. (AP Photo/Nabil al-Jurani)

MORE:

Happy Iraqis Showing Deep Love For Occupation Troops: #2

Here, They Offer Stones To Help Put Out Fire Burning Up Military Vehicle, And Make Hand Signals Showing They Cheer On The British Soldiers Winning A Big Victory Over The Fire!



A group of youths - one throwing stones, in foreground, and another giving the victory sign, at top - gather on a bridge above a burning British military vehicle after an attack which wounded two British soldiers in Basra, Iraq. (AP Photo/Nabil al-Jurani)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Lessons Of War That Few Have Learned:

“The Military We Have Now Is More And More The Instrument Of Imperial Assumptions Beyond Even The Electoral Process”

If the men and women of the White House had valued the painful lessons of Vietnam over blind service, we would not be bogged down in another quagmire and we would not be having 300,000 people marching down Broadway led by a growing organization called Iraq Veterans Against the War.

May. 12, 2006 By John Grant, Philadelphia Inquirer

John Grant (grantphoto4@earthlink.net) is president of the Veterans for Peace chapter in Philadelphia.

As I exited the Staten Island Ferry recently for an antiwar demonstration of 300,000 people down Broadway, a young man next to me noticed my VETERANS FOR PEACE T-shirt.

“What war?” he asked.

“Vietnam.”

“Thanks for your service,” he said.

“The war never should have happened,” I told him. “It’s not something to thank me for.”

“Thanks, anyway,” he said as we parted.

As a veteran, you get “Thanks for your service” a lot. It always irritates me. I never quite know how to respond because I’m not proud of my service in Vietnam, and don’t feel I should be thanked for it.

I was 18 when I joined. I spent the most influential year of my life in Vietnam. Then I came home and educated myself. If people want to thank me, let them do it for what I learned from the experience, not for going there.

The main thing I learned?

U.S. military interventions since World War II have generally been dishonest and in support of quite vicious governments. There’s Iran in 1953 and Guatemala the next year. And, of course, Vietnam.

My service was hardly the stuff of national warrior myth. I was a kid, a radio direction finder in the mountains west of Pleiku locating enemy units so they could be destroyed.

My job was to spin a silver antenna around and say here's a map coordinate, bomb it silly, and maybe, if I'm right, you'll hurt the enemy. Then again, if I'm wrong, you may level an innocent village.

You know ... the fog of war.

I'm not a pacifist, though I have friends who are. I will defend myself with violence to the best of my ability. I feel that way, as well, about the military. But like a pistol, the problem is in whose hands the pistol is held and what he or she does with it. The military we have now is more and more the instrument of imperial assumptions beyond even the electoral process.

I know there are people who will distort what I'm saying, and I understand how they might feel. By implication, I'm commenting on the service of others, suggesting that they might transcend all the patriotic and macho mind-wash and consider what their service in places like Vietnam actually accomplished.

Instead of the superficial "Thank you for your service" approach, what if we honestly examined experiences like Vietnam and used them to learn something? Susan Sontag was crucified for saying this after 9/11: "By all means, let's mourn together, but let's not be stupid together." She was right.

If the men and women of the White House had valued the painful lessons of Vietnam over blind service, we would not be bogged down in another quagmire and we would not be having 300,000 people marching down Broadway led by a growing organization called Iraq Veterans Against the War.

These young men and women also choose to transcend the superficiality of "Thank you for your service."

While these veterans honor the courage, and mourn the suffering and loss, of their friends in Iraq, they are acting on what they've learned from their experience, which is that the U.S. occupation is wrong and needs to be ended.

Anyone who feels this is unpatriotic should consider the words of a famous World War II combat bomber pilot: "The highest patriotism is not a blind acceptance of official policy, but a love of one's country deep enough to call her to a higher standard." That bomber pilot was George McGovern.

So next time you consider muttering to a vet, "Thanks for your service," take a moment to consider what that service meant to the people on the wrong end of it and whether it was worth all the pain and misery.

In my case, I'd rather be thanked for my service opposing the invasion and occupation of Iraq.

In the winter of 2002, because of what I learned in Vietnam, I joined many others who were aware that the blind runaway train full of frightened and duped Americans racing toward Iraq was headed for disaster. Of course, the train went right over us.

If you need to thank me, thank me for that.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Oops: The Truth Slips Out

20 May 2006 By Patrick Cockburn, Independent News and Media Limited [Excerpt]

I thought it was too dangerous to go beyond the town into the Arab part of Diyala province, once famous for its fruit, since it is largely under insurgent control.

Iraq's Oil: “Hopes That Post-Saddam Iraq Would In The Short Term Open Its Oilfields To Foreign Investment Were Also Unfulfilled”

May 17, 2006 By Peter Kiernan, Asia Times Online [Excerpts]

According to the Institute for the Analysis of Global Security, there have been at least 309 reported attacks on Iraq's oil pipelines, installations, and oil-security personnel. In particular the export pipeline that links the large northern oilfield of Kirkuk to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, which normally transits about 40% of Iraq's oil exports – is frequently sabotaged and is currently not operating.

Insurgent attacks have been the main factor in poor output levels for both oil production and exports, while the state of Iraq's worn-out oil infrastructure, corruption and poor power output have exacerbated the situation.

Despite Cheney's claiming in April 2003 that Iraq could increase oil production to 3 million barrels per day (mbpd) by the end of that year, Iraq's oil output is still lower than prewar levels. According to Energy Intelligence, Iraq's oil production is at 1.8mbpd, compared with 2.5mbpd just over three years ago, while oil exports are down to 1.4mbpd compared with about 2mbpd just over three years ago.

Because of much higher global oil prices, Iraq's annual oil revenue is greater now than three years ago, and this has more than compensated for the decline in oil exports. Nevertheless, the Bush administration's hopes that Iraq's oil revenue would pay for its hefty reconstruction bill were dashed.

Facing declining production, huge reconstruction costs, and frequent sabotage attacks, Iraq's oil sector has not been able to alter the Middle East political landscape as neo-conservatives had hoped. In fact the opposite has occurred. Rather than post-Saddam Iraq being able to flood the market with oil to depress prices, its instability has instead been a contributing factor to the steady rise in the price of oil.

Meanwhile, hopes that post-Saddam Iraq would in the short term open its oilfields to foreign investment were also unfulfilled.

A combination of the poor security environment and policy uncertainty has postponed strategic decision-making on foreign investment in Iraq's oil, decisions that will only be made after a permanent government is formed and Iraq's legislature devises a petroleum law.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

CLASS WAR REPORTS

“If Class Warfare Is Being Waged In America, My Class Is Clearly Winning”

May 19, 2006 Socialist Worker: **Excerpts from the introduction to *Subterranean Fire* by SHARON SMITH**

THE UNITED States ranks not only as the richest society in the world today but also as the most unequal among advanced industrialized nations.

The scale of poverty among the poorest Americans, according to the United Nation’s 2005 Human Development Report, is comparable to that in parts of the Third World.

The U.S. infant mortality rate matches that of Malaysia. African Americans living in Washington, D.C., have a higher infant mortality rate than residents of the Indian state of Kerala.

Across the United States, Black mothers are twice as likely as whites to bear low-birth-weight babies, and Black children are twice as likely to die before their first birthday.

Child poverty rates in the United States have been rising steadily since 2000, following 20 years of decline, and, mirroring Mexico, surged past 20 percent in 2005.

On average, a male child born into the wealthiest 5 percent of the U.S. population will live 25 percent longer than a male child born into the poorest 5 percent.

From its earliest years, U.S. capitalism has relied upon massive social and class inequality, despite all rhetoric to the contrary. Even during periods of economic boom and rising median incomes, a significant portion of the working class has consistently lived in extreme poverty.

In 1970, the average real compensation for the CEOs of the top 100 U.S. corporations was 39 nine times the pay of the average worker. By 2002, they earned more than 1,000 times the average worker’s wage.

As Warren Buffett, the world’s fourth-richest man, commented in his 2004 annual letter to the shareholders of Berkshire Hathaway, “If class warfare is being waged in America, my class is clearly winning.”

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.

“Washington And Wall Street Have Been Waging A War On American Wages” [86% Of Americans Disagree, But Who Cares What They Think?]

February 2006 The Hightower Lowdown [Excerpt]

For years, Washington and Wall Street have been waging a war on American wages, using everything from monetary policy to immigration policy in their constant effort to push workers' pay down.

The most visible of these efforts is the obscene sight of fat-cat CEOs and well-paid Congress critters conspiring to keep our country's wage floor stuck at the subpoverty level of \$5.15 an hour (about \$10,500 a year).

Yet despite support for boosting the minimum wage from 86% of Americans (including the chairman of Wal-Mart, who wails that these poverty workers can't afford to shop at his stores) corporate lobbyists have kept hourly pay nailed down at \$5.15 for nearly a decade.

[So, what do you call a government that has only contempt for what 86% of the people want? A democracy? Or a special kind of dictatorship: a dictatorship of, by, and for those who have the serious money?]

Received:

“The People Who Run This Country Don't Give A Shit About The Workers, Soldiers, Immigrants”

From: Joshua Karpoff
To: GI Special
Sent: May 20, 2006

Newspaper headline:

Some Iraq War Vets Go Homeless After Return To US

May 19, 2006 Reuters

So thanks to the penny pinching assholes running the VA and the uncaring Pentagon brass, homelessness amongst veterans is again on the rise, just like it was after Vietnam. With the VA doing little to nothing to help soldiers overcome their PTSD, and shitty at best job training programs, vets are being cast aside as soon as they aren't needed anymore.

One major difference this time between homeless vets after Vietnam and homeless vets now is that a growing number of the vets are women, who face even harsher realities than homeless men, especially if they are trying to raise a child alone.

I think the issue of homeless vets shows in striking detail how the military is not a jobs program, nor is it a way to get out of "bad neighborhoods," lies that are frequently told by recruiters.

The fact remains that the people who run this country don't give a shit about the people who do all the work to make society run, the workers, soldiers, immigrants.

To our less than benevolent rulers we're just another part of a disposable society.

Josh Karpoff
Rochester Institute of Technology Anti War, Organizer
Campus Antiwar Network, Website Manager
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Email: trotskysghost@hotmail.com

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

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