

GI SPECIAL 4E24:



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

**“I Am Now Part Of The
Terror That America Has
Brought To Afghanistan”
“What America Claims To Fight,
Is What I Do”**

“I Now Consider Myself A Protestor!”

[Thanks to Dennis O'Neil, Bring Them Home Now, for sending this in.]

Posted at: **Bring Them Home Now:** www.bringthemhomenow.org/sound/main.html

May 19, 2006

I've been a conservative Republican as long as I can remember and initially supported this war, standing alongside my fellow Republicans thinking I was morally superior for fighting for "freedom."

How wrong I was!

I can only say: Forgive me.

I need my son's forgiveness first and foremost as he is stationed in Afghanistan, serving a country that doesn't care about freedom....only dominance and oppression.

If everyone in our country could see this war through the eyes of our soldiers, they would change their minds too.

Here is the blog from my son that CHANGED MY MIND!

With humility,

Danni, Proud mom of a private serving in Afghanistan

WHAT I DO:

I've been here for three months now, and it occurs to me that the war being fought back at home is very different from the war being fought here in Afghanistan.

Back home everyone is fighting the Taliban, fighting with their American flags and their "support our troops" bumper stickers, catching highlights on the news that have been edited by the media to make all this look like a war.

Meanwhile I'm here fighting with a .50 cal and an M249 that I don't shoot, fighting with weapons that are only pointed at children who get too close to the trucks, fighting not with the Taliban, but with insanity.

Fighting with guilt.

America's perception of this war is distorted, America believes there's an enemy here capable of threatening the all glorious American way of life, that an evil master mind lurks in the shadows and plans to destroy everything they know to be good and righteous.

I know the truth.

The truth that the Taliban only exist as a handful of used to be sheep herders and mud-hut merchants that are pissed off because America has put soldiers on their streets.

Pissed off because America has sent an invasion force into their country to threaten their way of living.

When president Bush was asked about the terror that America brings to other countries, he told the addressing reporter "dont worry about that."

He should have said "Dont worry about PVT H., He's doing just fine."

Because after all, I am now part of the terror that America has brought to Afghanistan.

Thats me, sitting behind the machine gun with the muzzle that passes by the faces of so many innocent people.

Thats me smashing the windshields of "incompliant" jingle truck drivers who's only trespass is not understanding the cursing I use to direct them off the road.

Thats me, with my sling shot, shooting little kids who throw rocks even though I would only do the same thing in their position.

Thats me, terror.

What America claims to fight, is what I do.

If this changes even one mind, I'll be grateful.

It sure changed mine.

I now consider myself a protestor!

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Valley Marine Killed Over Weekend

May 23, 2006 Miriam Ramirez, Monitor Staff Writer

EDINBURG

A U.S. Marine serving in Iraq was killed over the weekend, the first Rio Grande Valley serviceman to die this year.

Lance Cpl. Benito A. Ramirez, 22, a member of the 1st Marine Division, 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, stationed in Fallujah, Iraq, died when a roadside bomb detonated in close range.

He becomes the 17th serviceman from the Rio Grande Valley killed in Iraq and Afghanistan since 2003.

He is the fourth Edinburg resident who never made it home since the war in Iraq began.

Parents Felipe and Maria Ramirez, who were notified of their son's death on Sunday, did not want to speak to local media.

A graduate of Edinburg Economedes High School, Ramirez joined the Marine Corps in 2002. By December, seven months after graduation, his unit deployed overseas.

Already having served two tours of duty in the war-torn country, Ramirez volunteered for a third, Garcia said.

In 2004, Ramirez was awarded a Certificate of Commendation, recognition for meritorious service.

Members of America's Last Patrol say they are available to assist them while funeral arrangements are made. "We have contacted the family, but they have asked to mourn privately," said Jose M. Vasquez, commander of the veteran's group.

Garcia did not know when the Marine's body would return to the Valley.

Kane'ohe Marine Killed By "Friendly" Fire

May 23, 2006 By William Cole, Military Writer, The Honolulu Advertiser

Another Hawai'i Marine has died from injuries in Iraq, bringing to seven the number of deaths that have hit the 3rd Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment, since it left for the country in March.

Lance Cpl. Jose S. Marin Dominguez Jr., 22, of Liberal, Kan., and Lance Cpl. Hatak Yuka Keyu M. Yearby, 21, of Overbrook, Okla., were in a vehicle that was hit by a roadside bomb, an official said. Another Marine was wounded.

The Marines were on a combat patrol to escort an explosive ordnance disposal team to the site of another reported roadside bomb that was discovered before detonation. Marin Dominguez and Yearby struck a second bomb.

Lance Cpl. Adam C. Conboy, 21, of Philadelphia, was shot in the chest by friendly fire, his mother said.

The battalion headquarters is at Haditha Dam northwest of Baghdad, but its 900 Marines and companies are spread throughout the "Triad" of Haditha, Haqlaniyah and Barwana near the Euphrates River and down to the Baghdad-Jubbah-Dulab region.

Marines and Iraqi soldiers have been exposed to all-too-frequent roadside bomb blasts, and some have engaged in small-arms firefights with insurgents.

The Marines patrol the streets with "jundi," Iraqi junior enlisted soldiers, looking for insurgent activity.

Delavan Soldier Killed

May 16, 2006 By ANDY KRAVETZ of the Journal Star, PEORIA

Members of an Illinois Army National Guard unit who knew a Delavan man killed over the weekend in Iraq describe him as a "morals and ethics" type of guy.

"He was a great guy . . . morals and ethics all right there," said Sgt. 1st Class Michael Koslowsky, who served with Spc. Ronald Gebur in the 733rd Quartermaster Battalion, based in Delavan.

Gebur, 23, died Saturday when an explosive device blew up near his Humvee during a patrol in Baghdad, according to the Pentagon.

He leaves behind a wife, who is also in the U.S. Army, and a 9-month-old son.

"He gave the ultimate sacrifice for us," his father, Larry Gebur, said Monday while fighting back tears.

Koslowsky remembered Gebur as someone who enlisted in the National Guard after graduating from Delavan High School in 2002. While with the 733rd, he was a cook, but he had higher aspirations.

"All I know, he wanted to go active duty the minute he came in," Koslowsky said. "He wanted to be infantry."

So in 2004, Gebur transferred to the 4th Infantry Division, based at Fort Hood, Texas, where he was assigned to 1st Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment. There, he was a platoon leader and a sniper. His unit had just arrived in Iraq for a tour of duty in December.

Master Sgt. Jason Burrell was also in the 733rd with Gebur. He remembers him as a friendly guy who always seemed happy. He would volunteer for extra duty and loved the Army.

Deborah Gebur said her son joined the military to follow in the footsteps of his grandfathers, who both served in Korea.

"He was very talented. He grew up learning to hunt with his grandfather, so that's how he learned to shoot. He was just so talented. He was a strong man. That's how I remember him," his mother said.

Koslowsky, 34, said he considered Gebur not just another soldier under his command but a close friend as well. They would hang out together after drill sessions. The death has been tough for the sergeant.

"I will miss him greatly," he said.

Baghdad IED Damages Humvee; U.S. Troops Kill Mother And Child

[Z writes: Ishikawa and Kuroshima would understand: insert troops into a hell on earth and there's no way to prevent atrocities. Yet the real fiends in their capital suites are never spattered with a single drop of blood. Solidarity, Z]

May 23, 2006 AP

A roadside bomb damaged one Humvee in a U.S. convoy in Dora, one of Baghdad's most violent areas, and an Iraqi mother and child were wounded by U.S. troops in gunfire that followed.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

“Civilians Are Ready To Cooperate With Anti- Government Forces” “They See That The Government Is Rotten”

The Taliban have become far more daring, infiltrating areas where they have not been seen for over four years in large numbers. Some of the worst fighting this week was in Panjwayi district, less than 20 miles from the heart of Kandahar, which has left aid agencies able to operate only within the gates of Afghanistan's second largest city.

May 23, 2006 By Rachel Morarjee, Contributor to The Christian Science Monitor
[Excerpt}

That security bubble appears to have shrunk over the past year, and demanded a rising price from Coalition forces.

This week, more than 250 people were killed in a string of pitched battles in Kandahar and neighboring Helmand province. Most of the dead were insurgents but two French soldiers, an American, and a Canadian soldier were also killed in the fighting.

The Taliban have become far more daring, infiltrating areas where they have not been seen for over four years in large numbers. Some of the worst fighting this week was in Panjwayi district, less than 20 miles from the heart of Kandahar, which has left aid agencies able to operate only within the gates of Afghanistan's second largest city.

As the fighting heated up last week, villagers from the district could be seen carrying all their belongings on donkeys or packing them in cars and fleeing into Kandahar.

"It was an acknowledgment that the government could do nothing for them," says a western security expert in the south.

But with schools closing because of attacks, aid agencies unable to operate, and the police harassing villagers and threatening them as much as the Taliban, public patience is running out. Many in Kandahar say the insurgency is being fed by frustration with an impotent and corrupt Afghan government that has failed to deliver reconstruction or security.

Villagers from Panjwayi said they are as frightened of the police, who regularly raid houses and strip them of valuables, as they are of Taliban militants.

"Afghan corruption is like a pressure cooker that has reached the exploding point. We have to take it off the gas," says Col. Mohammed Hussain, a representative of the

Afghan Interior Ministry stationed with Canadian troops in Kandahar (and no relation to Shahida).

After five years, the promises to rebuild and retrain the police have proved hollow.

"Civilians are ready to cooperate with anti- government forces because they see that the government is rotten and can do nothing for them," Colonel Hussain says.

The Massacre At Azizi:

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in. He writes: Remind me, why do they hate the US again?]

"We've buried women. We've buried children," Ikhlaf, 40, said by cell phone from the area, which has been closed off to reporters by local security forces. "They are killing us. We are so angry."

May 23, 2006 By Noor Khan, ASSOCIATED PRESS & ABC & By RUHULLAH KHAPALWAK, New York Times

Angry villagers dug graves Tuesday to bury dozens of suspected militants and civilians killed in one of the deadliest U.S. airstrikes since the American-led invasion in 2001.

The coalition airstrike on Azizi was the third clash there in a week. U.S. Air Force A-10 Warthog warplanes bombed an Islamic school, or madrassa, where the militants were suspected of hiding, before hitting surrounding homes as the insurgents took shelter.

Local officials said 17 civilians also were killed, but one villager, Haji Ikhlaf, told The Associated Press that 26 civilians had been buried by early Tuesday.

"We've buried women. We've buried children," Ikhlaf, 40, said by cell phone from the area, which has been closed off to reporters by local security forces. "They are killing us. We are so angry."

Planes started bombing close to midnight Sunday and continued for four or five hours into Monday, said residents of Tolokan.

Mohammed Rafiq, a 23-year-old farmer, said the bombs had caused enormous destruction. "I don't have anything left," he said.

The AFP new agency has quoted a human rights official as saying the toll confirmed to him by officials is 20 but he believes it could rise as more information becomes available.

A teacher in nearby Tulakhan village told AFP by telephone that he saw the bodies of 40 civilians, including children, and that about 50 others had been wounded.

The teacher, named Abdullah, said he had assisted in burying 28 people and saw the bodies of 12 others being returned to their home village from other areas.

Eight houses in his village were destroyed in the bombing, several damaged and scores of animals were killed, he said from the area, which was still off-limits to journalists.

Other residents told AFP at the main hospital in Kandahar city on Monday that they had seen scores of dead and wounded.

An elderly man, Attah Mohammad, said he had lost 24 members of his family, including some children.

Villagers also dug graves of slain Taliban rebels, he said.

President Hamid Karzai ordered an investigation Tuesday into the deaths in one of the deadliest U.S. air strikes since the American-led invasion in 2001.

Assorted Resistance Action

23 May 2006 By VOA News & By Noor Khan, ASSOCIATED PRESS & ABC

Afghan officials say Taleban guerrillas have ambushed a police convoy carrying a deputy provincial governor and a police chief in southern Afghanistan, killing three officers.

Tuesday's ambush against police occurred in Helmand, a province neighboring Kandahar and heartland of the country's multibillion dollar heroin trade.

The last seven days have seen the worst fighting in Afghanistan in five years.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

TROOP NEWS

**“The Father Was Now Convinced
We Had All Been Lied To And His
Son Was Stolen From Him By This
Administration”**

It only took a few words until the man broke down crying. Not just a tear or two, full scale painful crying. He explained that his son had died in Iraq about a year and a half ago.

His son thought he was doing the right thing when he joined. He thought he was serving his country and working for a better world. The father was now convinced we had all been lied to and his son was stolen from him by this administration.

From: David Honish, Veterans For Peace
To: GI Special
Sent: May 22, 2006
Subject: Halliburton Peace Activist Story

Thought you might be interested in the account of Chapter 106 North TX Veterans For Peace member Dan Burnam of their bus trip to Oklahoma to protest at the Halliburton stockholder's meeting that was moved there to try to avoid the protesters that mark their Houston meetings.

21 May 2006 By Dan Burnam

I have already shared my experience with Sandy but I wanted to share what happened on our Halliburton journey.

There is often discussion if our methods do any good. My experience yesterday was more than worth it all.

Sammy and I both had a great time. We saw Jim that morning and meet a lot of interesting people.

Over all it was a good event but for me the best experience happened on the road trip home. I was with a group riding on the VFP bus. Our good friend Richard had his art work on the VFP bus and the message on the bus was focused more on stopping the war in Iran.

On the way home, We stopped at a truck stop in Bowie.

For what ever reason, we just pulled out a banner saying "Bush Lied".

A truck driver was glaring us down. we thought this could become confrontational so we opened dialog.

It only took a few words until the man broke down crying. Not just a tear or two, full scale painful crying. He explained that his son had died in Iraq about a year and a half ago.

His son thought he was doing the right thing when he joined. He thought he was serving his country and working for a better world.

The father was now convinced we had all been lied to and his son was stolen from him by this administration.

We hugged and there was not a dry eye among us.

He expressed how frustrated and helpless he felt and thanked us for what we were doing.

We gave him information about VFP, Gold Star Families, and talked about how important Nov will be. The man insisted this administration must be punished for the theft of his son. He thanked us all again and we went our ways.

When ever anyone ask you "WHY do we do this?" Does the peace movement accomplish anything?" You're damned right the movement has a purpose.

We provided a path for this man to work out his anger and his sorrow.

Our progress may only be marked by one person at a time.

Who knows what this man's energies may do.

I am totally exhausted but I feel so good I had to share this story with those I know will understand.

Dan

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



The casket of Marine Cpl. Stephen Richard Bixler of Suffield, Conn. at Arlington National Cemetery May 18, 2006. Bixler was killed while on combat operations in the Al Anbar Province in Iraq. (AP Photo/Chris Greenberg)

Army Col. (Ret'd) Handcuffed At Ft. McNair For Distributing Postcards Advertising “Sir! No Sir!” Accused Of “Distributing Seditious Material”



From: Outreach Producer Sir! No Sir!: Celia Alario, 310-721-6517 celia@riseup.net
To: GI Special
Sent: May 23, 2006

Washington, DC

Retired Army Colonel and former US Diplomat Ann Wright was detained Monday and subsequently barred from Ft. McNair in Washington, DC for distributing postcards with information about the historical documentary Sir! No Sir!

Military police on the base accused her of “distributing seditious material” for handing out flyers about the film, which tells the forgotten history of the GI movement to end the war in Vietnam.

In a review last week, the Washington Post called the film “An absorbing piece of cultural history.”

Colonel Wright was taken into custody by military police after placing postcards at a few locations on the base, including the headquarters and the Army’s ‘Center for Military History’.

Wright is familiar with the Center, having donated items from her military service in Grenada in 1983 and 1984. Wright also served in Nicaragua, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia and Mongolia, and was on the team that reopened the US embassy in Cabal, Afghanistan in December of 2001.

Military police said the postcards, which advertise the film’s run at the E Street Cinema in Washington DC this week, were “seditious material”.

Wright was handcuffed and taken to the military police station, where she was handcuffed to a chair, despite her stance that she was a peaceful, nonviolent, 59 year old retired army colonel with arthritic knees.

She mentioned to the military policeman that she'd been in the Army longer than he'd been alive and respected the military, but felt that the history of US involvement in Vietnam was not "seditious material", and that this history would not jeopardize order and discipline in the military.

She was detained for two hours and upon release was told that she may be barred by the base commander for having distributed the postcards.

Ann Wright said: "History can be embarrassing to organizations, but embarrassment is not a reason to deny history or to deny people in an organization the right to understand the historical context that this film--Sir! No Sir--presents to the US public, both military and civilian."

Wright served 13 years in the US Army and 16 years in the Reserves, and after 16 years in the diplomatic corps resigned in May 2003, in opposition to the war on Iraq. She now lectures frequently from her military and diplomatic background on current foreign policy issues, including the need to stop the war on Iraq.

Because of her belief that this is an important film for Americans to see, Wright plans to continue distributing postcards wherever she wants to.-

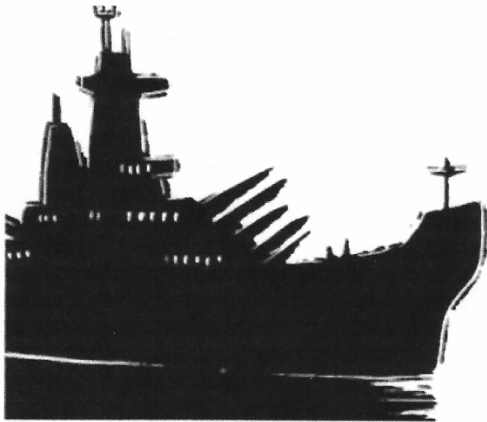
Hear Director David Zeiger and Retired Army Colonel Ann Wright on Democracy Now! Wednesday Morning!

More information from: Celia Alario cel: 310-721-6517 fax: 213-947-1623
celiaalario@earthlink.net

**At Last:
Anti-War Groups Reaching Out
To Activity Duty Members Of
Armed Forces!**

Stop The War

Demonstrate To
Bring The Troops Home
Now



"Fleet Week" March & Vigil

New York City

Daily Vigils at the Intrepid War Museum (46th St & 12th Ave) from May 25-30, 12 noon - 2 pm

Saturday May 27: Solemn Procession to the Intrepid followed by a vigil. Assemble at the NY Public Library (41st St & 5th Ave) at 10:30 am

Sunday May 28: Veterans For Peace Solemn Procession to Battery Park. Assemble at the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial (55 Water St) at 1 pm

NYC WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE

339 Lafayette Street, New York, NY 10012 718.768.7306 nycwrl@att.net www.warresisters.org

Endorsed By: CodePINK NYC, Granny Peace Brigade, Manhattan Greens, NYC Socialist Party, NYMAA, Students for a Democratic Society NYC, Veterans for Peace NYC

May 22, 2005 NEW YORK CITY WAR RESISTERS LEAGUE

NEW YORK, NY: Anti-war and peace activists will gather at the New York Public Library (41st St and 5th Ave) at 10:30 on Saturday, May 27, prior to beginning a solemn procession to the site of New York City's 'Fleet Week' military demonstrations at the Intrepid War Museum.

The march will conclude with a vigil at the Intrepid (12th Avenue and 46th Street) from approximately 12:00 noon until 2 PM. This action is the centerpiece of a week of daily vigils at the Intrepid. The vigils, running from May 25 through May 30 (12 noon to 2 pm) are being organized by the NYC War Resisters League and Catholic Worker.

The procession and vigil on the 27th is being cosponsored by Students for a Democratic Society and Veterans For Peace and has been endorsed by a wide array of peace groups.

The May 27th action is part of a campaign to end the US occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. **Activists will leaflet during the procession and at the Intrepid, reaching out to the active duty military personnel visiting New York City; advising those in uniform of their rights and options should they wish to leave the military.**

[That's a start, but there are plenty of people in the armed services against the war who understand that organizing inside the military is no less important than "leaving the military," and are not for one second to be scorned because that's what they decide to do, rather than engaging in individual actions that get them kicked out. Those resisting inside the armed services need our help, support, aid and comfort most of all, since fewest are offering it. It was the rebellion *inside* the military that stopped the war in Vietnam. Never forget it. T]

Frida Berrigan, a longtime War Resisters League organizer said that: The cost of the war has been staggering, in financial and human terms. The government must bring our military personnel home NOW. They don't want an 'exit strategy', they want to come home."

"The response from military personnel with whom we interacted at other protests has been very positive," said Matt Daloisio, an activist from Catholic Worker. "They see the need for an immediate ceasefire - it's the government that has blinders on," he added.

"The New York chapter of SDS has endorsed this action and will participate as we feel that it is very appropriate to speak out on Memorial Day: to demand the troops be brought home before any more lives are lost. This march will have veterans, students and grandmothers," said Thomas Good, an organizer with Students for a Democratic Society. "With these diverse constituencies marching together it is clearly time our elected officials started paying attention to what the people in the streets are saying," he added.

[What the elected officials paid attention to during Vietnam days, in addition to all the rest of the pure hell they faced, was the simple fact that the troops in the armed services refused to fight that Imperial war anymore. That's the point of this exercise, not orienting as supplicants toward a batch of crooks in DC.]

First Female Conscientious Objector Sentenced To 100 Days Confinement For Refusing Deployment To Afghanistan

23 MAY 2006 From: SOA Watch, media@soaw.org

Contact: Aidan Delgado, 941.685.7941: <http://www.myspace.com/freekatherine>

FT. BENNING, GA: Army National Guard Specialist Katherine Jashinski received a bad conduct discharge today and was sentenced to 120 days confinement after pleading guilty to the charge of "refusal to obey a legal order."

She was acquitted of the more serious charge of "missing movement by design."

With 53 days already served (on Fort Benning), and 20 days off for good behavior, Ms. Jashinski has 47 days of confinement remaining. [And that is called a victory.]

On November 17, 2005, Jashinski made a public statement of conscientious objection on the eve of her scheduled deployment to Afghanistan. Eighteen months after filing, the Army denied her application for a discharge.

She was then court-martialed for refusing to train with weapons.

Jashinski's superiors testified that they believed in the sincerity of her CO claim, and the Judge noted that he was convinced of the same.

Aidan Delgado and Camilo Mejía, members of Iraq Veterans Against the War, attended Ms. Jashinski's trial today to support her.

They described the atmosphere of the courtroom as initially tense, but said that Jashinski's powerful heartfelt testimony changed the tone of the room.

"Iraq Veterans Against the War supports the right of every soldier to follow their conscience,"* said Delgado.

"As the first woman GI to publicly take a stand against this war and to declare herself a CO, Katherine's actions are very significant. "She is a fine example of a young person standing up for her beliefs."

Ms. Jashinski is feeling triumphant and happy to have resolution.

After completing her sentence she will return to school at the University of Texas at Austin and continue her work with the newly founded Austin GI Rights Hotline.

Tampa, Florida: Memorial Day CANDLE LIGHT VIGIL FOR THE FALLEN

From: Jay Alexander
To: GI Special
Sent: May 21, 2006
Subject: CANDLE LIGHT VIGIL FOR THE FALLEN - Memorial Day - Tampa

Tampa Bay Veterans for Peace, Chapter 119 is organizing a Memorial Day Candlelight Vigil at the corner of Bayshore and Bay to Bay Avenues on Monday, May 29th, from 7 to 9pm. Ample parking is available at the citipark across the intersection.

We also will invite Military Families Speak Out, Gold Star Families For Peace and all other peace loving groups and individuals to join with us.

This Vigil will include an open air solemn silent observance in honor of those who gave their lives to defend our nation and to strive for peace.

We kindly ask that you dress in black or wear a black arm band, bring your own matches/lighter, and a candle.

We'll begin by forming to offer a blessing and to read the names of the 107 Floridians who have been killed in action, and to sing a song to memorialize their passing.

Daylight permitting, we'll also show signs and banners to passing traffic from MacDill AFB. Feel free to bring your own event appropriate sign. Some will be provided. During this period, a smile and a wave of the hand are the best reaction to passers by.

Once darkness is falling on us on the sidewalk alongside beautiful Hillsborough Bay, we will space ourselves out for best visual effect, light our candles, and observe silence. Please plan on respecting this silence for at least 15 minutes for optimum effect before as many passing cars as possible.

This is not only an awesome visual for passers by, but many participants find it to be a powerful spiritual experience, personally.

Please exercise caution when crossing these busy streets to the opposite sidewalk, when walking along the seawall, and when going back to your vehicle.

2455+ US & 108 Floridians DEAD and 1158 days since the invasion of Iraq on 19 March 2003

MAP:

http://maps.yahoo.com/maps_result?addr=w+bay+to+bay+and+bayshore&csz=Tampa+%2C+FL&country=us&new=1&name=&qty=

Take A Stand! **Vigil For Peace** **At Socom And Central Command**

Support The Troops: Order Them Home - NOW!

From: Jay Alexander

To: GI Special

Sent: May 21, 2006

Subject: Vigil for Peace - MacDill AFB, Tampa, FL, Monday June 5th, 2006: Three Years On

Members of Tampa Bay Chapter of Veterans For Peace Chapter 119 are calling on Tampa Bay area chapters of Code Pink, Military Families Speak Out and Gold Star Families for Peace and local and other peace activists to attend a Vigil for Peace starting at 4:30 pm and ending at sundown on Monday June 5th, 2006 - Three Years On.

Please practice our sacred right to dissent against the war with its detrimental human and economic impact. Since March 19, 2003 we have lost 2400 Americans and an unknown number of Iraqi and Afghan lives.

The vigil will be at the intersection of West Gandy Blvd and South Dale Mabry Highway. The US Military Headquarters of the U.S. Special Operations (<http://www.socom.mil/>) and Central Command (<http://www.centcom.mil/>) is located just one mile south of this location at MacDill AFB.

Please consider joining this peaceful vigil.

We need to remind the Pentagon and our elected officials that the majority of Americans are dissatisfied with this criminal war that has become another quagmire.

Map:

http://maps.yahoo.com/maps_result?addr=w+gandy+and+s+dale+mabry&csz=Tampa+%2CFL&country=us&new=1&name=&qty=

TBVFP contacts for....

Pinellas:

David Bupp
fldave612@aol.com
727- 536-8796 (h) ,727- 481-3680 (m)

Hillsborough:

Chris Uhl
cuhl1@yahoo.com
813-832-4067

Park in a lot nearest the intersection (Mobil/Exxon/Publix/Target Store)

Guidelines for participation in Anti-War Activities just follow these THREE simple ground rules and Strive, at all our activities, to

1. Observe Silence, but be open, friendly and respectful toward all whom we may encounter and
2. Avoid Confrontation and maintain an air of calm, dignity and peacefulness;
3. No violence, belligerent behavior, weapons, drugs or alcohol and be courteous in giving the right of way to all pedestrian and motor traffic.

Please use caution. Go along the corners and spread out. Bring a banner or sign that marks the anniversary and keep on message. Bring water and it's available nearby.

Forecast: <http://www.noaa.org/>:

Times and locations are subject to change and cancellation by inclement weather.

SecNavy Says Sailors Don't Need Pay Raise

5.29.06 Navy Times

Navy Secretary Donald C. Winter believes sailor pay is "adequate" given the total value of compensation.

Reservist Sues To Separate From Army: "No Good Deed Goes Unpunished," He Says

May 22, 2006 By Michelle Tan, Army Times staff writer [Excerpts]

An Army Reserve officer is suing the service so that he can resign his commission.

The lawsuit, filed in federal court by Capt. Brad Schwan, accuses the Army of being in breach of contract and forcing him into “involuntary servitude.”

Better than one in four Reserve officers who have sought to resign their commissions since 2005 have been turned down and told they will stay in uniform until further notice.

Schwan said he’s “disheartened” by a relatively new Army policy that allows IRR officers with more than eight years of service to resign their commission.

The policy was enacted after the Army recalled a number of IRR soldiers to duty, only to find that many couldn’t or wouldn’t serve, and after Schwan moved to the Reserve.

“No good deed goes unpunished,” Schwan said about the IRR policy. “Instead of breaking the law, unlike those IRR soldiers who didn’t show up, I was proactive and signed up. Here I am in this situation.”

[Lesson learned, right?]

“Most people in my situation can’t afford to litigate against the Army,” Schwan said. “Unless you’re in the situation like I am and you have a little bit of legal knowledge ... you’re pretty much relegated to doing what the Army tells you regardless of whether they’re breaking the law.”

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Resisting an illegal invasion, and resisting the occupation of your country, is a recognized right under international law. Being a fundamentalist religious reactionary doesn’t negate that right. May 23, 2006 Eli Stephens, Left I on the News

President Bush called for the National Guard to patrol the U.S./Mexican border. The guards will track down and find illegals. That’s not their job. They’re trained to defend our country, not track down and find people. Let’s be honest, the Guard couldn’t even track down and find President Bush when he was in the National Guard. Jay Leno via LC Wolf, Georgia Veterans For Peace

“There Continue To Be Reports Of Soldiers Not Having Food Or Water”

Those Hungry Marines: Another Comment

[GI Special 4E23: 5.23.06 carried two letters from civilians in Iraq about a Providence, Rhode Island news story reporting Marines in forward combat positions with relatives in Rhode Island were going hungry and asking for food from Iraqis. The civilians in Iraq, in a different location, wrote that the Marines were lying.

[Here’s another comment on the issue. T.]

From: Dennis O'Neil, Bring Them Home Now
To: GI Special
Sent: May 23, 2006 7:25 AM
Subject: on begging for food from Iraqis

GI Special--

I read with interest the emails you carried concerning the news article about parents sending food to Iraq so their kids don't have to ask Iraqis for chow.

It does seem counterintuitive that the high command can't figure out how to get food to the troops, but we have received a number of letters from parents at the Bring Them Home Now! (website <<http://www.bringthemhomenow.org/>) with similar complaints.

Right now there is a new article (about Halliburton) on our home page by Jeri Reed, a military mom from OK, that sheds some light on this.

Delivery and preparation of meals has been largely outsourced to private contractors like Halliburton subsidiary KBR, whose employees simply don't have the same incentives (carrot OR stick) to get the troops fed as their fellow soldiers used to in the pre-Rummy period.

Dennis
for Bring Them Home Now!

From Jeri Reed, Military Mom

(Excerpt From Dennis O'Neil)

Things have not improved in Iraq since the first year of the war when Cody was there, they have worsened. And there continue to be reports of soldiers not having food or water, or being provided contaminated food and water, something that government and military officials are certainly aware of, even if the general public is not. They allow it to continue, KBR continues to get paid.

I first got a request for food from Cody shortly after the fall of Baghdad when he was based at Camp Dogwood in the south. He sounded very hungry.

He informed me that much of the camp was sick, that he and his unit thought that the food being prepared for them was not clean or safe, and that they were trying to keep from eating so that they would not become sick.

I was very puzzled, Cody had always been fed very well by the Army, and I did not understand what was going on, he was not telling me everything. But I immediately went and shipped a box of food, not snacks, whatever I could find that would provide nutrition to him and his fellow soldiers.

A few weeks later, Cody was moved to provide communication support at the Abu Ghraib prison where he would remain for six months.

It became quite apparent that Cody and the other soldiers stationed there, unable to leave the premises due to safety consideration and buy food from Iraqis as many other soldiers have done, were simply not getting enough food and water.

This may have varied over time, but the on average it seems that they were restricted to one MRE per day and two liter bottles of water. I still could not understand what was going on, but I continued to send shipments of food every week or so, something that I really could not afford. And the food was not getting to him.

I finally realized that Cody was not getting enough food or water and also was not receiving the food that I sent him for one reason. KBR had contracts to provide this for the military, food, water and mail delivery, and because it was so dangerous to drive to Abu Ghraib. or places west like Fallujah or Al-Ramadi where a large number of soldiers were based, civilian KBR employees were not performing these tasks on a regular basis.

Families all over the country were shipping food to their soldiers, quietly and without question, spending money they did not have so their soldiers could eat, while KBR was being paid for this, with our money.

Most disturbing to me was the growing attitude of hatred towards Iraqis I sensed in my son, who had deployed to Iraq thinking the invasion was wrong, mainly because of his concern for the Iraqi people.

"They are going to send us into Iraq," he told me before he deployed, "and do terrible things to the people there. And we (the soldiers) will be the ones who get blamed."

As part of an occupying army, under attack by Iraqi people who did not want them there, Cody's attitude began to change. I could not help but notice how his sleep deprivation and lack of food and water contributed to this.

As I have heard other soldiers based at correctional facilities in Iraq report, Cody began telling me that the prisoners were being cared for better than the soldiers, and I could hear the growing hatred for the prisoners in his voice, even though this did not seem to be the case to me.

"But Ma," he told me, "the prisoners get real cooked rice."

This was one of the most upsetting things he ever told me. It was hard to cope with the fact that my good son, who held no grudge against the Iraqis before the invasion, was beginning to hate them, in part because they got rice and he didn't.

Rice is what poor people fight over.

While I do not believe that prisoners at correctional facilities in Iraq are being well cared for, it does not surprise me that many soldiers come to resent and hate them. Conditions are horrific for both prisoners and soldiers at these places and the atmosphere is filled with fear.

And to me, KBR through its inability to fulfill its contract of delivering food and water to all of our soldiers contributes to the abusive situations at these facilities.

Things have not improved in Iraq since the first year of the war when Cody was there, they have worsened. They are less safe.

And there continue to be reports of soldiers not having food or water, or being provided contaminated food and water, something that government and military officials are certainly aware of, even if the general public is not.

They allow it to continue, KBR continues to get paid.



Official Announcement:

The government today announced that it is changing its emblem from an **Eagle** to a **CONDOM** because it more accurately reflects the government's political stance. A condom allows for inflation, halts production, destroys the next generation, protects a bunch of pricks, and gives you a sense of security while you are actually being screwed.

Damn, it just doesn't get more accurate than that! ,

[Thanks to Mike Hastie, Vietnam Veteran, who sent this in.]

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action



A police vehicle was the target of a car bomb killing two police commandos in the New Baghdad area of eastern Baghdad, May 23, 2006. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

May 23, 2006 SAMEER N. YACOUB, Associated Press Writer & AFP

A car bomb exploded in New Baghdad, an eastern part of the capital, killing five Iraqis - two police commandos and three civilians.

In the Palestine Street district, an industry ministry employee was killed in a drive-by shooting.

OCCUPATION REPORT

So Much For That “Sovereignty” Bullshit:

Iraqi Prime Minister Says British Government Will Get Out Of Two Provinces In June: British Government Says No We Won't

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

May 23, 2006 Ewen MacAskill, Guardian

Nuri al-Maliki, the new Iraqi prime minister, had a surprise for Tony Blair and his entourage in Baghdad yesterday.

At a joint press conference, Mr Maliki said British troops would hand over responsibility in two provinces to Iraqi security forces by next month and that he expected US, British and other foreign troops out of 16 of the country's 18 provinces by the end of the year, a much speedier and more ambitious schedule than the US and Britain have so far admitted to.

The announcement was news to Mr Blair and his team.

Mr Maliki said there was an agreement with the British: but British officials said there was no agreement.

And he said the withdrawals would be in June: officials say it will be July.

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)

Reporters In Iraq: **“It’s Hard To Feel Free When A Trip To The Local Market Requires Two Armored Cars”**

“It’s like there’s a blanket over the country,” says Mark Danner, who writes about Iraq for the New York Review of Books, “and all we see are the shapes.”

May 22, 2006 By Jennifer Senior, New York Magazine [Excerpts]

In the aftermath of the American invasion, hundreds of Western journalists, perhaps as many as a thousand, rushed to Iraq. An estimated 70 remain.

For this small group, the country has become an otherplanetary place to work and live.

It’s a place where Anne Garrels, now in her fourth year in Baghdad for NPR, puts on her heavy flak jacket and walks around her compound for exercise. It’s a place where male reporters buy acid-washed jeans with Western labels in order to look more Iraqi, and female reporters seek out abayas, a crude emblem of Middle Eastern female oppression, in order to move around with greater freedom.

Though freedom in this environment is a relative matter. It’s hard to feel free when a trip to the local market requires two armored cars.

“The way to understand reporting in Iraq right now is this,” says [Dexter] Filkins. “You can wake up on any given morning and the phones don’t work. The only way to see people is to go to their houses.

“So you have to talk to your security adviser, so that he can tell you what neighborhood is bad that day, and then you have to rustle up a driver for your car, and a chase car, and a translator, and some guards.

“But then you get in that car to drive down the street and you find a car bomb has gone off an hour before, so to get somewhere still takes three hours. And that’s for one interview.”

“It’s like there’s a blanket over the country,” says Mark Danner, who writes about Iraq for the New York Review of Books, “and all we see are the shapes.”

MORE:

“For All Journalists, It's Really Become Impossible To Move Around”

[Thanks to Phil G for sending this in.]

May 23, 2006 By Howard Kurtz, Washington Post Staff Writer

The Voice of America's bureau in Baghdad has been closed for the past six months, ever since the government-funded agency withdrew its only reporter in Iraq after she was fired upon in an ambush and her security guard was later killed.

All Western news organizations have struggled with the dangerous conditions in Iraq, which have led to such high-profile incidents as the kidnapping of Christian Science Monitor reporter Jill Carroll and the wounding of ABC News anchor Bob Woodruff.

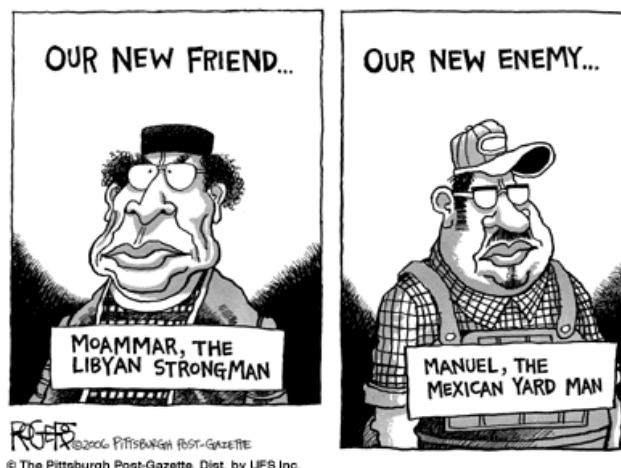
But for a federally funded information service to pull out of Baghdad for such a prolonged period raises questions about the Bush administration's insistence that conditions there are gradually improving.

VOA reporter Alisha Ryu said yesterday that she told her bosses in December that "it would really be impossible for me to do any kind of work" in Iraq. "I couldn't live with the idea that someone else could have died who was working with me. . . . For all journalists, it's really become impossible to move around."

Administration officials have complained on numerous occasions that journalists in Iraq are focusing too heavily on the daily violence and attacks, and are neglecting signs of progress there.

Many editors and reporters have responded that the security situation makes it difficult for correspondents to move around the country unless they are embedded with military units.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

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.

Received:



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace, for sending this in.]

ExxonMobil will hold its annual shareholders meeting in downtown Dallas at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center on the morning of Wednesday, May 31.

Please join the Union of Concerned Scientists and our partners in the Exxpose Exxon campaign at a rally to expose Exxon's anti-consumer and anti-environment policies that make it the world's leading global warming villain. Using humor and satire, we will engage in a public display of "affection" that is sure to get the message across to ExxonMobil and to the media.

Join the rally to Exxpose Exxon! If you're interested in joining the rally or participating in the pizza prep party, please contact Molly Rooke at mollyrooke@sbcglobal.net or (214) 369-6667 for details. We need people who can be at the Meyerson Symphony Center at 8:00 a.m. sharp on Wednesday, May 31.

As you know, while we pay skyrocketing gas prices at the pump, ExxonMobil is raking in record profits and using those profits to block efforts to end our nation's addiction to oil. ExxonMobil is the only major oil company funding global warming skeptics, refusing to invest in renewable energies and lobbying to drill in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

What's more, Exxon's 2006 first quarter profits of more than eight billion dollars are almost double what it owes the Alaskan victims of the 1989 Exxon Valdez oil spill.

Please join us at the May 31 rally or the pizza prep party by sending an email right now to Molly Rooke at mollyrooke@sbcglobal.net or call (214) 369-6667 for more details.

Thank you for helping us to Exxpose Exxon's destructive environmental policies.

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/>;

special.iraq-news.de; http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/;
<http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>; <http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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