

GI SPECIAL 4E25:

RAMADI: FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



U.S. soldiers run down a street, as purple smoke grenades cover their path, during a gunbattle with insurgents in Ramadi April 22, 2006. (AP Photo/Todd Pitman)

Ramadi: Two Views:

1: An Occupation View

“It’s Out Of Control”

**“They Hit Us So Many Times
With IEDs, We Ceded It To
Them”**

**“This Just ‘We Ride Out, Hold It For An Hour, Get Hit, Ride Back In And Now We Don’t Hold It Anymore,’ What’s The Point?”
“When We’re Going Out, Getting Hurt And ... Not Accomplishing Anything, Why Are We Going Out There?”**

“This just ‘we ride out, hold it for an hour, get hit, ride back in and now we don’t hold it anymore,’ what’s the point?” said Ruble of the Army’s 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment.

“I believe in the cause and I believe in doing good, but when were going out, getting hurt and ... not accomplishing anything, why are we going out there? If you’re saying killing one insurgent is worth one of my guys getting hurt ... you’re crazy. That’s like killing one guy in the Chinese army. What have you done? not a thing.”

After one neighborhood sweep devolved into an hour-long gunbattle, Iraqi Maj. Jabar Marouf al-Tamini returned to base and drew his finger across a satellite map of the area he’d just fled under fire: “It’s fallen under the command of insurgents,” he said, shaking his head. “They control it now.”

May 22, 2006 The Associated Press [Excerpts]

RAMADI, Iraq

Some roads are so bomb-laden that U.S. troops won’t use them. Guerrillas attack U.S. troops nearly every time they venture out, and hit their bases with gunfire, rockets or mortars when they don’t.

Though not powerful enough to overrun U.S. positions, insurgents here in the heart of the Sunni Muslim triangle have fought undermanned U.S. and Iraqi forces to a virtual stalemate.

“It’s out of control,” says Army Sgt. 1st Class Britt Ruble, behind the sandbags of an observation post in the capital of Anbar province. “We don’t have control of this ... we just don’t have enough boots on the ground.”

Reining in Ramadi, through arms or persuasion, could be the toughest challenge for Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki’s new government.

Al-Maliki has promised to use “maximum force” when needed. But three years of U.S. military presence, with nearly constant patrols and sweeps, hasn’t done it.

Today Ramadi, a city of 400,000 along the main highway running to Jordan and Syria, 70 miles west of Baghdad, has battles fought in endless circles. Small teams of insurgents open fire and coalition troops respond with heavy blows, often airstrikes or rocket fire that’s turned city blocks into rubble.

They’ve destroyed police stations and left the force in shambles. The criminal court system doesn’t function because judges are afraid to work; tribal sheiks have fled or been assassinated.

While al-Maliki has vowed to crush the insurgency, a major military operation to clear Ramadi risks destroying any hope of reaching a political settlement with disaffected Sunnis.

U.S. commanders also say a Fallujah-style operation is not in the cards, at least not yet, and might not have the desired effect. “That would set us back two years,” said Lt. Col. Stephen Neary, commander of the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment.

Most U.S. missions typically consist of going out, coming under fire and returning to base, leaving behind a no-man’s-land held by neither side that insurgents in black ski masks always pour back into.

“This just ‘we ride out, hold it for an hour, get hit, ride back in and now we don’t hold it anymore,’ what’s the point?” said Ruble of the Army’s 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment.

“I believe in the cause and I believe in doing good, but when were going out, getting hurt and ... not accomplishing anything, why are we going out there? If you’re saying killing one insurgent is worth one of my guys getting hurt ... you’re crazy. That’s like killing one guy in the Chinese army. What have you done? not a thing.”

One recent coalition tally of “significant acts” (roadside bombs, attacks, exchanges of fire) indicated that out of 43 reported in Iraq on a single day, 27 occurred in Ramadi and its environs, according to a Marine officer who declined to be named because he’s not authorized to speak to the media.

And that, he said, was “a quiet day” — when nothing from Ramadi even made the news.

In Ramadi, machine-gun fire and explosions are heard every day and tracer fire or illumination flares are seen every night.

Even though assaults kill dozens at a time, guerrillas keep on coming, and keep dying.

“They’re crazy to be coming in the numbers that they do,” Lance Cpl. Chris Skiff, 25, of Tupper Lake, N.Y.

Inside a palatial Saddam-era guesthouse near the Euphrates River, now a fortified U.S. base where sand-filled barriers and camouflage netting surround even the portable toilets, Marines stare in wonder at photos of U.S. troops deployed here less two years ago.

The pictures show their predecessors riding in open-topped vehicles, often with little armor. They show freshly painted buildings, since destroyed or splattered with gunfire. They show U.S. troops walking through a downtown marketplace, a casual outing unthinkable today.

Some of the pictures show bullet-strafed buildings and cars on fire, but it's a far cry from Ramadi, 2006. Case in point: Government Center, headquarters of the provincial governor.

Once, civilian traffic was allowed to pass in front of the near-pristine edifice. Today, only military vehicles are allowed near. The wrecked building is enclosed by blast walls, barbed wire and a sometime moat of sewage. From machine-gun nests, walls of sandbags and tents of camouflage on the roof Marines repel several attacks a day.

"If you wanna get blown up or shot at or anything else, then this is the place," said Marine Staff Sgt. Jacob Smith, 28, from Martin, S.D., who helps clear roadside bombs that are sometimes replaced just after the minesweepers drive past.

In one Ramadi neighborhood, Master Sgt. Tom Coffey, 38, of Underhill, Vt., gestured to a paved road his forces would not drive on. "They hit us so many times with IEDs (roadside bombs), we ceded it to them," he said.

Though coalition forces answer with massive firepower, they rarely pursue attackers, for fear of falling into an ambush and because they have few troops to spare.

Though U.S. and Iraqi troops conduct frequent raids and hit targets, the insurgents fight back in their own way.

When U.S. and Iraqi troops question civilians, insurgents follow in their footsteps to visit and sometimes kill the suspected informants.

After U.S. troops use residential rooftop walls as observation posts, insurgents have been known to knock them down.

Ramadi is dangerous not only for combatants, but for civilians caught in the crossfire. "It's getting worse. Safety is zero," Col. Hassan said.

After one neighborhood sweep devolved into an hour-long gunbattle, Iraqi Maj. Jabar Marouf al-Tamini returned to base and drew his finger across a satellite map of the area he'd just fled under fire: "It's fallen under the command of insurgents," he said, shaking his head. "They control it now."

U.S. commanders would argue otherwise, but acknowledge perhaps a bigger problem.

“They don’t have to win. All they have to do is not lose,” said Barela, 35, of Albuquerque, N.M., citing an adage about guerrilla war.

Ramadi: Two Views: **2: An Iraqi Citizens’ View**

**Ramadi Up Close And Personal:
“I Know That The Fighters Need To
Get Back Their Life And Stay With
Their Families Again With Peace And
US Soldiers Want This Also....”
“Both Of Them Need The Chance
And US Troops Can Make This
Chance”**

The main problem is that US troops think that by hurting civilians they will force resistance to stop the attacks but the clear fact is that Resistance got more members and getting stronger when more civilians killed.....the other problem is that the people here have no way to stop US troops crimes only by defending their houses by them selvesthey believe that the world ignored themso no peace chance can be useful.

May 15, 2006 Anti-Allawi-group

My friend Qasem has asked me to forward this e-mail.
MARIANA

Date: 14 May 2006
From: qasem aldulaimy
Subject: for all peace friends more days are here

More destruction and more victims leads to more fighters

Now the situation in Ramadi and the ways around it going to be worse more.....US troops going to install more snipers towers and at 7th May 2006 US attacked the train

station of Ramadi completely ..it is the third attack for this station although it is empty and surrounded by the local people houses.....

US snipers occupied more houses such as (Mr.Fasaal Alassafi 's house) .the US snipers used to make the houses military bases for snipers and hunt any body moving around them....

The people in Ramadi called Iraqi fighters whose attacking US forces (Resistance) resistance still watching and attacking US troops hardly .

For the Ramadi people think that Resistance is the Iraqi victims relatives of US bombing and they believe that Resistance revenging for the Iraqis whose killed by US troops.

The main problem is that US troops think that by hurting civilians they will force resistance to stop the attacks but the clear fact is that Resistance got more members and getting stronger when more civilians killed.....the other problem is that the people here have no way to stop US troops crimes only by defending their houses by them selvesthey believe that the world ignored themso no peace chance can be useful.

The streets of Ramadi full with destroyed buildings, houses and burned cars, I know very well that all of them destroyed by US troops in add there occupied schools and houses.

I believe there is bad experience for my people with the US troops.my people never trust US troops and US troops never trust us.....we living with our families and children in our houses and they living in their tanks with weapons among our houses.....

Now in Ramadi most the streets are dangerous because of US snipers and services is almost not found because US troops destroyed telephone station ,mobile service, electricity and water services

the main reason to destroy this services is to punish the civilians because they do not help US troops to kill the fighters.....

for me I believe that my people never agree to help some body to kill any body

US can get out the city to avoid attacks it is the easier choice for Iraqis and US soldiersand it is the best choice to get peace without blood.

I know that the fighters need to get back their life and stay with their families again with peace and US soldiers want this also

both of them need the chance and US troops can make this chance.

May 8, 2006

US troops tried to get more houses to install snipers base among the house ...

some fighters attacked them and fighting continued for 2 hours after noon after non fighting period (4 hours)

some fighters hunted one US professional sniper on his base then many attacks happened and fighting...and other US snipers in Ramadi started shooting any one can be found in the streets.....but just they started many people started to take out the people by their cars and help them to run away from the snipers shootings

the people believe that snipers is the most wild US soldiers in US troops that found in Ramadi because snipers killed many kids and one of them ,I know him, his name Haitham Yusif Hubaiter (7years old) he killed by US sniper while he was going to his school 2months ago, in add to many kids and women killed by the US snipers with shot in head.

By the way the college of agriculture and college of education still occupied by US troops and the students use other buildings of Anbar university to study.

May 10, 2006

At 9:30 morning ,US troops tried to install more snipers bases by occupying more house closer to the core of the city, some fighters attacked them and tough fighting continued to 3 hours

US bullets hurted many houses because of their randomly shooting.....this way hurted many families inside their houses and my family hurtled also when many bullets sparked fire in the kids room ..

I heard their screams while 2 of my nephews run away from their burning bedroomI am and my brother run upstairs to find out what kind of hurt we will find this time.....my mind was full with images of killed kid with sniper bullet in head or burned dead body of one of my nephews.....

I scared too much and I lost my control on my steps on the stairsI found my brother brooked down the door and crashed the window with his hands to get out the heavy smoke and he carried out his (5 years) shocked son (Mustafa) to get out him the burned room

the fire just started to burn some blanketsI found my way to bring water and start extinguish the fireit was small fire caused by the (fire burn bullets) ...

this kind by bullets used by US troops it is very harmful gun for human beings or the materials ...it is contain lead that will be hot liquid inside the bulletif the bullet get inside the body will exploded and crash the body from inside and melt bones & fleshand if the bullet attacked car or furniture or wood, it will burn and melt it .

The streets were empty and the fighters succeeded to disappear as usual ...but the US soldiers keep their machine guns working and pointing to our houses....

I know that US soldiers want to keep themselves a live till they see there families but we also need to be a live to take care our suffering families in our poor hard life in Iraq.

Notice: till now there is no electricity, no drinking water, no phone service and no way to know what is the next day can be

darkness and blood are our atmosphere.

And in media there is the usual news about 10s of Iraqi dead bodies found in Baghdad streets and explosions killed many Iraqis and the only help that government doing is collect the dead body and put them in hospitals and tell the media to avoid scare the people by hide the real numbers of the dead bodies in the streets

Other new strange crimes appeared in Baghdad when group of gunmen moving in Baghdad streets and shooting in the crowded places on the civilians and the Iraqi police allow them to pass the check pointsit is strange but it is factask any Iraqi even government members then he cant say it is not fact

Now, IF I have the choice to live in Baghdad or Ramadi or Fallujah ...I will choose the 2 last choices because the dangerous side is clear but in Baghdad every thing is Dangerous even Police check points can arrest and kill the people for money or some thing else

May 14, 2006 Via Brian Conley, Aliveinbaghdad.org

Rafat reached a friend in Ramadi yesterday. He is a manager at the electrical company in Ramadi. Accoring to him, the United States forces there shutdown the electricity and telephone center for many houses and all the public services were turned off or destroyed over the past week.

This corroborates with repeated comments by Qasem regarding the state of social services at this time in Ramadi.

Qasem's latest email covers the events of Thursday, Friday and Saturday in Ramadi:

May 11, 2006

The day time was quiet but I heard the sounds of heavy guns somewhere around Ramadi...

At 9:00 pm an F-16 bombed one place, it is the train station again ... in addition to this, tanks attacked the houses of the train station governmental employees.....three civilians where killed ..these civilians where father and his 2 kids ...and some others injuredand their house destroyed.

May 12, 2006

US troops were attacked by some fightersthe attacks were in the military base that is located in the agriculture collage.

The fighters attacked the base with machine guns and mortars, the reaction of the US troops was to attack the houses that were located near their base and at night they moved their tanks in the streets and arrested many people and inspected many houses.

Let me tell you what the inspection included.

As usual, US soldiers were moving with tanks in the streets among the houses after midnight. They arrest people from any family that saw the fighters on their way to fighting location and they arrest any family that shows movement inside their house during US soldiers moving.

Most arrest cases are when US soldiers notice that someone is still awake after midnight!!!

Because of that me and my family and most the people in our area keep silent and hide inside our rooms and keep the kids quiet and take them to their beds. And sure all this happen in deep darkness every night because no electricity can be found. Only by private generators that can work only few hours because of very expensive fuel shortage.

After inspection any house the result will :

- 1- destroyed doors and windows.**
- 2- Broken furniture and some broken sets such as TV sets ,refrigerator .**
- 3- Broken car windows.**
- 4- Scared kids and women, girls**

And let me tell you what are the steps of getting US soldiers in any house after midnight :

- 1- US soldiers surround the house and watch it for few minutes.
- 2- They throw sonic bombs in the windows-that make high explosion sound to make shock on the people who are living inside and this shock keeps everybody inside unable to hear for 20 minutes at leastand for babies there is risk to lose there ears hearing ability, maybe for their whole life.**
- 3- The soldiers get in the house from many openings (windows, doors) and then they crash any door they facebedroom and kitchen, etc.
- 4- They take all the family (even women, kids) by force, shouting loudly and putting them in one room with tied hands in the darkest, smallest room**
- 5- The soldiers start inspection and they break any closed cabinets and lockers.....**

6- After they make sure that there is no weapons or bombs in this housethe soldiers start to collect information from the family members.

Mostly there are no interpreters with the US soldiers, so that mostly the soldiers will arrest the males and young boys to interrogate them in the US military base.

7- After the US soldiers finish, they throw smoke bombs outside the house then they ride the tanks with the arrested people to go back to their military base.

My family had this experience many times when they had US inspectors after midnightand the worst thing for them is when I am not available to be the interpreter for the US soldiers.

Many times I got offers from US soldiers (when they inspecting my house) to be interpreter with US soldiers in inspections with good payment, but I refuse because I know that I will be partner to the US troops crimes in Iraq if I be with them during their killing my people.

US soldiers need to understand that all of them came to Iraq with their guns and hurt Iraqis too much and all of them have his own share in Iraqi tragedy ..in addition all of Iraqis are victims and a few of them fight to stop this tragedy.

May 13, 2006

Today in the morning the US troops tried to get more houses to use them as snipers bases.....and many fighters appeared with their guns to stop this.

US soldiers use all the power that they can get from tanks and helicopters that attacked many houses and killed many people (most of the victims were civilians).

This time the US soldiers chose my house to use it as snipers base.

At 3 am 10s of US soldiers destroyed the outer gate of my house and came in the house while my family were sleepingthey hid in the garden for a while. I was woken up. I heard their sounds and steps. After awhile they got inside after crashing the two main doors of my house. Then I came out of my room to show myself with some English words that can help my family to avoid the harmful reaction of the American way of getting in the bedrooms.

The US soldiers shouted on me "Freeze! Turn back to the wall with raised hands now!" the US soldiers shouted on me.

I did what he asked me. Another US soldier inspected me then he said "he is clean" he said for the officer who was watching me carefully.....there was three Iraqi soldiers whose cant speak English at all.....but they where speaking each to other "OK..... can you help US to finish our job here.....we need you to tell us about this house and what kind of people living here."

The officer asked me this while the other soldiers moving around me ..in fact I cant see them, it was dark but they see me by their instruments found in their helmetsbut I

noticed that the officer brought our kerosene lamp to help to see my steps and to see him while he talking to me.

"Please do not hurt us we are a peaceful family and my family includes kids and women and an old man (my father) ...please let me wake them by my self to be ready for inspection.....

"ok.....hurry up and I want all the people whose living here come to be in this room " the officer said pointing to my small room. I hurried to wake up my father and mother telling them calmly that US soldiers are here and all of us are OK....and they want all of us to be in one room" I said to my father with calm voice to avoid scaring him-he has heart problems.

Then I went to my sisters room and woke them up and took them to my room2 US soldiers moved with me without saying any word.....they felt safe with me because I was doing their orders.

In the room of kids I found my nephews sleeping, one of my nephew, Mustafa who is 5 years old was sick and sleeping deeply. I carried him and moved with the other kids to my room. Finally I waked up all the family and all of the stayed in the room.

The soldiers started tying the hands of all family membersbut I stopped him "please do not do thisyou can lock the door but don't tie their hands, there is kidsit is hard for themplease do not do that" I said to the officer.

"oklock the doorit will be enough" the officer said.

"You are 18 members living in this house ??? how" the officer asked me

"We have no choicethat it is all what we canthere is no other place to live.....but it is ok ...our house is nice enough for all of us together" I answered with a smile....trying to make them relax.

"You are a good boytake care your family" he said with smile

**"Oh noI am not boyI am mando not let me feel bad" I said to him
....kidding**

"Oh sorry, sorryhow old are you???"

"I am 30 years old"

"Oh , you seem younger.....30??? Are you sure???"

"Yes I am sureand if I seem younger it is good for my girlfriend-right?"

"hahaha...yes sure. you deserve good one " officer said with laugh

"she is goodand it is not your businessok....??" I said with laughing

"Okok.....now get in with your family and we will open the door when we finish.....get in the room please"...the officer said

I keep quiet while I am getting in the room

One of the soldiers locked the door and we stayed in darkness.

At the beginning I thought that the soldiers will get out after they finish inspecting the housebut they stayed till the 11:20 am.....and we stayed in the dark room for 6 hours

The first 2 hours were ok although it was very hot and darkbut the problems started when Mustafa wanted to go to bath room.....I asked the soldiers to allow him to go.....

"We cant open it ...only the Americans can open itwe not allowed to do any thing without their orders" Iraqi soldier said to me .

"Ok tell them nowhe is sick kid and he need to go toilet now"

"Ok.....I will tryI can't speak English.....I just will tell them by signs ...ok??" the Iraqi soldiers said

"Ok, ok"

He went upstairs and after few minutes he came back with one US soldier.

"What is your problem ??? " the American soldier asked me behind the locked door. I explained for him about my nephewthen he opened the door

"Ok ...he should go alone ..." the American soldier said

"No he cant he is sick.....he is sick he cant walkhe have weak legs"

"Ok okYou go with himand you," pointing to the Iraqi soldier, "watch them." the American soldier said to me and to the Iraqi soldier.

"What he said??" the Iraqi soldier asked me

I explained for himthen we go to the toilet and the Iraqi soldier points his gun on us, me and 5 year-old sick Mustafa

This way of used with every one went to the bath room.....we spend the 6 hours as hostages in dark hot room.

The next message will explain what happenedthanks.

More About Home Invasion In Ramadi

May 16th, 2006 Via Brian Conley, Aliveinbaghdad.org

More news from Qasem in Ramadi:

During the time of our being in the dark hot room, we heard sound of single shots, the sounds coming from above the house-seems like on the roof. I asked the Iraqi soldiers about these sounds of shooting. They told me that there is some American snipers staying on the roof of my house.

Oh my! They used my house as a snipers base, to kill the people. This is what happened many times for the last year. They will shoot all the people who are leaving their house in the early morning, yes they will.

We kept silent and some of us tried to sleep but nobody can-it is too hot and became wet, in addition to difficulty breathing. Maybe because the air can't be recycled, the room is completely closed, the window and door.

I felt hungry and thirsty...oh it is not fair...hungry and thirsty inside my own house...

And I felt bad because my house will be a killing tool, it is very criminal for me...

At 11am there was the sounds of tanks near my house. After awhile, US soldiers run down stairs and left the house. The Iraqi soldier, from behind the door, said to his friend "what happened???"

I don't know, maybe they found some thing outside!!!!!" the other soldier answered.

"Oh they're riding in the tank-they are leaving, we should follow them. We can't stay." One of the Iraqi soldiers said.

Then I shouted to them, "Open the door now, you will go and nobody will open it!!!"

"Ha, ok, ok. I will give you the key," the Iraqi soldier said.

He put the key under the door and ran to follow his friends

I wait until the tank left and I became sure that US soldiers go

I opened the door and asked my brother to take care and keep all the family inside until I came back. I looked around inside the house and roof and all the rooms. Then I came back to the room and let my family get out of the room.

It seemed like breathing freedom when I got out of the room. "Oh it was terrible night! A hard one and dangerous for me, my father, mother, brothers and kids."

I found that American snipers used the beds of the kids for cover in their place on the roof. In addition, they broke holes in the front walls to look through them at the street and garden.

Anyway we are OK now we got back our lovely house, and while we were eating breakfast together we were discussing about this experience and some jokes

were made by my brother who found that it is funny that American soldiers almost forgot the Iraqi soldiers in the house.

“In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit,” said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay’s Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday’s raid. “Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead.”

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Marine Killed 5.22



Marine Lance Cpl. William Leusink, 21, was killed in Iraq, May 22, 2006 by a roadside bomb along with another member of his unit. (AP Photo/Family Photo)

U.S. Soldier Killed Near Balad

5.23.06 (AP)

A US army soldier died when his patrol was attacked by small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades in Iraq, the military said Wednesday.

The soldiers' convoy was conducting an anti-roadside-bomb operation south of Balad, which is 80 kilometers (50 miles) north of Baghdad, when the attack occurred Tuesday, the US Command said.

Pleasant Hills Marine Killed

05/24/06 WTAE

A 20-year-old Marine from Pleasant Hills has been killed in Iraq.

Pt. Steven Freund's aunt told Channel 4 Action News he was killed in El Kharma, Iraq, when his vehicle hit a roadside bomb.

Freund attended Thomas Jefferson High School before getting his GED and joining the Marines.

He had been a Marine for about a year and a half and was deployed in January.

Soldier From Md. Dies In Iraq Blast



Army Spc. Armer N. Burkart (U.S. Army photo)

May 16, 2006 By Nicole Fuller, Sun reporter

A 26-year-old soldier who grew up in Rockville was killed by an improvised explosive device in Iraq, the Department of Defense announced yesterday.

Army Spc. Armer N. Burkart was the gunner in a Humvee conducting combat patrols in west Baghdad when the vehicle was struck by the bomb Thursday.

Burkart was a cavalry scout assigned to the 1st Battalion, 71st Cavalry Regiment, 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, N.Y. He had served in Afghanistan from August 2003 to April 2004.

An A-student and 1997 graduate of Col. Zadok Magruder High School in Rockville, Burkart was a standout member of the school's ROTC program and that won him a full scholarship to attend Lehigh University in Bethlehem, Pa., said Sgt. Maj. John Ohmer, a social studies teacher at Magruder. But Burkart left Lehigh after two years, and joined the Army in July 2000, the teacher said.

Burkart was the first alumnus from the high school to die in Iraq, Ohmer said, adding that up to a half-dozen former students are serving in the war zone. He was the 44th soldier with ties to Maryland to die in Iraq.

The soldier's father, John C. Burkart, reached at his home in Mount Dora, Fla., said he was too distraught to talk after speaking with other reporters.

"I can't do this," Burkart's father said, before hanging up the phone. Burkart told the Associated Press that both his son's grandfathers were in the Navy.

"He was a great guy," John Burkart told the AP. "He was proud to be in the Army."

The death of Armer Burkart is the second time the family has dealt with tragedy in recent years: Ohmer said that during Burkart's senior year in high school his mother died in a motorcycle crash in Florida.

"It was very devastating," Ohmer said. "I remember how distraught Armer was at that point. She was very much involved in his life. We would be at a drill meet in Baltimore and she would bring pizza and different things for the kids."

A member of the ROTC's drill team and the school's marching band, Burkart won two leadership awards in high school and rose to the rank of ROTC captain.

British Armored Patrol Attacked

May 24 by Simon Ostrovsky, AFP

In southern Iraq, a British armored patrol came under attack by guerrillas but repelled the attackers, killing up to five of them without sustaining casualties, a British military spokesman said.

"They took on armored vehicles, that's why there are no MNF (Multinational Force) casualties," Lieutenant Colonel Richard Eaton told AFP, adding the attackers were suspected to be members of a renegade militia.

Convoy Duty:

How Bad Is It? The Truth Slips Out

May 24, 2006 By Gina Cavallaro, Army Times staff writer [Excerpt]

[Col. William R.] Frunzi's office at Fort Monroe, Va., is a sort of "user's representative to the development community," he said, and is responsible for the Army's 196 watercraft and more than 340,000 pieces of tactical wheeled vehicles and trucks.

"Trucks are now recognized as combat systems," he said, noting that the thousands of drivers who head out each day from Kuwait to points all over Iraq "get shot at 85 percent of the time."

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



May 24, 4:53 AM ET: US soldiers making coffee before operations in the area of Gharna, just outside the city of Fallujah. (AFP/US Army/Graham Paulsgrove)

Oh Shit: More Truth Slips Out

May 26, 2006 MICHAEL SCHWARTZ interviewed by ERIC RUDER, Socialist Worker [Excerpt]

The situation is quite complicated and made more complicated by the fact that even by U.S. statistics, of the approximately 700 attacks in the month of March, which is the last month I saw numbers for, about 650 attacks were directed at the U.S. military and 30 or so were directed either at the Iraqi police or military, and only 20 were directed at civilians.

So you're talking about less than 10 percent of all the attacks are directed at anyone except the U.S.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

News From The Mountains Of Ghor: U.S. Officer Says Resistance Growing Stronger And More Influential

May 24, 2006 Associated Press & By Sayed Salahuddin (Reuters)

A new fire fight in southern Afghanistan, also involving coalition airstrikes, killed at least five Afghan soldiers

Col. Tom Collins said Tuesday that Taliban rebels have grown in "strength and influence" recently and now have an experienced cadre of troops in southern Afghanistan.

"There is a hard-core group of Taliban fighters, certainly numbering in the hundreds," he told reporters in Kabul. "We know for a fact that in recent weeks they have grown in strength and influence in some parts of Kandahar, Helmand and Uruzgan," the three southern provinces worst hit by the insurgency.

The fighting Tuesday evening began in a small village in Tirin Kot district before the militants fled higher into the mountains, where coalition aircraft bombed Taliban positions, said the Afghan military commander for southern Afghanistan, Gen. Rehmatullah Raufi.

A coalition statement said the fighting started after a joint Afghan-coalition patrol was attacked. The troops beat back the assault and forced the militants to retreat, it said.

Coalition airstrikes were called in toward the end of the battle, Raufi said. Maj. Scott Lundy, a coalition spokesman, confirmed that the coalition provided air support.

An Afghan policemen and four Afghan soldiers were killed. The coalition said six Afghan soldiers and three police were wounded,

A district chief, a judge, a provincial official, and two guards from the Shahrak district of Ghor province were killed by a group of armed men who ambushed their car Tuesday evening, said Karimuddin Rezazada, the deputy governor of Ghor province.

A Taliban spokesman, Qari Mohammad Yousuf, said by telephone the Taliban carried out the attack.

The guerrillas, fighting to oust foreign forces and defeat the government, mostly operate in the south and east and have not been known to operate in the mountains of Ghor.

But there have been several attacks in recent months outside the south and east, suggesting the Taliban are expanding their area of operations.

In the south and east, aid agencies and government workers are increasingly confined to the safety of provincial capitals while bands of Taliban roam the countryside, attacking remote police posts and setting ambushes on roads.

Notes From A Lost War:

Resistance Moves To Concentrated Force Attacks & Creating Battle Lines “They Were Never So Effective In The Past” Popular Support For Fighting Occupiers Growing

5.24.06 RFE/RL [Excerpt]

Lutfullah Mashal, a former spokesman for the Afghan Interior Ministry, says Taliban fighters no longer rely solely on hit-and-run tactics by small groups of guerrillas. Instead, the Taliban have been concentrating into groups of more than 100 fighters to carry out frontal assaults on government security posts.

Mashal says that development explains why deaths in Afghanistan during the past week have topped the number of reported deaths in Iraq in the same period.

"During the past 4 1/2 years, there have always been changes in Taliban fighting tactics. But this latest change is unique," Mashal says.

"They have never (concentrated their forces) like this before, and they were never so effective in the past.

"The Taliban have never caused such high numbers of casualties to government forces before. Now, their attacks are more organized and they have started to fight using (more conventional methods), concentrating their forces together. And they have started creating battle lines."

U.S. military officials have told RFE/RL that concentrations of Taliban forces make their job easier because it allows air strikes to be more effective. But with Taliban fighters taking shelter in residential compounds, the violence also appears to be causing more civilian casualties.

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has ordered an investigation into reports that at least 16 civilians were killed on May 22 by U.S.-led coalition air strikes on a village near Kandahar.

Within the fledgling national parliament this week, some Afghan politicians say civilian casualties are beginning to turn the feelings of ordinary Afghans against the presence of foreign troops.

Obeidullah is a member of parliament from the western Afghan province of Farah.

He tells RFE/RL that Taliban fighters are now getting more support from the Afghan population than they have at any time since 2001.

"One year ago, nobody was giving sanctuary to the Taliban," Obeidullah says. "I think that people are helping them more now."

Kabul-based political analyst Waheed Mudjda says it would be a mistake for U.S. military leaders to overlook what he says is growing resentment among Afghans about civilian deaths from coalition air strikes.

Occupation Ambassadors' Plane Destroyed

May 24, 2006 Associated Press & (KUNA)

In an apparent accident, a British military C-130 cargo aircraft with several foreign troops on board carrying the country's ambassador to Afghanistan caught fire while landing at a southern airstrip but all on board escaped unhurt, officials said.

One of the plane's tires burst when it hit the ground at the airstrip in Lashkargah in Helmand province, sending debris into an engine, which then caught fire, said Sgt. Chris Miller, a spokesman for the U.S.-led coalition. He said the incident was not the result of militant fire.

The Foreign Office in London said Ambassador Stephen Evans was going to Helmand to review postwar reconstruction efforts. He said the aircraft was destroyed by the fire.

TROOP NEWS

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



The gravesite 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)

**Bush Regime Traitors Say Tiny
Pay Increase Approved By
House “Too Good To The
Troops”:
They Want A Pay Cut**

[That's right. A pay cut. A 2.2% pay raise, which is what the Bush's scum want, is less than the yearly rate of inflation. And that means a *cut* in wages. Duh.]

White House officials said lawmakers were too good to the troops and not good enough to weapons programs in approving a raise that would be half a percentage point higher than the administration's proposed 2.2 percent increase.

May 22, 2006 By Rick Maze, Army Times staff writer [Excerpts]

The Bush administration is balking at the 2.7 percent all-ranks pay raise approved by the House in its version of the \$512.9 billion defense authorization bill for 2007.

White House officials said lawmakers were too good to the troops and not good enough to weapons programs in approving a raise that would be half a percentage point higher than the administration's proposed 2.2 percent increase.

But in a sign of independence, the House bill increases Army and Marine Corps personnel, expands health benefits for drilling reservists, rejects an administration proposal to raise fees for retirees using the military medical system and retains the 2.7 percent pay raise instead of the 2.2 percent proposed by the administration

"The administration proposed the 2.2 percent increase because that is what is necessary to recruit high-quality people to the armed forces," the statement said, calling the bigger increase "unnecessary."

But Rep. Duncan Hunter, R-Calif., the House Armed Services Committee chairman, praised the approval of the higher raise and noted that it will help to reduce the remaining gap between military and private-sector wages, which stands at about 4.5 percent.

Activists Arrested In Washington For Trying To Stop Deployment Of Rolling Coffins

May 24, 2006 Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash.: Seven people have been arrested in protests against convoys of Iraq-bound Army Strykers and other military vehicles to be loaded onto a ship at the Port of Olympia, police said.

Five people were accused of pedestrian interference Tuesday after officers said they blocked the convoys at a downtown crosswalk, and one was arrested a day earlier.

The seventh, Andrew C. Hendricks, 37, of Olympia, was accused of trespassing after police said he tried to put a bicycle lock on one of the two front gates to the port early Tuesday morning.

The first of about 20 convoys began arriving Monday from Fort Lewis, between Tacoma and Olympia, with vehicles from the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division.

The unit, the Army's first Stryker Brigade Combat Team, in 2003 became the first Stryker brigade to be sent to Iraq. The brigade, which has about 4,000 soldiers, is being sent to Iraq again next month to replace one from Alaska, said Joseph W. Hitt, a civilian spokesman at Fort Lewis.

Authorities would not give the name of the ship that will carry the equipment or say when it was expected to dock.

Police identified those accused of blocking traffic Tuesday as Joshua A. Elliott, 25, of Olympia; Holly A. Carter, 24, of Littlerock; Nicole M. Miller, 24, of Littlerock; Jeffery A. Berryhill, 21, of Auburn; and David Lynn Jr., 55, of Gig Harbor.

Brendan M. Dunn, 21, of Olympia, was cited for the same offense Monday.

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 RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

May 24 THOMAS WAGNER, AP Writer & Reuters & by Simon Ostrovsky, AFP

A bomb set fire to an oil pipeline in Latifiya, 20 miles south of Baghdad, said police Capt. Rashid al-Samarie. The pipeline carries oil from a storage area to the Dora refinery in Baghdad, which often is bombed by insurgents.

Wednesday's deadliest drive-by shooting killed Adel Issa, a member in Diyala provincial council, and two of his bodyguards in their convoy in northern Iraq, and wounding.

Two roadside bombs wounded two soldiers in Baghdad, police said.

At an Iraqi military highway checkpoint near the U.S. military base north of Baghdad, guerrillas opened fire on the soldiers, killing one and wounding two.

A car bomb near a joint Iraqi/U.S. checkpoint in the town of Falluja wounded four Iraqi policemen, Falluja police said.

Two members of the Iraqi security forces were killed in clashes that erupted during a raid and search operation by army and police in the town of Yusufiya, 15 km south of Baghdad, police said.

Baghdad's deputy police commissioner Brigadier General Ahmed Daoud who was shot while he traveled in his car in the capital's west Mamun district.

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

Bush Imperial Governor Admits Loss Of Much Of Anbar Province To The Resistance

24 May 2006 By Richard A. Ooppel Jr., The New York Times [Excerpt]

And in a stark admission of the security problems Iraq faces, three years after President Bush asserted that "major combat operations" in Iraq were complete, the American ambassador to Baghdad, Zalmay Khalilzad, acknowledged that American forces do not control regions of western Iraq.

"I believe that parts of Anbar are under the control of terrorists and insurgents," Mr. Khalilzad said in an interview on CNN. Anbar Province stretches from Falluja, just west of Baghdad, all the way to the Syrian and Jordanian borders.

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

**“There’s No Way That The U.S.
Departure Would Create More
Violence”**

“75 Percent Of The Death Is Caused By The U.S.”

May 26, 2006 MICHAEL SCHWARTZ interviewed by ERIC RUDER, Socialist Worker
[Excerpt]

ER: THE U.S. case to its own population is that “we can’t leave Iraq now” because the job would be left undone, and the country would collapse into civil war--therefore, we aim to leave as quickly as Iraqi forces take our place. What do you say to that argument?

MS: THERE ARE two answers to that question. The first part is that all the things that people say are bad about Iraq, like there might be a civil war, which is the most prominent idea right now, are being caused, not prevented, by the U.S. And the longer the U.S. stays, the more likely there will be a civil war.

So without ignoring the fact that there is a lot of friction and that therefore there might be a lot of violence if the U.S. were to leave immediately, I think it’s easy to know that there will be far more violence if the U.S. stays, and not only violence created by the U.S.

Keep in mind that we have all this inter-ethnic violence going on, and it still represents a small proportion, perhaps 20 or 25 percent, of all the deaths in Iraq.

The rest is caused by the U.S. --- 75 percent of the death is caused by the U.S. even in this period of high sectarian violence. So there’s no way that the U.S. departure would create more violence: there would be less violence.

The other part of the answer has to do with the idea of “finishing the job.”

You have to ask what job the U.S. is trying to finish.

When you look at the beginning of the war, after the Saddam regime collapsed when there was relatively little violence, the U.S. effort was to completely dismantle the Iraqi economy, “liberalize” it and administer economic shock treatment from which the Iraqis have not yet recovered. We’re talking about somewhere between 30 and 70 percent unemployment right now.

Thirty percent was the level of unemployment during the U.S. Great Depression, and 70 percent is just unheard of: total paralysis of the kind suffered by the countries that have suffered the worst neoliberal reform. And this is getting worse, not getting better.

So if we’re trying to finish that job, that’s a horrible job to finish.

What we need to do is withdraw the military and economic pressure that the U.S. is applying and allow Iraqis to repair their own economy and their own infrastructure, which they did fairly successfully after the first U.S. war in 1991.

So the idea that the U.S. is somehow preventing something is wrong, and the idea that the U.S. ought to be finishing this terrible job is also wrong.

There's no way that the U.S. staying is somehow a benefit.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



© The Columbus Dispatch

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

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)

CLASS WAR REPORTS

The \$70 Billion Tax Cut For The Rich: Irresponsible And Obscene

The rich are now paying a smaller percentage of their income in taxes than at any time in the last seventy-five years.

May 15 by Robert B. Reich, Common Dreams [Excerpts]

We've got a war going on that's not going well, and the military is spending over a half a trillion dollars a year. Meanwhile, public services are being slashed. So what's Congress about to give us? A \$70 billion tax cut.

Like the Bush Administration's previous tax cuts, most of this one is going to people who are already very comfortable. Hence, it's both irresponsible and obscene.

The non-partisan Urban Institute Brookings Institution Tax Policy Center examined its provisions, including a two-year extension of capital gains and dividend tax cuts, and a one-year extension of relief from the Alternative Minimum Tax.

It turns out a whopping 87 percent of the benefits of this tax cut will go to the 14 percent of American households earning above \$100,000 a year.

Twenty-two percent of the benefits will go to the richest two-tenths of one percent of American households earning more than a million dollars a year.

Some administration apologists, including the editorial page of the Wall Street Journal, claim repeatedly that the rich are paying a larger-than-ever share of income taxes, so it's entirely fitting that they get the lion's share of any tax cut. This logic conveniently leaves out two facts.

First, the rich are now paying a smaller percentage of their income in taxes than at any time in the last seventy-five years.

Second, if you consider not just income and capital-gains taxes but all the taxes people pay, including payroll taxes and sales taxes, you find that middle-income workers are now paying a larger share of their incomes than people at or near the top.

We have turned the principle of a graduated, progressive tax on its head.

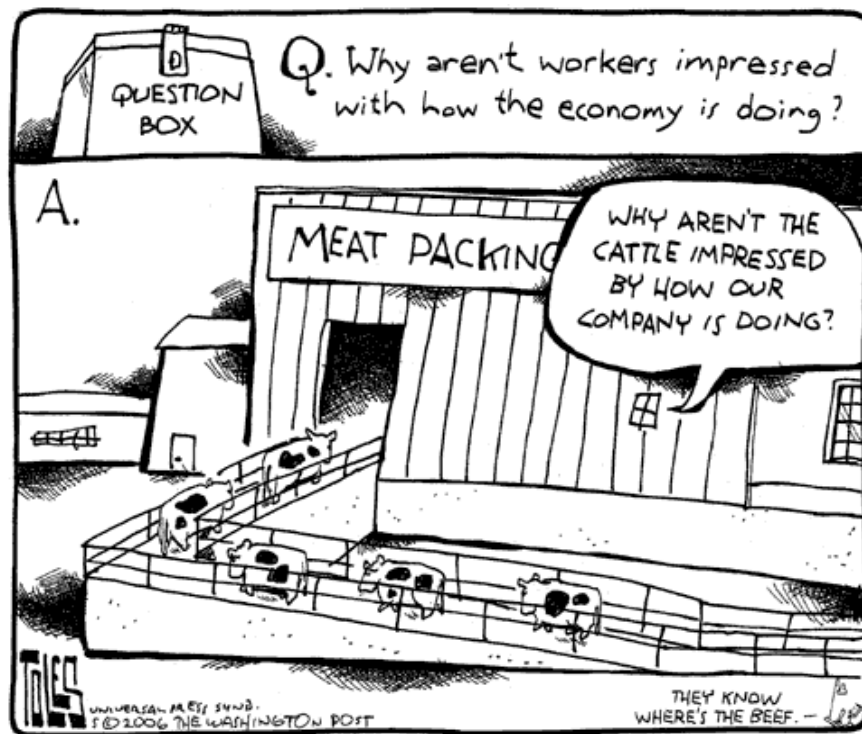
Productivity is up, but the current annual median wage of around \$35,000 is what it was five years ago, adjusted for inflation. While top executives are raking in seven and eight-digit compensation packages, their middle-class workers are stuck in the mud.

Annual Savings Under The Latest Republican Tax Cut:

[From The Washington Post]

Here are the figures

\$10,000-\$20,000: \$2
\$20,000-\$30,000: \$9
\$30,000-\$40,000: \$16
\$40,000-\$50,000: \$46
\$75,000-\$100,000: \$403
\$100,000-\$200,000: \$1,388
\$200,000-\$500,000: \$4,499
\$500,000-\$1 million: \$5,562
More than \$1 million: \$41,977



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

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

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

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

http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/;

<http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>; <http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/gi-special.htm>

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