

GI Special: thomasbarton@earthlink.net

6.22.06

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GI SPECIAL 4F20:

Screening and discussion
8 PM
Thursday
June 22
NYC

IF YOU EVER WANTED TO END A WAR...

NO SIR!
NO SIR!

THE SUPPRESSED STORY OF THE GI MOVEMENT
TO END THE WAR IN VIETNAM

Screening followed by Q&A with
DAVE CLINE Veterans for Peace
TOM BARTON GI Special

\$10, Roone Arledge Cinema, Alfred Lerner Hall,
Columbia University, 114th and Broadway

This screening is part of the Socialism 2006 conference
from June 22 to June 25. For more information about
conference events and registration, go to www.socialismconference.org

NOTICE

Because of organizing activities in support of efforts to provide aid and comfort to service personnel who question, oppose or resist U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, (see above) GI Special will not appear, or will appear in much abbreviated form, until Sunday, June 25. Apologies to correspondents that it will not be possible to respond to emails until then also. T

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Texas Sgt. Killed In Ramadi



Sgt. Reyes Ramirez, 23 of Willis, Texas, was killed in Ar Ramadi June 17, 2006, when an improvised explosive device detonated during combat operations. (AP Photo/Ramirez family via Conroe Courier)

SWARTZ CREEK MARINE DIES

June 21, 2006 By Marjory Raymer, THE FLINT JOURNAL

Marine Lance Cpl. Brandon Webb, 20, of Swartz Creek, died Tuesday in Iraq.

Webb was a firefighter in Swartz Creek for almost a year before he took military leave to join the Marines, said his mother, Ann Christofferson, this morning.

Christofferson also is a Swartz Creek firefighter.

"There is so much in life he had to offer that we'll never know," Christofferson said.

She said Webb was an "awesome son" and a straight-A student who never got into any serious trouble. He loved baseball, hockey, golf and playing video games.

He joined the Marines while still in the fire academy under an agreement that he would not be activated until he became a certified firefighter.

He served with Swartz Creek department from June 2004 to May 2005, Fire Chief Brent Cole said today.

Cole described Webb as a quiet individual who was an "excellent" firefighter. "He always got along with everybody," Cole said.

Christofferson said joining the Marines had been Webb's dream since he was just a little boy. "He felt like people needed to fight for this country and make it a better place," she said.

Webb had been serving in Iraq since January and was scheduled to return stateside on Aug. 2.

Webb was born and raised in Arizona. He graduated from high school there but attended Swartz Creek High School in 2003 during his junior year.

He also leaves a brother, Austin. Funeral arrangements are pending.

One U.S. Soldier Killed, 12 Wounded In Yusefiya Search For Bodies



U.S. Army PFC Thomas Lowell Tucker, 25. Iraqi Defense Ministry official Major General Abdul Aziz Mohammed told Reuters June 20, 2006 that a joint U.S.-Iraqi force found the bodies of Privates Tucker, and Kristian Menchaca, 23, near an electricity plant in Yusufiya. (The Oregon Army National Guard/Handout/Reuters)

June 20, 2006 By DEXTER FILKINS, The New York Times Company

Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, the American military spokesman, said "the remains" of what are believed to be the two Americans were found near a power plant in the vicinity of Yusefiya, about three miles from the site where they had been captured by insurgents.

The general said that the soldiers conducting the search had encountered several roadside bombs, and that one soldier had been killed and 12 wounded.

General Caldwell declined to speak in detail about the physical condition of those who had been found, but said that the cause of death could not be determined.

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

That is not a good enough reason.



US marines patrol with an Iraqi collaborator soldier [guess which one he is] in an area in the town of Habbaniyah June 14. (AFP/Thibault Malterre)

Civilian Occupation Worker Killed

June 21, 2006 By ROBINSON DUFFY, Staff Writer, News miner

A North Pole man working as a contractor with the Army Corps of Engineers in Iraq was killed Monday in what is being called a work-related accident. The Army is investigating the cause of the accident.

Edward Cunahan, 41, worked as an ammunition handler with the corps' Coalition Munitions Clearance Program, which is responsible for collecting and destroying captured munitions. He was employed by Tetra Tech Inc., with headquarters in Pasadena, Calif.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

4 Canadian Soldiers Wounded By IED In Shahwali Kot

Jun 21 The Associated Press

A roadside bomb hit a military convoy Wednesday in southern Afghanistan, injuring four Canadian soldiers, the military said.

Two Afghan men were detained in connection with the blast, said coalition spokesman Maj. Quentin Innis.

The explosion occurred around 8 a.m. as the troops were conducting a routine patrol in the Shahwali Kot district of Kandahar province, he said.

"Two Afghan guys were spotted fleeing from a position of observation. They were run down and detained," he said.

One of the soldiers was seriously wounded, he said. The other three are in stable condition in Kandahar city, he said.

Occupation Troops Help The Resistance: Kill Three Collaborator Cops, Wound Three More

June 21, 2006 AP, KABUL, Afghanistan

Coalition soldiers accidentally fired on an unmarked police car in eastern Afghanistan, killing three Afghan policemen and wounding three, the U.S. military said Wednesday.

The shooting happened Tuesday at a checkpoint in eastern Kunar province when a car approached without slowing down, Col. Tom Collins said during a press briefing in the capital, Kabul.

Coalition soldiers saw that the occupants, who were not in uniform, were armed and “felt they were in immediate danger so they opened fire on the vehicle,” he said.

TROOP NEWS

**Engaged, Never Married:
“The Day Before He Went To Iraq, Army
Reserve Sergeant Joe Velez Of The
Bronx Decided To Marry His Girlfriend.
Last Week, He Was Killed By A Roadside
Bomb”**



The casket of Sgt. Jose M. Velez is lifted into a hearse while his family looks on June 19, 2006 in New York. Sgt. Velez, originally from Bronx, New York, was killed during combat operations near Kirkuk in Iraq. (AP Photo/Seth Wenig)

He said that he'd been pricing body armor. His mother even offered to buy it for him. The company sergeant, though, didn't believe one soldier should have body armor if everyone didn't.

6.26.06 By Steve Fishman, New York Magazine

I heard about the death of Sergeant Joe Velez; the papers said his name was Jose, but he called himself Joe with me; a week ago. Word came via one of his fellow soldiers, who telephoned from Iraq.

The news struck me with surprising force. I'd only known Velez slightly; I'd met him just two days before he shipped out from his home in the Bronx.

We'd spoken a few times, but because of the circumstances; Velez, we both knew, was headed into a kill zone; the conversations grew unusually candid, as if he were mentioning thoughts as they came to him.

One thing he was trying to process was whether he should propose to his girlfriend. By happenstance, I was his sounding board.

He'd explained the situation by phone the day before he departed. Today, he told me, was his girlfriend's birthday. He planned to take her to dinner. Maybe, he thought, he should propose then. On the phone, though, he wasn't entirely sure. Velez was only recently divorced; that was one reason he'd signed up for the military; when out of the blue he met this girl five weeks ago. Plus, he was leaving for a year. Still, he told me, "She's amazing."

As we talked, he thought more about getting married. "I should propose tonight," Velez said to me, encouraged. "I think I should."

On learning of Velez's death in Iraq, I realized I didn't know how the story ended, which somehow made his death more unsettling.

I'd first met Velez, a tractor-trailer driver from the Bronx, at Fort Totten, a breathtaking stretch of parkland on the Queens side of the East River. I'd asked to meet reservists, part-time soldiers, heading to fight in Iraq. I wanted to know what it was like to hear the news about Iraq and then head into that chaos.

Reservists; National Guard, Marine Reserve, and, like Velez, Army Reserve; mostly trained one weekend a month, plus a couple of weeks a year, a pretty good deal for the benefits, which include educational aid, retirement funds, and extra pay. Before the Iraq war, few military experts considered reservists combat-ready. The caricature, as one National Guard colonel explained to me, was "weekend warrior playing cards, drinking beer." In the Iraq war, however, President Bush has relied heavily on reservists, who at one point made up 40 percent of America's troops on the ground.

The 77th command of the Army Reserves, Velez's unit, had convened for me Velez and three other soldiers. They wore new blousy uniforms that seemed too big and too clean. They were part of a unit that would shepherd convoys of fuel trucks from one base to another. On one hand, Velez welcomed that news. He knew how to handle a truck. On the other hand, being anywhere near a fuel truck made him a prime target. Everyone knew about the buried bombs, so powerful they melt steel truck carriages.

Velez's captain attended the meeting, as did the company's senior sergeant. They weren't there as minders, but the effect was similar. The four soldiers, two women and two men, clutched their hands tightly in front of them and kept conversation to a narrow range.

There was talk of the importance of the mission, the pleasures of camaraderie, topics that seemed to have little to do with risking their lives. And they talked about packing the right socks, and stocking their iPods with music, and Iraq's spiders. "I hate spiders," said one soldier.

Velez, a beefy 35-year-old, was the oldest soldier there. Perhaps because of that, or because it's only possible to talk of war as summer camp; socks! iPods!; for so long, Velez eventually shifted the conversation.

He said he worried about getting fired on. "Driving down the road, trying to help the Iraqis out and they're against us. It doesn't make sense. It scares me to know that there's people out there who want to hurt us," he said. "I've been thinking about it, and I can't sleep now." I could hear emotion bubbling up in him, and I wanted to hear more. That's what I'd come for. But just then the commanders said the soldiers had to get back to work.

And so, the following day, which was the day before he was to ship out, I phoned Velez.

He said that he'd been pricing body armor. His mother even offered to buy it for him. The company sergeant, though, didn't believe one soldier should have body armor if everyone didn't.

Plus, Velez figured, it's really expensive, more than \$6,000 in some cases.

In any case, Velez told me he wasn't focused on dying. "Then you're dead," he said, which I took to mean that if you're dead, you have nothing more to worry about. Lately, though, Velez did worry about being injured.

He might like to talk to his family about this. But his mother got too emotional and cried. So did his girlfriend. "Nobody wants to hear about war," he told me. Sometimes, as a way to be with his thoughts, he watched war movies, again and again; he liked Full Metal Jacket, Black Hawk Down.

It was the movies, he told me, that gave him the idea that he could lose his legs. He'd been fixated on that possibility. What if he returned home an amputee? And he a truck driver! That would not be good. He couldn't take care of himself.

"Losing a limb and going through life like that," he said, "I've seen soldiers . . . They get depressed, and I don't want to give up on life like that."

Lately, at night, Velez couldn't sleep. For ten days, he hadn't slept more than a couple of hours a night.

A few weeks before heading to Iraq, Velez had all but moved in with his girlfriend in the Bronx. When he couldn't sleep, he sometimes sat up in bed and watched her sleep. Other times, he got out of bed. He'd made a list of little projects around the apartment, and he figured he might as well get to them.

"It can wait till tomorrow," his girlfriend told him, if she awakened.

"No, I'm up." The other night he fixed the curtains in the bathroom. I have to make sure everyone is safe, he thought.

Still, even busy with repair jobs, Velez thought about getting wounded. And so, two days before his departure, he told me that he asked his girlfriend, "Would you take me back if I lost my legs?" Velez knew it was a difficult question. They'd met in church just over a month ago. But two weeks ago, Velez said he realized he was in love with her. For the first time in years, he felt contented. Just the other day, his girlfriend's 9-year-old son gave him a hug for the first time—the kid called Velez his "personal GI Joe." Still, Velez worried that, for his girlfriend, taking care of him if, you know, he was injured, was a lot to ask. "It would be hard for her and for me," he said. But he'd already put the question out there, and so had no choice but to wait for her answer.

Naomi de Jesus, Velez's girlfriend, is an eighth-grade schoolteacher who also teaches at Mercy College at night. She cried a lot in the days before his departure; sometimes if he was just calling to say he was on his way home. But when Velez posed this very serious question, she composed herself. She thought about everything they'd shared in a short time and how it was like a fairy tale to find such a good person against such a deadline.

"You know I really wouldn't care," she told Velez. "As long as you come back alive."

When Velez recounted this story to me the day before he was to leave, he seemed moved anew. It brought her into focus, her terrific qualities, and also the idea of marriage. His mind seemed to drift in a kind of associative chain.

He thought about departing, and about Iraq, and how in the last few days he recognized that he was scared, really scared, and the chemistry of all these thoughts led Velez to a conclusion. He was sure of it now. He told me that he would propose that night. "We're going to get married," he said. Then, as if continuing this thought, he added, "I hope I come back."

Three months later, Velez was the gunner in a Humvee, escorting a convoy in Kirkuk north of Baghdad. His job was to scan the road for enemy targets, which is no doubt what he was doing when, a few minutes past midnight on June 9, a bomb exploded under the Humvee's right rear passenger door. Velez was taken to a combat service hospital in Baghdad. At 1:35 A.M., a surgeon pronounced him dead. He was one of 2,500 Americans to die in Iraq.

I didn't know if Velez was engaged at the time of his death, or if he'd even popped the question. In my mind, it seemed a key omission in the cold official report of his death. So I called Naomi.

As it turned out, the night before Velez left, his plans changed.

Velez had intended to pick up Naomi, and with her son and his two children from previous relationships, go to dinner, which would have been the setting to talk of marriage. But as he walked into Naomi's apartment, people shouted, "Surprise!" Naomi had invited her family and his family for a farewell party.

And so, improvising, Velez had leaned over to her when the entire party sat down to dinner. "I love you. You're the most important thing to me. I know I want to spend the rest of my life with you," he told her.

It was a marriage proposal, and as I heard the words, something of a plea. Naomi told me she was busily planning their wedding for when he returned. He e-mailed her that they'd have a baby together. She was looking for a house for them.

I know that all the plans make his death more tragic. But, somehow, I was happy to hear them, happy to hear that Iraq hadn't ended his life, until it did.



(Photo: Courtesy of Naomi de Jesus)

Army Reserve Runs Out Of Troops For Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse;

Down To 34,000 Who Can Still Be Sent

[Thanks to Anna Bradley, who sent this in.]

June 21, 2006 By GREG JAFFE, The Wall St. Journal

WASHINGTON: The Army may be running low on support forces for Iraq and Afghanistan, with only about 34,000 troops of its Army Reserve force of 189,000 available for an involuntary call-up to active-duty service, officials say.

Lt. Gen. Jack Stultz, the chief of the Army Reserve, says the Reserve will be able to meet its commitments in the next year with the help of volunteers.

The larger Army National Guard, which can be mobilized by governors for natural disasters or by the president for wars abroad, faces a similar strain to that of the Reserve, but not as severe, Army officials said.

The Army Reserve is focused primarily on critical combat specialties needed in nation-building, while the Army National Guard is built largely around combat formations similar to those in the active-duty force.

The heavier-than-expected use of the Reserve force in the past five years has put the Pentagon in a bind, say Army officials. A large percentage of those 35,000 soldiers eligible for involuntary call-ups are low-ranking enlisted soldiers. "Most of the officers and senior noncommissioned officers have already been mobilized," Gen. Stultz said.

Army National Guard and Reserve soldiers can be called to active duty involuntarily for as long as 24 months for operations in Iraq or elsewhere.

Once they have served that time, under Army regulations, they can no longer be made to deploy, but can still be sent abroad if they go voluntarily.

Currently, there are about 25,000 Army Reserve soldiers deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, and an additional 10,000 serving on active duty in the U.S. There are about 46,000 National Guard troops called up or serving on active duty in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere.

The Reserve includes many critical specialties such as military-police soldiers, truck drivers and most of the Army's civil-affairs troops, who specialize in humanitarian aid and reconstruction.

There are only 1,790 Army reservists left who are trained to serve as military police and only 2,530 transportation and logistics specialists.

The force also provides vital specialties in the event of natural disasters or terrorist attacks in the U.S.

"Right now, we are dependent on heroes who are volunteering to go back for their second and third tour" of Iraq and Afghanistan, Gen. Stultz said.

He noted that one Texas-based Army Reserve truck company was recently mobilized for its second tour in Iraq. About 60% of the 299 soldiers in the unit volunteered to go back. The Army is filling the remaining positions in the unit with new recruits, who can be mobilized involuntarily, and volunteers from other units.

But it is unclear how much longer the Army Reserve force can depend on volunteers. Some Army officials are suggesting that it is time to change the current policy, which caps involuntary call-ups at 24 months.

Senior Army officials say they would like to be able to call up Army Reserve and National Guard reservists for one year of active-duty service for every five years they are in the reserves. The current policy "was built for wars in which you mobilize, fight the war, win and come back home," Gen. Stultz said. The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan don't fit that model, he said.

A change in the policy could draw criticism from Democrats eager to reduce the size of the force in Iraq, or governors who depend on National Guard and Reserve soldiers for natural-disaster relief.

Gen. Stultz hasn't formally suggested changing the policy, but some senior Pentagon officials say that if the U.S. continues to maintain 130,000 troops in Iraq and 20,000 troops in Afghanistan, the Bush administration likely will have to amend it.

The strain on the Army Reserve has been heightened in recent years by recruiting and retention shortfalls.

Currently, the Army Reserve is authorized for 205,000 troops by Congress but is fielding a force of about 189,000.

“Those Who Put Their Lives On The Line Get The Scraps Left By These So-Called Leaders”

June 26, 2006
Army Times
Letters To The Editor

I find it outrageous that certain federal workers — politicians — get such generous pensions for serving so little time.

I served in the Army for 30 years, including 18 months in Vietnam, where I could have been killed. I can assure you that my pension is nothing compared to what they enjoy.

I guess when you are in power, you can vote yourself a pretty sweet pension, while those who put their lives on the line get the scraps left by these so-called leaders.

Sgt. Maj. Robert V. Winstead (ret.)
Alexandria, Va.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

No More Iraq For Them: Japanese Troops Going Home



Members of Japan Ground Self-Defence Forces assemble materials before loading containers for their pullout at their camp in Samawa June 21, 2006, following an order to withdraw. REUTERS/Japan Defence Agency/Handout (IRAQ)

Stupidity Or Deceit?

Commanders Covered Up Haditha Massacre

June 21, 2006 (AP)

An investigation into the killing of 24 Iraqis by U.S. Marines concludes that senior military personnel in Iraq did not follow up on potential inaccuracies in early accounts of the deaths, the Los Angeles Times reported Wednesday.

Military officials have said Marines killed the civilians in Haditha on Nov. 19 after a roadside bomb rocked a military convoy, killing one Marine. The Marine Corps initially attributed the civilian deaths to the bomb and crossfire during a battle between the Americans and insurgents.

A report by Army Maj. Gen. Eldon Bargewell said problems with initial accounts submitted by Marines involved in the deaths should have been apparent to commanders in the area, the Times said.

Bargewell questioned why senior military officers in western Iraq did not conduct a thorough investigation, the newspaper said. It cited a portion of his report's executive summary that was read to the Times by a U.S. Defense Department official who requested anonymity because the report had not been released publicly.

"Virtually no inquiry at any level of command was conducted into the circumstances surrounding the deaths," Bargewell wrote, according to the Times. "There were, however, a number of red flags and opportunities to do so."

“A Culture Of Bullying, Harassment And Intimidation Which Drove Some Cadets And Trainee Soldiers To Suicide”

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

June 19, 2006 The Age Company Ltd.

Military justice complaints continue.

More than 600 military personnel have complained to the ombudsman about defence's handling of their concerns, with one case still outstanding after more than three years, a parliamentary committee has heard

An inquiry into military justice reopened for a public hearing on Monday to review the way the Australian Defence Force has responded to a report released in June last year.

The report uncovered a culture of bullying, harassment and intimidation which drove some cadets and trainee soldiers to suicide and heard dozens of complaints about the way internal investigations were handled.

Defence Force Ombudsman Professor John McMillan, who is also the Commonwealth Ombudsman, said there had been a drop in the number of cases sent to his office for review over the past year. But he expected to have handled just over 600 cases over the 2005-06 financial year.

Prof McMillan said the number of cases that had been open for more than a year had fallen from 38 per cent last year to 14 per cent this year.

But two per cent of cases had remained unresolved after more than two years and one case had been open for over three years. He said he had set up his own investigation into the way complaints by military personnel of unacceptable behaviour are investigated by the defence force.

But the ombudsman said he had put off an investigation into drug use in the military, while the ADF did its own internal probe. "My office had proposed earlier in the year to do an 'own motion' investigation into how the Department of Defence is handling allegations of non-medical use of drugs," he said.

"After interchange of correspondence with the CDF (Chief of the Defence Force Angus Houston) we decided to put that on hold because we were told there was an internal review. "It is a matter we may return to when that internal review is completed."

He said there had been a general improvement in the military's handling of complaints and internal investigations since the Senate report was released.

"My office in the past sometimes found it difficult to get priority for its requests," he said.

"We've seen a general improvement in the responsiveness of the defence portfolio to our requests."

Inspector-General of the Australian Defence Force, Geoff Earley, told the committee he had 240 cases on his books, many of which were "long-standing", but he was also seeing improvements.

“GoArmyEd Has Become A Disaster”

June 26, 2006
Army Times

Letters To The Editor

The changeover from traditional tuition assistance paperwork to Internet-only with GoArmyEd has become a disaster for many students attempting to enroll in courses.

I started on my graduate degree with the traditional program, where I registered directly with the school and obtained my tuition assistance from the Army and additional funds from the Department of Veterans Affairs through the Top-Up program.

It was simple. I dealt with the school directly; I didn't need "mandatory" counseling to obtain tuition assistance, my school's counselor answered all my questions. I could register for classes as soon as they became available, and I could send my Top-Up paperwork as quickly as possible to VA for reimbursement.

Now, I am forced to waste time sitting in an education office to be counseled every time I need a class because I am too "dumb" to know what classes I need.

I am not able to register with the school for the classes I need when they become available, because apparently GoArmyEd is not on the same schedule as the school. Moreover, class codes and titles are often erroneous or have not been updated in the system.

The system is cryptic and not user-friendly.

Not being able to register on time for classes also gives me a delay at VA. It can take up to five months to be reimbursed for expenses if VA is not given the paperwork early enough.

To add insult to injury, I was told that I could not register for further classes because the Army did not have most of my grades for my undergraduate degree, and I risked paying back several years' worth of tuition assistance.

GoArmyEd will not allow me to register until all this information is added into the system. Why would it need this info, several years old, when I am not even working on a bachelor's degree?

Now I risk not being able to get the classes I need because they may fill up or be closed for insufficient enrollment by the time GoArmyEd gets around to meeting the school's schedule.

Furthermore, I deploy to Iraq this fall, and I may not be able to sit for an hour or two to receive unneeded counseling for classes before I am allowed to register.

I shouldn't have to wait for the Army to catch up with a civilian schedule. Filling out a tuition assistance form takes five minutes.

If I already have the information I need, and the classes are available, why should I have to wait for the Army to register me?

I can do it myself, as I have for the last several years in a lot less time.

Sometimes improvements are steps backward.

This one is.

It has caused unneeded delays in obtaining classes and tuition, lost and wasted time sitting in lobbies, and aggravation producing records and paperwork that aren't necessary.

Staff Sgt. Theodore A. DiVito
Fort Hood, Texas

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Iraqi Leader Tells U.S. To Get Troops Out Now

06/21/06 AFP

Moqtada al-Sadr has called on countries with foreign troops in the war-ravaged country to follow Japan's move and pull out.

"The withdrawal of Japanese troops is a good step and I hope that all countries with occupation forces in Iraq would follow suit in a quick and organised way that would not hurt the Iraqi people," Sadr said at a joint press conference with former prime minister Ibrahim Jaafari in the Shiite shrine city of Najaf.

Sadr, who led a bloody rebellion against US and coalition forces in 2004, has remained staunchly opposed to a foreign troop presence in Iraq despite the participation of his supporters in the government.

He is also against the creation of two autonomous federations in the Shiite centre and south, a position advocated by his bitter rival Abdul Aziz al-Hakim, leader of parliament's

most powerful Shiite party the Supreme Council for the Islamic Revolution (SCIRI) in Iraq.

Assorted Resistance Action

20 June 2006 Aljazeera & June 21 (KUNA)

An Iraqi soldier was killed in fierce clashes in the western district of Baghdad on Wednesday, police said.

A source at the police told KUNA the fierce clashes occurred between the Iraqi army forces and unknown gunmen in Al-Mansour area.

Police Captain Amir Kamil, who provided security for the Yarmouk hospital, was shot to death on Tuesday at a bus station, Captain Jamil Hussein said.

Guerrillas riding motorcycles also killed a traffic officer near his house in al-Amara, 290km southeast of Baghdad.

The attacks against police came a day after militants in speeding cars killed Brigadier Hudairi al-Janabi, the chief of police in Falluja, 65km west of Baghdad.

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

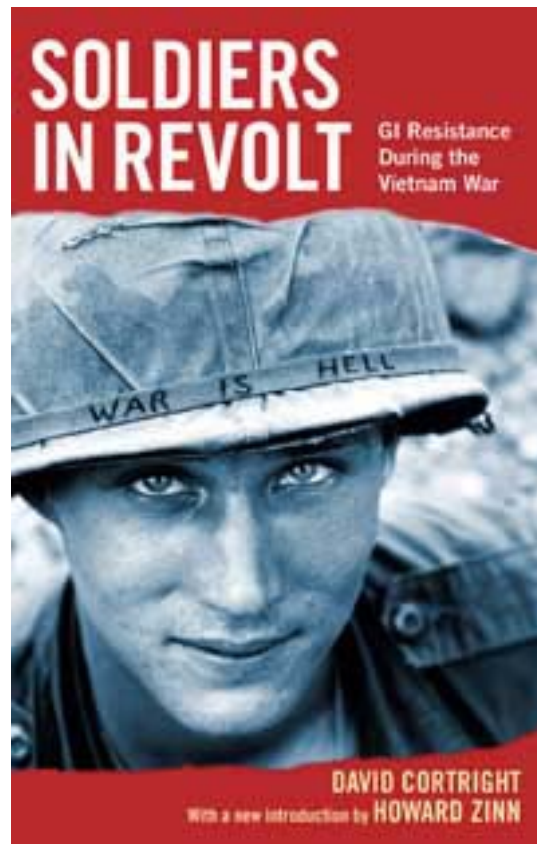
FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004**

**“GI Resistance Disrupted The
Social Order Of The US Military**

And Effectively Undermined Its Ability To Function”
“The Acts Of GI Resistance Were An Enormously Important Factor In The Withdrawal Of US Forces From Vietnam”



Spring 2006, By Brian Gryzlak (reviewer), The Veteran, Vietnam Veterans Against the War. Brian Gryzlak lives in Tiffin, Iowa and is a member of the University of Iowa Antiwar Committee and a former member of the Progressive Resource/Action Cooperative (PRC) in Champaign, Illinois.

Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War, By David Cortright, (Haymarket Books, 2005)

Discourse over the motivations for (and the state and trajectory of) the current war in Iraq is often imbued with comparisons to the Vietnam War.

It is in this context that the new edition of David Cortright's *Soldiers in Revolt: GI Resistance During the Vietnam War* (first published in 1975) is an especially salient and timely read.

With an introduction to the 2005 edition by historian Howard Zinn, *Soldiers in Revolt* chronicles acts of resistance within the US military to the Vietnam War and the conditions of military life.

Cortright documents how resistance was most prominent among enlistees of working-class backgrounds, volunteers (as opposed to conscripts), and African Americans.

GI resistance to the war (and various facets of military life) assumed many forms, ranging from conscious dress-code violations and attempts at unionization to circulating on-base petitions, disobeying orders, and committing direct assaults on officers.

GIs spoke out against the institutional racism of the military and held rallies. With the support of civilians, they founded newspapers to disseminate information among the ranks and established off-base coffeehouses, which were venues for organizing efforts.

As the war progressed, the military faced increasing desertions, AWOL soldiers, and conscientious objectors, and declining reenlistment rates, which initially hit the Army and Marine Corps hardest, as these branches faced the most direct combat exposure.

As air assaults were stepped up in the early 1970s in place of ground forces, acts of resistance shifted from the Army and the Marine Corps to the Navy and the Air Force, and included sabotage of Navy ships, attempts to block ships from deploying to Vietnam from the United States, and on-ship sit-ins.

With the end of the draft in 1973 and the subsequent drawdown of US forces in Indochina, GI organizing efforts shifted to improving day-to-day conditions of military life, focusing on challenging institutionalized racism and working toward the democratization of military life.

Cortright also details the "recruitment racket" that ensued once the draft ended in 1973, illustrating the deceptive, pressure-laden tactics employed by military recruiters to sign up volunteers; those with limited prospects for social and economic advancement were prime targets for recruitment (often referred to now as the "poverty draft"). Cortright highlights the non-transferability of skills learned in certain roles to civilian labor markets and the discrepancy between the demand for transferable skill sets to the civilian labor market and the supply of such rarely needed skills; e.g., those of weapons mechanics.

The global commitment of US military personnel drives the "recruitment racket" to staff an "all-volunteer" military, currently spread across over 700 bases throughout the world. Add to the mix the unemployment and underemployment endemic in the United States, and a recipe for channeling the economically disadvantaged into the ranks of the military emerges, enabling the country to continue its interventionist policies.

In a postscript to the new edition, Cortright delves further into the extent of GI resistance during the Vietnam War; drawing from thirty years of evidence on the issue, he argues that GI resistance was much more pervasive than initially thought.

Resistance among GIs stationed at bases in the United States and those stationed in Indochina (and simultaneous dissent at bases elsewhere throughout the globe) threw the status of the US military as a viable institution into question.

Moreover, veterans played a critical role in stoking antiwar sentiment, and VVAW "convincingly demonstrated to the American people and US political leaders that the war had to end."

In fact, the attorney general for the Nixon administration branded VVAW as "the single most dangerous group in the US," clear evidence of its effectiveness as an organization.

Absent from current mainstream media assessments of the situation in Iraq are the substantial and growing contributions of US military personnel to the opposition to the war.

In fact, as with veterans of the Vietnam War, Iraq war veterans and their families have established organizations aimed at bringing the troops home, including Military Families Speak Out, Iraq Veterans Against the War, and Gold Star Families for Peace.

Soldiers in Revolt demonstrates how GI resistance disrupted the social order of the US military and effectively undermined its ability to function.

While the mass protests and social upheavals of the US civilian populace played a critical role in influencing policy, the acts of GI resistance were an enormously important factor in the withdrawal of US forces from Vietnam.

Three decades later, it is clear that **Soldiers in Revolt** can be read not only as a fascinating and detailed history of mobilized discontent among GIs during the Vietnam War, but also as a resource for the current antiwar movement.

**HONOR THE WARRIOR,
NOT THE WAR**

Vietnam Veterans Against the War
Fighting for Veterans, Peace and Justice since 1967
www.vvaw.org



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.

U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR; RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



Foreign fighters from the U.S. armed forces occupying an Iraqi citizens home in Ramadi, June 19, 2006. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg)

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

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

"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."

The Timor Troop Revolt

The US is unhappy with East Timor's close diplomatic relations with China and Cuba, and the Cuban scholarships given to Timorese medical students. Australia has long had problems with the Timorese government over the oil resources and the issue of whether the pipeline should go to Darwin or Timor.

June 20, 2006 By Conn Hallinan, Portside [Excerpt] & June 21 2006, Green Left Weekly [Excerpt]

There is lots of blame to spread around for the recent riots in East Timor that killed over 30 people and paralyzed the capital, Dili. For starters, the World Bank, International Monetary Fund, Australia, and the U.S.

The trigger for the unrest was a decision by Prime Minister Mari Alkatiri to dismiss 600 of the new nation's soldiers. Alkatiri was responding to pressure from the World Bank and the IMF to curb government spending and impose austerity on the debt-laden island.

The dismissed soldiers were mostly easterners, and westerners largely dominate the present East Timor government. The media has played up this 'ethnic tension' angle, although there are no ethnic differences between the two populations. What has caused tension is that the current government is mostly composed of exiles that fled during Indonesia's 25-year reign of terror.

When the soldiers claimed that they were being discriminated against by Dili-dominated government, Alkatiri cavalierly dismissed them.

The real source of the problem is that East Timor was first ravaged by the Indonesians, and then quickly abandoned by the United Nations, in large part because the UN is under severe budget pressure from U.S. and Great Britain. The U.S. is opposing efforts to send UN troops back in.

Timor's underdevelopment is due not only to Indonesia's rapacious exploitation, but also to Australia's refusal to turn over billions of dollars in oil revenues from the Timor Sea. Under current international law those fields belong to East Timor, but Australia claims they are 'disputed.'

According to Freitas*, "kontroladu" (under control) is the term used by East Timor's leaders to describe the current situation in Dili. But only during daylight hours.

At night time, the situation is still tense, although the people try to entertain themselves by watching the World Cup. Those living on the outskirts are still afraid. Smoke from possibly burning houses can be seen at night. The arson attacks seem to be focused on houses of bureaucrats or members of the government on the edges of Dili.

Some ministries have started to operate again during the day, but offices of the ministries for agriculture, mineral resources and energy policy and for development have been looted.

The US is unhappy with East Timor's close diplomatic relations with China and Cuba, and the Cuban scholarships given to Timorese medical students. Australia has long had problems with the Timorese government over the oil resources and the issue of whether the pipeline should go to Darwin or Timor.

"I think it would be very difficult for them to resolve our problems. It seems what they most want is for Alkatiri and (the ruling party) Fretilin to go.

They are concerned that Fretilin would win the 2007 elections again, if they wait until election time. They don't wish to wait another five years, after the 2007 elections. Some of them are supported by the US and Australia, who would rather the Alkatiri government be gone.

**Tomas Freitas is the director of Luta Hamutuk (Fight Together), a research and advocacy institute focusing on economic issues, including East Timor's Petroleum Fund. The Petroleum Fund is a mechanism to regulate the expenditure of East Timor's oil and gas proceeds.*

Freitas was involved in the Timorese clandestine movement against Indonesian occupation and more recently, the campaign for fair maritime boundaries in the Timor Sea. He was interviewed by Green Left Weekly's Vanessa Hearman.

OCCUPATION REPORT

**Ugh.
Me Big U.S. Liberator Man;
You Stupid Native:
You Give Up Now;
Ugh**

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, The Military Project, who contributed to the comments below.]

June 21 2006 Doug Lorimer, Green Left Weekly

Islam Memo reported on June 9 that giant loudspeakers, set up by the US military in the centre of Ramadi, had announced: "To all armed men, your emir has died, and there is no need anymore for you to fight. Therefore, drop your weapons and surrender to the American and Iraqi forces and we promise that we shall not harm you."

[Now we know what hopelessly incompetent former Hollywood writers do for a living. They turn out this inane shit, modeled on the scripts for Tarzan movies produced back in the 1940s. “Ugh. Me Big U.S. Liberator Man. Ugh. Put down your gun. Your big ”emir” man dead. Ugh. You one dumb piece of shit who only fight because big “emir” man tell you to. Ugh. You give up now, we treat you good. Ugh. Like Abu G. Or maybe torture cell. Ugh. Or maybe just kill you, wife and kids. Ha Ha Ha. Ugh.”]

The announcement was met by repeated volleys of mortars and rocket-propelled grenades from Iraqi resistance fighters. [And no doubt had the reporter been able to get close enough, volleys of hilarity as well, at the sheer condescending dimwittedness of it. The resistance reply certainly takes literary criticism to a whole new level.]

[It would appear that the “emirs” at the Pentagon have not a clue they’re dealing with an armed resistance using the most up to date technology, not a bunch of simple-minded characters from a bad Sinbad The Sailor movie, riding around on camels and mouthing stupid dialogue about “emirs.” This charming mix of arrogance and stupidity is an old problem for Imperial armies, and one of the reasons they lose wars of occupation with reliable regularity.

[Arrogant underestimation of the enemy (the announcement above is a classic) has been prominent in the defeat of every lost Imperial war of occupation since the revolutions against colonialism began in the 1950s. This war is no exception.]

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

**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)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

City Commissioner Who Would Limit Food For The Homeless Pushed Law So Dogs Can Eat At Restaurants

June 19, 2006 Local 6 News

The Orlando City Council discussed a controversial plan to limit who can feed the homeless and how often, according to a Local 6 News report.

Each week, several groups travel to Lake Eola in Orlando to provide food for the homeless.

Each week, several groups travel to Lake Eola in Orlando to provide food for the homeless.

City Commissioner Patty Sheehan proposed the bill.

Sheehan said the issue has become one-sided against her and she simply has the interest of all parties at heart, Local 6 reporter Chris Trenkmann said.

"City Commissioner Patty Sheehan has become known as the commissioner for the dogs because she helped pass a state law allowing dogs to eat at restaurants outdoors," Local 6 reporter Chris Trenkmann said. "But, now she is being criticized for not allowing the homeless to eat."

Sheehan has proposed moving the feedings to Lake Eola to Silvia Street. But, businesses in the area are not happy about the idea, Trenkmann said.

A group of supporters for the homeless gathered in downtown Orlando Monday who say they have a right to have the feedings at Lake Eola.

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

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

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

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

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

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