

GI SPECIAL 4G14:

MILITARY PERSONNEL MARCH AGAINST THE WAR ON VIETNAM



Image from sirnosir.com

**“The History Of These
Olive-Drab Rebels Is
Largely Hidden From
Us”**

“By Rulers Who Would Rather Its Lessons Were Forgotten”

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

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Llibcom.org [Excerpts]

1966: The Resistance Begins

The years 1966 and 1967 saw the first acts of resistance among GIs.

Given the general passivity within the ranks and the tight control exercised by the brass, these first acts required a clear willingness for self-sacrifice.

The first major public act of resistance was the refusal, in June of 1966, of three privates from Fort Hood, Texas to ship out to Vietnam. The three men, David Samas, James Johnson, and Dennis Mora, had just completed training and were on leave before their scheduled departure for the war zone. The case received wide publicity, but the men were each eventually sentenced to three years at hard labour.

There followed a series of other individual acts of resistance.

Ronald Lockman, a black GI refused orders to Vietnam with the slogan, "I follow the Fort Hood Three. Who will follow me?"

Capt. Howard Levy refused to teach medicine to the Green Berets, and Capt. Dale Noyd refused to give flying instructions to prospective bombing pilots.

[T]here was also in this period the beginning of an ethical and/or religious resistance. The first clear incident occurred at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, where in April of 1967 five GIs staged a pray-in for peace on base. Two of these GIs refused a direct order to cease praying and were subsequently court-marshalled.

The majority of these early instances of resistance were actually simply acts of refusal; refusal to go to Vietnam, to carry out training, to obey orders. They were important in that they helped to directly confront the intense fear which all GIs feel; they helped to shake up the general milieu of passivity.

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1968: Collapse Of Morale

Up until 1968 the desertion rate for U.S. troops in Vietnam was still lower than in previous wars. But by 1969 the desertion rate had increased fourfold. This wasn't limited to Southeast Asia; desertion rates among GIs were on the increase worldwide.

For soldiers in the combat zone, insubordination became an important part of avoiding horrible injury or death.

As early as mid-1969, an entire company of the 196th Light Infantry Brigade sat down on the battlefield. Later that year, a rifle company from the famed 1st Air Cavalry Division flatly refused - on CBS TV - to advance down a dangerous trail. In the following 12 months the 1st Air Cavalry notched up 35 combat refusals.

The period from 1968 to 1970 was a period of rapid disintegration of morale and widespread rebelliousness within the U.S. military.

There were a variety of causes contributing to this development. By this time the war had become vastly unpopular in the general society, anti-war demonstrations were large and to some degree respectable, and prominent politicians were speaking out against the continuation of the war.

For a youth entering the military in these years the war was already a questionable proposition, and with the ground war raging and coffins coming home every day very few new recruits were enthusiastic about their situation. In addition, the rising level of black consciousness and the rapidly spreading dope culture both served to alienate new recruits from military authority.

Thus, GIs came into uniform in this period with a fairly negative predisposition.

Their experience in the military and in the war transformed this negative pre-disposition into outright hostility.

The nature of the war certainly accelerated this disaffection; a seemingly endless ground war against an often invisible enemy, with the mass of people often openly hostile, in support of a government both unpopular and corrupt.

The Vietnamese revolutionaries also made attempts to reach out to American GIs, with some impact.

From mild forms of political protest and disobedience of war orders, the resistance among the ground troops grew into a massive and widespread “quasi-mutiny” by 1970 and 1971. Soldiers went on “search and avoid” missions, intentionally skirting clashes with the Vietnamese, and often holding three-day-long pot parties instead of fighting.

Clampdown And Repercussions

Initially response to mutinous behaviour was swift and harsh.

Two black marines, William Harvey and George Daniels, were sentenced to six and ten years at hard labour for speaking against the war in their barracks. Privates Dam Amick and Ken Stolte were sentenced to four years for distributing a leaflet.

Ford Ord. Pvt. Theoda Lester was sentenced to three years for refusing to cut his Afro.

And Pvt. Wade Carson was sentenced to six months for "intention" to distribute underground newspaper FED-UP on Fort Lewis.

The pattern was widespread and the message was clear: the brass was not about to tolerate political dissent in its ranks.

However, as the war progressed the stockades (military prisons) became overcrowded with AWOLs and laced with political organisers.

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| <p>In July of 1968 prisoners seized control of the stockade at Fort Bragg and held it for three days, and in June of 1969 prisoners rebelled in the Fort Dix stockade and inflicted extensive damage before being brought under control.</p> |
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Probably the most famous incident of stockade resistance occurred at the Presidio, where 27 prisoners staged a sit-down during morning formation to protest the shot-gun slaying of a fellow prisoner by a stockade guard. The men were charged with mutiny and initially received very heavy sentences, but their sacrifice had considerable impact around the country. After a year their sentences were reduced to time served.

A number of factors eventually helped to weaken the brass's repressive power. Media coverage, public protest, and the general growth of GI resistance all played a part.

The key factor though was that political GIs continued to be dangerous in the stockades, and eventually the military often chose to discharge dissidents and get rid of them all together.

1970: The Rebellion Grows

By 1970, the U.S. Army had 65,643 deserters, roughly the equivalent of four infantry divisions. In an article published in the Armed Forces Journal (June 7, 1971), Marine

Colonel Robert D. Heinl Jr., a veteran combat commander with over 27 years experience in the Marines, and the author of *Soldiers Of The Sea*, a definitive history of the Marine Corps, wrote:

“By every conceivable indicator, our army that remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and non-commissioned officers, drug-ridden, and dispirited where not near mutinous. Elsewhere than Vietnam, the situation is nearly as serious... Sedition, coupled with disaffection from within the ranks, and externally fomented with an audacity and intensity previously inconceivable, infest the Armed Services...”

Heinl cited a New York Times article which quoted an enlisted man saying, “The American garrisons on the larger bases are virtually disarmed. The lifers have taken our weapons away...there have also been quite a few frag incidents in the battalion.”

“Frag incidents” or “fragging” was soldier slang in Vietnam for the killing of strict, unpopular and aggressive officers and NCO’s (Non-Commissioned Officers, or “non-coms”).

Heinl wrote, “Bounties, raised by common subscription in amounts running anywhere from \$50 to \$1,000, have been widely reported put on the heads of leaders who the privates and SP4s want to rub out.” Shortly after the costly assault on Hamburger Hill in mid-1969, one of the GI underground newspapers in Vietnam, *GI Says*, publicly offered a \$10,000 bounty on Lieutenant Colonel Weldon Hunnicutt, the officer who ordered and led the attack.

“The Pentagon has now disclosed that fraggings in 1970 (209 killings) have more than doubled those of the previous year (96 killings).

“Word of the deaths of officers will bring cheers at troop movies or in bivouacs of certain units.”

Congressional hearings on fraggings held in 1973 estimated that roughly 3% of officer and non-com deaths in Vietnam between 1961 and 1972 were a result of fraggings. But these figures were only for killings committed with grenades, and didn’t include officer deaths from automatic weapons fire, handguns and knifings.

The Army’s Judge Advocate General’s Corps estimated that only 10% of fragging attempts resulted in anyone going to trial.

In the America I Division, plagued by poor morale, fraggings during 1971 were estimated to be running around one a week. War equipment was frequently sabotaged and destroyed.

Drug use was epidemic, with an estimated 80% of the troops in Vietnam using some form of drug. Sometime in mid-1970 huge quantities of heroin were dumped on the black market, and GIs were receptive to its enveloping high. By the end of 1971 over 30% of the combat troops were on smack.

By 1972 roughly 300 anti-war and anti-military newspapers, with names like Harass the Brass, All Hands Abandon Ship and Star Spangled Bummer had been put out by enlisted people.

Many hundreds of GIs created these papers, but their influence was far wider, with thousands more who helped distribute them, and tens of thousands of readers. Riots and anti-war demonstrations took place on bases in Asia, Europe and in the United States.

The situation stateside was less intense but no less disturbing to the military brass. Desertion and AWOL became absolutely epidemic. In 1966 the desertion rate was 14.7 per thousand, in 1968 it was 26.2 per thousand, and by 1970 it had risen to 52.3 per thousand; AWOL was so common that by the height of the war one GI went AWOL every three minutes. From January of '67 to January of '72 a total of 354,112 GIs left their posts without permission, and at the time of the signing of the peace accords 98,324 were still missing.

The New Air War, And The New Resistance

By the early 1970s the government had to begin pulling out of the ground war and switching to an "air war," in part because many of the ground troops who were supposed to do the fighting were hamstringing the world's mightiest military force by their sabotage and resistance.

With this shift, the Navy became an important centre of resistance to the war, primarily among crews on Navy attack carriers directly involved in the bombing. While there was dissidence and some political organising among Air Force personnel and in other parts of the Navy, it was where the support crews most directly touched the war that resistance flared.

Probably the most dramatic incident occurred aboard the Navy attack carrier USS Coral Sea in the fall of 1971.

The Coral Sea was docked in California while it prepared for a tour of bombing duty off the coast of Vietnam. On board was a crew of 4,500 men, a few hundred of whom were pilots, the rest being support crew. A handful of men on the ship began circulating a petition which read in part, "We the people must guide the government and not allow the government to guide us! The Coral Sea is scheduled for Vietnam in November. This does not have to be a fact. The ship can be prevented from taking an active part in the conflict if we the majority voice our opinion that we do not believe in the Vietnam war. If you feel that the Coral Sea should not go to Vietnam, voice your opinion by signing this petition."

Though the petition had to be circulated secretly, and though men took a calculated risk putting their name down on something which the brass might eventually see, within a few weeks over 1,000 men had signed it.

Out of this grew an on-ship organisation called "Stop Our Ship" (SOS).

The men engaged in a series of demonstrations to halt their sailing date, and on November 6 over 300 men from the ship led the autumn anti-war march in San Francisco.

Their effort to stop the ship failed, and a number of men jumped ship as the Coral Sea left for Vietnam. But the SOS movement spread to other attack carriers, including the USS Hancock and the USS Ranger.

The Navy continued to be racked by political organising and severe racial unrest.

Sometimes, black and white sailors would rebel together. The most significant of these took place on board the USS Constellation off Southern California, in November 1972. In response to a threat of less-than-honourable discharges against several black sailors, a group of over 100 black and white sailors staged a day-and-a-half long sit-in.

Fearful of losing control of his ship at sea to full-scale mutiny, the ship's commander brought the Constellation back to San Diego. One hundred and thirty-two sailors were allowed to go ashore. They refused orders to re-board the ship several days later, staging a defiant dockside strike on the morning of November 9.

In spite of the seriousness of the rebellion, not one of the sailors involved was arrested.

Sabotage was an extremely useful tactic.

On May 26, 1970, the USS Anderson was preparing to steam from San Diego to Vietnam. But someone had dropped nuts, bolts and chains down the main gear shaft. A major breakdown occurred, resulting in thousands of dollars worth of damage and a delay of several weeks. Several sailors were charged, but because of a lack of evidence the case was dismissed. With the escalation of naval involvement in the war the level of sabotage grew.

In June of 1972 the USS Ranger was disabled by sabotage, and in October both the USS Kittyhawk and the USS Hassayampa were swept by fighting.

In July, within the space of three weeks, two of the Navy's aircraft carriers were put out of commission by sabotage.

On July 10, a massive fire swept through the Admiral's quarters and radar centre of the USS Forrestal, causing over \$7 million in damage. This delayed the ship's deployment for over two months.

In late July, the USS Ranger was docked at Alameda, California. Just days before the ship's scheduled departure for Vietnam, a paint-scraper and two 12-inch bolts were inserted into the number-four-engine reduction gears causing nearly \$1 million in damage and forcing a three-and-a-half month delay in operations for extensive repairs. The sailor charged in the case was acquitted. In other cases, sailors tossed equipment over the sides of ships while at sea.

Though the impact of these actions only slightly impeded the war effort, they helped to maintain a constant pressure on the Administration to withdraw the military from the disaster of the Indochina war.

The House Armed Services Committee summed up the crisis of rebellion in the Navy: "The U.S. Navy is now confronted with pressures...which, if not controlled, will surely destroy its enviable tradition of discipline. Recent instances of sabotage, riot, willful disobedience of orders, and contempt for authority...are clear-cut symptoms of a dangerous deterioration of discipline."



A sailor reads an underground anti-war paper: Image from sirnosir.com

The Makeup Of Resistance

There is a common misconception that it was draftees who were the most disaffected elements in the military. In fact, it was often enlistees who were most likely to engage in open rebellion.

Draftees were only in for two years, went in expecting the worst, and generally kept their heads down until they got out of uniform. While of course many draftees went AWOL and engaged in group resistance when it developed, it was enlistees who were most angry and most likely to act on that anger.

For one thing, enlistees were in for three or four years; even after a tour of duty in 'Nam they still had a long stretch left in the service.

For another thing, they went in with some expectations, generally with a recruiter's promise of training and a good job classification, often with an assurance that they wouldn't be sent to Vietnam. When these promises weren't kept, enlistees were very pissed off. A study commissioned by the Pentagon found that 64% of chronic AWOLs during the war years were enlistees, and that a high percentage were Vietnam vets.

The following incident at a GI movement organising conference illustrates this point:

"A quick poll of the GIs and vets in the room showed that the vast majority of them had come from Regular Army, three or four year enlistments. Many of them expressed the notion that, in fact, it was the enlistees and not discontented draftees who had formed the core of the GI movement.

"A number of reasons were offered for this, including the fact many enlistees do enlist out of the hope of training, and a better job, or other material reasons. When the Army turns out to be a repressive and bankrupt institution, they are the most disillusioned and the most ready to fight back."

The official political Left attempted to involve itself in GI organising. Civilian counter-cultural coffee-shops were set up outside garrisons in the US to try to reach out to rank-and-file soldiers, with some limited success.

Most left-wing parties proved themselves to be merely interested in recruitment or media-grabbing antics rather than sustained, long-term organising efforts which saw groups like the attempted American Servicemen's Union disintegrate.

Subsequently it was the troops themselves who organised their own resistance, driven by their own experiences of life in the Army.

However, the rebellion in the ranks didn't emerge simply in response to battlefield conditions. A civilian anti-war movement in the U.S. had emerged on the coat tails of the civil rights movement, at a time when the pacifism-at-any-price tactics of civil rights leaders had reached their effective limit, and were being questioned by a younger, combative generation.

Working class blacks and Latinos served in combat units out of all proportion to their numbers in American society, and groups such as the Black Panther Party, and major urban riots in Watts, Detroit and Newark had an explosive effect on the consciousness of these men.

After the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. major riots erupted in 181 U.S. cities; at that point the rulers of the United States were facing the gravest national crisis since the Civil War.

And the radical movement of the late 1960s wasn't limited to the United States. Large-scale rebellion was breaking out all over the world, in Latin American and Europe and Africa, and even against the Maoists in China.

Its high points were the wildcat general strike that shut down France in May, 1968, and the near-state of insurrection in the 60s and 70s in Italy - the last time major industrialised democracies came close to social revolution.

Conclusion

The history of these olive-drab rebels is largely hidden from us, by rulers who would rather its lessons were forgotten.

That the might of the most powerful military on Earth is worth naught if workers refuse to refuse to kill or oppress their fellow workers, and that the only allegiance which benefits us is not to our countries, our Generals, or to our flags, but to our class.

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

MNF W SAILOR KILLED

7/13/2006 06-07-01CE

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: A Sailor assigned to 9th Naval Construction Regiment died due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province on July 12.

Family Confirms Death Of Area Sailor

July 14, 2006, By Thomas Geyer, The Quad-City Times

ALEDO, Ill.: The family of Navy Reservist Jerry Tharp of Aledo confirmed Thursday that the sailor has been killed in the line of duty while serving in Iraq.

A U.S. flag flew at half-staff in the front yard of Tharp's rural Aledo home Thursday afternoon.

A single star hanging in a window signified that a person in the house was serving in the military overseas.

Tharp would be the 12th person with Quad-City ties to die in the line of duty while serving in Iraq.

According to a military news release, the sailor was assigned to the 9th Naval Construction Regiment, and that "he died due to enemy action" while operating in Al-Anbar Province.

Wright Soldier Wounded

July 13th, 2006 Wendy Johnson, The Pine Journal

Brian Saaristo, a soldier from Wright who is serving with the United States Army's 101st Airborne Division, has been wounded while in Iraq.

According to Pastor Matt Saarem of Bethany Lutheran Church of Cromwell, Saaristo lost both of his legs below the knees as the result of injuries incurred during an attack.

Reportedly, a roadside bomb hit the Humvee Saaristo was travelling in.

Saarem said Saaristo was flown to Germany and then to Washington, D.C., where he will spend coming weeks to heal and recuperate from his injuries.

His wife, Cheryl, traveled to Washington, D.C., on Tuesday, July 4, to be with him. The Saaristos have two children.

**REALLY BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
HOPELESS WAR:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



6.30.06: Marines patrolling the interior of Combat Outpost Falcon south of Ramadi. (AFP/USMC-HO/Cpl. Daniel J. Redding)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two Foreign Occupation Troops Wounded In Pech Valley; Nationality Not Announced

7.13.06 By NOOR KHAN - Associated Press

Two coalition forces were slightly wounded in an ambush in Kunar province's Pech River Valley Wednesday, said military spokeswoman Lt. Tamara Lawrence.

Resistance Attacks In Force At Nawzad And Shamalzai

07/13/06 Reuters & By NOOR KHAN, Associated Press & July 14, 2006 Xinhua

Some 200 militants, driving four-wheel-drive vehicles, poured into the Helmand provincial town of Nawzad around midday Wednesday and set up positions around a police compound where Afghan soldiers and police, along with coalition forces, were based, spokesman Ghulam Muhiddin said.

"The Taliban surrounded this area, including a nearby bazaar, and told all their shopkeepers to leave before attacking the compound with small-arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades," Muhiddin told The Associated Press.

Soldiers and Afghan forces inside the compound returned fire, said coalition spokeswoman Capt. Julie Roberge.

In neighboring Musa Qala district, insurgents fired rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns at coalition troops.

In southern Zabul province, three Afghan border guards were killed in a clash Wednesday with armed tribesmen crossing from Pakistan, border guard chief Jailani Khan said Thursday.

Armed men in a convoy of cars carrying about 200 members of the Nasser tribe crossed into the Shamalzai district and fired on border guards trying to stop them, Khan said. He said he didn't know if there were any casualties among the tribespeople.

Militants ambushed an Afghan government convoy, killing two policemen.

Three border policemen were killed in southern Afghanistan as Taliban-linked militants stormed their posts, a local official said Thursday.

"A group of armed Taliban insurgents attacked Shamanzai district in Zabul province yesterday at 5:00 a.m., killing three border policemen," commander of the district's border police, Jilani Khan, told Xinhua.

TROOP NEWS

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



Baggage handlers at Tampa International Airport unload the casket of Army Sgt. Bryan Luckey, 25, of Tampa, July 8, 2006 in Tampa, Fla. Luckey died June 29, 2006, in Iraq. (AP Photo/Brian Cassella, Pool)

**“You Don’t Have To Be In A
Place Where There Are
Gunfights Every Day To See
How Horrible The Occupation
Is”**



Kelly Dougherty (csindy.com)

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

June 30, 2006 Kelly Dougherty, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

KELLY DOUGHERTY served in Nasariyah, Iraq, as a member of the Colorado Army National Guard.

After her return, she cofounded Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW). Kelly spoke about her experiences and the antiwar struggle as part of a panel discussion with war resisters Camilo Mejía and Pablo Paredes at the Socialism 2006 conference in New York City.

I WAS in the Colorado National Guard as a medic, but when I was activated to go to Iraq, I had been in the military seven years. I had been on one overseas deployment before--to the Balkans.

It may seem naïve, but I wasn't expecting to get called up, even though it looked like the war was going to happen. I was a medic in a medical unit, and the military police company that I used to be in got activated to go to Kuwait. I was transferred back to that unit and changed job titles from medic to military police.

At the time, I was against the idea of a war against Iraq. Up to that point, I hadn't been really politically educated, but I definitely had certain viewpoints.

When you're in the military, you feel very intimidated and helpless to stand up for yourself because you're under all this pressure to follow orders and go with the flow. Don't stand up for yourself--not only because you face punishment, but also because you don't want the people you're serving with to say that you're hurting the integrity of the team.

I went with the unit to Kuwait in February 2003. About three or four weeks after the war started, we moved north into Iraq and spent the next 10 months there.

I think it's important to hear soldiers from Iraq tell their stories, regardless of where they were. Some veterans were in combat units that saw a lot of gunfights, a lot of roadside bombs, they lost a lot of people in their unit. They can really testify to how horrible war can be--not only for the soldiers, but for the civilians.

But my experience wasn't really like that. I think it shows more the day-to-day routine of a foreign occupation.

We were in the south, which was and still is generally one of the safer areas in Iraq. In the time I was there, I was never shot at, we never got hit by a roadside bomb, there were never any suicide bombers attacking us. We were generally safe compared to a lot of other veterans I've talked to, and the Iraqi people in that area were generally safer than Iraqis in other parts of the country.

But at the same time, you saw the inescapable violence--whether it was intentional or unintentional--that happened every single day just because we were in their country as an occupying army.

You don't have to be in a place where there are gunfights every day to see how horrible the occupation is for the people who live there and the people who are forced to fight it.

AS PART of a military police company, our two main jobs were patrols and convoy escorts. We were escorting Kellogg, Brown and Root (KBR) fuel tankers and flatbed trucks from Kuwait north to military bases in Iraq.

It's hard to comprehend how many vehicles drive in Iraq every day for these convoys. And they're U.S.-contracted vehicles going up and down the streets that the Iraqi people drive on.

There are often traffic accidents caused by military vehicles or contracted vehicles, and it's almost always the Iraqi people who come out the worse for it because they're driving in their small cars or they're crossing the street. If they get hit or their car gets damaged, there aren't a lot of resources that they have. So there's this low-level destruction that goes on day after day after day.

When trucks in these convoys broke down, we had to guard them from the Iraqi people. The logic was that if you let the Iraqi people have a truck or what's on a truck that broke down, then they're going to see that they can have that, so they're going to start running vehicles off the road on purpose.

So we would guard these vehicles for hour after hour after hour while we called back to have KBR send someone to recover the truck. And in the meantime, we would get in a confrontation with Iraqi civilians who were waiting around trying to get anything from the truck--a door handle, a tire, the lug nuts. Or they wanted the actual cargo--a lot of times, these trucks carried diesel fuel, but they had other things, too.

In almost every instance, we would be told finally that they're not going to send someone, they can't right now, so just leave the vehicle. It was so frustrating for us, because here we were getting into violent confrontations, hurting the Iraqis with rubber bullets and mace and riot batons.

Luckily, it never turned deadly on either side with my unit, but I always thought that this was going to be the day that some Iraqi brings an AK47 and shoots at us, and I know once that happens, people are going to open up fire.

To go through that--to feel like you were putting yourself in danger, and it was really scary many times, especially in the evening.

I remember one time in particular when we had gone to secure two semi trucks that had jackknifed and were blocking the road. There were people everywhere. It was dark, and we were vastly outnumbered.

People were running up to the trucks, and we were trying to keep them back--hitting them, macing them to keep them away. And we knew we were just going to leave the trucks in the end.

It was so frustrating. Why do I have to hit an Iraqi with my riot baton? Because I feel my life is in danger? But at the same time, I know that what I'm guarding is not viewed as an asset when it comes down to it.

A lot of times we would destroy the cargo and the engine block so that vehicles couldn't be driven after we abandoned them. We would burn the fuel and burn the cargo on the truck, because those were our orders. So there's produce on that flatbed truck, and there are 300 Iraqis standing around, but we can't let them take the produce because it will create too much of a crowd, and we'll have to push them back--like the Iraqi people were just dogs.

I think this is just inherent in the fact of occupation. You can't escape it. You can't say if more women joined the Army, or if people with a better education or a better social conscience joined the Army, it wouldn't be like that. It's the situation that determines how people respond. And there's no way around that.

I was against the war, but I had this hope that maybe we'll go in there and have a positive impact--that we'll help the Iraqis to rebuild, we'll make things better for them. I didn't see that happen at all.

I think that's really what made me decide that I wanted to get more involved and more educated about what was going on--it's not just Iraq, it's other wars, it's policies, it's the military and how it's run. That's what led to me to become involved when I got back, but it was a process.

I THINK that a group like the IVAW has tremendous potential to effect change and stop this war. As veterans, our voice carries a lot of weight. Not that our views against the war are more important than anyone else's views, but people take them seriously because we've been in the military and we've witnessed that firsthand.

I think one of the big challenges facing not only our group, but veterans' and antiwar groups is getting women more involved in the movement. The military is very male dominated. I think about 10 to 15 percent of the military is women, but it's a hyper-masculine, violent culture that women are in.

So when women get out of the military, I think the last thing many of us want to do is join an organization full of military men even if they're antiwar. Many women have had bad experiences in the military--the way they're treated by their counterparts, and they don't want to deal with that anymore. They just want to try to move on with their lives.

In a lot of cases, that military mentality slips into groups like ours. I think that IVAW has been aware of this, and right now, a little over 10 percent of our members are women, so it's a similar ratio to the military. But we're really trying to incorporate women and make them feel safe and make them feel like this is the place where they can come to be around fellow veterans, but not feel that sense of danger that they may have felt in the military.

For instance, when we were escorting convoys in Kuwait, women couldn't be out alone after dark because there was such a high incidence of sexual assault against women by soldiers.

So you're in an area where you can't trust the soldiers you're over there fighting with, and you constantly have to look over your shoulder. At the same time, you're going out in the same roles as the men--to do patrols, convoys, raids, checkpoint. These are basically infantry tactics, but women do them, too, even though they're not called infantry soldiers. It's like fighting a war on two fronts.

Specialist Suzanne Swift recently refused to redeploy to Iraq. She was also in a military police company. She refused to go because she was getting sexually assaulted and sexually harassed on a daily basis while she was in Iraq, and also once she returned to her unit.

When she finally decided to report one of her sergeants, he wasn't punished, and she was made to feel like a pariah--like, look what you did.

It's common. I think a lot of women might feel like it's their fault, or I just have to keep my mouth shut.

Often, if women want to report something, the chain of command will ask do you really want to do this? This sergeant that you say assaulted you has a military career and a family--do you really want to ruin someone's military career? They're made to feel very guilty.

This goes all the way up. The same system that will condone and sanction torture of prisoners is the same system that silences women and makes them feel intimidated and even encourages men to continue in this behavior.

I think it's important for our group and other groups that we work with to recognize that there are women in the military, and that their stories are similar to the men's, but that we also face different struggles that are specific to being a women in the military and in the peace movement.

I think a lot of people take for granted that there are women in the military and the IVAW--oh, that's great.

But you can still see that a lot of people don't identify women veterans as being on an equal level as the male veterans.

If I'm wearing this IVAW shirt at a rally and standing by Camilo, I guarantee that a lot of people will talk to Camilo and not look at me because they just think that I'm there as his girlfriend.

I've encountered that kind of mentality over and over--to go somewhere wearing my desert camouflage uniform top with my name on it, and an older veteran says to me, "Your husband must have been in the military."

So I think it's about education. People don't mean to be disrespectful or not value your experience, but I think people don't know. So that's one of the things that IVAW is focusing on.

We're having a meeting in Seattle this August with Veterans for Peace, and we'll be having education courses to deal with those kinds of issues, so that we can make our organization one that doesn't just say it's welcoming to everyone, but truly is welcoming and safe and a place where people feel like they don't have to be on the defensive.



IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Overruns Rashaad Checkpoint;

12 Collaborator Soldiers Killed



A wrecked Iraqi army vehicle on the site where resistance fighters killed 13 Iraqi soldiers at Rashaad. (AFP/Marwan Ibrahim)

7.14.06 Reuters & Aljazeera

Resistance fighters attacked an Iraqi army checkpoint in northern Iraq on Friday, killing 13 soldiers and wounding one.

They attacked the soldiers in Rashaad, 40 km (24 miles) south of Kirkuk, with rocket propelled grenades and machineguns at 3.30 p.m. (1130 GMT). The Defense Ministry confirmed the incident but said it had no details.

Assorted Resistance Action

12 July 2006 The Associated Press & Reuters & 13 Jul 2006 Reuters & Aljazeera & Santa Barbara News-Press & AP & July 14 (KUNA) & (Reuters) & By KIM GAMEL (AP)

A bomber rammed his car into a police patrol, killing three and wounding eight Kurdish security forces, in Kirkuk.

Guerrillas attacked a police patrol, killing a police officer and wounding another in Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Five policemen were wounded when clashes erupted between resistance fighters and policemen in the western Sunni Ghazaliya district

A bomber blew himself up in the city council of the town of Abi Saida, 80 km (60 miles) north of Baghdad, killing six people and wounding three, including the head of the city council, police said.

Three Iraqi soldiers were killed and three wounded when resistance soldiers attacked a checkpoint at the entrance of al-Abasi.

Five Iraqi soldiers were wounded by a roadside bomb in the northern city of Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A car bomber struck a police patrol in the northern city of Mosul. Two policemen and three civilians were killed, and two policemen and three civilians were wounded.

Security sources in Irbil said that heads of two decapitated Iraqi soldiers were found in western Kirkuk in northern Iraq.

One policeman was killed and another wounded when guerrillas opened fire on their car in central Kirkuk, police said.

A sniper killed two policemen manning a checkpoint in Tal Afar on Thursday, police said.

Police in the northern Baghdad neighborhood of Azamiyah were ambushed when they arrived to collect six bodies that had been found; one policeman was wounded.

In the northern city of Mosul a policeman was shot to death outside his home; and militants in a car killed a judge's bodyguard.

Guerrillas at a fake checkpoint killed four policemen from Karbala who were in Baghdad for a training course.

The bodies of four council members have been pulled from the rubble after a village council headquarters northeast of Baghdad was hit by a bicycle bomb. South of Baghdad, authorities say a member of a provincial council was also killed.

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

**Thousands Of Iraqis Condemn US &
Israel Over Lebanon;
"No, No To Israel! No, No To America!"
Demonstrators Chanted In Sadr City**



Iraqi citizens hold a poster of Lebanese Hezbollah leader Sheikh Hassan Nasrallah as they rally against Israel and the United States following Friday noon prayers in the town of Kufa. Nasrallah, whose home and office were targeted by Israeli warplanes, has long been one of the Zionist state's foremost foes. (AFP)

7.14.06 AFP & July 13, 2006, BASSEM MROUE, Associated Press Writer

Moqtada al-Sadr has lashed out at Israel and urged Iraqis to stand behind Lebanon to confront a "common enemy". "We say a no, a thousand no's to Israel and its terrorism, and everybody should know that we in Iraq will not stay quiet against the rampaging Zionists," Sadr said Friday in a statement issued from the southern Shiite holy city of Najaf.

"I urge the people of Iraq and the political parties to stand behind the people of Lebanon. Let us forget our divisions, because I know our unity will be the arm to help the Lebanese in their confrontation with our common enemy."

Sadr, known for his strong anti-US stand, said: "Our hearts are broken by the bombings unleashed by the terrorist Zionist enemy with the backing from the enemy of all people, America."

"Despite being under occupation and extremely severe conditions, we tell them (Lebanon) that we are with you and not with your enemy. We hope you will be patient and courageous in facing our common enemy," he added.

"God bless the people who are defending their country, their territories and their sacred sites." "We hope the day will come when Iraqi forces are strong enough to be in charge of security. Then, we will be happy to see the Mahdi Army merged into the military and security forces," said Sheik Abdul-Zahra al-Suwejadi, a senior al-Sadr aide.

Their presence in Sadr City has reassured residents so that thousands of them drive and mill about the streets freely at night, even after an 8:30 p.m. curfew. Al-Sadr - an outspoken opponent of the U.S. military presence - has used the Mahdi Army to emerge as a key figure among the Shiite majority, despite hostility not only from the Americans but many Shiite leaders as well.

Although the Mahdi Army's current size is unclear, it is widely believed to number more than 10,000 fighters, including former soldiers from Saddam's army.

Amer al-Husseini, al-Sadr's representative in Sadr City, said local leaders can mobilize thousands of Mahdi Army members within minutes through calls by mosques loudspeakers. He maintained the Mahdi Army is gaining more members every day.

All members are being registered and issued uniforms of yellow shirts and black trousers, al-Sadr aides say. That has helped imbue a new sense of confidence within Mahdi Army ranks at a time when pressure is mounting to disband it.

Thousands of Iraqis also demonstrated in the Shiite district of Sadr City in Baghdad and the southeastern cities of Kut and Amarah, praising the leader of Hezbollah and denouncing Israel and the United States. Some protesters said they were ready to fight the Israelis.

"No, no to Israel! No, no to America!" demonstrators chanted in Sadr City.

"Let everyone understand that we will not stand idle," read one of the banners carried by the demonstrators. "Iraq and Lebanon are calling. Enough silence, Arabs," read another.

Get The Message?



Armed demonstrators against the U.S. occupation of Iraq and Zionist attacks on Lebanon stand behind a makeshift Lebanese flag in Baghdad's Sadr City. Iraqis from both sides of the country's sectarian divide have condemned Israel's attacks on Lebanon and Gaza. (AFP/Wissam Al-Okaili)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

It Seems So Long Ago:

“Combat Refusals” Reported From Iraq

August 02, 2004 Onkar Singh in New Delhi, rediff.com India Limited

According to their accounts of Indian truck drivers who returned after working in Iraq, whenever armed militants attacked a convoy of trucks ferrying supplies to US troops in Iraq, the escort vehicles carrying American soldiers, instead of protecting the convoy, would be the first to flee leaving the unarmed and hapless truck drivers to fend for themselves.

Truck driver Harnek Singh (30) told *rediff.com* over phone from his residence in Jalandhar district of Punjab that some Indian truck drivers had been caught by people opposed to American occupation but were let off after being beaten up and in return for a promise not to return to Iraq.

“The Iraqis think that the truckers are the life line of the American forces in Iraq and if the truck drivers refuse to work then the Americans would find it difficult to continue the occupation of Iraq and would be forced to leave. They told us that they have nothing against the people of India and hence not to assist the Americans. If we worked for the Americans, then we would be seen as enemies of Iraqis,” he said.

What forced Harnek to return was the attitude of the American forces.

"We took food for them in 60-foot long trucks. But once inside the army camps, we were held captive at gunpoint by American soldiers and not allowed to leave. Their treatment was horrible.

When a convoy was attacked, the escort vehicles would simply speed off in different directions and leave the hapless truck drivers to fend for themselves," he said.

Tarlok Singh (43) of Kalabakra village in Jalandhar district returned to India on the same day as Harnek. He not only corroborated what the other truckers told *rediff.com* but also gave a vivid description of an April 10 attack on a convoy of trucks.

"As the convoy of 18 trucks moved from Kuwait to Tikrit via Baghdad, we came under heavy fire soon after we had passed the Iraqi capital.

"A glass splinter entered the eye of Abdul Shakoor of Kolkata, who was driving the first truck. Another driver Aroop Singh was hit in both the thighs and was bleeding but did not stop.

The three escort vehicles in the front simply sped off and the one at the back took a U-turn and sped back to Baghdad.

"We sped on touching speeds of 135 kilometres per hour. The bodies of the trucks had gaping holes all over. It was only after we had covered six kilometers that the firing stopped. Once we reached Tikrit, we got Aroop admitted to a hospital and 15 days later he was taken back to Kuwait but only after we raised a hue and cry about it," Tarlok Singh told *rediff.com*.

Both Harnek Singh and Tarlok Singh declared that they would prefer to die of starvation rather than work in Kuwait or Iraq.

Cease-Fires

Comment:

Through history, cease fires have been an honorable way for armies to stop killing each other for no good reason, while the politicians try to make a deal.

They come in two forms:

- 1. Official, through the chain of command.**
- 2. Unofficial, as in Vietnam, where U.S. and North Vietnamese soldiers agreed to stop killing each other in a given local situation, and which the chain of command either didn't know about, or looked the other way because the officer(s) in question wished to live.**

T

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

1000 Collaborators Graduate: 700 Patriots Go AWOL



(AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg, File)

A soldier from the first entirely Sunni basic training class decides not to collaborate with the occupation during a graduation ceremony in Habaniyah April 30, 2006.

Their televised graduation was supposed to be a moment of national celebration:

A class of 1,000 Sunni Arab soldiers graduated. Two months later, only about 300 of them have reported for duty, U.S. officials say. (AP Photo/Jacob Silberberg, File)

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

**Silliest Bullshit Of The Year, So Far:
Occupation Propaganda Offensive Brags
That Security In Province Handed Over
To Locals “For The First Time”**

But Occupation Troops Will Stay

13 July 2006 BBC NEWS

Britain has handed over responsibility for security in one of Iraq's 18 provinces to local forces for the first time since the country was invaded. An agreement transferring power in Muthanna was signed by Major General John Cooper, who commands coalition forces in southern Iraq.

The numbers involved in the handover were small; just 700 British and Australian soldiers.

A small Australian force will continue to offer assistance.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

WHICH SIDE ARE YOU ON?



A Palestinian man protecting his child against a Zionist thug during a wedding ceremony, in the occupied Palestinian village of Bil'in, near the West Bank town of Ramallah, July 14, 2006. 26 Palestinians and international activists were injured, including the bride, when Zionist border police attacked the peaceful celebration. (AP Photo/Muhammed Muheisen)

Aiming To Kill Hamas Military Leaders, Israeli Air Force Kills 9 Members Of A Family Instead

July 13, 2006 By STEVEN ERLANGER, The New York Times Company

GAZA, July 12: Israeli intelligence identified the correct target; a three-story concrete house on the northern edge of Gaza City where top Hamas military men were holding a meeting. They included Muhammad Deif, chief of the military wing, sought by Israel for more than a decade, and Raed Saad, his top aide.

The Israeli Air Force hit the target accurately at 3 a.m., collapsing the back of the house into a concrete sandwich, while the front teetered backward, resting on the rubble behind.

But the top men of Hamas's secretive military wing, the most important of the groups that have held a captured Israeli soldier since June 25, escaped, apparently injured, even after another Israeli missile was fired on a car fleeing the scene.

Instead, the bombing killed 9 members of the Salmiyeh family, a father, mother and 7 of the couple's 10 children, ages 7 to 18, who were on the upper floors of the house.

It was another example of Israeli disregard for Palestinian life, in the views of neighbors and onlookers.

The eldest son, Muhammad Salmiyeh, was on the upper balcony, Mr. Zughbor remembered, screaming, "We're still breathing, help us!"

He also said he remembered seeing headless torsos and the body of a small child in the olive trees beside the house. One son, Awad, was dug out of the rubble four hours later, and underwent an operation at Al Shifa hospital here.

At the funeral for the Salmiyeh family members, the dead were borne aloft by hundreds of mourners. There was the usual shooting of guns into the air and the fervent praise for the martyrs. There were the flags of all the militant groups: the green of Hamas, the yellow of Fatah, the black of Islamic Jihad, the red of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. As usual, there was not a Palestinian flag to be seen.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

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)

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/gispecial/2006/index.html>;

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

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

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