

GI SPECIAL 4G19:

THE NEW LEBANESE FLAG



[Gorillasguides.blogspot.com]

**Nation Breaking:
A Soldiers' Meticulous, Detailed
Account Of A Complete Disaster:
"We Were Fighting A War To
Establish Permanent Bases In Iraq To
Better Manipulate The Flow Of Middle
East Oil"**

[Thanks to D, who sent this in.]

I began to wonder: if the highest-ranking officers in a battalion did not care to interact with the Iraqis, how were the generals in the Pentagon to know what was going on? How would the president know? I realized that they wouldn't—and they didn't care because training the Iraqis was of little real interest.

That's not to say that the men who died in Iraq died for nothing. They were doing their jobs. But the Bush administration disgraces their memories by stating that our only option is to prolong a losing policy. This administration refuses to learn from its mistakes, level with the soldiers fighting its war, and bring the sad American chapter called Iraq to a close.

July 3, 2006 By Joe W. Guthrie, The American Conservative

Joe W. Guthrie served three years in the U.S. Army as an Infantry officer and was honorably discharged in December 2005. He now works as a PE teacher and coach at a private school in Florida.

I didn't grow up with dreams of spreading democracy. I was an all-American kid from a small southern town who went to college on a baseball scholarship and joined the National Guard to earn some extra money. During graduate school, recruiters persuaded me to join the Army through ROTC so that after graduation I would enter as an officer. I bought their pitch and believed our newly elected president when he promised no more nation building. My dad told me, "It's a great time to join the military. It has done an excellent job of repairing itself after Vietnam."

I was commissioned as a Second Lieutenant in December 2002 and, after paratrooper and additional officer training, was transferred from the 82nd Airborne Infantry to the new Stryker Brigade units at Ft. Lewis. In October 2004, I deployed to Iraq.

I went with an open mind. By then, the mission was well underway, and we had heard the negative reports filtering back. But I believed that I could make a difference and felt honored to serve. The fact that I had received more Arabic language and culture training than any other soldier in my battalion made me feel vital to an important mission.

But I was anxious too. I had gotten married just three months before and wondered whether I would ever see my new wife again. I wondered what I would do in a firefight. My whole life I had heard that fear of the unknown is the greatest fear, and in October 2004, it was for me.

Confidence in my training and my government somewhat quelled these fears. During the flight to Iraq, I thought of my first jump in airborne school three years before. No clearer picture of the proverbial leap of faith existed in my mind—yet I knew greater challenges awaited.

I also flashed back to that conversation with my dad when I joined the Guard.

Having lived through the Vietnam era, he had always expressed displeasure with certain government institutions during that period.

Like many of his generation, he found himself questioning authorities previously considered worthy of unflinching support. I always found these views curious because with the exception of this interlude in American history, my father always supported the government and raised me to do the same.

“I don’t believe that our government will ever allow our military to become involved in a war like Vietnam again,” he told me. “The American people would not stand for it.”

Those words would haunt me in the months ahead.

Within 48 hours of our boots touching Iraqi soil, my battalion was on the move to Mosul, which had historically enjoyed a reputation as a center of Mideast commerce, prized for its oilfields. But by the time we arrived, it teetered on the edge of collapse. Iraqi police had nearly all deserted their duties, and lawlessness reigned.

I was designated the Iraqi army liaison officer, an assignment I took seriously. From the outset of the war, both President Bush and my superior officers had emphasized that training the Iraqi army was key to our mission’s success.

But the longer I spent, the more I came to realize that this was not only a lie but an impossible strategy for achieving victory.

Army doctrine and training have not accounted for a unit in combat having both to fight an insurgency and train indigenous peoples to assist in the fight.

I started out as a one-man operation that grew into a cell of 60 people who rotated in for a week to a couple of months at a time. That infusion of manpower would seem to bolster the notion that Iraqi training was a priority.

In reality, our leadership sent soldiers with suicidal tendencies, weight problems, and disillusionment. In a year’s time, we received only one visit from the battalion commander, only one visit from our battalion’s operations officer, and only one visit from the battalion executive officer.

This isolation set us up for failure with the Iraqis.

Meetings with the Iraqi colonel in our partner Iraqi army battalion were conducted by a master sergeant and me, and almost always a problem arose in these meetings beyond our authority to control. When asked to meet with our Iraqi army colonel, our battalion commander refused.

I began to wonder: if the highest-ranking officers in a battalion did not care to interact with the Iraqis, how were the generals in the Pentagon to know what was

going on? How would the president know? I realized that they wouldn't—and they didn't care because training the Iraqis was of little real interest.

From October 2004 to September 2005, fewer than 180 fresh-from-the streets recruits were trained by our cell and incorporated into the Iraqi army battalion in Mosul, though the battalion's personnel total was exaggerated by the Iraqis.

These errors, while reported by our cell, were ignored by our superiors.

Between October 2004 and April 2005, we conducted several headcounts of Iraqi army battalion personnel and never found more than 350 present at one time. But the Iraqis recorded 1,300, and the Iraqi figures were taken as accurate.

When we reported this discrepancy, we were told we must factor in the number supposedly on vacation. Every month we sent accurate numbers, and in each case we were ordered to count at least 200 soldiers as being on leave. No proof that they were actually on authorized leave was ever provided except for the Iraqi army officers' word.

During our first month in Mosul, we were unable to conduct basic training due to Ramadan, so we opted to focus our efforts on facilities upgrade.

But our requests to KBR—Kellogg, Brown and Root, Halliburton's subsidiary company—failed because the contractor would not service any facility housing Iraqis, only Americans. Air conditioning and heat did not exist. Electricity often did not flow. These amenities could have been added easily by KBR.

Our cell searched for help with money from a budget earmarked for Iraqi training but was ultimately unsuccessful. Iraqi contractors were often crooked and more familiar with the American system of payments than we were, our battalion chain of command refused to divert any American supplies or manpower to solve the problem, and giving money to Iraqis to fix their own infrastructure proved worthless because the money simply went into the hands of the highest-ranking Iraqi present.

During our struggles, our U.S. battalion enjoyed much greater success finding contractors for its own projects. Upgrades for our detainee facilities were completed in less than a month, but the contractors responsible for these projects were never allowed to help us.

In addition to manpower shortages and facility failure, training doctrine was never uniformly approved nor implemented.

An example: when we arrived in Mosul, we were given a manual by our preceding unit, which falsely described the procedure for clearing—making sure ammunition was no longer in the chamber of a weapon. The procedure given to us, which had been taught to the Iraqis for months, called for an additional step that did not appear in any manual in the U.S. Army.

Upon discovering this error, our cell's master sergeant blacked out all manuals illustrating the errant function and instituted the correct teaching.

However, old habits die hard. In January 2005, one of our U.S. soldiers was killed by an Iraqi attempting to clear his weapon inside a Stryker vehicle. He pulled the trigger, consistent with the mistaken teaching he received, and one of our heroes was gone forever.

The Army investigators ruled that the faulty system instilled by the American unit preceding us caused the problem.

However, this practiced continued. In June 2005, some of the soldiers within our cell witnessed Special Forces soldiers implementing the same procedure that cost our soldier his life. After correcting the Special Forces team, our soldiers were told to "get your nose out of SF business."

In June 2005, Special Forces took over some of our training mission. After a quick tour, they announced that they would initiate driver's training for our Iraqi battalion though we had completed it four months prior.

Our master sergeant complained to both Special Forces and our battalion commander that this training had already been covered, and he was overruled.

Our superiors were so uninterested in the training program that they would have voiced equal approval of Iraqis riding pigs.

In March 2005, we began to push our trainees out on independent missions. They planned, briefed their troops, rehearsed, and executed the missions by themselves. All of these actions were repeated in June 2005, when Special Forces took over. Similarly, beginning in January 2005, every soldier in our Iraqi army battalion had participated in basic rifle marksmanship training. In June 2005, the same training was repeated by Special Forces. There was no coherence to the program, nor discernable progress.

In April 2005, a push began across Iraq to utilize more personnel in Iraqi army training. According to the briefing I was given, a minimum of 15 soldiers made an adequate cell. Our cell already surpassed this number, but our battalion decided to upgrade it to nearly 60 soldiers to satisfy the Bush administration's contention that large numbers of Iraqis were being trained and large numbers of U.S. soldiers were doing the training.

But we needed more officers, not soldiers, so many of the newly acquired men ended up sitting around. No one bothered to ask whether a need existed.

If anyone had, we would have said that the Iraqis did not have as many people present as U.S. commanders contended and that the Iraqi soldiers supposedly coming off vacation never did so simply because they did not exist. When these problems were brought to our battalion, our integrity was questioned.

Moreover, our daily presence became highly resented by the Iraqis, especially their officers. They felt that the Iraqi army needed to be the sole authority responsible for training. Their battalion commander told me that any attempt by American officers to live

in his training compound would be considered spying. And that was just the start of the conflicts. Most Iraqi officers considered their knowledge of the city and insurgents far superior to American technology and training, while Americans considered the Iraqis undisciplined and lazy.

Logistical issues compounded these operational headaches.

For the first five months of our tour, we received no boots or uniforms for the Iraqis despite numerous searches and deals gone awry.

We were told to utilize the local economy, but the only contractor we could find disappeared after we gave him an initial payment of \$20,000. (The vanishing contractor had been recommended by the Iraqi battalion commander.)

Months later, we discovered that two buildings, covered in weeds and rust and seemingly empty, were not. The Iraqis had told us that nothing was housed in these two buildings. One day we decided to open them and discovered enough equipment to outfit three battalions. Some of it read “March 2003”—the leadership of the Iraqi battalion had been hoarding this equipment for years. For all we knew they had been selling the uniforms to terrorist organizations. In addition, we also found a large cache of mines, mortar tubes, machine guns, and ammunition in an adjacent building. The resident Iraqi company commander was ostensibly fired by the Iraqi battalion commander, but we saw him return less than two weeks later. When we reported to our battalion, we were told, “Well, after all, it is their army.”

Our cell’s replacement arrived in June in combination form. The first part came from two Special Forces teams. The second was part of the MiTT program (Military Transition Team), consisting of ten soldiers who were either experienced enlisted personnel or officers—meaning they had at least six to ten years time in the Army. I went with other Iraqi Army Liaison Officers from different battalions to Taji to meet with these men and describe what they would face in Mosul.

To my dismay, I quickly learned they possessed no knowledge of their final destination. They made the journey with no radio communication, some with only one pair of boots, no information on where they would go or what they would be doing when they got there.

I expected to hear questions like “What sort of operational tempo do your Iraqi counterparts possess?” In contrast, I was asked, “Lieutenant, do you have e-mail capability up in Mosul? Nobody has told us anything and I really want to know how I will communicate with my family.”

I later found out that they were selected mostly from desk jobs in the Recruiting Command or the Pentagon.

Yet I listened with them at their initial briefs about how they were performing “a mission that was the most important key to our success in Iraq.” If this were true then why were they sending desk jockeys with little or no experience training

indigenous soldiers? And why during one of their initial briefings did their leader, a full colonel, have to plead for more boots for his men?

Once these men arrived in Mosul, they were given a two-day welcome briefing. Then they were sent to remote combat outposts in the middle of the worst areas. Their only radios had been given to them by us. Running water worked on occasion. And they received no equipment to outfit their Iraqi counterparts.

To this day, MiTT teams operate under the same conditions. Future help probably will not come due to our battalion replacement's apparent apathy: they refused any data concerning our experience despite numerous attempts.

Another logistical problem arose due to the Iraqi army's masterful deception in accounting for their equipment.

For the first six months of our tour, our cell inventoried every piece of military equipment their battalion possessed. We reported in April 2005 that we had names showing which soldiers signed out AK ammunition and then returned differing ammunition. (This differing ammo was made during the time of Saddam and is readily available on the market; most of it does not work.)

We also had six Iraqi witnesses working in the Iraqi arms room who observed the fraud.

My superior officers weren't interested.

In addition, every month the Iraqi army leadership and our cell agreed to a list of items mutually decided to be essential.

However, the end of the month's expenditures routinely included space heaters for the Iraqi army leadership's quarters, satellite television for the officers only, and new furniture for the officers, to name just a few items.

And trips down to the Iraqi army compound in the wee hours of the morning resulted in all kinds of discoveries. Sometimes I saw Iraqi soldiers sucking gas out of the tanks of the trucks to sell. Another time, I saw two Iraqi soldiers painting a tan Iraqi military truck white in an attempt to sell it on the open market. We were told to "tolerate a certain amount of graft."

Not surprisingly, I never received an accurate vehicle count from the Iraqi army.

Each month, I counted the vehicles that the Iraqi army owned, a number that never matched the figures given to me by the Iraqi battalion.

To make matters worse, after I turned in the number that I had counted, I would often find my figures altered after brigade released their own report.

In April 2005, I documented the fraud in an e-mail. Two days later, I was confronted by two superior officers and told that my reports would no longer be needed.

If I doubted that the Iraqis were any more committed than my own superiors to outfitting and training their army, the answer came after a long presentation to the Iraqi army battalion's executive officer, offering suggestions on his logistics operational plan. I concluded by asking what he thought.

"My plan is that you should care for all of our logistical needs," he said. "Why?" I asked. The Iraqi executive officer replied, "You broke our country. Now, you fix it." The essence of a failed policy did not get any clearer than that.

From October 2004 to June 2005, the prevailing attitude of our battalion—including my own at first—was that the Iraqis were incapable of conducting operations independently.

However, after speaking with locals and Iraqi army officers, I reached a different conclusion. The locals asked me why Iraqis were not doing more on missions. Iraqi officers told me that they conducted company-level operations on their own nearly a year prior to our arrival.

Did our higher command know and simply not choose to use this information? Or was it a ploy to prolong a state of perpetual war?

I decided to test the theory.

In March 2005, I began to send Iraqis out on missions into Mosul, usually unbeknownst to my battalion, and found them capable of conducting missions on their own except when they were hampered by our military values and horrible perception of the local area. When I sent Iraqis out alone, they found evidence and insurgents that we never were able to, though they were none too careful about complying with the Geneva Conventions.

Once battalion discovered these missions, they quickly reeled them, and me, in. All Iraqi missions would thereafter be dictated by our U.S. battalion, and I would make sure that the Iraqis performed these missions in the exact manner in which they were dictated.

During the last week of March, I relayed this new strategy to the Iraqi battalion commander and his underlings. They asked to speak with my battalion commander, but he refused and dismissed the matter, reminding me that all parties would comply with his wishes.

Two days later, I argued with two Iraqi officers, who up until then had been my friends. One said that the only reason they would go to an area they knew to be heavily laden with IED ambushes was that they respected me.

That respect was shattered less than an hour later when an IED wounded four of their soldiers. Although I rushed them to the hospital and they lived, the respect I worked for five months to earn vanished. From that point on, my time with the Iraqis was much more difficult.

Our relationships with the locals fared no better. Our line companies spent nearly every waking minute on patrol.

The nightly door-kicks on residents' homes proved excellent recruiting tools for local terrorists. I recall several occasions of having to kick in doors to take cover only to hear screaming locals.

Moreover, due to the high frequency of our line companies prowling the city, the Iraqi army and our cell working with them took a very distant backseat in priority. If we needed to discuss a problem with our battalion commander, he was in the city on patrol. If our goal was to turn the city over to the Iraqis, so we could leave, why was he out all the time without the Iraqis?

At the very least, if the Iraqis stirred up a hornet's nest among the local people, it's their own nest.

Though force structure was problematic, training inefficient, logistical support nonexistent, and combat operations illogical, by far the most personally frustrating factor in fulfilling my assignment was the ocean of financial corruption.

Our government has tolerated a systematic culture of "spend to win" that fattens the pockets of the few and accomplishes little.

Each month, along with our cell's master sergeant, I handed a minimum payment of \$100,000 to the Iraqi army battalion.

\$50,000 covered their monthly operational budget—facilities upgrades, maintenance parts, etc. The other \$50,000 went toward the battalion's subsistence budget, which allowed each soldier \$90 a month for food. The problem was that the Iraqis said they had 556 soldiers, and we never counted more than 350 at any given time. Yet we were ordered to pay on the basis of the numbers they declared, with the remainder going directly into the Iraqi leadership's pockets.

The operational budget proved to be an even worse disaster.

Each month we handed over \$50,000, yet no money was ever spent on tools for the mechanics, no improvements were made to the buildings, no new vehicles were ever purchased.

So why did we continue to give \$50,000 each month? The Iraqi army officers would not perform for anything less. We were bribing them to keep up the appearance of a workable fighting force.

Our receipts for these transactions were cleared back through the comptrollers who tracked what U.S. battalions were spending. When it was learned that we were spending \$100,000 a month, we were told that we were not spending enough and were accused of not supporting the mission.

The message was clear: the more money we gave the Iraqis, the greater chance of keeping the Iraqi unit together.

We also had a projects account for spending money on the Iraqis. After the theft of the uniform payment of \$20,000, we only used this system two more times. Both resulted in complete failure.

In December 2004, we negotiated a contract for 15 Toyota 4x4 pick-up trucks. All were to be no older than 2000, and the price of each was \$11,000, making the total contract value \$165,000. We traveled to Dahuk to make this transaction, but a 1994 model was the newest truck before us. Many of the others were badly damaged and barely running. We called off the deal and in turn angered the Iraqi army battalion's leadership, which had recommended the vendor.

In February 2005, desperate to initiate some progress on new barracks on the Iraqi army battalion compound, we again enlisted the help of the Iraqi army to find a contractor. But the deal fell flat after the he refused anything less than 40 percent of the total price quote for the buildings up front. By our rules, we could not surrender such a sum.

(After the failed sale, we returned the funds and were asked by the comptroller if we were sure we wanted to return this money.)

Meanwhile, U.S. Army Civil Affairs began to compensate Iraqi army soldiers for damages incurred by "terrorist" attacks. On one occasion, two Iraqi brothers who were junior officers in our battalion stated that someone burned down their house and shot up their car. They were paid even after we told Civil Affairs that several Iraqi soldiers told us that these men inflicted the destruction themselves. Civil Affairs did not ride out to the site, they merely took the brothers' photos of the damage at face value.

They also rewarded any Iraqi for information concerning insurgents. One soldier brought information on compact discs that he explained was terrorist intelligence. The CDs did show insurgent propaganda but could be purchased at many different marketplaces in Mosul and served no purpose other than general propaganda. Yet Civil Affairs paid off this soldier.

We alerted our battalion leadership to all of this, and some of the information was sent up to brigade, but that was as far as the inquiry ever went.

The system was set up so that we could not physically account for the money without breaking the rules.

I returned home in September 2005, grateful and safe, but stripped of the illusions I had taken with me.

My experience proved that contrary to countless official pronouncements, the Bush administration has no interest in the Iraqi army training program.

We were fighting a war to establish permanent bases in Iraq to better manipulate the flow of Middle East oil.

For if this war was about human rights, why were we not in Rwanda? If our mission was about bringing democracy to a region, then why were we not in Cuba? And if the intelligence leading up to this war was merely faulty, why was no one fired?

I believed in my mission, and I wanted the Iraqis I was training to run their own country. But this wasn't an American priority, and I left Mosul feeling that my efforts were either erased or ignored.

That's not to say that the men who died in Iraq died for nothing. They were doing their jobs.

But the Bush administration disgraces their memories by stating that our only option is to prolong a losing policy.

If I learned anything from the lessons I was charged with teaching, it's that a good military leader examines costs and benefits and adjusts his course accordingly.

Yet this administration refuses to learn from its mistakes, level with the soldiers fighting its war, and bring the sad American chapter called Iraq to a close.

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

MND B SOLDIER DIES OF BAGHDAD WOUNDS

7/17/2006 06-07-01CE

BAGHDAD: A Multi National Division Baghdad Soldier died from wounds today at approximately 12:55 p.m. after being hit by small-arms fire in western Baghdad earlier in the day.

The name of the Soldier is being withheld pending notification of next of kin.

Local Soldier Killed On Last Mission

07/18/2006 WLFI-TV

A soldier from White County has been killed in Iraq. His mother says Army Specialist Nathaniel Baughman was killed Monday.

Jill Baughman says her son was at the end of a convoy when it was hit by a missile.

Mrs. Baughman says her son's unit was due to leave Iraq in a few weeks and Monday's convoy was to be their last mission there.

Local Soldier Killed; Dickinson Shot By Snipers



U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Michael Dickinson II in Iraq in 2005. Dickinson was killed while on patrol in Iraq, July 17, 2006. (AP Photo/Dickinson family via Battle Creek Enquirer)

07/18/06 Trace Christenson, The Enquirer

The mother of Staff Sgt. Michael Dickinson, 26, has been notified her son was killed Monday in Iraq.

Vicki Dickinson, of Battle Creek, said today she was notified Monday that her son died when he was shot by snipers while on patrol with a Marine Corps unit in Iraq.

She is awaiting further details from the U.S. Army at Fort Bragg in North Carolina, where Michael Dickinson was stationed, and where memorial services are scheduled for Thursday.

Dickinson is the third soldier from the Battle Creek area killed in Iraq.

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



U.S. soldiers at the scene of a car bomb attack in Mosul, 240 miles north of Baghdad, July 3, 2006. (Khaleed al-Mousily/Reuters)

Grand Rapids Soldier Dies After Explosion In Iraq

Jul. 18, 2006 Associated Press

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich.

A 23-year-old soldier from Michigan has died from injuries he received when his armored vehicle struck a roadside bomb in Iraq, friends and relatives said.

Sgt. Al'Kaila Floyd, a combat engineer from Grand Rapids, was injured July 8. He died Thursday at a hospital in Germany, family members told The Grand Rapids Press for a story published Tuesday.

Floyd's twin brother, Al'Jaila, his two sisters and his grandmother, who raised him, were an hour away from reaching him at his hospital bed when he died, said Glenn Floyd, an uncle of the soldier.

Al'Kaila Floyd joined the Army in 2001 immediately after graduating from Ottawa Hills High School, where he was in the Junior ROTC program for four years, his uncle said.

Lisa Frain, the mother of a friend of the soldier, said word of his death was painful.

"I just got sick when I found out," Frain said. "This was a good kid and it hits home when it happens to someone you know."

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Soldier "Is Suffering From Heat Exhaustion, Without Proper Supplies And Resources"

[Thanks to George McNeilage, Justice For Gordon Gentle, UK, who sent this in.]

Military Families Against The War NEWSLETTER 13TH JULY 2006

We are getting many emails from families with loved ones serving in Afghanistan. Susan writes:

"My brother has been serving in Afghanistan since April and he is not doing too well. He is suffering from heat exhaustion, without proper supplies and resources. He is rapidly losing weight and the equipment provided is just not good enough."

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)

TROOP NEWS

Veterans Screwed Again!!



**ATTENTION
ALL VETERANS, FAMILIES
AND SUPPORTERS...**

**WE NEED
YOU!**

*Please join us at a Press Conference
(and Rally) on Tuesday, July 25, 2006
at 11 AM in front of City Hall as Veterans
speak out against the Mayor and City
Council for continually stating that
they "Support the Troops" and veterans
yet continually deny funding to help
veterans and returning troops.*

*We need **ALL HANDS** to attend and
pack the front of City Hall to show our
anger and disappointment with the
Mayor and City Council regarding
the recent city budget and its lack of
funding for veterans.*

*This is an important opportunity for
ALL Veterans and supporters in the five
boroughs to unite and speak out on a
common cause...taking care of veterans
and taking care of the troops when
they come home!*

*Please pass this information on
to others!*

**"You wave the flag,
now show us
the services!"**

**Tuesday, July 25, 2006
11:30 AM - 1 PM - City Hall, NYC**



PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION TO CITY HALL:

SUBWAY: #4, #5, #6 to City Hall/Brooklyn Bridge
#2, #3 to Park Place
#N, #R to City Hall

BUS: M15 to City Hall/Park Row

FOR MORE INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT (917) 360-1408

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

Invitation To:
Meeting Resistance
**“The Film Makers Want
To Bring In As Many
Veterans As Possible To
See It”**

July 18, 2006
From: Garrett Reppenhagen"
Invitation to MEETING RESISTANCE

Hey Everyone,

This film "Meeting The Resistance" is being shown on Tuesday in DC for the first time ever.

The film makers want to bring in as many veterans as possible to see it.

Please consider coming to the film and the panel afterwards.

Meeting the Resistance shows a rare look at the inside motivations of the Iraqi Insurgency itself. It will be an amazing eye opener to what is going on in the minds of the resistance.

Please let me know if you would like to attend.

Garrett Reppenhagen
Iraq Veteran Scout/Sniper 1st ID
gridburn@hotmail.com



Molly Bingham

You are invited to a private
preview screening of

MEETING RESISTANCE

A documentary film about Iraq

by Steve Connors
and Molly Bingham

TIME: 7:15pm doors open
7:30pm film begins

DATE: Tuesday, July 25, 2006

LOCATION: Landmark E Street Theater
The E Street Cinema is located at 11th & E Streets NW in Washington, DC.

The film will be followed by a panel discussion with the directors.

RSVP required, limited seating available.

RSVP to Jessica Kolmer at jkolmer@venturecommunications.com or 202.628.7772

About MEETING RESISTANCE

MEETING RESISTANCE was filmed in the streets, alleyways and ubiquitous teashops of the Adhamiya neighborhood of Baghdad. It enters the physical and psychological heart of the insurgency against the American occupation.

Focusing on eight "insurgents," each with his or her own tale and reasons for opposing the American-led occupation, yet all people who within days of the fall of Baghdad were arranging themselves into resistance cells, finding the money and weapons to continue the fight against the American military. The film witnesses how they began to organize themselves, reveals why they have decided to violently oppose the occupation of the country, and hears in their words the underlying ideological foundations to their fight and how and why those have changed over time.

Directors Steve Connors' and Molly Bingham's unsurpassed access and visually stunning cinematography makes this film one-of-a-kind; essential viewing for audiences around the world concerned with a deeper understanding of the current situation in Iraq, and with the human condition of resistance.

For more information, visit www.meetingresistance.com

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



The casket of Army Spc. Christopher D. Rose at Golden Gate National Cemetery in San Bruno, Calif., July 11, 2006. Nearly 200 mourners paid their respects to Rose, who was killed by a roadside bomb last month. (AP Photo/Jeff Chiu)

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

“You Are Traitors!” “You Are Not Doing Your Job!” “American Agents!”

Jul 18, 2006 By Khaled Farhan, (Reuters)

A suicide bomber pulled his minivan into a busy market on Tuesday, lured labourers onboard with the promise of jobs and then blew himself up, killing 59 people in one of the bloodiest attacks in Iraq this year.

The blast in the Shi'ite city of Kufa wounded 132 people and sparked clashes between police and angry protesters, dealing a fresh blow to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki's efforts to promote national reconciliation and avoid a slide towards civil war.

Protesters gathered around the blackened mangle of vehicles. Blood-stained clothes lay amid the debris.

"We want the Mehdi Army to protect us. We want Moqtada's army to protect us," a woman dressed in a black abaya screamed.

Others chanted to the police: "You are traitors!" "You are not doing your job!" "American agents!"

Assorted Resistance Action

07/18/06 by Hassan Abdul Zahra, AFP News & (Reuters) & By DPA & Reuters

Insurgents fired mortar rounds on an Iraqi army base, killing one soldier and wounding four, in the town of Habaniya, 75 km (47 miles) west of Baghdad.

Guerrillas killed a local leader of the Badr Brigade, the military wing of the Supreme [collaborator] Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq, the largest Shi'ite party in government. Abu Ali al-Garawi, head of Badr in Diwaniya, was killed near Baghdad along with two of his nephews while travelling in a motorcade.

Eight policemen were killed and three wounded in an attack on an Iraqi police patrol near Kirkuk.

Five Iraqi soldiers were wounded when several rockets landed near a military base used for training Iraqi forces in Kut, Iraqi army said.

Five policeman were killed and five were wounded, including four civilians, when a roadside bomb went off near a police patrol in Hawija, 70 km (43 miles) southwest of Kirkuk, police said.

Guerrillas killed three translators who worked for the U.S. forces in Haditha.

Militants killed a police major in the city of Falluja, 50 km (35 miles) west of Baghdad, police said.

Three Iraqi soldiers were killed as guerrillas attacked a checkpoint near Mahmoudiya killing three Iraqi soldiers, 35 kilometres south of Baghdad, said a security source.

The source told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa that they opened intensive fire on an Iraqi army checkpoint, on the road between Youssefiya and Mahmudiya, killing three soldiers and injuring another.

The source added that the assailants managed to escape following their attack.

One police officer and two guerrillas were killed in an attack on Baquba police station, 60 kilometres north of Baghdad, security sources said Tuesday.

Guerrillas attacked a police checkpoint, killing four policeman and wounding another near Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

The sources told Deutsche Presse-Agentur dpa that unidentified armed men attacked the Tahrir Police Station in Baquba on Monday night killing one police officer and injuring another two members of the police force, while two of the attackers were.

The source added that the assailants managed to escape following their attack.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The “Why” Helicopter in Vietnam



From: Richard Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: July 17, 2006

58,000 American soldiers were killed in Vietnam.

Their average age was 19.

From the senior prom to Vietnam.

We now fast forward 30 years to
the war in Iraq.

The average age of Americans
killed in Iraq is not 19, but the
lies are absolutely the same.

Absolutely!

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
July 17, 2006

Photo from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: hastiemike@earthlink.net) T

“Only When Diplomacy Can Make Armed Conflict Unnecessary, Can All Sides Be Truly Considered Victors”

From: David Honish, Veterans For Peace
To: GI Special
Sent: July 18, 2006
Subject: GI Special 4G18

Regarding the final excerpt [OCCUPATION PALESTINE section, GI Special 4G18] implying that Israel is guilty of war crimes for targeting civilian infrastructure, this would be the equivalent of handing out speeding tickets at the Indy 500.

The Nuremburg Tribunals convicted persons for starting the war, and for using genocide. I don't think the tribunals quibbled over whether the Luftwaffe struck only military targets without any civilian casualties.

It seems to me that targeting civilian infrastructure to deny support of military forces has been official US policy since at least Sherman's march through Georgia, if not before?

I doubt that anyone in their right mind would consider the numerous wars with the Native Americans to be anything other than attempted genocide? Gen Philip Sheridan's quote "The only good Indian is a dead Indian" tends to support such a claim.

US military operations against tribal peoples in the Philippine Islands at the turn of the last century were arguably genocidal in nature as well.

In WWI poison gas was commonly used by all sides on the Western Front. It would be pretty hard to argue that the deliberate effort to start a firestorm in Hamburg, Tokyo, and Dresden by Allied Air Forces was only targeting military sites.

The centuries old conflicts of the Middle East are characterized by both valid claims and blame for all opposing forces, and are not likely to be resolved anytime soon.

My point is that the exercise of war itself is always inhumane in nature.

Trying to establish rules about who can or cannot be shot, and with what sort of weapons is just engaging in trying to establish blame, rather than actually solving problems.

Clausewitz said "War is merely diplomacy by other means." Only when diplomacy can make armed conflict unnecessary, can all sides be truly considered victors.

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.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Zionist Swine Attack, Beat U.S. Mom And Son For “Looking Palestinian”



17 July 06 (Bethlehem) Ayman Oghanna, PNN

A mother and son, both American citizens, were savagely beaten last week by Israeli security at the Israeli entry point from Jordan: Allenby Bridge. The victims

were 47 year old Tina Hannouneh and her 17 year old son. Their crime was looking Palestinian.

Hannouneh, who was born in the West Bank, moved to Arizona in 1986, where she now works as banker. She and her son Michael had come to Palestine, on a holiday, to visit friends and family.

The incident occurred because 17 year old Michael, who suffers from a chronic heart condition, was listening to his i-pod.

Tina underwent surgery last week in Beit Jala. Afterwards, she spoke to PNN about her ordeal:

“We were entering through security when a guy dressed as a civilian approached Michael. He grabbed Michael’s neck with his right hand and reached for the i-pod with his left hand, shouting ‘give me that’ in Arabic.”

Michael, who has spent most of his life in the US, does not speak or understand Arabic.

He was unaware that the man choking him was a security officer, and refused to give him the mp3 player. Hannouneh added, “The security officer was not wearing a uniform. My son couldn’t have recognized him as army or police. He payed \$400 for that i-pod, he’s not just going to give it to anybody.”

Confused and bewildered about what was happening, Michael held on to his i-pod. It was then that the officer became violent.

Hannouneh explained that “the guy punched him, dropped him to the ground, and started banging his head against on the floor.” She continued, “He shouted in Arabic ‘you can’t say no to a police officer.’”

After trying to protect her son, the officer turned on Hannouneh. She commented, “As hard as he could he hit my face. I fell to the floor and hit my head on the metal bar in the security fence. I have two stitches and my nose is really smashed. My shirt and my pants were covered in blood”.

The terrorized family’s ordeal only came to an end when other officials realized they were American.

Like all Palestinians, Hannouneh and her son were victims of institutional racism at the heart of the Israeli security service. Hannouneh told PNN, “They did this to me because of the color of my skin, because I’m Palestinian”. She continued, “I can’t even travel through the checkpoint and complain to the US Consulate in Jerusalem because I am Palestinian. It’s humiliating”.

Adi Dagan, from Machsom Watch, an Israeli human rights organization that monitors checkpoints, told PNN: “To them she is just a Palestinian. Palestinians are without protection. In 2004 we documented 100 complaints of violence and we only received about 10 responses, sometimes soldiers are punished, but often nothing happens.

“This is what ordinary Palestinians go through everyday.”



Machsom Watch has documented shocking cases of physical violence, including one incident where a Border Policeman attacked a Palestinian man in the face with a screwdriver. Yet Machsom Watch admit that they have difficulty getting the full picture. Dagan added, “it’s clear to us that the soldiers act cautiously around us, the watchers and reporters, but lose their restraint when we are absent.”

PNN has learned that often Palestinians are too afraid to make complaints, especially as it would involve further contact with Israeli security officials. PNN contacted the US Consulate and the Israeli police, but as of yet has failed to receive any response.

The assault follows a Ha’aretz report stating that for the first time since 1967, Israel is implementing a new policy in the West Bank that prevents the entry of Palestinians with foreign citizenship, most of whom are Americans. As always, the reasons are connected to “security,” though the harassment and restrictions separate families and weaken humanitarian organizations.

Nidal Ibrahim at the Arab American Institute (AAI) in Washington, DC told PNN, “We at AAI are disturbed by continued reports that we’re getting of Israeli mistreatment of American citizens of Palestinian descent, including both being denied entry as well as the rough treatment and harassment.” Referring to Hannouneh’s case, the AAI stated “it speaks of the lack of restraint and understanding on the part of Israel in general and the Israeli border guard specifically. Ultimately, these types of actions do nothing to but cast a black eye on the state of Israel itself.”

For Hannouneh and her son, the trauma will have a lasting effect. Hannouneh said “My son was so excited. He was listening to the Bible on his i-pod. He wanted to come a day earlier. He wanted to go everywhere- where Jesus Christ was, where he was born.

“Now he doesn’t want to go into town because he is too scared. He can’t look me in the eye because he feels responsible, that it’s his fault. He never wants to come back, neither do I. I’m never coming back for this again. That’s probably the point, they don’t want anybody to come back.”

Hannouneh, who is seeking legal action both in Israel and the US, ended the interview with a plea to the US government: "We need some help here, at least come and see how Palestinians are suffering."

Unfortunately, Hannouneh's plea is not the first of its kind, and it certainly won't be the last.

“Is Hizbullah Here?” “Only Children Here” City Mourns Air Strike Dead Kids

Thanks to JM, who sent this in. She writes: Israeli soldiers have had a lot of practice killing children in Palestine. Now they are excelling at it.]

July 18, 2006 Clancy Chassay in Tyre, The Guardian

Twelve-year-old Nour lay heavily bandaged and fighting for her life in a hospital in the southern Lebanese city of Tyre. She is one of many children killed and injured in Israeli air strikes on this Mediterranean port in past days.

"We are praying for her," said Fatima, a laboratory technician doubling as a nurse at Jabal Amal hospital, which is overloaded with the victims of the air strikes. Ali, the doctor treating Nour, said he did not know whether she would survive her injuries. "She has large burns all over her body, she is losing a lot of fluids. She probably won't live; her life is now in God's hands."

More ambulances streamed into the hospital and doctors hurried to treat the victims of the latest bombing. Whatever the Israelis' intended target, the bomb fell on a small water canal next to the Qasmia refugee camp, home to about 500 Palestinians.

Its victims were 11 children taking an afternoon swim in the canal.

The first blast left a crater nearly four metres deep, burying many of the swimmers deep under the orange earth. Seven of the children were injured, three critically. Three others have not been found.

The scene was littered with small plastic sandals, several caked in blood. Ismael, the father of one of the children, sat on the edge of the crater, his head in his hands weeping.

"Children! Children!" he roared through his tears, "Children here! My son here."

He stood and looked down into the crater: "Is Hizbullah here? Only children here," he said, referring to the militant Islamist group that kidnapped two Israeli soldiers and which Israel says it is targeting in the wave of attacks.

Another man staggered around behind Ismael, also unable to control his grief.

The children were taken to the intensive care unit, many caked in earth, having been buried deep in the ground. The victims of the blast joined scores of injured from previous attacks across the south of the country.

Ahmed Mrouwe, the hospital's director, said more than 200 wounded people had been brought into the hospital - one of three in the area.

"We have received 196 wounded and 25 dead; the majority of them are children and women."

It was the one of the bloodiest days so far in Lebanon, with 41 dead. In Sidon, 25 miles south of Beirut, an Israeli air strike on a road bridge hit two vehicles, killing 10 civilians and wounding at least seven, medical sources told Reuters.

They said both vehicles had been crossing the Rmeileh bridge, heading from the south towards Beirut. Leaflets dropped from Israeli planes have been urging residents in Hizbullah-controlled areas of the south to leave.

Nine of the dead were in one vehicle. A woman died in the other vehicle and six members of her family were wounded.

An annex of the hospital in Tyre had been bombed the day before.

The attack came as doctors were tending to victims of a strike on a 12-storey residential building, which also housed the civil defence offices, in Tyre. That attack left 21 dead, including several children. Dr Mrouwe said nine people in one family had been killed; only the father had survived.

At the site of the strike, rubble lay strewn hundreds of metres from the building. The face of the building had been ripped off, revealing the insides of homes. Furniture dangled out over the charred wreckage of a cargo truck flipped on its side by the force of the blast.

Huge chunks of cement bricks lay scattered between dozens of crumpled cars. One resident, Mohammed, said he had seen the blast from his house nearby. Amal, his sister's friend, had been killed in the attack; she had just turned five.

At the hospital, small children were grouped in clusters throughout its corridors, many displaced by the strikes on their homes. In one room, a 50-year-old woman lay motionless in her hospital bed, burns covering much of her body. She had narrowly survived the attack on the building. She did not know it yet, but her son had died in the operating theatre earlier that morning.

Asked how it compared to 1996 when Israel launched an attack on the south, killing scores of civilians, Dr Mrouwe said: "It's incomparable, incomparable. In 1996 the majority were fighters. This time we have yet to receive any fighters."

Drones circled overhead almost continuously throughout the day, interrupted by distant roar of fighter planes above.

Dr Mrouwe said: "We only want one of the human rights, we don't need democracy - we just want to live."

**“Be Peaceful, Be Courteous,
Obey The Law, Respect
Everyone; But If Someone Puts
His Hand On You, Send Him To
The Cemetery”
Malcolm X**



Lebanese Maamar Al-Weiss looks at the body of his niece Sumar, 5, at a morgue in a hospital in Taanayel, in the Bekaa Valley, Lebanon, July 18, 2006, where she died after she suffered shrapnel injuries from an Israeli airstrike on Monday. (AP Photo/Samer Hussein)



An armed Palestinian woman from the Popular Resistance Committees during a demonstration in Gaza City to protest against daily Israeli incursions in the Gaza Strip. Israeli jets have hit Lebanese army bases and flattened homes in a deadly new blitz of air strikes, the seventh day of an assault that has killed at least 230 people and sent tens of thousands of people fleeing for their lives. (AFP/Thomas Coex)

[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."]

The Zionist State "Portraying Its Own 'Right To Self-Defence' As Beyond Question, While Denying Anyone Else The Same"

There is no reason in the world why Israel should be able to enter Arab sovereign soil to occupy, destroy, kidnap and eliminate its perceived foes - repeatedly, with impunity and without restraint - while the Arab side cannot do the same. And if the Arab states are unable or unwilling to do so then the job should fall to those who can.

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

July 18, 2006 Ahmad Khalidi, The Guardian [Excerpt]

Much has been made in recent days - at the G8 summit and elsewhere - of Israel's right to retaliate against the capture of its soldiers, or attacks on its troops on its own sovereign territory.

Some, such as those in the US administration, seem to believe that Israel has an unqualified licence to hit back at its enemies no matter what the cost. And even those willing to recognise that there may be a problem tend to couch it in terms of Israel's "disproportionate use of force" rather than its basic right to take military action.

But what is at stake here is not proportionality or the issue of self-defence, but symmetry and equivalence.

Israel is staking a claim to the exclusive use of force as an instrument of policy and punishment, and is seeking to deny any opposing state or non-state actor a similar right. It is also largely succeeding in portraying its own "right to self-defence" as beyond question, while denying anyone else the same.

And the international community is effectively endorsing Israel's stance on both counts.

From an Arab point of view this cannot be right.

There is no reason in the world why Israel should be able to enter Arab sovereign soil to occupy, destroy, kidnap and eliminate its perceived foes - repeatedly, with impunity and without restraint - while the Arab side cannot do the same.

And if the Arab states are unable or unwilling to do so then the job should fall to those who can.

It is important to bear in mind that in both the case of the Hamas raid that led to the invasion of Gaza and the Hizbullah attack that led to the assault on Lebanon it was Israel's regular armed forces, not its civilians, that were targeted.

It is hard to see how this can be filed under the rubric of "terrorism", rather than a straightforward tactical defeat for Israel's much-vaunted military machine; one that Israel seems loath to acknowledge.

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.

