

GI SPECIAL 4114:



“They Just Sent Her Over There” State’s Oldest War Casualty In At Least 50 Years Felt She Lacked Training

Stevenson also said Howard was given a gun that she did not know how to use, even after trying to train herself.

Sept. 11, 2006 By SCOTT WILLIAMS and SARAH LARIMER, Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

Waukesha: An Army reservist who has become the oldest Wisconsin war casualty in at least 50 years told family members that she worried about being too old and poorly trained for combat.

"We had no idea why she was there," said Lorraine Stevenson, a cousin of Merideth Howard of Waukesha, who was killed Friday in Afghanistan, five months after her unit arrived there.



Merideth Howard: Photo/Contributed

Howard was 52 years old, making her also the oldest female military member from anywhere in the United States killed in action since U.S. military operations began in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The Army announced Monday that the Waukesha woman was killed in Kabul, Afghanistan, along with another U.S. soldier when a suicide car bomber struck a Humvee military vehicle in which they were riding.

Howard was a sergeant assigned to the Army Reserves 364th Civil Affairs Brigade, a unit working to rebuild roads, schools or other infrastructure in the war-torn country.

Susan Utley, another cousin from Howard's home state of Texas, said Howard told her that training of reservists was questionable and that she was "very worried" about being deployed to Afghanistan.

"She was trying to put the best face on it," Utley said. "But, yeah, her whole going over there was with a lot of misgivings."

The military issued a statement Monday that Howard was killed in Friday's suicide bombing along with Robert J. Paul, 43, of The Dalles, Ore., another member of her military unit.

As members of a civil affairs unit, they served with doctors, fire chiefs and other professionals who are helpful in rebuilding Afghanistan's government because of their

"finely honed skills practiced daily in the civilian sector," according to a military statement.

As a civilian in Waukesha, Howard worked as a fire safety consultant.

Wisconsin has lost at least six service men and women in Afghanistan, along with 61 others who have been killed in Iraq.

At the Wisconsin Veterans Museum in Madison, records show that no soldier age 52 or older from Wisconsin has died in combat since at least the Korean War during the 1950s. The museum's archives do not indicate the age of casualties in the Korean War or World War II.

The state lost at least one 53-year-old soldier during World War I.

Records from the U.S. Defense Department show that six older soldiers, all men, have died in Iraq and Afghanistan. The oldest was a 58-year-old from Alabama, according to Department of Defense casualty reports.

Lt. Col. Tim Donovan, spokesman for the Wisconsin National Guard, said the National Guard has 28 members over age 50 serving overseas, out of a total estimated 1,800 members on active duty.

Donovan said the state had a National Guard member in his upper 60s who was activated during the first Persian Gulf War and was the oldest U.S. soldier on active duty at the time. "They're not youngsters, but they're in good physical shape," he said.

Howard, who was born in Corpus Christi, Texas, joined the Reserves in 1988. She had graduated from Texas A&M University before marrying and relocating to Waukesha with her husband, Hugh Hvolboll.

Hvolboll placed a sign at their residence asking for privacy and declining to speak with the media. The family later issued a statement through the military Monday, saying that she was a "loving, affectionate and outgoing" woman who played tennis in college and later became the first female firefighter in Bryan, Texas.

"She gave the shirt off her back to help each and every friend she had," the statement said.

The family statement said it was Howard's wish to be cremated with her ashes "scattered with fireworks in the waters of both San Francisco and Corpus Christi Bay."

According to the Army, Howard worked as a "medical equipment repairer" and was assigned to the 364th Brigade on April 5, 2006, and shipped out to Afghanistan a short time later. The Army also said her civilian occupation as a fire protection specialist taught her to design construction specifications and inspect fire alarm systems, sprinkler systems and fire pumps.

John Margowski, director of veterans services for Waukesha County, said the military might be activating older soldiers because of their specialized needs in trying to build new governments in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Noting that the military also could be shorthanded after nearly five years of military operations, Margowski added: "Unless it's an all-out war, I would question putting someone who was older on the front lines."

Stevenson said her cousin expected to go to a safer area of Afghanistan.

Stevenson also said Howard was given a gun that she did not know how to use, even after trying to train herself.

"She was not adequately trained," Stevenson said. "They just sent her over there."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Yuba City Soldier Dies In Iraq; Pfc. Harley Andrews Leaves Behind Wife, Son



September 13, 2006 KCRA

YUBA CITY, Calif. -- A soldier from Yuba City died in the war in Iraq.

Pfc. Harley Andrews, 22, was killed Sunday, friends of his family said.

Andrews is survived by a wife and a young son.

Soldier Killed In Al Anbar Province

Sept. 13, 2006 Multi-National Corps Iraq, Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20060913-01

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: One Soldier assigned to a battalion under I Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward) died Monday, Sept. 11, from injuries sustained due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province.

Soldier Killed By Roadside Bomb South Of Baghdad

Sept. 13, 2006 Multi-National Corps Iraq, Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20060913-02

BAGHDAD: A Multi-National Division Baghdad Soldier died at approximately 10:53 p.m. Tuesday after the vehicle he was riding in was struck by an improvised-explosive device south of Baghdad.

U.S. Troop Levels In Iraq Reach 147,000 [Up From 145,000 Last Week]

9.13.06 By Gordon Lubold, Army Times Staff writer

Troop levels in Iraq have topped 147,000, a big jump over the number of troops deployed there over the last several months, but Pentagon officials say it's only a temporary spike as commands change over. **[Right. And Bush is winning his war. And Martians live on the dark side of the moon.]**

The number of U.S. troops in Iraq as of Sept. 13 marks a 16 percent increase over the number of troops reported by the Pentagon in late July, when it was around 127,000.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Local Soldier Killed In Afghanistan

8/23/2006 KQTV

Hiawatha residents mourn a serviceman's death this week. Army Specialist Jeremiah Scott Cole is remembered by his family and friends as a hero.

The Cole family says they are holding on to their happy memories of Scottie Cole. They say he was proud to serve and protect not only his country but also his town.

"Pride we're so proud of that boy, a lot of people look at it like anger. And yeah that's a normal reaction, we're shocked, hurt, that's a chunk of our heart gone," said Tom Jameson.

Jameson is remembering his nephew, 26-year-old Army Specialist, Jeremiah 'Scottie' Cole. Who was serving with the 10th Mountain Division, and was station in Fort Drum, New York.

Cole and three other soldiers were riding in a humvee in Afghanistan on August 16th, when it hit an IED or a land mine.

Cole was the only one to die.

"He was doing what he wanted, he loved his wife, he loved his boy he loved his country and he loved his town," said his mother, Candice Cole.

In May of this year, he shipped out for his first tour of duty and left behind his new wife, Andrea and his now five-and-a half month old son, Nicholas.

"They had their goals and it was get her thru school, get him thru school, he wanted to be a history teacher and a coach," she said.

His family has found strength in each other and the Hiawatha community.

They all want to honor and remember the happy memories that Scottie created when alive.

"He had the best heart; in every situation and would go the extra mile, to make sure that things were fair if it was something he could fix," his mother said.

Cole came from a strong military background, his father and uncles all served their country.

His family says Cole always fought for the underdog and was loved by everyone he befriended.

"He made a big impression on everybody and he expected nothing in return," Candice said.

His family says the small town of Hiawatha that he loved so much, will for ever remember his giving heart and smile.

Local Guardsman Killed In Afghanistan

September 11, 2006 The Kansas City Channel

INDEPENDENCE, Mo. -- A local National Guardsman was killed in the war in Afghanistan last week.

Staff Sgt. Mike Fuga, of Independence, had served in Afghanistan for two years.

On Saturday, his family learned he was killed.

"I went to the door and asked, 'Who is it?' And all I heard is, 'Missouri National Guard, ma'am.' Right there, my heart just fell," widow Justina Fuga told KMBC's Dan Weinbaum.

Fuga said that's when she knew the man she married 13 years ago was dead. "He was a hero, a true hero," Fuga said. "Proud of him?" Weinbaum asked. "Yeah," Fuga said.

Mike Fuga was called to active duty in 2004 and was sent to Afghanistan to help train that country's new army. "Mike was very proud of being able to go over there and serve his country," said friend and co-worker Rusty Hay.

On Aug. 4, 2005, a KMBC photojournalist recorded Mike Fuga coming home on leave.

"His first year there was OK. He was stationed up north, but the second time he was sent to southern Afghanistan," Tina Fuga said. "I think he had a feeling, but he just never told us."

Weinbaum reported that the Taliban has regrouped in southern Afghanistan. "To him, he felt honored to go out there and do something for his country; to do something that meant something to everybody here," Tina Fuga said.

Mike Fuga worked for Southwest Airlines before he was called to serve. He leaves behind a wife and 12-year-old daughter.

Great Military Blunders Of All Time: 6000 Troops To Occupy An Area As Big As Great Britain: [And The Stupid Body Counts Are Back]

By Mark John (Reuters)

"It's hard to convince people whose house you've just bombed that you are on their side," said Colonel Christopher Langton, head of defence analysis at the London-based International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

NATO estimates that it has killed more than 500 Taliban since it launched the Operation Medusa offensive just over a week ago in the southern province of Kandahar, heartland of the insurgency. The Taliban dismiss the figure as propaganda.

"They have fallen into the trap of daily reports about the number of Taliban killed. But more important is how many people you persuade not to be fighters in the first place," said Sean Kay, security specialist at Ohio Wesleyan University.

The violence has also exposed the thin deployment of NATO troops in the south.

It has just 6,000 men in an area the size of Britain, a number alliance chiefs originally said was sufficient so long as they had the support of ordinary Afghans. ["Ordinary Afghans" have about 3000 years worth of killing foreign invaders and picking clean their bones. But the idiots who planned this deadly fiasco never thought about that, now did they? And it's about 10 million to 6,000 in the south. How do you like those odds?]

Now they say they underestimated Taliban resistance and need up to 2,500 additional troops and extra attack helicopters and transport aircraft. But analysts say that too is insufficient. **[How refreshing. "Analysts" with a grip on reality.]**

"That is nowhere near the numbers they really need," said Kay. "There is a huge disconnect between the challenges and the capabilities."

"The Attacks Have Kept Coming" **"Almost Any Movement On The Ground Gets Ambushed. We Need An Entire Battle Group To Move Things"**

"We have greater firepower so we tend to win ... You also have to think that each time we kill one, how many more enemies we are creating ... the lack of security means hardly any reconstruction ... we are not exactly winning hearts and minds."

September 14, 2006 By Kim Sengupta, APN Holdings

Soldiers deployed in Afghanistan's Helmand province five years after the United States-led invasion, and six months after the deployment of a large British force,

say the sheer ferocity of fighting in the Sangin valley, and privations faced by the troops, are far worse than generally known.

"We are flattening places we have already flattened, but the attacks have kept coming. We have killed them by the dozens, but more keep coming, either locally or from across the border," one said.

"We have used B1 bombers, Harriers, F16s and Mirage 2000s. At one point our Apaches (helicopter gunships) ran out of missiles, they have fired so many.

"Almost any movement on the ground gets ambushed. We need an entire battle group to move things. Yet they will not give us the helicopters we have been asking for.

"We have also got problems with the Afghan forces. The army, on the whole, is pretty good, although they are often not paid properly. But many of the police will not fight the Taliban, either because they are scared or they are sympathisers."

Lt Gen Richards, who says British forces have been involved in some of the fiercest fighting since Korea, has now decided to withdraw from outlying positions, which will be taken over by the Afghan forces.

It is a decision that some have questioned. An officer who has served in Helmand said: "We have to ask, can we rely on them? "Especially the police."

He continued: "We did not expect the ferocity of the engagements. We also expected the Taliban to carry out hit and run raids. Instead we have often been fighting toe to toe, endless close-quarters combat. It has been exhausting.

"I remember when we had to extract a Danish recce group which was getting attacked on all sides; it was bedlam.

"We have greater firepower, so we tend to win, but, of course, they can take their losses while our casualties will invariably lead to concern back home. You also have to think that each time we kill one, how many more enemies we are creating. And, of course, the lack of security means hardly any reconstruction is taking place now, so we are not exactly winning hearts and minds."

In the market town of Lashkar Gar, Afghan civilians are increasingly concerned about security. One man said: "We are not safe now; it is more dangerous than it was just a few months ago."

British forces in Helmand had not originally planned to go into Sangin. But when the provincial governor, Mohammad Daoud, appealed for help from President Hamid Karzai to counter increasing Taliban activity, the US commander in the country asked British troops to move in.

The result has been that overstretched forces have come under constant attack.

NATO Regimes Say Who? Us? Go To Afghanistan? No Thanks

Sep 13, 2006 By PAUL AMES, AP

NATO generals struggled Wednesday to persuade allies to provide an extra 2,000 troops urgently sought by commanders because of the ferocity of Taliban resistance to the alliance push into southern Afghanistan.

However, European allies, with thousands of troops already committed elsewhere in Afghanistan or in Iraq, Kosovo, Bosnia, Congo and most recently Lebanon, are wary of sending more to the battlefields of Kandahar and Helmand, where recent fighting has killed more than 30 NATO troops and hundreds of militants.

Assorted Resistance Action

Sep 13 AFP News

ASADABAD, Afghanistan: Two rockets struck Afghanistan's eastern city of Jalalabad on Wednesday, one hitting the airport area hours before President Hamid Karzai flew in, but neither caused any casualties.

One of the rockets hit the outskirts of the airport compound at about 8:00 am (0330 GMT), Nangarhar province police spokesman Ghafoor Khan told AFP.

Dozens of Taliban attacked a police convoy in remote western Afghanistan, kicking off a battle that left four policemen dead, an official said on Wednesday.

The police convoy was attacked mid-afternoon in Farah province, not far from where unidentified gunmen shot dead a UN driver on Tuesday.

"Fighting erupted. Four of our policemen were killed, 11 were wounded," provincial police chief Sayed Agha Saceb told AFP. "

Police in volatile eastern Kunar province said meanwhile that four of their colleagues were killed when a bomb exploded under their vehicle. Two of the dead were low-level commanders.

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of Army Pfc. Shaun Novak of Two Rivers, Wis., who was killed by a roadside bomb in Iraq, at General Mitchell International airport in Milwaukee, before being returned to Two Rivers, Sept. 7, 2006. (AP Photo/Darren Hauck)

Stryker Wiring: “The Whole Thing Just Looks Like A Death Trap Waiting To Happen”

From: Joshua K
To: GI Special
Sent: September 13, 2006
Subject: A picture says a thousand words

I was reading through the latest issue, 4113 and there was a picture of a soldier from the 172nd Stryker Brigade, inside his vehicle, who had recently been killed in Iraq.

There was something that struck me about that picture, and it took a minute for me to figure out what it was; The absolute clutter of wiring and equipment inside his Stryker.

I'm finishing my degree in Electrical Engineering right now, and as an engineer I am absolutely disgraced by the absolute rats nest of a vehicle that the greedy military-industrial complex has provided these soldiers.

I've built prototype projects with half assed wiring, but that picture is just fucking ridiculous. What happens when something goes wrong with one of those wires, let alone something battle related? The whole thing just looks like a death trap waiting to happen.

Yet again, a perfect example of where the priorities of those in charge really lie, with helping their rich defense contractor buddies get rich, while the poor working class grunt gets shafted.

“This Air Force F-16 Combat Squadron Has Taken The Horrifying Step Of Completely Disregarding The Constitution”

September 04, 2006 By Mikey Weinstein, Army Times. Mikey Weinstein, an Air Force Academy graduate and former White House counsel under President Reagan, is president and founder of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation.

For many of us, hearing the term “crusader” conjures up memories of grade-school history classes filled with long lectures about hordes of armored Christian soldiers hacking their way across Europe and the Middle East to recapture Jerusalem.

The Crusaders of the Middle Ages were holy warriors fighting in the name of the Roman Catholic Church and Jesus. Their mission was no secret: They were embroiled in a sectarian religious war to militarily enforce adherence to their biblical worldview.

Their leaders pushed, coerced and pressured them to fight on religious grounds. Their battlegrounds were awash in blood.

As Americans, this should be something we never fear, as our founding fathers knew the critical importance of keeping religion and government separate.

Most would find it unfathomable to think of modern-day crusaders existing within our armed forces: of our men and women wearing uniforms decorated with religious symbols.

However, as I recently discovered, crusaders do exist, and they're serving in the 523rd Fighter Squadron of our Air Force.

The airmen of 523rd Fighter Squadron, based at Cannon Air Force Base, N.M., not only call themselves “crusaders,” they also use blatantly religious symbolism on the patches they affix to their uniforms and the official logo of their unit.

As we continue to engage in a war on terrorism against religious fundamentalists, we must take a moment to consider the sick irony of allowing Air Force combat personnel to dress in clothes displaying religious emblems.

Our men and women are fighting ruthless terrorist organizations that exploit religion as a means to cause mass devastation and death. It is the job of our military to end this fundamentalism, remove the terrorists and bring safety, democracy and freedom to the areas where they operate; not to spread Christianity or represent America as a Christian nation.

Our military personnel are not crusaders. They are honorable and noble defenders of our constitutionally guaranteed rights and freedoms.

The “Crusaders” patch prominently features a large cross: an unmistakable emblem of the Christian faith, as well as other accouterments of the historical Crusaders: a broadsword and armored helmet.

There is no hidden meaning here, no effort to disguise the reference to the Christian religion.

This Air Force F-16 combat squadron has taken the horrifying step of completely disregarding the Constitution, which, as service men and women, they should proudly uphold under the oath they all took to do so.

Christian, Jew, Muslim, agnostic and atheist alike should agree: there is no place for this display of religiosity within our armed forces. The uniforms of our military personnel should not be showcases for religious imagery, particularly when that imagery directly boasts of one of the most devastating examples of human bloodshed in recorded history.

Take a look at the Air Force handbook: you can find it online at www.af.mil. I assure you that nowhere in the Air Force mission statement does it say anything about fighting a crusade for religious freedom.

What it does say is this: “The mission of the U.S. Air Force is to deliver sovereign options for the defense of the United States and its global interests; to fly and fight in the air, space and cyberspace”

Even the ubiquitous and time-honored “Little Blue Book” of Air Force core values established in 1947, and to which guiding principles on religion were specifically added in 1997 to stop “ethical corrosion,” clearly states: “Military professionals must remember that religious choice is a matter of individual conscience.

“Professionals, and especially commanders, must not take it upon themselves to change or coercively influence the religious views of subordinates.”

The men and women who choose to serve in our military should be able to do so without the fear of being pressured to lead a religious crusade, without fear of being coercively evangelized and without fear of having to wear the symbol of another's faith.

Today's U.S. military is the most technologically lethal organization ever created. We, as Americans, should never fear that religion will overtake this mighty military force.

There is no denying that religion is pouring into our government institutions, including our armed forces, at a rapid pace.

It is our responsibility to stand up and raise our voices against these continued egregious violations of our Constitution.

Our Constitution guarantees us the right to pray freely and also prevents our government from imposing religion upon us.

We must express our outrage to military and government leadership, and we must fight to protect our rights, including the right to worship, or not, our God, in whatever manner we choose.

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 RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Assorted Resistance Action

Sept 13 (KUNA) & VOA News & Reuters & By SAMEER N. YACOUB, AP

An oil installation guard was wounded in a clash with gunmen who tried to blow up an oil pipeline in al-Fatha, an area 30 km (20 miles) south of Kirkuk, police said.

A civilian was killed and seven were wounded, including a policeman, when a roadside bomb exploded and clashes erupted between gunmen and the police in Mosul, police and a Reuters reporter at the scene said.

An explosion in Baghdad was aimed at a patrol that protects power institutions as it was passing near the police station, a ministry of interior source told Kuwait News Agency (KUNA). A vehicle of the patrol and a number of nearby stores, houses and cars were damaged.

A bomb exploded during the morning rush hour Wednesday near a police station in eastern Baghdad. That attack killed three policemen.

Four people were wounded, including a traffic policeman, when two mortar rounds landed in central Baghdad near the Muthana military base, an Interior Ministry source said.

Two mortar shells struck al-Rashad police station in southeastern Baghdad, killing one policeman and wounding two others, said police 1st Lt. Mohammed Kheyoun.

Another two policemen were killed when two mortar rounds landed near their station in Baghdad's eastern neighborhood of Mashtal, police Maj. Maher Hamid Mousa said. Three others were injured.

A bomb in a parked car in central Baghdad killed 14 people, including two policemen. It targeted police vehicles near the traffic police headquarters during the morning rush hour, police sources said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

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

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

“Resistance Within The Military Ranks Grew Into A Massive Antiwar Movement”



E! Entertainment Television, Inc. Film Review:

Here are your marching orders: Check out this documentary for a fresh perspective on the Vietnam War protests.

The flick focuses on resistance within the military ranks, which began with a few imprisoned insurgents and--by the early '70s--grew into a massive antiwar movement, with soldiers attacking their own officers and entire units refusing to fight.

Director David Zeiger also dispels the popular myth that vets returning home were spat on and called "baby killers" (even Stallone thought so, as a Rambo clip shows!).

Nimbly edited, No Sir! includes present-day interviews with former soldiers and activists, archival footage, film shot by GIs and terrific snippets of Jane Fonda and Donald Sutherland's popular antiwar show tour (Fonda, too, appears in a new interview).

Though a period piece, the doc's topics are surprisingly relevant today--another unpopular war, military spin, Abu Ghraib, etc.

Yes, sir, No Sir! is worth your tour of duty.

Sir! No Sir!:
At A Theatre Near You!
To find it: <http://www.sirnosir.com/>

The Sir! No Sir! DVD is on sale now, exclusively at www.sirnosir.com.

Also available will be a Soundtrack CD (which includes the entire song from the FTA Show, "Soldier We Love You"), theatrical posters, tee shirts, and the DVD of "A Night of Ferocious Joy," a film by me about the first hip-hop antiwar concert against the "War on Terror."

The Reaction To Patriotic Bullshit



From: Richard Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: September 11, 2006
Subject: The Reaction to Patriotic Bullshit

Vietnam Veterans display their reaction to Mel Gibson's movie.

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)

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward GI Special 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.

BUSH EYE CHART

rev. 8/18/06

NEAR VISION ACUITY

SLOAN LETTERS

This chart should be held 16 inches (40 cm) from the eyes, at right angles to the line of vision and illuminated with not less than 10 or more than 25 foot candles of light.

LINEAR
SNELLEN
SCALE

20/200

W M D

20/150

**EMPIRE
TORTURE**

20/100

**SADDAM AL QAEDA
IRAQ**

20/80

WAR ON TERROR ABU GHRAIB GITMO

20/60

FOURTH AMENDMENT DOMESTIC SPYING

20/50

WARRANTLESS WIRETAPS SECRET LEGAL MEMOS

20/40

ARBITRARY ARREST SIGNING STATEMENTS ONE PARTY GOVT.

20/30

FALSEHOODS IMPERIAL VIOLENCE EXTRAORDINARY RENDITION CHENEY

20/25

GENEVA CONVENTION RUMSFELD ILLEGAL LEAKERS HABEAS CORPUS UN BRIEFING THE "DECIDER" PATRIOT ACT MILITARY TRIBUNALS SECRET DETENTION FACILITIES

20/20

OIL HALLIBURTON NO-BID CONTRACTS CAMP CASEY WALTER REED HOSPITAL GREEN ZONE SUICIDE BOMBERS INSURGENTS IMPROVISED EXPLOSIVE DEVICE SUNNI SHIITE KURDS

20/15

CINDY SHEEHAN STOP LOSS ORDERS TOUR EXTENSIONS "EMERGENCY FUNDING" PRISONER SUICIDES BRING THEM HOME NOW DOWNING STREET MEMOS AFGHANISTAN DOVER AFB FRAUDULENT ELECTION

"Oh, what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive"
- Sir Walter Scott

www.veteransforpeace.org

[Thanks to LC Wolf, who sent this in.]

With Friends Like These: A Review of Giuliana Sgrena's *Friendly Fire*

From: Ron Jacobs
To: GI Special
Sent: September 13, 2006

With Friends Like These: A Review of Giuliana Sgrena's *Friendly Fire* (Haymarket 2006)

Giuliana Sgrena was wounded by US soldiers not long after being freed from her guerrilla fighter captors in Iraq. This incident put her on the front pages of newspapers around the world. In addition, it put her in the hospital and her rescuer six feet under.

Of course, no apologies were forthcoming from the US military or Embassy. Instead, a series of excuses and lies were issued, while any evidence pointing to US culpability was destroyed.

The good news is that Ms. Sgrena survived to tell her story. As my daughter exclaimed after she read the book jacket of my copy of Sgrena's story: "Man, she really had an adventure! It sounds like the Americans wanted to get her."

Indeed, the story within the pages of *Friendly Fire* is quite an adventure. In addition, the text, just published in an English translation by Haymarket Books of Chicago, USA, is a reflection on captivity, the motivation of her kidnappers, the meaning of her journalistic work, and the situation in occupied Iraq.

Her gratitude to the forces that freed her is apparent throughout the book, as is her ambivalence about her captors. Although she never yields to their rationale for kidnapping her, she does acknowledge the tactic as one with some military and political value.

Although she never seems to understand fully that all Westerners are potential hostages merely because of their nations of origin, Sgrena admits that her kidnapping was important in that it provided the Iraqi resistance with a forum to express their opposition to their nation's occupation. In addition, the response to the kidnapping in Italy provided Italians and other non-Iraqis opposed to the occupation a means to express their opposition while supporting the release of the hostages.

This was best expressed in the slogan *Free Iraq! Free Giuliani!* that appeared in rallies across Italy. With this statement, any pro-occupation sentiment in the movement to free Sgrena was effectively sidelined.

Like many other hostage tales, there are moments of true human interaction between the hostage and her captors.

Interestingly enough, but not surprisingly, some of these moments occur during various soccer matches that are watched by the kidnapers. Although Sgrena is anything but a sports fan, her Italian nationality gives her credence if only because of one of the kidnapers obsession with Italian soccer.

She describes her discussions of religion and non-belief with the mujahedin holding her and their difficulty in understanding her relationship to her unmarried longtime partner.

Unlike other hostage tales, especially the recent story by US journalist taken hostage Jill Carroll, Sgrena refuses to accept the rationale of the occupiers and insists throughout the text that it is the occupation that is the primary culprit in Iraq, not the resistance.

The descriptions of the aforementioned conversations reminds the reader of the contradictory nature of the human condition: warriors able to hold a woman prisoner yet curious enough of this person from another culture to converse with her and debate, even though their commanders and clerics might not approve.

As regards Sgrena's thoughts on Iraq, it is her contention that the fighters against the occupiers are primarily composed of two elements: the nationalist insurgency and the jihadists.

Sgrena states that the jihadists want the US in Iraq because it gives them a front in their war on the infidels, while the insurgency wants the US and other occupation troops out so they can get on with their lives.

As I write this review, the news broadcasts are reporting on a demonstration of hundreds of thousands against the US occupation of Iraq and the Israeli war on Lebanon in Baghdad.

The primary component of this demonstration were Shia Iraqis that support Muqtada al-Sadr. According to the news report, US officials claim to be concerned that this massive show of strength by these Shia Iraqis could provoke attacks on them by members of the Sunni community in Iraq.

While there may be some truth to this possibility, the fact that the US command is expressing concern is so transparent as to be laughable. After all, the US military and intelligence have certainly killed more of Sadr's supporters than their fellow Iraqis have.

It is more likely that the US is concerned that the solidarity being expressed across religious lines and across the Arab world for the resistance of Hezbollah to Israel's onslaught will become the dominant current in Iraq. If that occurred, the resistance to the occupation would be nearly universal among Iraqis. That would spell the end of not only the occupation, but of the jihadists as well.

Of course, the Pentagon and White House (with approval from Congress) remains convinced that the situation can be remedied in favor of Washington via military means. Indeed, the commander of US Central Command, General Abizaid, went on record in early August stating that he could "imagine" the US military "winning" Baghdad.

As Sgrena's book clarifies (once again), this imaginary scenario is nothing more than a pipe dream for the US generals and a nightmare for the Iraqis.

As the occupation and its consequent mayhem continue no one is certain what the next phase will look like. The civil strife between various religious trends is but one facet of the aforementioned mayhem. Underlying it all is the continuing dismal state of most Iraqis' economic lives and the lack of any apparent future of peace.

Sgrena's understanding of this desperate situation and Washington's fundamental role in creating and maintaining it are the subject of much of her commentary in the book.

It is interspersed with a narrative describing the physical realities of her captivity and her means of dealing with the boredom, fear, and hopelessness that are part of any imprisonment.

Her journalistic abilities are quite apparent in these descriptions: one feels that they know the characteristics of the room she spent her captivity almost as well if they had seen a walk-through video of it.

Her discussion of the emotions she experienced are interwoven into her story in such a way that they become like the darkness of her mask that the kidnappers insist she wear at times of their choosing. Or the daylight that we assume will always be. They exist but they do not overwhelm.

In fact, that is how Sgrena tells her story.

Perhaps it is her journalistic detachment or perhaps it is the only manner in which she could write it down. No matter what the reason may be, it works.

***Friendly Fire* is more than the tale of one hostage's ordeal and it is more than just another tract on the US-created debacle that is Iraq.**

It is not a cry for revenge, but a tempered statement on a nation's shattered psyche and an individual attempt to share a perspective influenced by her unforeseen role in that nation's history.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

The Master Race Is At It Again: [When Did They Ever Stop?]

More Than 100 Violations Of Truce In Last Month By Zionists

[Thanks to J, who sent this in.]

September 14, 2006 Clancy Chassay in Aita al-Shaab, The Guardian [Excerpts]

In the dusty, broken village of Aita al-Shaab, where almost every house bears scars from the battle between Israel and Hizbullah, the war still lingers a month after it officially ended.

Israeli tanks and bulldozers roam back and forth across the border at night, locals say, while Hizbullah fighters patrol the thick green hills above the village. The sound of Israeli drones is familiar to the people of southern Lebanon, who report daily over-flights.

According to Alexander Ivanko, spokesman for the UN interim force in Lebanon (Unifil), there have been more than 100 recorded ceasefire violations by Israeli forces in the last month. These have been mostly over-flights and incursions by tanks, troops and bulldozers.

Mr Ivanko said that 24 Lebanese civilians - including four men from Aita al-Shaab - had been detained at gunpoint by Israeli troops. All were later released.

In addition to the incursions, there have also been a number of shooting incidents - described by the residents of Aita al-Shaab as "intimidation fire".

Some locals have moved to escape the gunfire on the edge of the village, a few hundred metres from the site where two Israeli soldiers were abducted [translation: captured on Lebanese soil after they invaded it] on July 12, sparking a 34-day conflict that left more than 1,000 Lebanese civilians dead. Wafa Srour, 21, said: "The bullets were coming very close to the house, so we moved to a friend's house close to the centre of town."

Last night the Israel Defence Force said it had kept to the requirements of UN resolution 1701, which ended the conflict, and 80% of territory had been "transferred" to Unifil. Israel reserved the right to continue "intelligence surveillance" while the two captured Israeli soldiers were still held, it said. [In which case the Lebanese resistance movement has the right to conduct "intelligence surveillance" in any part of occupied Palestine they see fit, including Tel Aviv, right?]

Like the Israeli forces, Hizbullah has not withdrawn from the battlefield. [translation: The Lebanese who belong to Hizbullah have not withdrawn from Lebanon. Duh.] Within minutes of the four Aita al-Shaab residents being held by Israeli troops last Friday men from the village took up position in anticipation of a possible battle. They wore Hizbullah's trademark black T-shirts and combat trousers.

But the villagers say local fighters will not violate the ceasefire. "Sayyed Hassan (Nasrallah, the Hizbullah leader) has said that is what is best for Lebanon, so that is what they'll do," said Fatmeh Srour, 19, Wafa's sister. She said many in the village believed Israel was trying to provoke them. "They were trying to take us back into war by shooting at everything, but we remained steadfast."

The Srour sisters lost their brother, Mohammed, in the fighting. "He was a brave warrior; he fought hard in two battles before he was martyred," Fatmeh said. Her husband, a Hizbullah fighter, was on patrol in the next village. "Every time we see the boys holding their heads high, it makes us feel proud."

Many villagers lost relatives in the conflict, either Hizbullah fighters or civilians killed by missiles. Many houses have been shredded beyond recognition and conditions are difficult, with many villagers suffering infections from contaminated well water. Aid workers have set up a clinic and are working with Hizbullah officials to distribute supplies. A small medical camp has been set up by the Iranian Red Crescent.

Nearby Bint Jbeil, where the bloodiest battles were fought, is the first of four southern towns to benefit from a planned \$300,000 reconstruction project funded by Qatar. The Lebanese army deployed to the town nearly two weeks ago, but the residents still complain of Israeli harassment. "It's not a ceasefire yet because the Israelis have not stopped their firing," said Ibrahim Bassi. "The big test for the Unifil is whether they can stop the violations."

Back in Aita al-Shaab, a man recited the opening verse of the Qur'an over a freshly laid gravestone. As the sun slipped over the hill into Israel, an explosion rang out across the lush green hills of the border.

[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."]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Welcome To Occupied New York City: City Government Trying To Block Demonstration Against Bush

9.13.06 ACTION ALERT UNITED FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE

Next Tuesday, September 19, President George Bush will be addressing the United Nations in defense of the disastrous Iraq War. United for Peace and Justice has planned a peaceful march and rally to voice our opposition and call for the troops to come home.

Yesterday we met with the New York Police Department, who informed us they will not allow any marches near the United Nations that day. In fact, they said they would not allow any marches east of Park Avenue, south of 52nd Street, or north of the mid 30s.

The police are invoking "security concerns" to justify shunting us so far away from the site of Bush's speech that we might as well be in another borough. We wouldn't just be out of earshot and out of visual range - we'd be many long blocks away.

Is this what democracy looks like?

We were completely willing to discuss a range of reasonable march routes, but the NYPD refused. Their only proposals were for marches far from the UN or a slot for a short rally at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza, among at least eight other organizations working on an array of issues.

This is another in a long line of actions by the New York City Police Department, and the federal government, that undermine our right to dissent.

Time and time again, United for Peace and Justice has had to fight to exercise our basic right to peaceful protest. They tried to stop us from rallying in the lead-up to the Iraq War. They tried to sideline our protest against the Republican National Convention to the sun-baked West Side Highway.

We didn't back down then, and we're not backing down now. United for Peace and Justice is determined to have the strongest possible antiwar presence on the streets of New York City on September 19 while Bush speaks at the UN.

We know this is a workday, but we urge you if you possibly can to make plans to join us in the streets.

Forward this email to everyone you know, and post it widely on appropriate blogs, listservs, and bulletin boards: <http://www.unitedforpeace.org/sept19survey>

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)



[Thanks to Pham B, who sent this in.]

CLASS WAR REPORTS

12,000 In Bangladesh Rally Against Election Fraud; Stones Thrown At The Prime Ministers' Office

[Thanks to J, who sent this in. She writes: the protests, calling for electoral reform, continue with increasing violence. The Asian media carry reports but the west seems to be showing little interest.]

Sept. 13, 2006 The News, Pakistan

DHAKA: Police in Dhaka baton-charged thousands of opposition supporters on Tuesday in violent clashes outside the Bangladesh prime minister's office that left at least 110 people injured, officials said.

The clashes in the Bangladesh capital, which came amid opposition calls for electoral reforms, saw up to 12,000 activists throw stones and try to pull down barbed wire barricades, police said.

Hospital officials said at least 110 people required treatment although opposition leaders put the number injured at around 350. Among those hurt were senior members of the Awami League and some protesters were taken to hospital with blood streaming from head wounds, according to television footage and an AFP correspondent.

A police chief speaking on condition of anonymity said officers were forced to baton-charge the demonstrators after being struck by stones.

Police also used tear gas to disperse the crowd, witnesses said. The authorities had deployed 12,000 police and paramilitary troops around Prime Minister Khaleda Zia's office to try to prevent Tuesday's protest.

A 14-party opposition alliance led by the Awami League is demanding electoral reforms ahead of January's national elections. The parties want the replacement of the election commissioner and his two deputies, accusing them of being partisan. They argue these officials have drawn up a flawed voter list that includes thousands of ghost voters and excludes many opposition supporters.

At one city hospital at least 10 people were in a serious condition, including Mohammad Nasim, the Awami League former home minister, said deputy director of Bangladesh Medical Hospital Rouf Sarder.

Awami League lawmaker and television soap opera star Asaduzzaman Noor was also among those who needed treatment, said an official at another hospital.

The party's acting general secretary Obaidul Qader said he estimated 350 people were hurt in the protest although it was not known how many required hospital treatment. "It was horrific. We believe these were targeted attacks," he said.

Last week, Qader accused police and paramilitaries of targeting Saber Hossain Chowdhury, a key aide to party leader Sheikh Hasina Wajed, who was seriously injured after being beaten during another protest.

The opposition parties have staged a series of protests to press their demands for reforms which they say are essential to a free and fair election and they are threatening to boycott the ballot unless their demands are met.

Zia's Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) leads a four-party Islamist-allied coalition which is due to hand over power to a caretaker government in late October.

The opposition is also demanding the head of the interim administration be chosen with the consent of all parties. Critics of the Awami League say it fears it cannot regain power unless it changes the system under which it was ousted in 2001.

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:

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