

GI SPECIAL 4117:



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

“We Had The Upper Hand And Their War Was Over”

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: September 16, 2006

The soldiers are the heart of the matter, when they see that they have the power to end the war, it will end just like it did in Vietnam.

Like I've said before, the only thing the Military did wrong in Vietnam, was to give us soldiers live ammunition.

When they did that, it took their power away from them and then we had a level playing field.

Soon, we had the upper hand and their war was over.

Solidarity,

Dennis

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.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Jennings Native Killed In Bombing



September 16, 2006 By: Lee Peck, KPLC

The family of U.S. Army Specialist Marcus Cain is still trying to digest the news of his tragic death. The 20-year-old Jennings native was serving in Iraq, where he was killed Wednesday night by a suicide bomber.

"He wasn't even able to defend himself. Do you understand. This person dropped a bomb on my baby," said Marcus' mother Bennie Cain.

The youngest of five, the 2003 Jennings High graduate enlisted right out of school following in the footsteps of three of his older siblings. With four children in the military in a time of war, Bennie Cain says she was prepared for this outcome.

"I knew after 15 years of being a military mom one day it was going to happen," said Bennie. "I knew this because that was the job they took."

While he may have been a man in the eyes of the world, Bennie says she'll always remember the boy she affectionately called "Dougy." "He was always you know just Dougy. That was our little name for the family. All his little friends they would come knock on the door and they would say, 'Is Dougy home, can we play with Dougy,'" recalls Bennie. "Then after he grew up a little bit and he went to high school he became Doug and then after that when he started dating the girls, then he was Marcus."

Calling home weekly, Marcus was excited and looking forward to returning home. "Last week he called and he wanted us to come. All he was talking about was in November he'd be out of Iraq and he wanted us all to be in Colleen, Texas when the plane landed."

But the hero's homecoming will now be bittersweet for the young soldier who died defending freedom. "Marcus died for a country that he loved," said Bennie.

And so, Bennie and her family mourn the loss of their son in a conflict that she feels in many ways makes no sense and will never truly be resolved. "We are over there fighting for some cowards. A suicide bomber killed my kid. Where am I going to find him to bring him to justice for killing my baby?"

Army officials tell the family it may not be until September 29th before his body is returned to the U.S.

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



U.S. soldiers from the 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division in Baghdad September 16, 2006. REUTERS/Thaier al-Sudani (IRAQ)

Central Texas Soldier Dies In Roadside Bombing

September 16, 2006 KWTX

Army Pfc. Jeffrey Shaffer, 21, of Waco died Wednesday in a roadside bombing in Iraq, family members said Friday.

Shaffer was assigned to the 1st Armored Division.

He died in Ar Ramadi where Sunni Arab militants and US troops have been fighting for months.

Shaffer attended West High School.

Survivors include his parents, Mark and Melissa Adams of Waco, and his brother, Stephen Shaffer of Waco.

Arrangements were pending at OakCrest Funeral Home of Waco.

NOTES FROM A LOST WAR:

Death By IED: “It’s Not A Matter Of If,” He Added. “It's A Matter Of When”

September 16, 2006 Mike Drummond, McClatchy Newspapers

TIKRIT, Iraq - Sgt. 1st Class Dale Toomey slipped his iPod buds under his radio headset and cautioned the rookie driver and gunner about potholes, parked cars and pedestrians as the Humvee convoy entered Tikrit.

"Keep an eye on this guy walking on the left," Toomey of Gastonia barked up to the 18-year-old gunner. "Keep moving left and right, up and down. Don't be a silhouette."

The As a veteran of the 505th Engineering Battalion, Toomey, 37, and fellow National Guard members from the greater Charlotte, N.C., area were showing their replacements on Saturday what it's like to drive the insurgent-infested, Tikrit-to-Baghdad highway on Saturday.

Since U.S. forces have massed in the capital to suppress sectarian violence in recent weeks, insurgent bombings have increased to the west in the Anbar province and to the north, closer to Tikrit.

Toomey, seated in the fourth of the five-vehicle caravan, set his iPod to Tim McGraw. Then, at 10:03 a.m. Iraq time, BOOM!

An explosive hidden in the median rocked the Humvee, the fourth in the five-vehicle caravan. The fifth and last one vehicle bore the brunt of the blast.

"IED! IED! IED!" Toomey shouted over the radio. An improvised explosive device had gone off.

Toomey, 37, grabbed a handful of gunner Richard Malloy's trousers and yanked him to the floor. The young soldier pressed his hands against his Kevlar helmet and buried his head between his knees. Off in the distance, the thump, thump, thump of a firefight between U.S. forces and insurgents heightened the chaos.

"We've got one, maybe two flat tires!" the fifth driver, Staff Sgt. Don Chandler, 38, of Silver Grove, Ky., called out. "We're still moving."

The fifth Humvee took the fourth spot, as the convoy communicated the extent of the damage. As it passed Toomey, he noted that only the right front tire was damaged. All vehicles kept rolling. A small roadside base was about a mile away.

"It can ride on the rim if it has to," Toomey said nonchalantly, quickly turning his attention to Malloy, who had returned topside to man his M-249 SAW belt-fed machine gun. "Sorry I jerked your pants down."

"It just rattled me," said Malloy of Peach Bottom, Penn.

He could have spoken for all inside the convoy, particularly those in Humvees four and five.

"You did good," assured Toomey, who as a civilian works for oil distributor Hagan Kennington.

With regular military stretched thin, the Pentagon has leaned on a massive deployment of citizen soldiers from National Guard and Reserve units for its mission in Iraq.

The 505th Battalion of the N.C. National Guard has been in Iraq for a year. It is about to hand over construction, demolition, road repair and convoy duty over to the Army's 19th Engineering Battalion out of Fort Knox, Ky.

The members of the 505th, which is headquartered in Gastonia, N.C., are returning home in the coming weeks.

Potholes in Charlotte are annoying. Potholes in Iraq can be deadly. They make ideal hiding places for improvised explosive devices. IEDs are responsible for 969 of the 2,682 U.S. deaths in Iraq here over the last 3 three and a half years, according to Iraq Coalition Casualty Count, a Web site that tracks military fatalities.

Of some 2,000 convoys the 505th has run in its year in Iraq, less than 3 percent have hit IEDs, according to Capt. Kyle Meisner. The numbers look comforting on paper. Inside a

Humvee, even an armored one bristling with machine guns and assault rifles, IEDs take on reaper-like meaning.

At the roadside base, the 22 soldiers dismounted and gathered around the damaged Humvee. Many quickly lit cigarettes. Some of those who didn't smoke stuffed Copenhagen chewing tobacco between their cheek and gum.

One soldier wept.

Each Humvee had at least one member of the 505th along Saturday. All had experienced an IED while on tour in Iraq.

Michael Thompson, 30, a quality control worker at textile manufacturer Guilford Mills in Goldsboro, N.C., has experienced 15 IEDs.

"Just a typical day in Iraq," he said, as a crew changed the tire on the stricken vehicle.

A cluster of young soldiers from the 19th Engineering Battalion sought shade in an overhang. Two dogs that base personnel found feeding on corpses a while back wagged their tails and made the rounds of the adoring soldiers.

Among them was Thomas Meadows, 19, of Indianapolis, the gunner aboard the fifth Humvee.

The blast had knocked him off his feet and snapped his head back.

He thought he may have a concussion.

It was his first time "outside the wire," his first convoy of what will be many in Iraq.

"When I came back up, I was mad," he said, drawing heavily on a cigarette.

He talked about wanting to be a cop in Indianapolis and about his wife and about the upcoming birth of their his daughter, due in December.

"I just don't understand why they do this when all we're trying to do is help." [He's new. He'll figure out how he would like it if 50,000 Iraqi troops were occupying Indianapolis, and calling on his wife and new born daughter by kicking their door down some night when he's not there.]

Less than two hours after the attack, the convoy was ready to roll again.

Those in charge decided to continue with the mission, rather than return to base. The convoy would press south to Samarra, have lunch at a base, practice closing a road and checking a bridge, then return to Camp Speicher, just outside Tikrit, Saddam Hussein's hometown.

When about some 200 members of the 505th, a quarter of the battalion, arrived last year, the departing unit rode only one, uneventful training mission. That unit had suffered a death by IED, and its commander had a heart attack. So the 505th had to do a lot of on-the-job training.

It has been blessed so far. The 505th has not suffered a fatality.

"I hate to say it, but what happened today was a good thing," Toomey told a reporter after the mission. "It was a wake-up call. It's for real."

He let the words sink in, as he pondered the reality of IEDs.

"It's not a matter of if," he added. "It's a matter of when."

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

BRITISH FORCES IN AFGHANISTAN A SHATTERED ARMY: Too Exhausted, Hungry And Thirsty To Fight Effectively; “He Is Losing So Much Weight That He Says His Legs Are Pretty Much Bone”

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

September 17, 2006 Mark Townsend, defence correspondent, The Observer [Excerpts]

Relatives of British troops serving in Afghanistan's Helmand province have raised serious concerns over the safety of soldiers, claiming many are so exhausted they are finding it difficult to operate properly.

A growing number of wives, mothers, girlfriends and sisters have decided to speak out over the 'intolerable' pressures on loved ones amid fears that, unless more Nato countries agree to send extra troops, the situation will deteriorate further.

The women describe how soldiers they have spoken to have had one day off in eight weeks because of relentless fighting with Taliban forces and are surviving on just three hours sleep.

'They are absolutely shattered; after a 10-hour gun battle my son is so exhausted he can barely speak,' said one mother whose son has been stationed in the volatile Sangin region of Helmand for two months.

Families also reveal that the supply of rations to the more remote British camps remains so erratic they are sending food parcels amid complaints troops are suffering weight loss.

One mother said fatigue was one of the most dangerous issues and that it was causing mistakes.

Her 19-year-old son in the Household Cavalry Regiment had lost a close friend after an accident involving an armoured vehicle. Her son had been left stranded in Sangin after their Scimitar broke down and they could not obtain the right part. She said: 'Eventually they tried to repair the Scimitar themselves, but were absolutely exhausted. One man jacked it up on sand, went underneath the vehicle and it collapsed, crushing his head.'

The mother said her son twice rang the army's main base in southern Afghanistan - Camp Bastion requesting help, but none was available: 'They were on their hands and knees trying to save him, but it was too late. They were absolutely traumatised.'

One mother, whose teenage son has been stationed in Sangin for the past five weeks, said: 'He has been surviving on three hours a sleep a night for five weeks, sleeping on rocks covered in cardboard. The men are absolutely exhausted.'

Sue Wallace from Brighton said her brother had been in a remote outpost in Sangin, scene of some of the bitterest fighting, for seven weeks without a break. 'They are not being rotated,' she said. 'They need rest and recuperation - and proper meals - if they want the job done properly,' she said.

One grandmother from Colchester has two 24-year-old grandsons fighting abroad, one in Iraq and one in Afghanistan. It is the one based in Helmand whom she fears she may never see again. 'I nearly lost him two weeks go,' she said. 'They were ambushed, the sergeant behind him was hit and the bullet ricocheted into his spine. He still cannot move.'

Relatives also claim that loved ones are being put at risk by inadequate equipment.

One mother said her son had been fighting in Sangin for more than two months and had only received his upgraded body armour last week. 'For 10 weeks, he had no proper protection. That makes my blood boil,' she said.

Others told how troops are forced to ration water because of irregular supplies. Wallace said her mother was sending her brother 2kg food parcels to keep him going. He has lost two stone since arriving in Afghanistan.

'He is losing so much weight that he says his legs are pretty much bone. He does not sound happy on the phone.' So far they have sent £200 of noodles, nuts and crisps to help maintain his strength.

Other mothers say that, while they were initially apprehensive before their sons were sent to Afghanistan, they never imagined it would be so dangerous. Jeanette Reid said her son, James, 22, of the Royal Logistics Corps, had served in Iraq three times, but nothing he experienced there compared to Afghanistan. 'I always thought Afghanistan was going to be a bit more intense than Iraq, and I was right,' she said.

Britain has lost 35 soldiers in the past six months in Helmand. New MoD figures reveal that another 211 have been injured.

Incredibly Stupid U.S. General Tells Afghans That Shooting Them Is “The Price Of Peace And Freedom”

“Afghans Have A Long History Of Ejecting Foreign Armies”

“If The People Are Disappointed Much More, They Could Unite Against The Foreign Forces”



Taliban fighters in Ghazni province in southern Afghanistan. Photo: Veronique De Viguerie

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

September 16, 2006 Declan Walsh in Ghazni, The Guardian [Excerpts]

In the past fortnight Nato has launched a blistering offensive, killing more than 500 Taliban, to stave off an attack on Kandahar city, a previously unthinkable notion.

It was not meant to be like this. When American troops started to flounder in Iraq after 2003 President George Bush lauded Afghanistan as a major victory. When presidential and parliamentary elections passed peacefully, his generals wrote the insurgency off.

"The Taliban is a force in decline," declared Major General Eric Olson 18 months ago.

Today, to many observers those words look foolish.

Comparisons of the southern war with Vietnam are no longer considered outlandish. And dismayed western diplomats, the architects of reconstruction, are watching their plans go up in smoke. "Nobody saw this coming. It's pretty dire," admitted one official in Kabul.

[Oh please, where do these morons come from?. Anybody with a brain the size of a pea saw it coming. The Afghans only have a 3000 year history of butchering foreign invaders who try to occupy their land. And their success in chopping a Russian Army into mincemeat was only yesterday, and contributed mightily to destroying the Russian Empire and the Stalinist regime that occupied half of Europe. Duh.]

No single factor explains the slide.

But some answers can be found in Ghazni, a central province considered secure until earlier this year. Now it is on the frontline of the Taliban advance, just a two-hour drive from Kabul.

In the past two months the Taliban has swept across the southern half of the province with kidnappings, assassinations and gun battles. American officials believe Andar district, a few miles from their base in Ghazni town, is the Taliban hub for four surrounding provinces. This week they launched a drive in Andar, searching houses and raking buildings with helicopter gunship fire into a Taliban compound. At least 35 people died including a mother and two children.

"We've warned people they may see soldiers shooting in their villages. I tell them this is the price of peace and freedom," said US commander Lieutenant Colonel Steven Gilbert.

Travel along the Kabul-Kandahar highway that slices through Ghazni - once a symbol of western reconstruction - has become a high-stakes game of power.

The Taliban sporadically mount checkpoints, frisking Afghans for ID cards, phone numbers or any other sign of a link to the government or foreign organisations. Those caught are beaten, kidnapped or killed.

Foreigners travel south by plane, passing high over the road they once boasted about.

In Qala Bagh district bands of 20 to 30 fighters descend at night. They demand food, shelter or a son to join the fighting, said Maulvi Aladat, the new district chief. A judge, a school principal and the local director of education have been assassinated in the past two months. The two girls' schools are closed.

The government offers scant protection. Ghazni's untrained police are outnumbered and outgunned.

Huddled inside poorly protected compounds with few radios or vehicles, they are little match for large Taliban squads armed with machine guns and rocket propelled grenades. The US-trained Afghan army is curiously absent.

Ghazni has just 280 soldiers, according to the governor, Sher Alam Ibrahimi. Although on paper the army has 35,000 soldiers, desertion rates are believed to be high.

After his cousin was abducted by the Taliban, Yar Muhammad appealed to the provincial and national authorities for help. None came. Days later the body of his cousin, an education department official who offended by teaching girls, was discovered on a stretch of desert.

"The government did absolutely nothing. They didn't even help to find the body," he said bitterly.

Local government is plagued by corruption and weak leadership. Ibrahimi, a former warlord, seems an unlikely candidate for governor with his grindingly slow speech and murky background that includes allegations of war crimes. Many believe Mr Karzai appointed him for his links to a more powerful warlord now in parliament.

Disillusionment with the president, who once promised so much, is high. "We are like a herd with no shepherd," said one elder. In desperation, his government has doubled the number of police through the use of arbikays, untrained tribal fighters paid directly by the governor. They are a mixed blessing.

On Wednesday Dawlat Khan, one of the arbikay commanders, stormed into the police chief's office in Ghazni, bursting with anger. "The Taliban attacked my house. My wife and children were inside. What sort of government do we have that cannot protect us!" he yelled.

Mr Khan typifies the compromises Mr Karzai has had to make to maintain law and order. A life-long warrior with a fierce and unsmiling face, he has a reputation for ruthlessness and brutality.

Lt Col Gilbert said Mr Khan was "covered in blood" the first time they met. But he is a fierce foe of the Taliban, standing to fight when trained policemen scurry away. "In an environment where peace is the norm, he wouldn't have a place," Lt

Col Gilbert said. "But after 30 years of war, famine and fighting, you don't have the luxury of saying I don't want these hard core guys."

Mr Khan told the Guardian the militants have bigger guns and more fighters. They have powerful friends. Several times he had collared Taliban fighters only to discover days later they had been released following a call from a powerful politician or influential tribal leader. They also have surprising amounts of money.

Last year, he said, he captured two insurgents, "one of them alive". Mr Khan asked him why he was fighting. The man replied: "You are being paid 5,000 Afghanis (£54). I am making 20,000 Pakistani rupees. So now you tell me why you are fighting."

Barnett Rubin, an Afghanistan expert at New York University, said that after being driven into Pakistan's tribal areas in late 2001 the Taliban "reconstituted their command structure, recruitment networks, and support bases ... while Afghans waited in vain for the major reconstruction effort they expected to build their state and improve their lives".

"You can't tell poor farmers not to grow drugs and then you have civil servants driving a luxury car and living in a huge house," said Ms Nathan.

The speed and scale of this summer's violence has disoriented both Afghans and foreigners.

In the south outlandish theories that the US is covertly supporting the Taliban, or that British troops have come to avenge colonial-era defeats, are common.

Afghans have a long history of ejecting foreign armies. The good news for Nato is that most still believe the military visitors are a force for good. "People are tired of fighting. Nobody wants to go back to that," said one official in Ghazni, who requested anonymity.

"But if the people are disappointed much more, they could unite against the foreign forces. History could repeat itself."

TROOP NEWS

AWOL Calls Up 75% In 12 Weeks

9.16.06 Ilene Proctor and Margery Epstein, Public Relations [Excerpt]

The GI Rights Hotline, a national soldiers' support service, has logged a 75 percent increase in calls in the last 12 weeks, with more than 100 of those calls from soldiers, or people on their behalf, asking about the penalties associated with going AWOL .

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



Iraq: CNN

Won't Deploy? Can't Deploy! There Are No More Troops To Send To Iraq



[Thanks to Katherine GY, Military Project, who sent this in.]

Sept. 14, 2006 By Daniel Benjamin and Michèle A. Flournoy, Slate.com

Earlier this week, in a Washington Post op-ed, William Kristol and Rich Lowry called on the Bush administration to send more troops to Iraq.

Coming one day before 62 Iraqis turned up tortured and shot in Baghdad and a couple of dozen more were blown up by car bombs, their argument that more American boots on the ground are necessary—though not sufficient—to halt the bloodbath has a compelling logic, even for many who think the war was a mistake. It isn't clear that any

conceivable increase in troops could stem the tide of sectarian violence, but it is, at least, a serious argument and a welcome counterpoint to the White House's incessant calls for staying a course that is leading to disaster.

The only problem with Kristol and Lowry's recommendation is that it is premised on an illusion: In fact, there are no more troops to send to Iraq.

That is the unmistakable message of an Army briefing making the rounds in Washington.

According to in-house assessments, fully two-thirds of the Army's operating force, both active and reserve, is now reporting in as "unready," that is, they lack the equipment, people, or training they need to execute their assigned missions.

Not a single one of the Army's Brigade Combat Teams, its core fighting units, currently in the United States is ready to deploy. In short, the Army has no strategic reserve to speak of.

The other key U.S. fighting force in Iraq, the Marine Corps, is also hurting, with much of its equipment badly in need of repair or replacement.

In terms of ground-force readiness, the United States is in worse shape than at any time since the aftermath of Vietnam, when revelations about a "hollow" military sparked defense buildups from the Carter and then Reagan administrations.

From early on, military experts said that with roughly 140,000 troops in Iraq, the existing Army and Marine Corps was sufficient to prosecute the war for a couple of rotations after the invasion but that the force would need to be supplemented to sustain a longer war.

Now those rotations have come and gone, and many units are on their second and even third tours in Iraq. Many active-duty soldiers and Marines are doing near back-to-back deployments, often with less than a year at home.

Meanwhile, the military is also cannibalizing its equipment stocks. Given the harsh physical environment in Iraq and the high tempo of operations there, weapons, vehicles, and other equipment have been breaking down and wearing out at a rapid rate. So, the military has had to pillage from nondeploying units, the National Guard, and forward-deployed stocks around the world that are meant to be available in case of a crisis.

For Iraq, the implications are clear.

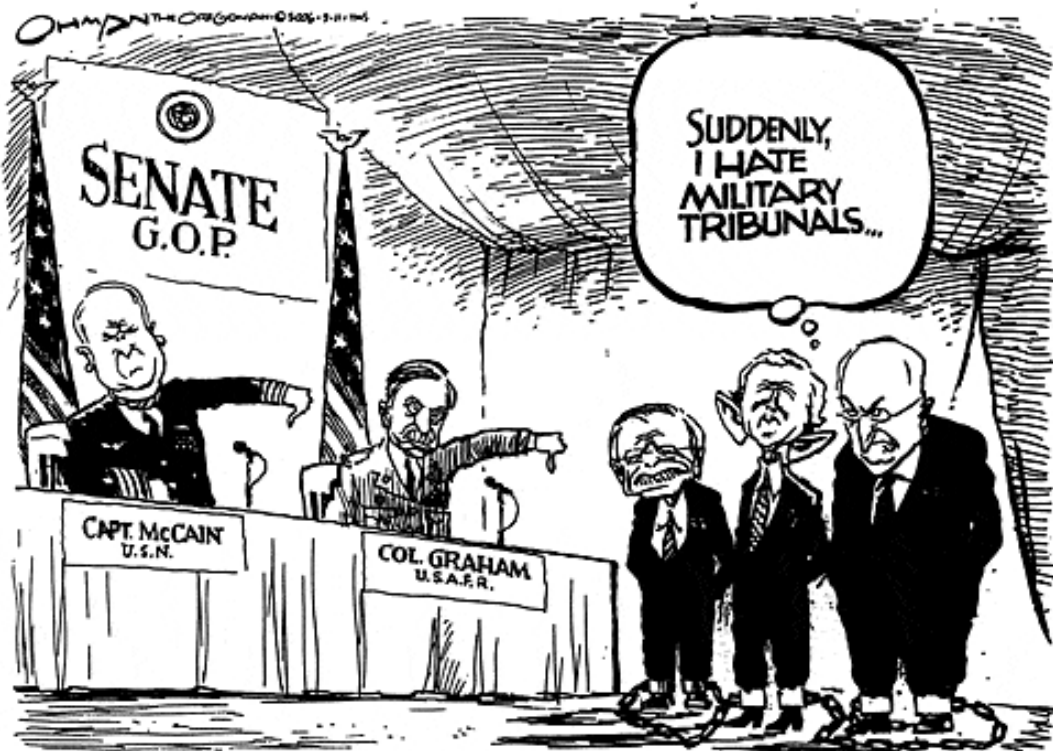
Without additional combat troops, it is simply not true, as Kristol and Lowry contend, that "the ability to succeed in Iraq is, to some significant degree, within our control."

This might have been true two years ago, when the insurgency was just beginning to grow and Secretary Rumsfeld was resisting calls to send in more troops because it would have undermined his case for military "transformation."

One remarkable aspect of the current disarray is how the administration has refused to face up to the problem.

The military's funding requests to improve readiness were reduced by the Office of the Secretary of Defense when the Pentagon was putting together its budget request because of the costs of operations in Iraq and, to a much lesser degree, in Afghanistan.

(Those costs are the major reason why the current national defense spending of \$562 billion is higher in dollar terms than in any other year since World War II except 1952, the height of the Korean War buildup.)



[Thanks to JW, who sent this in.]

This Is Not A Satire: **Air Force Chief Says Test Microwave Weapons On U.S. Citizens**

September 12, 2006 AP

Nonlethal weapons such as high-power microwave devices should be used on American citizens in crowd-control situations before being used on the battlefield, the Air Force secretary said Tuesday.

VA Recovers Stolen Computer With Vets Records For The 6,578th Time

September 15, 2006 By Rick Maze, Army Times Staff writer

A stolen computer containing personal information on 16,000 veterans who had been treated at two Pennsylvania hospitals has been recovered and a 21-year-old has been arrested for the theft from the office of a government contractor.

An investigation is under way to determine if veterans whose names, addresses and other personal data were on the computer are at risk for identity theft.

The Department of Veterans Affairs inspector general said in a statement Thursday night that the FBI is analyzing of the computer to determine if the information was compromised.

The stolen computer contained information on about 16,000 patients who had been treated at VA medical centers in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia.

Nevada Tells Veterans Affairs Dept To Fuck Off

9.14.06 Los Angeles Times

The widow of a Nevada soldier killed in Afghanistan won state approval to place a Wiccan religious symbol on his memorial plaque, something the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs had refused.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Uncle Sam And His Endless Bodybags



From: Richard Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: September 15, 2006
Subject: Uncle Sam and His Endless Bodybags

Uncle Sam and His Endless Bodybags

58,000 killed in Vietnam, 300,000 wounded

2,675+ killed in Iraq, 20,000+ wounded

**And then there is Afghanistan, getting worse
and worse and worse.**

Endless wars???

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
September 15, 2006**

Photo and caption 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)

The Royal Indian Navy Mutiny



RIN Mutineer's Memorial in Mumbai.

[Thanks to Adam Keller, Via Max Watts]

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia [Excerpts]

The RIN Mutiny (Also called the Bombay Mutiny) encompasses a total strike and subsequent mutiny by the Indian sailors of the Royal Indian Navy on board ship and shore establishments at Bombay (Mumbai) harbour on 18 February 1946.

From the initial flashpoint in Bombay, the mutiny spread and found support through India, from Karachi to Calcutta and ultimately came to involve 78 ships, 20 shore establishments and 20,000 sailors.

The RIN Mutiny started as a strike by ratings of the Royal Indian Navy on the 18th February in protest against general conditions.

The immediate issue of the mutiny was conditions and food, but there were more fundamental matters such as racist behaviour by British officers of the Royal Navy personnel towards Indian sailors, and disciplinary measures being taken against anyone demonstrating pro-nationalist sympathies.

The strike found immense support among the Indian population already in grips with the stories of the Indian National Army. The actions of the mutineers was supported by demonstrations which included a one-day general strike in Bombay.

The strike spread to other cities, and was joined by the Air Force and local police forces.

Naval officers and men began calling themselves the Indian National Navy and offered left handed salutes to British officers.

At some places, NCOs in the British Indian Army ignored and defied orders from British superiors. In Madras and Pune, the British garrisons had to face revolts within the ranks of the British Indian Army.

Widespread riotings took place from Karachi to Calcutta.

Famously the ships hoisted three flags tied together - those of the Congress, Muslim League, and the Red Flag of the Communist Party of India (CPI), signifying the unity and demarginalisation of communal issues among the mutineers.

The Mutineers Listen To Politicians, And Are Betrayed

The mutiny was called off following a meeting between the President of the Naval Central Strike Committee (NCSC) , M. S. Khan, and Vallab Bhai Patel of the Congress, who had been sent to Bombay to settle the crisis. Patel issued a statement calling on the strikers to end their action, which was later echoed by a statement issued in Calcutta by Mohammed Ali Jinnah on behalf of the Muslim League.

Under these considerable pressures, the strikers gave way. However, despite assurances of the good services of the Congress and the Muslim League widespread arrests were made. These were followed up by courts martial and large scale dismissals from the service. None of those dismissed were reinstated into either of the Indian or Pakistani navies after independence.

Events Of The Mutiny

After the Second World War, three officers of the Indian National Army (I.N.A.), General Shah Nawaz Khan, Colonel Prem Sehgal and Colonel Gurbaksh Singh Dhillon were put on trial at the Red Fort in Delhi for 'waging war against the King Emperor', i.e. the British sovereign. The three defendants were defended at the trial by Jawaharlal Nehru, Bhulabhai Desai and others. However, even outside the court, the trials inspired a wave protests and discontentment among the Indian populations, who came to view the defendants as revolutionaries who dared to fight for their country.

The mutiny was initiated by the ratings of Indian Navy on 18 February, 1946. It was a reaction against the treatment meted to ratings in general and the lack of service facilities in particular.

On January 16, 1946, a contingent of 67 ratings of various branches arrived at Castle Barracks, Mint Road, in Fort Mumbai.

This contingent had arrived from the basic training establishment, HMIS Akbar, located at Thane, a suburb of Bombay, at 1600 in the evening. The officer on duty informed the galley (kitchen) staff of this arrival.

The sailors were that evening alleged to have been served sub-standard food. Only 17 ratings took the meal, the rest of the contingent went ashore to eat in an open act of defiance . It has since been said that such acts of neglect where fairly regular, and when reported to senior officers present practically evoked no response, which certainly was a factor in the build up of discontentment.



HMIS Talwar at Bombay Harbour.

The ratings of communication branch in the shore establishment, HMIS Talwar, drawn from a relatively higher strata, harboured a high level of revulsion towards the authorities, having had been complaining of neglect of their facilities fruitlessly.

The INA trials, the stories of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, as well as the stories of INA's fight during the Siege of Imphal and in Burma were seeping into the glaring public-eye at the time. These, received through the wireless sets and the media, fed a disgruntlement and ultimately inspired the sailors to strike.



HMIS Hindustan at Bombay Harbour after the war.

In Karachi, mutiny broke out on board the Royal Indian Navy ship, H.M.I.S. Hindustan off Manora Island.

The ship, as well as shore establishments were taken over by mutineers.

Later, it spread to the HMIS Bahadur .

A naval central strike committee was formed on the on February 18, 1946, led by naval rating M.S. Khan.

The next day, ratings from Castle and Fort Barracks in Bombay, joined in the mutiny when rumours spread HMIS Talwar ratings had been fired upon (which was incorrect).

Ratings left their posts and went around Bombay in lorries, holding aloft flags containing the picture of Subhash Chandra Bose. Several Indian naval officers who opposed the strike and sided with the British were thrown off the ship by ratings.

Soon, they were joined by thousands of disgruntled ratings from Bombay, Karachi, Cochin and Vizag.

Communications was maintained other through the wireless communication sets available in HMIS Talwar. Thus, the entire revolt was coordinated.

The strike by the Naval ratings soon took serious proportions. Hundreds of strikers from the sloops, minesweepers and shore establishments in Bombay demonstrated for 2 hours along Hornby Road near VT (now the very busy D.N. Road near CST).

British personnel of the Defence forces were singled out for attacks by the strikers who were armed with hammers, crowbars and hockey sticks.

The Union Jack was lowered from the ships.

Vehicles carrying mail were stopped and the mail burnt. British men and women going in cars and victorias were made to get down and shout Jai Hind. Guns were trained on the Taj Mahal hotel, the Yacht Club and other buildings from morning till evening.

1000 RIAF men from the Marine Drive and Andheri Camps also joined in sympathy.

By the end of the day Gurkhas in Karachi had refused to fire on striking sailors.

The strike soon spread to other parts of India. The ratings in Calcutta, Madras, Karachi and Vizag also went on strike with the slogans Strike for Bombay, Release 11,000 INA prisoners and Jai Hind.

On the 19th of February, the Tricolour was hoisted by the ratings on most of the ships and establishments. By the 20th of February, the third day, armed British destroyers had positioned themselves off the Gateway of India.

The RIN Mutiny had become a crisis of the empire.

An alarmed Clement Attlee, the British Prime Minister, ordered the Royal Navy to put down the revolt. Admiral J H Godfrey, the Flag Officer commanding the RIN, went on air with his order to "Submit or perish".

The movement had, by this time, inspired by the patriotic fervour sweeping the country, the movement started taking a political turn.

The naval ratings' strike committee decided, in a confused manner, the HMIS Kumaon had to leave Bombay harbour while HMIS Kathiawar was already in the Arabian Sea under the command of a striking rating. At about 10.30 HIMS Kumaon suddenly let go the shore ropes, without even removing the ships' gangway while officers were discussing the law and order situation on the outer breakwater jetty. However, within two hours fresh instructions were received from the strikers' control room and the ship returned to the same berth.

The situation was changing fast and rumours spread that Australian and Canadian armed battalions had been stationed outside the Lion gate and the Gungate to encircle the dockyard where most ships were berthed.

However, by this time, all the armouries of the ships and establishments had been seized by the striking ratings. The clerks, cleaning hands, cooks and wireless operators of the striking ship armed themselves with whatever weapon was available to resist the British Destroyers that had sailed from Trincomalee.

The third day dawned charged with fresh emotions. The RAF flew squadron of bombers low over Bombay harbour in a show of force, as Admiral Rattray, Flag Officer, Bombay, RIN, issued an ultimatum asking the ratings to raise black flags and surrender unconditionally.

In Karachi, by this time, realising that little hope or trust could be put on the Indian troops, the 2nd Battalion of the Black watch had been called from their barracks. The first priority was to deal with this mutiny on Manora Island.

Ratings holding the Hindustan had by this time opened fire when attempts were made to board the ship.

At midnight, the 2nd Battalion was ordered to proceed to Manora, expecting resistance from the Indian naval ratings who had taken over the shore establishments H M I S Bahadur, Chamak and Himalaya and from the Royal Naval AA School on the island. The Battalion was ferried silently across in launches and landing craft. D company was the first across, and they immediately proceeded to the southern end of the island to Chamak. The remainder of the Battalion stayed at the southern end of the Island. By the morning, the British soldiers had secured the island.

Decision was made to confront the Indian naval ratings on board the Hindustan that was armed with 4-in. guns.

During the morning three guns (caliber unknown) from the Royal Artillery C. Troop arrived on the island. The Royal Artillery positioned the battery within point blank range

of the Hindustan on the dockside. An ultimatum was delivered to the mutineers aboard Hindustan, stating that if they did not leave the ship and put down their weapons by a 10:30 a.m. they would have to face the consequences. The deadline came and went and there was no message from the ship or any movement.

Orders were given to open fire at 10:33 a.m. The RAs first round was on target. On board the Hindustan the Indian naval ratings began to return gunfire and several shells whistled over the Royal Artillery guns, fortunately without hitting anyone. Most of the shells fired by the Indian ratings went harmlessly overhead and fell on Karachi itself. They had not been primed so there were no civilian casualties. However, the mutineers could not hold on. At 10:51 a.m. the white flag was raised aboard the Hindustan. British naval personnel boarded the ship to remove casualties and the remainder of the mutinous crew. Extensive damage had been done to Hindustan's superstructure and there were many casualties among the Indian sailors. These young Indian ratings, many of them still in their teens, had by then paid a heavy price.

However, HMIS Bahadur was still under the control of the mutineers. Several Indian naval officers who had attempted or argued in favour of put down the mutiny were thrown off the ship by ratings. The 2nd Battalion was ordered to storm the Bahadur and then proceed to storm the shore establishments on Manora island. By the evening D company was in possession of the A A school and Chamak, B company had taken the Himalaya, while the rest of the Battalion had secured Bahadur. The mutiny in Karachi had been put down.

In Bombay, the guncrew of a 25 pounder gun fitted in an old ship had by the end of the day fired salvos towards the Castle barracks. Patel had been negotiating fervently, and his statement of assurance did improve matters considerably.

However, it was clear that the mutiny was fast developing into a spontaneous movement with its own momentum.

By this time the British destroyers from Trincomalee had positioned themselves off the Gateway of India. The negotiations moved fast, keeping in view the extreme sensitivity of the situation and on the fourth day most of the demands of the strikers were conceded in principle.

Immediate steps were taken to improve the quality of food served in the ratings' kitchen and their living conditions. The national leaders also assured that favourable consideration will be accorded to release of all the prisoners of the Indian National Army. .

The mutiny caused a great deal of panic in the British Government. The connections of this mutiny with the popular perceptions and changing attitudes with the activities of the INA and Netaji Subhash Bose was well taken note of and its resemblance of the revolt of 1857 also caused alarm among the British administration of the time.

The fact that the mutiny of 1857 sparked off from a seemingly trivial and unexpected issue of greased cartridges, and that later historical analysis had revealed deep seated resentment among the then subjects of the East India Company led to fears that an identical situation was developing in India.

Gandhi & Muslim League Both Sell Out The Mutineers

Shockingly this Mutiny in the armed forces got no support from the national leaders and like all mutinies before it was largely leaderless.

Mahatma Gandhi, in fact, condemned the riots and the ratings' mutiny, his statement on 3rd March 1946 criticised the strikers for mutinying without the call of a "prepared revolutionary party" and without the "guidance and intervention" of "political leaders of their choice"

He further criticised the local Congress leader Aruna Asaf Ali, who was one of the few prominent political leaders of the time to offer her support for the mutineers, stating she would rather unite Hindus and Muslims on the barricades than on the constitutional front.

The Muslim League issued similar statements which essentially argued that the unrest of the sailors was not best expressed on the streets, however serious the grievance may be.

It may have been the conclusion that the rapid emergence of militant mass demonstrations in support of the sailors would erode central political authority if and when transfer of power occurred.

This certainly is reflected on the opinion of the sailors who participated in the strike.

It has been concluded by later historians that the discomfiture of the Mainstream political parties was because the public outpourings indicated their weakening hold over the masses at a time when they could show no success in reaching agreement with the Raj.

Possibly the only political segment that unconditionally supported the revolt and still mentions it is the Communist Party of India. The literature of the communist party, certainly see the RIN Mutiny as a spontaneous nationalist uprising that was one of the few episodes at the time that had the potential to prevent the partition of India, and one that was essentially betrayed by the leaders of the nationalist movement.

Legacy And Assessments Of The Effects Of The Mutiny

The most significant factor of this mutiny, with hind-sight, came to be that Hindus and Muslims united to resist the British, even at a time that saw the peak of the movement for Pakistan.

This critical assessment starts from events at the time of the mutiny.

The mutiny came to receive widespread militant support, even for the short period that it lasted, not only in Bombay, but also in Karachi and Calcutta on February 23rd, in

Ahmedabad, Madras and Trichinopoly on the 25th, at Kanpur on the 26th, and at Madurai and several places in Assam on the 26th.

The agitations, mass strikes demonstrations, and consequently support for the mutineers, therefore continued several days even after the mutiny had been called off.

Along with this, the assessment may be made that it described in crystal clear terms to the government that the British Indian Armed forces could no longer be relied upon for support in crisis, and even more it was more likely itself to be the source of the sparks that would ignite trouble in a country fast slipping out of the scenario of political settlement.

It is therefore arguable that the mutiny, had it continued and confronted the threat of the RIN commander Admiral Godfrey to destroy the fleet, would have put the British Raj on the path of a maelstrom of popular movement which would have seen British exit from south-east asia under very different circumstances than eventually happened.

Certainly, the forces at Godfrey's disposal was sufficient for him to carry out his threat of destroying the RIN. However, to control the result of those actions, compounded by the outpourings of the INA trials was beyond the capabilities of the British Indian forces on whom any British General or politician (including Indian leaders) could reliably trust.

The navy itself was marginal in terms of state power; Indian troops were at this time being swept by a wave of nationalist sentiments, as would be proved by the mutinies that occurred in the Royal Indian Air Force.

In the after-effect of the mutiny, Weekly intelligence summary issued on the 25th of March, 1946 admitted that the Indian army, navy and air force units were no longer trust worthy, and, for the army, "only day to day estimates of steadiness could be made".

It came to the situation where, if wide-scale public unrest took shape, the armed forces could not be relied upon to support counter-insurgency operations as they had been during the Quit India movement of 1942.

The involvement of the Communist Party also cast a very red tinge to this ultimately mass movement that, if confronted, had the potential to have been the flashpoint for the post-war powers, as was seen in Vietnam.

However, probably just as important remains the question as to what the implications would have been for India's internal politics had the mutiny continued. This was became a movement characterised by a significant amount of inter-communal co-operation.

The Indian nationalist leaders, most notably Gandhi and the Congress leadership apparently had been concerned that the mutiny would compromise the strategy of a negotiated and constitutional settlement, but they sought to negotiate with the British and not within the two prominent symbols of respective nationalism- the Congress and the Muslim League.

However, that begs the question as to why, when granted the God-given chance for a cross-religious unifying factor like the RIN Mutiny in 1946, they chose to denounce it as a leaderless and futile agitation instead of granting it political legitimacy.

These questions have remained largely un-answered, and the story of the mutiny of the all but disappeared from the story of modern India as well as the story of her struggle for independence.



Line-up of ships of the RIN on the Bombay dockyard breakwater during the mutiny.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Zimbabwe Unionists ‘Severely Tortured’ By Rat Mugabe’s Rat Police

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

15 September 2006 Aljazeera

Defence lawyers have said Zimbabwe police had severely tortured a dozen trade unionists arrested for trying to stage a banned protest over poor wages, leaving some with fractured limbs and one union leader in hospital.

Riot police arrested scores of members of the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions (ZCTU) on Wednesday, disrupting a planned march in the latest clampdown by Robert Mugabe's government.

At their first court appearance on Friday, lawyers said the unionists were assaulted "excessively and brutally" during arrest while demanding better pay and access to anti-retroviral HIV/AIDS drugs.

Magistrate Olivia Mariga ordered an investigation into the torture charges, which state prosecutors did not dispute. She also granted bail to all those detained in the capital pending trial on October 3.

Sarudzayi Njerere, defence lawyer, said police beat the group, including ZCTU's president, Lovemore Matombo, and its secretary-general, Wellington Chibebe, at a Harare police station.

"The accused persons were tortured brutally and severely. Wellington Chibebe has been unable to be here because he has been hospitalised."

Many of the accused limped into the courtroom while several wore arm slings and bandages.

Those granted bail included a freelance television journalist arrested while covering the abortive protest for Reuters. He said he was not assaulted.

The defence said the ZCTU members were initially denied medical attention and forced to wade barefooted through raw sewage in cells condemned as inhumane by the Supreme Court.

Amnesty International, the human rights, group, said it was "gravely concerned" over the torture and over the holding of rights activists and mothers with babies, who were arrested earlier this week and denied access to adequate food and medical care.

It was unclear if similar proceedings had taken place in other urban areas where many unionists were held.

Alec Muchadehama, a defence lawyer, said the ZCTU members would deny state charges of participating in a gathering with the intent to promote public violence and dismissed state lawyers' assertions that they had threatened state security.

"They were asking for bread-and-butter issues."

The ZCTU says workers have been hardest hit by an economic recession marked by the world's highest rate of inflation as well as shortages of food, fuel and other basic commodities.

The veteran leader, in power since independence from Britain in 1980, denies responsibility for Zimbabwe's economic woes, blaming them on what he calls sabotage by Western powers opposed to his government's seizure of white-owned farms for blacks. **[Bullshit. The "veteran leader" manages to feed his own fat face all the fine things a tyrant can command, and hand out plenty more to the scum that defend him by arresting, beating and torturing anybody who objects.]**

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

WINNER, 2006 CONTEST: WORLDS' BUTT-UGLIEST TERRORIST CHIEF



Sept. 15, 2006 (AP Photo/Ron Edmonds)

Received:

“Mothers And Fathers And Their Relatives Have To March Against This War”

From: dr. gildo [Brasil]
To: GI Special
Sent: September 16, 2006
Subject: Re: GI Special 4I15: Gen. Concedes Anbar To Resistance

Hey amigo Thomas after I posted here in january 2006 I am here again to quote a american song about "there is a time to listen, a time to say/ a time to sleep a time to awake/ a time to sing a time to pray/ A TIME TO SEE CRIMES A TIME TO PROTEST AGAINST THE PRESIDENT OF USA"

We can go on pretending what Iraq war is- the people of United States of America have to stop this war, if his president don't cares about the everyday deaths of US soldiers, his mothers and fathers and their relatives have to march against this war. STOP THIS SHAME WAR.

Thank you, Thomas for your persistent work, a brave work through GI Report,

meu agradecimentos,
Dr. GILDO

REPLY: Thanks for your encouragement. The credit largely goes to the people who send in information to GI Special: serving members of the armed forces, military family members, veterans, and civilian activists who are determined not only to stop the Imperial wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, but put a permanent stop to the system that benefits from the Empire. T.

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.

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