

GI SPECIAL 4L25:



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans, who sent this in.]

“We’re Losing. I’m Not Afraid To Say It” “It’s Hard To Be Somewhere Where There’s No Mission And We Just Drive Around”

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in.]

Dec 28 By WILL WEISSERT, Associated Press Writer [Excerpts]

Many of the American soldiers trying to quell sectarian killings in Baghdad don't appear to be looking for reinforcements.

They say the temporary surge in troop levels some people are calling for is a bad idea.

In dozens of interviews with soldiers of the Army's 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment as they patrolled the streets of eastern Baghdad, many said the Iraqi capital is embroiled in civil warfare between majority Shiite Muslims and Sunni Arabs that no number of American troops can stop.

But their more troubling worry was that dispatching a new wave of soldiers would result in more U.S. casualties, and some questioned whether an increasingly muddled American mission in Baghdad is worth putting more lives on the line.

Spc. Don Roberts, who was stationed in Baghdad in 2004, said the situation had gotten worse because of increasing violence between Shiites and Sunnis.

"I don't know what could help at this point," said Roberts, 22, of Paonia, Colo. "What would more guys do? We can't pick sides. It's almost like we have to watch them kill each other, then ask questions."

"Nothing's going to help. It's a religious war, and we're caught in the middle of it," said Sgt. Josh Keim, a native of Canton, Ohio, who is on his second tour in Iraq.

"It's hard to be somewhere where there's no mission and we just drive around."

Sgt. James Simons, 24, of Tacoma, Wash., said Baghdad is so dangerous that U.S. forces spend much of their time in combat instead of training Iraqis.

"Baghdad is still like it was at the start of the war. We still have to knock out insurgents because things are too dangerous for us to train the Iraqis," he said.

Sgt. Justin Thompson, a San Antonio native, said he signed up for delayed enlistment before the Sept. 11 terror attacks, then was forced to go to a war he didn't agree with.

A troop surge is "not going to stop the hatred between Shia and Sunni," said Thompson, who is especially bitter because his 4-year contract was involuntarily extended in June.

"This is a civil war, and we're just making things worse. We're losing. I'm not afraid to say it."

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 email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Three Marines Killed In Al Anbar

29 December 2006 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory
RELEASE No. 20061228-05

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – Three Marines assigned to Regimental Combat Team 5 died Thursday from wounds sustained due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province.

Michigan Marine Dies In Iraq Fight



Marine Cpl. Christopher Eskelson

December 29, 2006 BY NAOMI R. PATTON, FREE PRESS STAFF WRITER

Three days shy of his 23rd birthday, U.S. Marine Cpl. Christopher Eskelson, who was serving with the 1st Battalion of the 24th Marines in Iraq, found himself in a firefight around 2:45 p.m. Wednesday.

Marine officers told David Eskelson on Thursday morning that his son was killed after taking a direct hit to his flak jacket.

"He's definitely a hero," Eskelson, 48, said about his son, the oldest of three children. "He was actually going to be a doctor ... so he could help people."

Cpl. Eskelson joined the reserves with the goal of using the college scholarship benefit to get an education.

Born and raised in Vassar, east of Saginaw, he played football and basketball at Vassar High School and attended St. Michael's Lutheran Church.

Cpl. Eskelson was featured in a Free Press photo published on Christmas Eve that was part of a series of articles on his unit. "What a Christmas present," said David Eskelson

of the photo. He added that he had been waiting for a call from his son. "You people got no idea what that did for me as a dad. ... He was a warrior."

David Eskelson said the officers told him two other Marines from the unit also were killed and three others were wounded. They could not be identified by Thursday night.

Also Wednesday in Iraq, Marine Lance Cpl. William Craig Koprince Jr., a Southgate native, was killed by a roadside bomb in Anbar province. The 24-year-old, assigned to the 3rd Battalion of the 2nd Marine Regiment, was born in Southgate and moved to Tennessee when he was 10.

Pa. Soldier Dies Of Wounds Weeks After Being Injured In Iraq

Dec 28 CHAMBERSBURG, Pa. (AP)

A soldier from Pennsylvania who was wounded in Iraq in November has died, according to his family.

Sgt. Edward W. Shaffer, 24, of Mont Alto, died Wednesday afternoon at Brooke Army Medical Center in Texas, six weeks after being severely burned in an explosion, said his grandfather Edward Shaffer.

Sgt. Shaffer had been in critical condition at the hospital after being injured Nov. 13 by a roadside bomb in Ramadi, about 70 miles west of Baghdad. He suffered burns over 80 percent of his body, and doctors had given him only a 10 percent chance of surviving.

"All they could do was try to keep him comfortable. They couldn't do any more for him," Edward Shaffer said.

In the weeks following the accident, Sgt. Shaffer had undergone at least five surgeries, during which both hands and a foot were amputated. He also had unsuccessful skin graft surgery.

Shaffer had served in Iraq for eight months. Before that, he had completed tours of duty in Kuwait and Germany.

Shaffer was a member of the 1st Armored Division's 136th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Platoon, B Company.

He enlisted in the Army in 2003, a year after he graduated from Waynesboro Area Senior High School.

Peoria Parents Mourn Soldier Killed In Iraq

Dec. 22, 2006 Cecilia Chan, The Arizona Republic

As a child, David Staats whizzed around the house, pretending to be a firetruck as he dreamt of one day becoming a fireman or paramedic.

Instead, the boy grew up and joined the U.S. Army after graduating from Cactus High School in Glendale. On Saturday, Staff Sgt. Staats, 30, was killed during a mounted patrol outside of Baghdad.

His death brings to 83 the number of Arizonans killed in Iraq.

Staats was one of three soldiers who were killed when their Humvee struck a bomb, the Department of Defense says. The three were assigned to the First Cavalry Division based in Fort Hood, Texas.

Staats was only a little over two weeks into his third tour of Iraq when he was fatally wounded, said his mother, Wanda.

She and her husband, Roger, who spent 23 years in the Air Force and retired in 1985 at Luke Air Force Base, live in Peoria.

"David was a hero," she said. "He was doing what he thought he should do. He was trying to take care of business and make the world safe."

Wanda and Roger Staats learned of their only son's death Saturday. Army personnel broke the news to David's 8-year-old son, Tyler, who lives in Glendale with David's ex-wife.

Although David and Tyler's mom had divorced, father and son communicated with each other weekly. Tyler recently spent 10 days in Texas, Wanda said.

David and his family moved to the Valley in 1981. He played football at Cactus High School and served in the Reserve Officers' Training Corps there.

David's funeral is to take place in Colorado Springs, Colo. The Staatses won't be making the trip because of Roger's health. Instead, the couple is planning a memorial service Jan. 6. The time and location have not been decided.

David's death is especially hard for them, who were estranged from their son for three years because of family conflicts.

British Soldier Is Killed In Basra

29 December 2006 BBC

A British soldier has been killed by a roadside bomb in Basra, southern Iraq, the Ministry of Defence has said.

The soldier, from the 2nd Battalion, The Duke of Lancaster's Regiment, was killed while taking part in a routine patrol in Basra City. The Warrior Armoured Fighting Vehicle which he was travelling in was targeted by a roadside bomb.

He was airlifted to the Field Hospital at Shaibah Logistics Base, but died later as a result of his injuries. There were no other casualties.

“His Injuries Were The Result Of Rockets Fired Into The Base From Outside Its Boundaries, Not RPGs”

December 29, 2006 By MIKE KIENZLER, STAFF WRITER, The State Journal-Register

U.S. Marine Corps Gunnery Sgt. Andrew Harrell said Thursday he "is doing fine," although he faces surgery and therapy to repair wounds he suffered in Iraq on Dec. 18.

Harrell, a Springfield native, is in a military hospital in Bethesda, Md., with severe knee and leg injuries suffered in a rocket attack on a U.S. base at Camp Korean Village in Al-Anbar province in Iraq.

Previous reports had indicated Harrell was wounded and a Marine captain killed in explosions caused by two rocket-propelled grenades fired by Iraqi insurgents.

However, Harrell said in a telephone interview Thursday that his injuries were the result of rockets fired into the base from outside its boundaries, not RPGs.

"My femur was basically shattered," Harrell said. "On Tuesday, I'll have surgery on the femur, and then I'll have therapy. Then they'll send me back to California."

The Marine killed in the attack was Capt. Kevin Kryst of West Bend, Wis., a helicopter pilot who, like Harrell, was with the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, based in Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Harrell, who has been in the Marines since he graduated from Lanphier High School in 1996, said he was intelligence chief for the helicopter squadron.

Harrell added that he doesn't feel like a hero, especially considering that Kryst was killed in the attack.

Although he was on his third assignment in Iraq, Harrell said, "I was never there for any extended amount of time." He said his first two Iraqi tours lasted 30 and 38 days, respectively. The Pentagon announced Wednesday that the 15th Expeditionary Unit's current Iraq duty is scheduled to end next month.

Harrell and his wife, Gail, now live in the San Diego area.

Area Soldier Wounded By Bomb In Iraq



Sgt. 1st Class Tadd M. Lambert is shown in a photograph taken along the Tigris River, near Baghdad.

12.29.06 By Edward J. Canty TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

WORCESTER: An Army sergeant who formerly lived on Grafton Hill was wounded in Iraq shortly before Christmas and was returned to the United States yesterday, a relative said last night.

Sgt. 1st Class Tadd M. Lambert, a 10-year Army veteran, was injured Dec. 23 in Baghdad when a roadside bomb exploded near his vehicle while he was on patrol. The bomb shattered his leg, according to his aunt, Sandi Swett of Southbridge.

Ms. Swett said Sgt. Lambert, 28, underwent surgeries in Iraq and Germany and is expected to have to endure more operations at Fort Carson, Colo., where he is stationed. He is now in stable condition, she said.

His wife, Patricia (Lindsey) Lambert, also a Worcester native who was here visiting, left the city yesterday with their son, Joshua, to join her husband at Fort Carson. The family currently lives in Colorado Springs.

Ms. Swett said her nephew is a 1996 honors graduate of Worcester Vocational High School and played baseball locally.

Sgt. Lambert is the son of Ernest R. Lambert Sr. of Rutland and Dianne Lambert of Port Orange, Fla.

British Patrol Hit South Of Basra;

One Soldier Wounded

29 Dec 2006 Reuters

A British patrol was hit by a blast south of Basra and one British soldier was slightly wounded, Captain Olly Pile said.

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



U.S. soldiers from the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team guarding a street in Baghdad, October 29, 2006. REUTERS/Mohammed Ameen (IRAQ)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Assorted Resistance Action

Washington Post, December 20, 2006 & 12-29-2006 (AFP) & Pak Tribune

Taliban militants beheaded a man and fatally stabbed another as a warning to villagers not to give the government or NATO information about Taliban activities, a witness said.

A remote-controlled bomb exploded Friday in the province's capital, Khost, police said.

Three policemen, were hurt, police inspector Sayed Aziz said.

A similar bomb exploded Friday under the vehicle of a local police commander in Nangarhar province, also in the east, injuring two policemen, another official said.

Using machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades, the Taliban attacked a police post late Thursday night, said Khost provincial police commander Mohammad Ayub. The ensuing battle lasted more than an hour.

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket containing the remains of Marine Lance Cpl. Brent E. Beeler following Beeler's funeral in Jackson, Michigan December 19, 2006. Beeler was killed in combat near Fallujah, Iraq. REUTERS/Rebecca Cook (UNITED STATES)

Commander Says British Troops In Iraq Fucked By Politicians

12.28.06 New York Times

The commander of Britain's 7,000 troops in southern Iraq has complained that they are operating in conditions that display "a generation of underfunding and relative neglect" by successive governments back home.

The remarks by the commander, Maj. Gen. Richard Shirreff, echoed criticism by two other high-ranking officers in recent months, breaking with a tradition of public restraint by British military commanders in expressing political views.

Army, Air Force, Coast Guard Disability Claims Take A Year To Process By Hand; Marines Use Electronic Records; No Delay [Duh]

December 20, 2006 By Rick Maze, Army Times Staff writer [Excerpt]

A new report by a congressional watchdog agency said veterans' disability benefits claims could be processed faster if the Department of Veterans Affairs had better access to military records.

An example in the report from the Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress, is highlighted in the differences in handling post-traumatic stress disorder claims for veterans.

Processing such claims for Army, Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard personnel takes up to a year longer than for Marine veterans because an electronic records library exists for Marines that shows who has served in combat, an essential fact when applying for veterans' benefits.

If VA regional offices cannot find evidence of combat service in a veterans' record, they turn to historical records.

The Marine Corps electronic library can be searched right away, but VA must request the records of veterans of other services, a process that the report said takes up to a year.

The Joint Services Records Research Center that has the historical records has 13 full-time employees and a "steady" backlog of 4,000 requests for personnel files, the report said. Eighty-five percent of the requests are related to benefits claims.

"Many of the records that JSRRC may search are voluminous, are not stored electronically, and must be searched manually," the report said.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

ASSORTED RESISTANCE ACTION

12.29.06 Reuters & (KUNA)

Guerrillas attacked police in Jurf al-Sakhar, 85 km (53 miles) south of Baghdad, killing two and wounding seven, a police source said.

Four Iraqi soldiers were killed on Friday and another was injured in an attack by unknown armed men southwest of Kirkuk northern Iraq, an Iraqi military source said.

The source said unknown gunmen opened fire at two Iraqi checkpoints on a main road in Kirkuk, which resulted in killing four soldiers and injuring another.

Meanwhile, Iraqi police in Kirkuk said that one of its patrols discovered dead body of a policeman, who had been previously kidnapped. Signs of torture was and fire shots appeared on the corpse.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

One Saddam Hussein Executed:
Cost:
2998 U.S. KIA And Counting;
22,057 U.S. Wounded And Counting;
Hundreds Of Thousands Iraqis Killed,
No End In Sight;
George W. Bush Alive And Well

Saddam Hussein Executed
29 December 2006 AP

Baghdad - Former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein was executed early Saturday morning in Baghdad, according to Iraqi state television.

Hussein, 69, was hung around 6 a.m. local time (10 p.m. Friday EST) in the American-controlled Green Zone in central Baghdad.

**LIAR
TRAITOR
TROOP-KILLER
DOMESTIC ENEMY
UNFIT FOR COMMAND**



(AP Photo/Ed Reinke)

**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)

Been There, Done That: **“In The Face Of This Experience Most Soldiers Came To Perceive The War As Meaningless, As A War For Nothing”**



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

American soldiers spent much of their time in fruitless searches for an enemy who almost always determined the time and place of battle.

From: WORKING CLASS WAR, by Christian G. Appy, U. Of North Carolina Press, 1984
[Excerpts]

In Vietnam, American soldiers encountered a reality utterly at odds with the official justifications of the war presented by American policymakers.

Though many men arrived in Vietnam believing they had been sent to stop communism and to help the people of South Vietnam preserve democracy, their experience fundamentally contradicted those explanations.

Told they were in Vietnam to help the people, soldiers found widespread antagonism to their presence.

Told they were there to protect villagers from aggression, they carried out military orders that destroyed villages and brought terror to civilians.

Told they were fighting to prevent the spread of communism, they discovered that support for revolution already flourished throughout the country and could not be contained behind fixed boundaries.

The demoralization caused by the contradictions in American policy was exacerbated by the fact that U. S. troops fought at a tactical and strategic disadvantage.

Despite the much-vaunted superiority of American technology -- our greater firepower and mobility -- the Vietnamese opposition clearly established the terms of battle.

American soldiers spent much of their time in fruitless searches for an enemy who almost always determined the time and place of battle.

The majority of American infantrymen who lost their lives in Vietnam were killed by enemy ambushes, by enemy booby traps and mines, or by their own side's bombs, shells, or bullets (friendly fire).

Pitted against such an elusive enemy, American search-and-destroy missions were essentially efforts to attract enemy fire. American soldiers were used as bait to draw the enemy into identifiable targets so the full weight of American firepower, bombs, rockets, napalm, could be dropped on the Vietnamese.

As American troops soon learned, the central aim of U. S. policy in Vietnam was to maximize the enemy body count. In executing that policy, soldiers also learned that the high command was rarely particular about determining if dead Vietnamese were combatants or civilians.

In the face of this experience most soldiers came to perceive the war as meaningless, as a war for nothing.....

Those most responsible, the major policymakers and military commanders, have never owned up to the deceptions of their wartime claims and decisions: their portrayal of South Vietnamese dictatorships as democratic, their lies about the Gulf of Tonkin incident, their claims of progress based on false body counts and undercounted enemy forces, or their insistence that civilian casualties were unfortunate accidents rather than an inevitable result of American military strategy responsible for the deaths of at least a half-million civilians.

American soldiers on the ground were placed in deep moral jeopardy.

Even those who sought to act as humanely as possible often feel tainted by their role in carrying out such destructive policies. They have felt all the more tainted by the failure of American leaders to take responsibility for the worst of the war and by the efforts of those leaders to seek moral immunity from their own decisions.

Nothing symbolizes the moral safety of the powerful more dramatically than the massacre at My Lai.

While American GIs killed hundreds of unarmed villagers on the ground, the commanding officers, including a general and two colonels, circled 2,000 feet above the village in helicopters.

None of these airborne officers was indicted for the crime committed under their command.

Mutiny in India, 1920: “The Union Jack Was Replaced By The Flag Of The Irish Republic”

[Thanks to Adam Keller, The Other Israel, GUSH SHALOM, www.gush-shalom.org, for this information.]

On 28 June 1920, five men from C Company refused to take orders from their officers, declaring their intent not to serve the King until the British forces left Ireland.

When news of the Anglo-Irish War, especially of the behaviour of the Black and Tans and the Auxiliary Division (paramilitary reinforcements of the Royal Irish Constabulary from England), reached the veterans of the 1st Btn at Jalandhar, India, the mutiny began.

On 28 June 1920, five men from C Company refused to take orders from their officers, declaring their intent not to serve the King until the British forces left Ireland.

The Union Jack at Jullundur, on the North-West Frontier, was replaced by the flag of the Irish Republic.

Within three days, the mutiny was ended and the mutineers taken to prison camp at Dagshai.

At Solan, rumours began in the Rangers detachment there that the prisoners had been executed.

Under the command of Private James Daly, about 70 Rangers joined the mutiny and attacked the armoury. The guard successfully defended it: Privates Sears and Smyth were shot dead while other mutineers were taken prisoner.

In all, about 400 men had joined the mutiny, of whom eighty-eight were court martialled. Fourteen men were sentenced to death and the rest given up to 15 years in gaol, other than a few who were acquitted. Thirteen of the men sentenced to die had their sentences commuted to life imprisonment.

The defendants were apparently unaware that they could have had a defence counsel.

A historical account of the Mutiny can be found in 'Mutiny for the Cause', Sam Pollock, Lee Cooper, London, 1969.

21-year-old Daly was shot by a firing squad in Dagshai prison on November 2, 1920, and was therefore the last member of British Forces to be executed for mutiny.

Pte Sears and Pte Smyth were buried at Solan; Daly and John Miranda (who died in prison) were buried at the Dagshai graveyard (until 1970, see below). Jim Daly was eventually awarded the Victory & General Service Medals for his active service in WW1.

As a result of the foundation of the Irish Free State, under the terms of the Anglo-Irish Treaty the Connaught Rangers and five other Irish infantry regiments of the former Southern Ireland were disbanded in 1922. On 12 June the Rangers Colours, along with those of five other Irish regiments, were laid up in a disbandment ceremony at St. George's Hall, Windsor Castle in Berkshire in the presence of King George V and the five other disbanding regiments.

The Rangers detachment included the commanding officers of the 1st and 2nd Rangers, Lieutenant-Colonels W. N. S. Alexander and Henry Francis Newdigate Alexander. The regiment was formally disbanded on 31 July, after which there was no regiment of rangers in the British Army until 1968. Many of the Irish officers and men helped form the Western Command of the new Irish Army at the outbreak of the Irish Civil War.

In 1936, the Oireachtas (Irish Parliament) passed the CONNAUGHT RANGERS (PENSIONS) ACT, 1936 "An Act to provide for the payment of pensions, allowances, and gratuities to or in respect of certain former members of the 1st Battalion, the Connaught Rangers, and to make provision for other matters connected with the matters aforesaid" (August 1936).

The effect of the Act was to give the Mutineers parity of esteem with veterans of the Anglo-Irish War.

In 1970, the remains of Sears, Smyth and Daly were taken back to Ireland and given a military funeral with full honours.

Russian Soldiers' Mutiny In France, 1917

[Thanks to Adam Keller, The Other Israel, GUSH SHALOM, www.gush-shalom.org, for this information.]

From H.G. Wells, The Shape of Things to Come (1933):

The tragedy of a special Russian infantry corps in France.

Fifteen thousand Russians had been sent thither in 1916 to be equipped and armed and put into the line with the French armies. Many of these poor lads scarcely knew the difference between a Frenchman and a German, and the ostensible objects of the war were quite beyond their understanding. But they heard of the revolution in their own country and they resolved to consider their attitude with regard to it.

They elected representatives and put it to the vote whether they should continue to fight, which meant for them to take part in that "experiment" of General Nivelle's known to be in preparation at the time [i.e., sending a great mass of soldiers to attack the German positions with bayonets. Adam]

The Russians chose what seemed to them the generous part and went into the battle.

The French command used them ruthlessly, and nearly 6,000 were killed or wounded.

The rest came out of the line and mutinied. They would fight no more.

Thereupon, these defenceless men were surrounded by trustworthy French troops, a great concentration of guns was assembled, fire was opened upon them suddenly and they were massacred.

Piet Van Staveren: A Soldier Fights His Own Imperial Government In The Cause Of Indonesian Independence



Postcard from Collection Van Staveren

[Thanks to Adam Keller, The Other Israel, GUSH SHALOM, www.gush-shalom.org, for this information.]

Text was taken from *On the Waterfront*, -newsletter of the Friends of the International Institute Of Social History

At times the struggle between the Dutch and Indonesians for independence was not entirely black and white.

Sometimes Dutch young men, motivated by idealistic principles joined 'the enemy'. They remembered the recent Dutch struggle for independence against the Germans still too vividly.

Several years ago the Institute received the archive of the best known of these young men, Poncke Princen (1925-2002).

Later, through the intervention of Joop Morriën, we also acquired the letters of Piet van Staveren (1925-).

As a communist, he had already protested sending military conscripts to Indonesia, but as a consequence of Minister van Maarsseveen's promise that these soldiers would not be used for fighting, he ended up with this group.

In July 1947, when the first major Dutch military campaign threatened, he joined the troops of the Indonesian Republic in Jogjakarta. There he made himself useful in the Republican Youth Movement - his experiences in the pre-war socialist AJC and the post-war communist ANJV being yet fresh in his mind.

He also had contacts in the SOBSI.

Probably the fact that he had close ties with the Indonesian communists in Madiun was responsible for his ultimately being taken prisoner by the Hatta regime and then deported to the Netherlands.

There he was subject to a prison sentence, which he served in Leeuwarden until 1955.

As a result of this there were protests by Indonesian and Dutch communists. In 1984 he was interviewed in a VPRO radio documentary by Marion Bloem and Ivan Wolffers.

Besides the substantial amount of documentation and a few photos, the primary importance of the collection are the innumerable letters covering the 1946-1953 period (these also include a few original documents from Madiun from 1948).

These not only show a convinced and optimistic communist idealist, but also provide direct information about an important episode in the struggle for Indonesian independence.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Reporter Returns To Baghdad To Find It Far Different - And Worse Off

When I returned to the office, none of my Iraqi co-workers asked about their former president. They despise him, to be sure, but they shrugged and declared him yesterday's news, as irrelevant to their lives as the current crop of leaders cloistered in the Green Zone with no control over the anarchic landscape outside.

Dec. 28, 2006 By Hannah Allam, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

There's the Green Zone to guard the unpopular government from its suffering people, U.S. military bases where Iraqis aren't allowed to work, armored sedans to shield VIPs from the explosions that kill workaday civilians, different TV channels and newspapers for each political party, an unwritten citywide dress code to keep women from the eyes of men.

I attended a symposium called "How to Solve Iraq's Militia Problem," but the main militia representatives never showed up and those of us who did were stuck inside for hours while a robot disabled a car bomb in the parking lot.

Then there was the Iraqi government's two-day national reconciliation conference, which offered little more than the grandstanding of politicians whose interests are best served by the fragmenting of their country. The message was: The south is for the Shiites, the north is for the Kurds, the west is for the Sunnis, and the east is open for Iran. Baghdad, the besieged anchor in the center, is a free-for-all.

Even on the relatively "safe" side of the river, a dizzying assortment of armed men roamed freely. In the space of an hour, we encountered the Badr Organization militia, the Mahdi Army militia, the Kurdish peshmerga militia, the Iraqi police, interior ministry commandos, the Iraqi military, American troops, the Oil Protection Force, the motorcade of a Communist Party official and Central Bank guards escorting an armored van.

My colleagues were fearful of the future when I left, but at least they went home every night to home-cooked meals and the bustle of domestic life. A few had even purchased land in the optimistic belief that 2006 would bring a measure of calm. Now, half the staff has sent their families to safer countries, and others plan to do the same.

On any given night, we have three or four Iraqi staff members camping out at the office. I find them surfing the Internet for visa applications to European countries, information on the U.S. green-card lottery, fellowship programs, political asylum eligibility. At night, they burn through phone cards to baby talk with their children in Syria or blow kisses to them from a Web cam.

I covered a day of the Saddam Hussein trial because I was curious to see the dictator in person.

When I returned to the office, none of my Iraqi co-workers asked about their former president. They despise him, to be sure, but they shrugged and declared

him yesterday's news, as irrelevant to their lives as the current crop of leaders cloistered in the Green Zone with no control over the anarchic landscape outside.

Electricity is on for just a couple of hours a day in most districts. Gas lines stretch for block after block. Food prices are higher than ever, especially for fresh produce, which requires rural farmers to make the treacherous drive to Baghdad markets. The water is contaminated.

Universities are in bad shape. Instructors have fled, mortars interrupt classes, and people have been kidnapped at the gate. With violence emptying campuses, the Iraqi prime minister issued an order this month that threatens expulsion or dismissal for students and teachers who don't come back to class.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

**“Congressional Democrats Used
The Iraq Study Group Proposals**

To Retreat From Calls To Pull U.S. Troops Out Of Iraq” “Organize The Biggest Possible Mobilization For January 27 Antiwar Demonstrations”

December 15, 2006 Editorial [Excerpts]

THE NOVEMBER election that ousted the Republicans was a cause for celebration for anyone opposed to the Bush agenda. But the expectations of voters go far beyond the policies being put forward by the new majority party in Congress.

For example, a new Kaiser Family Foundation poll found that 73 percent of Democrats favor new programs that would achieve universal health care--which is definitely not on the agenda of the incoming Congress.

Likewise, Congressional Democrats used the Iraq Study Group proposals of James Baker and Lee Hamilton to retreat from calls to pull U.S. troops out of Iraq, but support for a rapid withdrawal continues to grow, according to a Newsweek poll taken in early December.

“Sixty-two percent of Americans want the Bush administration to set a timetable for withdrawal,” the magazine reported. “And not in the distant future. Forty-eight percent of Americans want U.S. soldiers and Marines to come home now or within the next year.”

But if the U.S. were to pull out, it would abandon a central aim of the occupation in the first place--direct control of the second-largest proven oil reserves in the world and, with it, crucial leverage over the world economy.

It is this imperialist drive--upheld by Republicans and Democrats alike--that is at odds with the interests and desires of the working-class majority in the U.S.

That’s why the real challenge to the war won’t come from Washington insiders, but by turning the sentiment against the war displayed in the election into active opposition.

The first step in rebuilding the antiwar movement is to organize the biggest possible mobilization for January 27 antiwar demonstrations in Washington and San Francisco. The march can give voice to the opposition of the antiwar majority--and it can be a focus for activists to organize or re-launch local groups that can be the basis of future action.

Even where the debate is more polarized--as with immigrant rights--immigrant workers have shown the potential for a long-term struggle comparable in many ways to the African American civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s.

That earlier movement has lessons for today as well. While the great successes of that struggle have made it into the history books, the many setbacks and defeats the movement endured are often overlooked.

It was in the 1960s, moreover, that the antiwar and Black Power movements confronted a Democratic Congress and White House -- and once they broke with the Democrats, the movements reached their most radical and powerful stage.

There is no predicting the shape of the struggles ahead. But with the U.S. ruling class increasingly divided over Iraq and the White House both dysfunctional and in denial, there's a growing sense that genuine change is needed.

It's time to organize.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send to contact@militaryproject.org:. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential. Same to unsubscribe.

Government Watchdogs Entrusted To Unearth Waste, Fraud And Abuse Under Attack From Thieving Politicians

12.28.06 Houston Chronicle

The inspectors general entrusted to unearth waste, fraud and abuse in federal agencies are increasingly under attack, as the top government officials they scrutinize attempt to erode the watchdogs' independence and authority.

During 2006, several inspectors general felt the wrath of government bosses or their supporters in Congress after investigations cited agencies for poor performance, excessive spending or wasted money.

Administration-friendly Republicans in Congress tried to do away with the special inspector general for Iraq, who repeatedly exposed examples of administration waste that cost billions of dollars. Among the contractors criticized was Halliburton, once headed by Vice President Dick Cheney.

President George W. Bush Announced A List Of His New Year's Resolutions For 2007

Dec. 26, 2006 By Andy Borowitz, Special to Newsweek

In an unprecedented televised address to the nation last night, President George W. Bush announced a list of his New Year's resolutions for 2007, telling the American people, "I am a big believer in abiding by resolutions, as long as they don't come from the United Nations."

The following is a list of the president's New Year's resolutions:

"I resolve to pay close attention to the recommendations of the Iraq Study Group's report, as soon as it comes out on a books-on-tape version.

"I resolve to make sure that by the end of 2007, Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki gets to spend more time with his family.

"I resolve to tell John Kerry that I thought his Iraq joke was hilarious and he should keep 'em coming.

"I resolve to learn how to use the Internets, especially the Google.

"I resolve to invite Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez to a peacemaking lunch at Taco Bell.

"I resolve to organize a hunting trip for Dick Cheney and Nancy Pelosi.

"I resolve to expand the search for Osama bin Laden to include MySpace.

"I resolve to clear all of the brush at my Crawford ranch, except for that patch I use to hide from Cindy Sheehan.

"I resolve to continue my opposition to gay parents, unless one of them is named Cheney.

"I resolve to improve relations with Latin America by building a 700-foot fence around Barbara and Jenna.

"And finally, my fellow Americans, I resolve to announce an exit strategy, in which I will withdraw all of our troops from Iraq — through Iran.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Reality Check; Halliburton And Chavez

December 24, 2006 By Joseph P. Kennedy II, Boston Globe [Excerpt]

While conservative interests in this country don't like him, US businesses don't mind his money and his marketplace.

Otherwise, why would General Motors and Ford sell more than 300,000 cars a year in Venezuela?

Why would Chevron Texaco, Exxon Mobil, Shell, and other major corporations -- including Vice President Cheney's old firm, Halliburton -- invest and earn billions every year off of petroleum exploration, production, refining, and transportation in the country?

Why would US insurance companies, banks, telecom firms, entertainment conglomerates, and consumer product manufacturers flock to our Latin American neighbor?

***Wall St. Sacrifices For The War:
“Financiers Are Buying \$5
Million Apartments For Their
Children”***

***“Young Hedge Fund Analysts
Scooping Up The \$2 Million To \$3
Million Starter Apartments”***

***“They Don't Feel Like The Money Is
Real And They Don't Mind Spending
It”***

December 25, 2006 By JENNY ANDERSON, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

It's a brisk Wednesday morning in the windy caverns of Wall Street and Sarah Clark's toes are cold.

Dressed in a purple flight attendant outfit, Ms. Clark, a 26-year-old model, is trying to entice recent bonus recipients at Goldman Sachs into using a charter plane service, handing out \$1,000 discount coupons to people in front of the investment bank's Broad Street headquarters.

"Where am I going?" asks one man, heading toward the Goldman building. "It's your own private jet," says Ms. Clark with a smile. "You can go wherever you like."

For Wall Street's elite, the sky may well be the limit.

In recent weeks, immense riches have been rained upon the top bankers and traders. After a year of record profits, investment houses like Goldman Sachs, Lehman Brothers and Morgan Stanley are awarding bonuses as high as \$60 million.

And a select group of hedge fund managers and private equity executives may be taking home even more.

That is serious money. And the serious luxury goods markets are feeling the impact.

Miller Motorcars, in Greenwich, Conn., is fielding more requests for the \$250,000 Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano than it can possibly fill.

One real estate broker laments a dearth of listings for two clients trying to spend \$20 million on Manhattan properties.

Financiers already comfortably settled in multimillion-dollar apartments and town houses are buying \$5 million apartments for their children.

Vacation homes, usually bought and sold in the spring, are now hot this winter, including ones in private resorts like the Yellowstone Club in Montana near Yellowstone National Park.

"Last year, everybody bought Ducatis," said one investment banker, referring to the Italian motorcycle. "This year it's vacations. I'm on my way to St. Barts," he said, en route to the airport. Like most bankers, he spoke on the condition that he not be identified, because he was not authorized to talk to a reporter by his company.

The 2006 bonus gold rush has re-energized some luxury markets. The Manhattan real estate market, for example, had softened; sales of apartments fell 17 percent in the third quarter this year compared with a year ago, according to the Corcoran Group.

Then came bonus day. Last week, Michele Kleier, president of Gumley Haft Kleier, received a call from a hedge fund manager in his late 30s. He had spent \$6 million on an apartment two years ago and, with his bonus, wanted to upgrade. His new price range? "Not more than \$20 million."

Ed Petrie, a broker at Sotheby's in East Hampton, N.Y., is now fielding two bids for \$8 million to \$10 million properties in exclusive Georgica Pond — properties that have been on the market since the spring. “The fall was relatively slow and then suddenly, with news on bonuses, there has been quite a bit of activity,” he said.

In the last three weeks, the Corcoran Sunshine Marketing group sold the last four apartments in the Richard Meier apartments at 165 Charles Street in Greenwich Village. The last one to go: a two-bedroom, two-bathroom apartment with 2,350 square feet that sold for just under \$7 million.

Adding to the spending spree is a rash of young hedge fund analysts, first big bonus checks in hand, scooping up the \$2 million to \$3 million starter apartments (most popular features: glass walls, marble bathrooms and kitchens — likely to go unused — with top-flight appliances).

“We love hedge funds, they are our favorite people” Ms. Kleier said. “They don’t feel like the money is real and they don’t mind spending it — they don’t mind going up by \$500,000 or \$1 million increments.”

Hedge fund analysts are not the only ones celebrating bonus season. Private equity firms like the Blackstone Group and Kohlberg Kravis & Roberts helped fuel a record deal-making year.

Those young, single hedge fund managers are bringing holiday cheer to car dealerships as well.

This year, drama surrounds the very limited production of the Ferrari 599 GTB Fiorano, a car with 612 horsepower that can go from zero to 60 miles an hour in 3.6 seconds. “It is the most sought-after car ever made,” said Richard Koppelman, president of Miller Motorcars. With a waiting list of 50, Mr. Koppelman expects to get only one.

Who will be the lucky customer? “It’s very difficult,” he said. “We try to take care of our best clients.”

Private planes, or shares of them, are also on the rise, with demand for charter planes at one company up 40 percent to 50 percent among financial services executives. “There is a noticeable difference this year compared to the past, especially in the financial sector,” said Jeffrey Menaged, founder and head of Chief Executive Air, the company that hired Ms. Clark for the day. A typical price for a charter flight is \$30,000.

Sales of “jet cards,” a sort of debit card for private flying, increase during bonus season, Mr. Menaged said, as executives lock in last year’s gains with guaranteed comfort for the new year.

Exotic destinations are also being pitched to the Wall Street ultrarich. Unlimited Speed started Victory Lane in November, a 3,000-acre development in Georgia for motor racing aficionados. Along with a 4.5 mile racetrack, the development also has a 1,600-acre nature preserve, equestrian facilities, a golf course and spa. It already has 27 reservations, a quarter of them coming from Wall Street, said Andrew Goggin, president of Unlimited Speed.

Not everyone on Wall Street is getting multimillion-dollar bonuses. The average managing director — who stands at the top of Wall Street’s hierarchical food chain, but far from rock-star status — will be getting \$1 million to \$3 million, which will likely be stashed in savings as memories of the 2001 bear market remain fresh.

Back handing out vouchers in front of Goldman, Ms. Clark wondered why there weren’t more people coming to work during the early hours.

Then, at 7:30 a.m., a black Mercedes pulled up, depositing Mr. Blankfein in front of Ms. Clark. The night before, he had been awarded a \$53.4 million bonus.

She offered him a voucher. “How are you?” he said, smiling quickly but refusing the voucher.

“I guess he didn’t want it,” she lamented.

***Prison Nation:* U.S. Leads World In Locking People Up; “One Out Of Every 32 U.S. Adults Was Either In Jail, On Probation Or On Parole”**

December 15, 2006 By Nicole Colson, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

ONE OUT of every 32 U.S. adults was either in jail, on probation or on parole at the end of last year, according to the Justice Department. The new federal statistics show that the U.S. continues to incarcerate its citizens at a rate higher than any other industrialized nation.

A record 2.2 million Americans were in jail--a 2.7 percent increase over the previous year, and a 35 percent rise since 1995. When those on probation and parole are added in, the number tops 7 million, or 3 percent of the adult population of the U.S.

A report disclosing the statistics doesn’t give any reason for the increase in the prison population, but experts say there has not been an increase in violent crime--on the contrary, violent crime rates have declined recently. Instead, they say, harsh federal and state sentencing laws, especially those mandating sentences for nonviolent drug offenses, are continuing to fill up prisons.

Prisoners sentenced for drug crimes continue to be the largest group of federal inmates, making up 55 percent of the prison population in 2003, according to the Justice Department. More than one-quarter of the 4.1 million men and women on probation last year were under supervision for a drug law violation.

Immigration offenses are also snaring more people into the criminal justice system. Between 1995 and 2003, convictions for immigration offenses rose by 394 percent--and prisoners charged with immigration violations now make up 10 percent of federal and state inmates.

The racism of the justice system is as apparent as ever. Among those ages 25 to 29, 8.1 percent of Black men--about one in 13--are incarcerated, compared with 2.6 percent of Latino men and 1.1 percent of white men.

Overall, in 2005, Blacks made up 40 percent of all inmates--three times larger than their proportion in the U.S. population. According to the Sentencing Project, in seven states--Iowa, Vermont, New Jersey, Connecticut, Wisconsin, North Dakota and South Dakota--African Americans are incarcerated at more than 10 times the rate of whites.

The new federal statistics also show a rise in the female prison population--which increased by 2.6 percent last year to make up a total of 7 percent of the inmate population, more than 200,000 people.

"These numbers are not worthy of celebration," James Alan Fox, a criminal justice professor at Northeastern University in Boston, told the Los Angeles Times. "We are becoming more punitive. We put so many more people into prison--the question is what happens to them when they get out."

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