

GI SPECIAL 2#B67



How It Is

TO: GI Special

From: R. (Iraq Veterans Against The War) (<http://www.ivaw.net/> Check it out.)

9.19.04

Found out last Tuesday that two guys from my last unit aren't going to Iraq.

The morning they were supposed to leave, one sliced his wrist with a K-Bar, & another shot himself in the leg with his M-16. They'd rather try to kill/disfigure themselves than go.

They're both alive, but from what I'm told the Marine Corps won't pay their medical bills from now on, because the injuries were self-inflicted.

Keep up the good work with GI Special

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

Whole South Carolina Battalion On Disciplinary Confinement At Dix:

Many Don't Want Iraq Duty; Cop/Commander Stupidly Admits Other Units Having Problems; Idiot Sgt. Says Stress Will "Level Off" In Iraq

September 19, 2004 By Thomas E. Ricks, Washington Post Staff Writer

"I think a lot of guys will break down in Iraq." "There's a federal prison at Fort Dix, and a lot of us feel the people in there have more rights than we do," said Spec. Michael Chapman, 31, a construction worker from near Greenville, S.C.

FORT DIX, N.J. -- The 635 soldiers of a battalion of the South Carolina National Guard scheduled to depart Sunday for a year or more in Iraq have spent their off-duty hours under a disciplinary lockdown in their barracks for the past two weeks.

The trouble began Labor Day weekend, when 13 members of the 1st Battalion of the 178th Field Artillery Regiment went AWOL, mainly to see their families again before shipping out. Then there was an ugly confrontation between members of the battalion's Alpha and Charlie batteries -- the term artillery units use instead of "companies" -- that threatened to turn into a brawl involving three dozen soldiers, and required the base police to intervene.

That prompted a barracks inspection that uncovered alcohol, resulting in the lockdown that kept soldiers in their rooms except for drills, **barred even from stepping outside for a smoke, a restriction that continued with some exceptions until Sunday's scheduled deployment.**

The battalion's rough-and-tumble experience at a base just off the New Jersey Turnpike reflects many of the biggest challenges, strains and stresses confronting the Guard and Reserve soldiers increasingly relied on to fight a war 7,000 miles away.

Preparation has been especially intense because the Army is short-handed on military police units, so these artillerymen are being quickly re-trained to provide desperately needed security for convoys. And to fully man the unit, scores of soldiers were pulled in from different Guard outfits, some voluntarily, some on orders.

As members of the unit looked toward their tour, some said they were angry, or reluctant to go, or both. Many more are bone-tired. Overall, some of them fear, the unit lacks strong cohesion -- the glue that holds units together in combat.

"Our morale isn't high enough for us to be away for 18 months," said Pfc. Joshua Garman, 20, who, in civilian life, works in a National Guard recruiting office. "I

think a lot of guys will break down in Iraq." Asked if he is happy that he volunteered for the deployment, Garman said, "Negative. No time off? I definitely would not have volunteered."

These soldiers will be based in northern Kuwait and will escort supply convoys into Iraq. That is some of the toughest duty on this mission, with every trip through the hot desert bringing the possibility of being hit by roadside bombs, rocket-propelled grenades and sniper fire.

"There's a federal prison at Fort Dix, and a lot of us feel the people in there have more rights than we do," said Spec. Michael Chapman, 31, a construction worker from near Greenville, S.C.

The drilling to prepare this artillery unit for that new role has been intense. Except for a brief spell during Labor Day weekend, soldiers have been confined to post and prevented from wearing civilian clothes when off duty.

Some complaints heard during interviews with the soldiers here last week centered on long hours and the disciplinary measures -- both of which the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Van McCarty, said were necessary to get the unit into shape before combat.

Sgt. Kelvin Richardson, 38, a machinist from Summerville, S.C., volunteered for this mission but says he now wishes he had not and has misgivings about the unit's readiness. Richardson is a veteran of the 1991 Persian Gulf War, in which he served with the 1st Cavalry Division, an active-duty "regular" unit. This battalion "doesn't come close" to that division, he said. "Active-duty, they take care of the soldiers."

Pfc. Kevin Archbald, 20, a construction worker from Fort Mill, S.C., who was transferred from another South Carolina Guard unit, also worries about his cobbled-together outfit's cohesion. "My last unit, we had a lot of people who knew each other. We were pretty close." He said he does not feel that in the 178th. Here, he said, "I think there's just a lot of frustration."

The daily headlines of surging violence in Iraq -- where U.S. forces crossed the 1,000-killed threshold last month -- were also part of the stress heard in soldiers' comments.

"I think before we deploy we should be allowed to go home and see our families for five days, because some of us might not come back," said Spec. Wendell McLeod, 40, a steelworker from Cheraw, S.C. "Morale is pretty low. . . . It's leading to fights and stuff. That's really all I got to say."

McCarty, the commander, disagrees with those assessments.

"The soldiers all have their issues to deal with, and some have dealt with it better than others," he said in an interview in his temporary office.

"We are not here for annual training and then go home" -- that is, the typical schedule for National Guard units in the past -- said McCarty, **assistant deputy director of law enforcement** for the South Carolina Department of Natural Resources in civilian life. "We are here to prepare to go into a combat zone." **(Mystery solved. This asshole is a cop, and he thinks he's running a prison. And he's right, it is a prison.)**

As for the barracks lockdown, he said, "I am not going to apologize. . . . I did what I felt was necessary."

He also contends that his case is hardly unusual nowadays. "Other units have similar problems," he said. "Ours just make more headlines."

Sgt. Maj. Clarence Gamble, who as the top noncommissioned officer for the battalion said he is not worried about putting an already stressed unit into the cauldron of Iraq duty.

"I haven't ever been deployed before, myself," he said. But, he concluded, "I feel like this unit will handle this well. Once we get in-country and get into missions, I think the stress will level off."

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation, the cuts to veterans' benefits, or the dangers of depleted uranium - is the first reason Traveling Soldier is necessary. 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)**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Attack In Samarra: Four U.S. Troops Wounded

9.19.04 Associated Press

SAMARRA, Iraq - A suicide attacker detonated a car bomb Sunday near a joint U.S.-Iraqi checkpoint, killing three people and wounding seven, including four U.S. soldiers in the northern city of Samarra, the military said.

The dead in Sunday's attack included an Iraqi soldier'

Four Americans and three Iraqi soldiers were also wounded in the explosion and evacuated to a nearby military hospital for treatment, O'Brien said.

Iraqi interim Prime Minister Ayad Allawi said "We have secured Samarra now, which was an important tie for insurgencies and the so-called resistance."



Smoke billows after an attack on a US convoy on the highway leading to Samarra. An Iraqi soldier was killed, and three US and three Iraqi troops wounded in a car-bombing. (AFP/File/Karim Sahib)

Occupation Gave Up Cities To Protect Baghdad; “Limited Resources” Problem Sr. Military Official Says

BAGHDAD, Iraq, Sept. 18 DEXTER FILKINS, NY Times

A senior American military official said cities like Ramadi and Samarra had been allowed to slip into insurgents' hands largely by default, as the Americans began to concentrate their limited resources on other areas, **like protecting the new government and critical pieces of infrastructure.**

The War Comes To Baghdad; 'I Felt The Shrapnel Hit Me': Cobra Company Takes Fire On Midnight Patrol

September 14, 2004 By Matthew Cox, Army Times staff writer

BAGHDAD — Lt. Col. Lopez Carter remembers spotting the incoming rocket-propelled grenade before it exploded.

"I saw the light flash. I never realized how fast an RPG moved," Carter said today, recalling the Monday morning ambush that injured him and six other soldiers in a Sadr City alley.

"Most of my soldiers dove. I was still standing when it hit."

Carter, the commander of the 1st Cavalry Division's 2nd Battalion, 8th Cavalry Regiment, suffered multiple shrapnel in his right heel, left arm and back.

The shrapnel broke his heel, and he'll be laid up a while.

He and several other soldiers had just finished occupying an observation post atop one of four buildings overlooking three main roads in the southern portion of this vast slum section of Baghdad. Soldiers from Cobra and Bulldog companies were on the other three rooftops and waiting nearby in up-armored Humvees.

The soldiers had set into their position about midnight. **Just before pulling out about 3:30 a.m., the street lights that had been out for several hours came back on and illuminated the area. (That's called a clue.)** Insurgents hiding on top of another building a little more than 100 meters away watched Carter's group exit the building and turn into the alley — that's when they struck.

"As we rounded the corner into the alleyway, the RPG started coming at us," recalled Cobra Company Commander Capt. Steve Gventer. "We all saw it — out of nowhere, this flash and fireball coming at you with a sparkling effect behind it."

The high-explosive projectile flew between the soldiers and exploded against the wall, spraying shrapnel everywhere.

"Everybody went to the ground, either from being hit or trying to dive on the ground," said Gventer, who was hit in the right arm with shrapnel. Less than three weeks ago, he suffered a bullet wound to his lower left leg fighting insurgents.

Carter blacked out briefly, but remembers being wounded.

“I felt the shrapnel hit me,” he said, describing how he was knocked to the ground. “I tried to get up, but realized that I couldn’t walk.”

Capt. Randall McCauley, the battalion’s intelligence officer was on the opposite side of the alley, trying to provide security when the RPG hit. He suffered minor wounds when a small piece of shrapnel hit his right hip.

Before he could return fire, he watched Command Sgt. Maj. Pablo Squiabro, who had been hit in the left hand, immediately go to the corner closest to the enemy position and start returning fire with his M4 carbine.

“The command sergeant major was very brave,” McCauley recalled. “He was unconcerned with his own safety. He knew that alleyway had to be secured.”

McCauley, of Clarendon, Ill., also returned fire, shooting out a large street light that was illuminating the alley.

Gventer tried to call his Humvees forward but his commercial walkie-talkie went dead for several minutes.

“I was yelling ‘Get out of the alley!’ ” said Gventer, who then spotted a soldier lying on the ground. Although he didn’t realize at the time, it was his driver, Pfc. Paul Sharinka.

Sharinka was the most severely wounded, Gventer said. Shrapnel hit his left arm, slicing into an artery. When the RPG hit, it knocked a large air-conditioner compressor off the wall, which hit Sharinka’s lower left leg and snapped it like a piece of kindling.

Gventer and Squiabro grabbed Sharinka and dragged him out of the danger area and started performing first aid.

Gventer was then able to contact the Humvees waiting two blocks over. **“We had all the rooftops marked with 10-digit grids, so they knew where we were,” he said.**

Sharinka underwent surgery Monday and doctors were able to repair his arm and his leg. He was flown to Germany today and is expected make a full recovery, Carter said. Staff Sgts. Anthony Montalvo and Chad Izworski also suffered multiple shrapnel wounds, but are expected to recover.

The ambush reminded all involved that the enemy can strike anywhere and at any time.

“Sadr City is no joke — no matter what you do, somebody can pop up with an RPG,” said Gventer, who is from Grapevine, Texas. “Everybody reacted the way they needed to react. The colonel was still in command even though he was wounded.”

Carter said he was glad to see that the enemy was unable to take advantage of the situation and fire more than one RPG. And while he admits he would rather have been standing somewhere else, he said it’s important for him to be up front with his soldiers.

"I think it's very important to be out there with our soldiers," the 43-year-old native of Fort Valley, Ga., said. "I just don't feel comfortable having them in what I call Indian country when I'm back in the command post."

TROOP NEWS

Family 'Thanks' Bush For Death Of Son



08 September 2004 WKYC-TV

THOMPSON - In Geauga County, anger and frustration over the death of a young soldier inside Iraq has prompted one family to send a personal message to President Bush.

Ken and Betty Landrus have put up a large sign outside their home near Thompson, Ohio that is sharply critical of the Bush administration.

The sign reads "Thanks Mr. Bush for the death of our son."

Their son, Staff Sgt. Sean Landrus was killed near Fallujah in January.

They believe the president misled the country about the reasons for invading Iraq and that their son died for nothing.

"Yes I do feel lied to because they kept saying there's mass destruction and nobody's found anything yet," father Ken Landrus said.

Sean Landrus also left behind a wife and three young children.

His youngest daughter, Kennedy, was born just before Sean left to serve inside Iraq.

Marines Covering Up Casualties

09 September 2004 John Pike, director of GlobalSecurity.org, Salon.com

No one's really bothered to ask whether U.S. soldiers have died *after* they are evacuated. No one's ever asked that question, or at least, no one's ever gotten a straight answer for that question.

I talked to another reporter who covers the Marines earlier today, and he said that the Marines just won't talk about it. They just will not answer the question. "No comment" is all they'll say. When asked why they're not releasing medical evacuation numbers, they say "because we're not."

Britain Withdrawing Thousands Of Troops From Iraq

September 19, 2004, *The Observer*, Jason Burke, chief reporter, *The Guardian*,

The British Army is to start pulling troops out of Iraq next month despite the deteriorating security situation in much of the country, *The Observer* has learnt.

The main British combat force in Iraq, about 5,000-strong, will be reduced by around a third by the end of October during a routine rotation of units.

More than 200 people were killed last week in one of the bloodiest weeks since last year's invasion, strengthening impressions that the country is spinning out of control.

Last week Geoff Hoon, the Defence Secretary, said that more troops could be sent to safeguard the polls if necessary, **although Whitehall sources said there was no guarantee that they would be British.**

The forthcoming 'drawdown' of British troops in Basra has not been made public and is likely to provoke consternation in both Washington and Baghdad.

Many in Iraq argue that more, not fewer, troops are needed. Last week British troops in Basra fought fierce battles with Shia militia groups.

Deaf Vietnam Vet Has Ribs Broken By Sadistic Piece Of Shit Wearing Cop Uniform---But Why Be Surprised? Cops Are Sadistic Pieces Of Shit



Martin Swanson, 54.

September 17, 2004 Photo and story by Mary Vorsino mvorsino@starbulletin.com

Martin Swanson can't read lips. He's never learned sign language, either.

That's why the 54-year-old Vietnam War veteran, who has been deaf for 35 years, says he didn't understand what a police officer was trying to tell him recently while on his way home from work. He figured it had something to do with his being on a closed sidewalk, he said.

Seconds later, Swanson was on the ground with the police officer's knee jabbing his back. Swanson suffered at least four broken ribs and several cuts and bruises in the arrest, which he says was unprovoked.

He is scheduled to appear in court Oct. 20 to answer charges that he harassed a police officer in the incident. (Being alive constitutes "harassment" of these criminals in uniform.)

But the U.S. Postal Service mail sorter, who lost his hearing and full use of one of his legs in an explosion during the Vietnam War, said the encounter was an unfortunate misunderstanding. (Wrong. Just cops doing what cops do best, beating the shit out of civilians because they can.)

"I think the police need to at least recognize when they're dealing with a deaf person," said Swanson, **who has short-cropped gray hair and stands a little over 5-foot-6.**

Swanson, who lives on Ward Avenue, was grappling with other medical problems before the arrest. **Now, he said, his broken ribs have kept him out of his heavy-lifting job for more than three weeks, and doctors are urging him to stay out for another month.**

Jim Fulton, executive assistant to the city prosecutor, declined to talk about the case. But he **said the charges would not have been filed if there wasn't enough evidence. (And this is how the scum get protected by their scum buddies.)**

He also said he didn't think the police officer knew Swanson was "hard of hearing on the initial contact."

"The courts have to settle this," Fulton said. "His action somehow ... (triggered) alarm." **(No, it just triggered a psychopath in a cops uniform acting like what he is, just another cowardly bully in a cops uniform. Dime a dozen.)**

The incident started about noon Aug. 26, when Swanson was walking on a Keeaumoku Street sidewalk toward his Beretania Street bus stop after having breakfast at Ala Moana Center. At Keeaumoku Street's intersection with Young Street, Swanson came across a sign that said the sidewalk was closed.

Swanson said because he was tired and there was no construction on the sidewalk at the time, he decided to walk in the closed sidewalk rather than cross the street.

He said he thinks that's when a police officer spotted him and started yelling for him to stop, but he isn't sure. The first indication he had that an officer was trying to get his attention was about halfway through the closed crosswalk, when he felt a hand on his shoulder, Swanson said.

He turned around and was facing an officer. He said the officer was talking and making hand signals, none of which Swanson understood.

Presuming that the officer was saying he wasn't supposed to be walking in a closed sidewalk, Swanson said he told the officer he would turn around and cross the street.

He got to the crosswalk, waited for the light and was about to step into the street when the officer was in front of him again, he said.

At that point, Swanson said, the officer seemed to be angry and yelling.

The officer then made a hand signal, which Swanson said he took as a request for identification. When he went to reach for his wallet in his front pocket, the officer grabbed his shoulders, he said.

Then, Swanson said, he was spun around and thrown against a fence. His legs were kicked out from under him and he fell to the ground, he said.

Swanson was kept there until more officers arrived, and was handcuffed while still face-down on the sidewalk. **All the while, "I tried to explain that I can't hear."**

But Swanson said no one listened.

Swanson was taken to the Queen's Medical Center for his injuries. That's where a doctor realized that Swanson was deaf and told the arresting officers.

Once they found out Swanson is a veteran, officers took him to Tripler Army Medical Center. After that, he was transported to Honolulu police headquarters.

By 9 p.m. -- 11 hours after he was arrested -- longtime friend Owen Stanley paid Swanson's \$100 bail and was able to take him home. Stanley said Swanson was badly shaken by the incident, and still confused about what had happened.

"He's very scared. He's very concerned. He doesn't know what he did to anger the officer," Stanley said. "Somebody made a very big mistake."

Rodney Ching, Swanson's lawyer, said he's surprised the state didn't dismiss the case after an Aug. 31 arraignment.

"They went way overboard in arresting him," he said. "I don't think they had grounds to arrest to begin with."

"I'm Not Coming Out Of Here Alive -- They're Getting Good,"

Sep. 19, 2004 BY ALAN BJERGA, Eagle Washington bureau

When Lonnie Moore was 12 and leaving his father's funeral, eight months after his mother's funeral, he turned to his grandmother and said something she'd never forget. "He said, 'Don't worry grandma, we'll be OK,' " Rose Moore recalled. "We've made it through this, we can make it through anything."

Seventeen years later, Lt. Moore knew he wasn't going to make it.

The Bradley fighting vehicle smoked down Highway 10 outside Ramadi on April 6, racing to an aid station while Moore lost nine units of blood. Under attack, his right leg hanging by a tendon, Lonnie Moore prepared to die.

He had two regrets. He wished he had married his girlfriend. He wished he could be around for his son. They'll be OK, he thought. "I'm at peace with God. I've been part of a history-changing event. I'm ready to die."

Everything went black.

Today the Wichita native lives at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., recovering from a wound that took his leg but not his life.

The Iraq war has an unusually high proportion of amputees to deaths. Moore is recovering from wounds that in past wars might have killed him, but now place him in a new generation of amputees rebuilding lives permanently altered by the war.

At the moment he's in a parking lot outside a Macaroni Grill in Silver Spring, Md.

Lucas, his younger brother, is in town, helping him into the Toyota Camry that Lucas drove in from Wichita. Moore is back in a wheelchair after months of therapy. His leg is growing new bone, and that's messing up the part of the leg that connects to his prosthetic, a few inches above where his knee had been.

Walter Reed is one of many places Moore has landed during nine years in the army and an army-brat childhood. He lists them off: "Fort Knox, Fort Riley, Fort Pope, Fort Lewis, Fort Irwin. Herzo Base in Germany."

He laughs, and continues.

"Fort Iraq.' Walter Reed Hospital..."

He pauses.

"Been there longer than I'd like to."

He says he's learned a lot about patience.

"Sometimes I get angry about things," he said. "You've got to suck it up and move on. I've been through a lot. I'll make it through this."

He reported in September. **"I was telling people we'd be redoing infrastructure, electricity, water. The last thing I expected was an all-out brawl," he said. But that's what it became.**

Attacks by small, seemingly suicidal groups that took on entire convoys grew more sophisticated as fall turned to winter.

Moore led a platoon that patrolled Highway 10, the road running from Baghdad to the Jordanian border. **The Americans would clear the mines from Highway 10, so the enemy started firing rocket-propelled grenades (RPGs) at them instead. Americans would switch convoys to different hours, and attackers adjusted their schedules.**

Convoys got more dangerous. Urban missions got trickier, with an enemy that blended into the community.

Moore said he could tell from the children when an attack would come. When insurgents prepared attacks, the children would throw rocks and yell at the troops.

"It was like the Mafia coming to town," he said. "Everybody stood a little straighter, afraid of getting hit."

The attacks escalated into spring.

And some of his buddies became casualties. His platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Joe Mosner, got hit in December, and was sent back to Walter Reed with the right side of his face torn up.

Moore was e-mailing his grandparents and Melanie, telling them everything was fine. But on April 4, he wrote something else to Mosner:

"I've got a feeling, I'm not coming out of here alive -- they're getting good," he wrote.

"Tell my family I love them, that I died doing what I love, but I'm not coming home."

The morning of April 6, Moore was patrolling Highway 10 -- which runs straight through Ramadi, a Wichita-sized city in the heart of Iraq's "Sunni Triangle" -- when his unit got a call. Marines were getting hit in Ramadi.

Ramadi was out of Moore's patrol range, but only barely. The unit knew the highway, and the Marines needed help. Moore's Bradley headed to the city on Highway 10.

He saw five or six men on each of two roads connecting to a frontage road. "I've been around long enough to know these guys are bad dudes, so I call up the commander and say 'hey, I'm pretty sure I've got some bad guys, can you see anything?' He says 'no, I can't,' so I keep driving, trying to get positive ID on a weapon.

"I ask, 'can I fire some warning shots to see if I can get them to show their weapons,' knowing they probably won't, and the commander says 'no.' So I tried to maneuver around, and..."

Moore looked over his right shoulder to see a man come out of nowhere with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher. **New armor put on the Bradley the day before would defend against it in all but one place -- and that's where the rocket-propelled grenade hit.**

"It was the shot of a lifetime," Moore said.

But he didn't know that then. "I thought it had hit the armor. So I thought, OK, I'm still alive. We're still being shot at, and I hop down and yell at my gunner, 'RPG at 3 o'clock!'

"The gunner holds up his hand, and it's gone.

"I ask, 'are you OK?' He says yeah -- it isn't spurting blood, so I know it's cauterized -- and he says, 'Are you OK?' I said I'm fine. He said, 'Look at your right leg.' "

Moore looked down. The RPG had blasted through the armor, tore through Moore's leg and lodged in the vehicle's turret box, disabling the vehicle's guns.

Moore's training kicked in.

"I radioed in, we got a gunner who lost his hand, and I think I'm going to lose my leg. I'm getting all woozy. I'm thinking, I don't think I'm going to make it. I owned up to the fact I was going to die."

Moore blacked out as the vehicle's driver rushed to the nearest evacuation station. He lost nine units of blood and, at one point, his vital signs. A chopper picked him up to fly him to Baghdad.

The hard part was about to begin.

The Talk In Shelbyville, Indiana

October 4, 2004 by SASHA ABRAMSKY, The Nation. Full article at:
<http://www.thenation.com/doc.mhtml?i=20041004&s=abramsky>

For most of the time I'd spent with her, Deen had been silent about her son's politics. Then, just as I was getting ready to leave, she let loose. "I know he's really mad at the government. He supports his job. But the morale--he's ready to get out."

Anna Deen is 39 years old, good-looking, with light brown hair, a pink halter-top and a pin on her right lapel. The pin has a photograph of a young man with a military hard hat on his head. Above the photo are the words "My Hero."

Deen works as a program coordinator at the Salvation Army in the small town of Shelbyville, Indiana. The man in the photograph is her son, Kevin. He is 20 years old, a communications specialist currently stationed in Iraq. He is in the Army because, when he was 17, his mother gave him an ultimatum: Either do better in school, or she was calling the recruiters. He chose the Army, went through basic training in Georgia, was stationed in Germany and, from there, was shipped off to Iraq.

"I know my son's there for a reason," Deen says fiercely. "And whatever might happen, that's the way it's supposed to be. And if I took it any other way, I'd be in a funny farm. I wouldn't be here able to talk about it."

Shelbyville is a very ordinary town. Thirty-two miles southeast of downtown Indianapolis, it has a population with an age distribution similar to that of the country as a whole, and with a median household income (\$36,824, according to the 2000 Census) just south of the national average--which in practice means that it has a fairly affluent upper middle class and a large number of blue-collar workers and retirees struggling to pay their bills, worried about their health insurance and pension benefits, concerned about the loss of jobs through NAFTA and trying not to end each month further in the red. It's an unostentatious, conservative, bedroom-community town, with a population just shy of 18,000, whiter than most but otherwise a pretty representative slice of small-town Middle America.

Shelbyville has dozens of churches, many of them fundamentalist, dotting its back streets, and a handful of mediocre restaurants, fast-food outlets and taverns with Bud/Coors/Miller on tap. Its population is not terribly political or outspoken, but the residents care deeply--in a traditional hard-work-and-duty sense--about town and country.

The town's motto is "Pride in Progress." It has none of the in-your-face urban poverty of Gary, Indiana, or the glitz of a city like Los Angeles. Many of the houses, most wooden, some brick, are extremely large (three-story behemoths in the 5,000-square-foot region); but almost all of them sell for under \$200,000. The more modest houses are still generally of a decent size, although they show signs of stress, with flaking paint, crumbling porches, gates askew. There's a Wal-Mart Supercenter on the edge of town and a host of nervous mom-and-pop business owners fearful they'll be driven out by its presence. And there are a lot of factories nearby that produce a variety of car parts for the large automobile companies.

The town's businessmen, their stores and banks and restaurants located on Harrison Street and the east-west streets that intersect it on either side of the unimaginatively named "Public Square" --a small parking lot with a green bronze statue of a man holding two wolf cubs aloft, a nondescript water fountain and sixteen trees ringing its perimeter--belong to the Masons, the Knights of Columbus or one of the other lodges in town. Blue-collar Joes and Janes take out membership in the large Eagles Aerie on Franklin Street. Veterans come together for beers and bingo at the VFW or the American Legion post out by the cornfields on the poorer, western edge of town. On back streets of the scruffier residential neighborhoods, a handful of hair salons and barbershops also provide places to congregate and while away the time. A multiscreen cinema and a biker bar are the epicenters of the town's entertainment.

Arguably, the only thing that marks Shelbyville out is that Army Recruiting Command says more of its young people are enlisting to join the Army than in any other town its size in the state of Indiana. **For that reason, Shelbyville offers a revealing window into the way the war in Iraq is reverberating at home--changing people's lives and, more slowly, their political ideas and allegiances.**

In one breath, Shelbyville residents will express confidence in the government and say that while they supported the initial decision to topple the Iraqi regime, they wish more time and energy had been spent planning for the post-Saddam occupation. They'll say the actions at Abu Ghraib were aberrational, and they'll defend the soldiers by saying privates wouldn't do things like that unless they were following orders. **And they'll point out that they should know, because they were in the Army themselves once. "Everybody I talked to [about Abu Ghraib]," says Chamber of Commerce head Lin Sexton, "said the chain of command went to Bush. It didn't stop at Rumsfeld. It went right to the top. There was so much empathy for the soldiers already. When that happened, the empathy escalated. These guys are getting court-martialed because of mismanagement at the top."**

Anna Deen will say Bush is an honest man, then turn around and blame his underlings for all the problems--Rumsfeld and Cheney, anybody except the President himself. "I don't know how to put it," Deen says, pausing between words, her voice a pent-up crescendo of frustration. "They just make decisions in

their little room and don't think about the outcome for myself. Or, on the news 'private so and so is dead,' and that's somebody's son or daughter.

“I don't appreciate what they've done to our boys, what they've done to families in the United States, and the situation we're in because of what they're deciding and how they're directing. But I have to believe that everything's going to work out--because of my son. He is my army. They put my boy in harm's way, and that's being very selfish. That's the government we live under--like it or not.” **It reminded me of the Little Uncle argument utilized by pro-czarist Russians in the early years of the twentieth century, when they blamed corrupt minions for their country's woes and for leading their well-intentioned czar, their "little uncle," astray. Everyone knows what happened to the czar only a few years later.**

Anna Deen says that after the Abu Ghraib photographs began appearing on the television news, her son called her from Iraq and begged her to believe "we're not all like that. Mom, we're not all like that." Bitterly, as she thinks of the damage done, she says, "They must have been really bored to do all that kind of stuff to those Iraqis. What were these people thinking? To, one, do these things, and, two, to take photos."

When I visit Anna Deen at her office, the metal front of her desk is plastered with photos of her son. Photos of Kevin at the ruins of Babylon, gun at his side. Photos of him trying on a shirt she sent. Photos of him with his Army buddies. A cork board on her wall has more of the same.

For most of the time I'd spent with her, Deen had been silent about her son's politics. Then, just as I was getting ready to leave, she let loose. "I know he's really mad at the government. He supports his job. But the morale--he's ready to get out."

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Shia Resistance Group Threatens to Kill 15 Iraqi Occupation Soldiers If Captured Sadr Aide Not Freed

Sept. 19, 2004 DUBAI (Reuters)

A hitherto unknown Islamist group has threatened to kill 15 captured Iraqi soldiers if authorities do not release an aide to Shi'ite rebel cleric Moqtada al-Sadr within 48 hours, Arab television Al Jazeera reported Sunday.

The channel showed a video of masked gunmen standing near a group of uniformed men it said were members of Iraq's National Guard.

Mohammad bin Abdullah Brigades, after Islam's Prophet, and were demanding the release of Sadr aide Hazem al-Araji, a Shi'ite cleric.

Al Jazeera earlier quoted a spokesman for one of Sadr's offices as saying Araji was arrested in the early hours of Sunday.

Three Kurd Militia Working For U.S. Military Captured & Killed

Sep. 19, 2004 MARIAM FAM, Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Militants beheaded three Iraqi Kurd militiamen, showing their deaths in a video posted on a Web site on Saturday and denouncing Kurdish political parties for cooperating with Americans in Iraq.

A statement posted along with Saturday's video, identified the three Kurds as KDP members who were abducted as **they were transporting military vehicles to an American base in Taji, 15 miles north of Baghdad.**

The "renegade military men, affiliated with the traitor Kurdistan Democratic Party" were beheaded, and their bodies were left on the road to Mosul "for them to be an example to others, and for us to revenge our women, children and elderly who die daily from American raids," the statement said.

It said Ansar al-Sunna Army has targeted Iraqi Kurdish parties because they have "sworn allegiance to the crusaders and fought and are still fighting Islam and its people."

It accused them of protecting American forces in Samarra, 60 miles north of Baghdad, as well as near the Taji military base just north of the capital, and elsewhere.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

A Thousand Dreams And Trust Betrayed

11 September 2004 By John Cory, t r u t h o u t | Perspective. **John Cory is a Vietnam veteran. He received the Purple Heart and Bronze Star with V device, 1969 - 1970**

**Where do soldiers go when they die?
Do they sail away across a patriot sky?
Or drift on the breeze of the lie
That killed them?**

It is coming, and in Bush's words, "We've turned the corner."

The numbers and names of the dead has reached 1,000 as the wounded, climbs above 7,000. At least those are the official numbers. This administration has always had a problem with honest numbers.

But numbers are numb. Numbers are faceless.

Sgt. Ryan Campbell was killed back in April 2004. His tour would have been over on April 25th but was involuntarily extended.

Go to thememoryhole.org and browse the photos of the wounded and maimed, now in recovery and learning to cope with the loss of limbs and eyes and brain trauma. Peer into the faces of Robert Acosta and Gary Boggs, PFC. Reed Rosenkranz, and Spec. Todd Rauch, Sgt. Gary Yoakam, or Spec. Edward Platt or Kris Atherton.

Find the faces of the dead and wounded, study them carefully and intensely, and what you see is the face of America, the face of faith and dreams, of love for family and home.

If you look closely, you'll also see the face of trust betrayed.

The price of war is not just the dead and wounded. While Bush robs the future by plundering the present, he steals our hearts and hopes. The economics of war is more than money and casualty counts. Ask Lila Lipscomb.

Study their faces, my friend, and you will see the stuff that dreams are made of, dreams that die in the far away dust of lies.

The dreams of men like Bush and Cheney have become the nightmare of America. They revel in the darkness of their chaos toys, and keep score in secret. Their dreams are made of grief and glory, of empires and profit and the bottom line. The ledgers of their lies have no room for the faces of futures lost.

A thousand dreams have died. Thousands of dreams swirl in painful confusion. And America asks, is this what dreams are made of?

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

Iraq: A Lost Cause? “There Is No Good Road Forward In Iraq”

September 18, 2004 Editorial, Star Tribune.

The news about Iraq this week has been all bad. Indeed, if you read what the experts say, Iraq may now be a lost cause. **Some sensible people are beginning to utter the unthinkable: Bring the troops home and refuse to pour more blood and money into an obvious -- and monumental -- U.S. defeat.**

That is not an easy notion to contemplate for two reasons: what it would leave in Iraq and the Middle East, and the explosive repercussions it would have for the United States at home and abroad. **But that it is being uttered aloud in polite company underscores a reality Americans must face: There is no good road forward in Iraq.**

The insurgency, which began as small groups of enemies taking random shots at American forces then fading quickly away, has strengthened into a sophisticated, large-group guerrilla conflict that experts say the United States most likely can't win, no matter how long it stays in Iraq and how many forces it throws into the conflict.

Vietnam can be overused as a paradigm, but in this case it is instructive. In January 1963, Viet Cong forces stood and fought for the first time at a small hamlet named Ap Bac. They inflicted a major defeat on South Vietnam and signaled a turning point in that conflict from which the South Vietnamese and Americans never really recovered. **It took 12 years for the United States to realize the war was lost and to disengage from the conflict. American experts -- including retired and still-serving military officials of high rank -- are saying that Iraq has passed the Ap Bac mark and can only go downhill from here.**

The signs suggest they are right. American and Iraqi deaths and casualties are mounting; more and more of the country is becoming a no-go zone for coalition forces, and even the so-called "green zone" in Baghdad no longer is safe. The backlash against Americans from Iraqi civilians is growing.

Notes From A Lost War

September 18, 2004 , Patrick Cockburn, "The Independent"

A year ago, fighting was mainly confined to Sunni Muslim districts in the provinces around Baghdad. Now attacks are being made on US forces across the country. **August was the first month in which more US soldiers were killed and wounded by Shia fighters than by Sunni guerrillas.**

The US and the interim government have diminishing control even in central Baghdad. This week, the US army was reduced to using rocket firing helicopters for crowd control in Haifa Street a few hundred yards from the Green Zone, the American and Iraqi government headquarters.

Last year, Iraqis were divided in their attitude to the occupation and to armed resistance. Today it is difficult to meet Iraqis who do not support the attacks on the Americans.

Ominously the guerrillas are getting more efficient. Last week, there was an expert attempt to assassinate the governor of Baghdad in which gunmen attacked his speeding convoy from in front and behind. His driver tried to escape by turning down a side street. The assassins had guessed he would do so and in the side street a large bomb was waiting to explode.

The government of Iyad Allawi, the interim prime minister, is like a small man with a very big bodyguard, in this case the US army and airforce.

The US is trying to extend the interim government's authority by use of its air power. It is a counter-productive method. Military spokesmen announce precision air strikes against "terrorists" while Iraqis are watching satellite television pictures of wrecked ambulances and wounded children.

They Will Quiet When We Leave

Sep 12, 2004 John N. Cooper, Axis of Logic

The Iraqi resistance to our occupation have made it clear: they will quit when we leave. Our 'leadership' calls them thugs, bandits, and outsiders; but **American reporters on the scene say they are principally Iraqi nationals, doing what we would, were we occupied by a foreign invader: trying to protect homes and families by expelling the alien invaders.**

Pentagon Consultant Says No Stability Until Americans Get Out: "No Fix On The Ground"

An interview on "The Jim Lehrer News Hour" Sept 7:

Retired Air Force Colonel Sam Gardiner, who teaches military operations and planning, and is a longtime consultant to the Defense Department:

COL. SAM GARDINER: "I must say that the people I talk to who know about what's going on inside, the diplomats, the spies and the military people, say we're never going to have stability there until the Americans get out. "We are causing much of this."

MARGARET WARNER: "What about the fix on the ground?"

COL. SAM GARDINER: "There is no fix on the ground... *When you get down to the point we are now, you're into tactical defense*....Let's hope this thing somehow finds a solution. I don't hear anybody with a solution."

OCCUPATION REPORT

Resistance Cutting Supply Of Collaborators; Translators Hit Especially Hard; Wounded Left To Die By Occupation Employers

September 19, 2004 By SABRINA TAVERNISE The New York Times

In the case of Atimad, "she's just gone," said Waell, who described the attitude at the base as: "We can easily get another one. There are 3,600 of them."

"They say they care about you, but they don't," Waell said.

BAGHDAD, Iraq — One by one, they are dying. Gunned down on the highway on their way to work. Shot point blank in front of their homes. Cornered in their cars.

Iraqis who work on American military bases are on the front lines of a secret war being waged by the country's violent insurgency.

The killings, less visible than the high-profile kidnappings but just as lethal, single out ordinary Iraqis and send a chilling message not to cooperate with the American occupation. **They are crimes that the police, so overwhelmed with daily violence, rarely even bother to investigate. It is hard to say how many have died this way.**

The American military does not release figures, nor do the American contractors that employ many of the workers. But in just the Dora neighborhood in southern Baghdad, based on figures from two local police stations as well as interviews with family members, between 12 and 14 workers have been killed since early August. Three of them died within the past 10 days.

Just as startling are the numbers of translators killed. Since January, about 52 have died in Baghdad, Fallujah and Ramadi, a person familiar with the death count said. More than 45 of the deaths were in Baghdad. "There's been a spike in the last three months," said the person, who insisted on anonymity.

Translators, who are often out on patrols with American soldiers, face a particular risk, because of the highly public nature of their jobs. **During the reporting for this article, for example, both the translator and the driver received death threats.**

"It's getting really dangerous," said a translator named Waell, who left his job at Forward Operating Base Falcon in Dora last month, because of the mounting risk. His boss, he said, "meets Sheiks, imams and officials."

"I have to meet those people every day," he said. "I don't know who to trust."

Some do not even tell their own families where they are employed, to keep relatives from worrying. Ziad, a translator who works for the Ministry of Defense, said he tells his family that he works in a private company. His sister was forced to quit her job at the American-run Baghdad airport, when their mother discovered she was working there.

The car of choice is a BMW, Mercedes or Opel. The weapon is often a 9 mm MP5 submachine gun, which is easily hidden and commonly used on soft targets like hostages.

At Falcon, the biggest danger is the entrance to the base, workers said. Employees suspect that the gate is being watched, and a number of the shootings have taken place along the road leading up to it, a lonely stretch of highway that is the only access for Iraqi employees. A notebook with names and addresses of the base's interpreters was found in a car that was stopped along the road last year, said Waell, citing reports from the base.

"That highway, it's the place people get killed," said Layla, a 23-year-old translator whose brother, Keis, was shot to death on the road on Sept. 7 as he was driving home from his job at the Falcon base.

One wrong move on the road can be lethal. Waell's school friend Atimad, also a translator at the base, was killed when she decided to take a taxi after her uncle could not come to fetch her. Five men in a white Kia parked in front of the cab killed her, he said.

"They grabbed her out of the car, shot her and just left her there," Waell said. "No one could do anything about it." In all, Waell counted five close friends at the base who had been shot and killed since May.

A sixth from a different base was shot and killed in front of his house on the night of Sept. 10, he said.

"We used to say, 'Oh God, you've got to be kidding,'" he said of his colleagues' reactions to the news that someone they know had been killed. "Now, we're used to it."

"When someone tells me my friend got killed," he added, "I'd just say he was a good guy. That's it. Nothing more."

Translators expressed deep disappointment with the way the American military and their employer — the Titan Corp. — has handled the danger. Interpreters are referred to as "terps," and are replaced in a seemingly endless flow of manpower as soon as they are killed.

An American military spokesman said legal restrictions "do not allow us to pay compensation to Iraqi civilians who work on our base and are killed off base by criminals."

Layla said she begged American administrators at the American-run hospital in central Baghdad to admit her brother, who was still alive after being shot but whose condition was rapidly deteriorating because he was being treated in an ill-equipped Iraqi hospital.

She said she was told that she had to collect her brother's documents before he could be admitted. But there was not enough time, Layla said, and her brother died a short time later.

"I've been working for them for about a year and a half," she said. "I wasn't asking for a house, for a visa, for a trip abroad. I was just asking them to save a life.

"He works for the army washing soldiers' clothes, and they can't save a life."

In the case of Atimad, "she's just gone," said Waell, who described the attitude at the base as: "We can easily get another one. There are 3,600 of them."

"They say they care about you, but they don't," Waell said.

Layla said she would continue her translating job in the International Zone, a sprawling area in central Baghdad that is the base of the American administration here. She is looking for a room there, to avoid the high risk of having to travel in and out.

Her two brothers, however, quit their jobs with Kellogg Brown & Root, a Halliburton subsidiary, last week.

Waell agreed.

"I'm not going anymore," he said. "I'm done."

"They keep calling every three or four days. I just want them to leave me alone."

"I always knew the Americans would bring electricity back to Baghdad. I just never thought they'd be shooting it up my ass." - *Young Iraqi translator, Baghdad, November 2003* (Carlotta Gall and David Rohde *The New York Times* 17 September 2004)

Received:

Conscientious Objector Video

From: "Jim" <jim@gifightback.org>

To: GI Special

September 19, 2004

The San Diego Military Rights Project recently helped a Second Class Petty Officer get out of the Navy with a Conscientious Objector discharge.

He spoke with me for a while one afternoon about the process and his beliefs on war. I have published that video on the net, if you'd like to see it please go to and follow the links to the multimedia page.

Thanks
Jim Carte

Web Copies

For back issues see: GI Special web site at <http://www.militaryproject.org/>

The following that we know of have also posted issues:

<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/> ; www.gifightback.org ;

<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/gi-special.htm>

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