

GI SPECIAL 2#B70

HOW MANY MORE FOR BUSH'S WAR?



After the car bomb 9.22.04: REUTERS/Faleh Kheiber

Baghdad Car Bomb Kills U.S. Soldier, 4 Wounded

September 22, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
Release Number: 04-09-25C & (Reuters)

BAGHDAD, Iraq – One Task Force Baghdad Soldier died and four others were wounded when a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device detonated at about 4:30 p.m. Sept. 22 near a traffic control point in Baghdad.

Four Soldiers were medically evacuated immediately following the attack, and one of them died of wounds at a nearby military medical treatment facility. A fifth Soldier suffered minor wounds in the blast.

Reuters television pictures on Wednesday showed two Humvees on fire and a thick column of black smoke.

"I saw a big ball of fire and then heard a huge explosion," said Haider Mousawi, a spokesman for Iraqi politician Ahmad Chalabi, **who added that U.S. forces had been guarding a local council meeting.**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

Five Members Of Galva-Based Guard Unit Injured In Car Bomb Blast

September 22nd, 2004 By Ann McGlynn, QCTimes.com

Five members of an Illinois National Guard unit based in Galva, Ill., were injured, one of them seriously, by an explosion in Iraq, a Guard spokesman confirmed Wednesday morning.

The five soldiers are members of Battery F, 202nd ADA, he said. Officials declined to release the soldiers' names or hometowns.

The five were on traffic patrol when an explosion occurred in the vicinity, officials said. The unit was deployed in November 2003 and is due to return home in March. The unit is comprised of more than 120 soldiers.

Soldier Killed By Roadside Bomb Near Uja

9.22.04 Associated Press, TIKRIT, Iraq

A North Dakota National Guard soldier has been killed in Iraq while investigating a suspicious roadside object that turned out to be a bomb. The soldier was a member of the North Dakota Guard's 141st Engineer Combat Battalion.

He was assigned to the unit's Company B, based in Jamestown.

An Army spokesman says the soldier was traveling on a highway about three miles south of Tikrit when he spotted the object.

The spokesman says the bomb then detonated -- killing the soldier. He died sometime around midnight

The blast happened near Uja.

The victim's family has been notified and members of the 141st's family support group are using a "phone tree" to spread the word, Keller said.

"That's our extended family and we want them to hear that it's not their soldier," Keller said.

U.S. Soldier Killed In Mosul

September 22, 2004 The Associated Press

A U.S. soldier was killed in Iraq on Wednesday, officials said. He died of his wounds following an attack on a patrol in the northern town of Mosul.

Armstrong County Soldier Dies: Iraq "Hell On Earth"

September 22, 2004 AP

APOLLO, Pa. -- Army Spec. Joshua Henry, a soldier from Armstrong County, died recently in Iraq, his sister said Tuesday.

Joshua Henry, 21, of Apollo, served with the 1st Infantry Division.

Friends told the *Valley News Dispatch* that Henry joined the Army after graduating from Apollo-Ridge High School in 2001. He served in Germany and Kosovo before going to Iraq in January, friends said.

Jake Nulph told the newspaper that he started worrying about Henry when he got an e-mail from his friend describing Iraq as "hell on earth."

"I knew then that things weren't good," Nulph said. "He talked about coming home for Christmas. The last thing he told me was, 'I love you, man.'"

Resistance Attacks 1st Infantry Division In Samarra: So Much For The Bullshit About Samarra "Taken" Last Week

September 22, 2004 The Associated Press & HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES
CENTRAL COMMAND Release Number: 04-09-72

Clashes erupted after sunset Wednesday in the central city of Samarra, where U.S. forces had earlier claimed success against militants waging a 17-month insurgency, police said. [Last week, command was bragging about how Samarra had been taken and the resistance defeated.]

At least one child was killed and five people wounded in fighting in the city's northeastern neighborhood of Qadisiya, said police Maj. Raed Saadoun Ahmad. Four houses were also damaged, he said.

A 1st Infantry Division patrol was attacked Sept. 22 with small arms fire and mortar fire from a mosque in Samarra at approximately 5 p.m. The Soldiers did not return fire.

The patrol had been attacked earlier in another location of the city and returned fire. The AIF relocated to a nearby building and continued attacking the patrol. Attack helicopters supporting the patrol fired hellfire missiles into the building.

The patrol continued and was subsequently attacked by AIF with small arms fire and rocket propelled grenades. The Soldiers returned fire with small arms fire and a TOW missile. Anti-Iraqi Forces again attacked the patrol and attack aviation dropped a GBU-12 bomb on the building. As the patrol continued they were engaged by AIF from the mosque.

There were no injuries to the Soldiers or damage to equipment.

Black Hawk Crash Reveals U.S. Forced To Use Copters To Go From HQ To Baghdad Airport

Sept. 22, 2004 BY GRETEL C. KOVACH, The Dallas Morning News

Last week, when a spate of car bombs unsettled the capital, U.S. embassy staff began requesting helicopter transportation between the International Zone in downtown Baghdad to the airport on the outskirts of the city.

TALLIL, Iraq - (KRT) - When the helicopter crew suited up at a U.S. military base in Iraq on Tuesday for a long day of flying, they thought rocket-propelled grenades and missiles were their deadliest concern.

But when the Black Hawk crashed that night soon after takeoff from Tallil Airfield, near An Nasiriyah, it was a reminder that more than bullets can down a helicopter in a war zone.

The four Army National Guard members from the "Superman" Company A, 1-244th Combat Aviation Battalion out of New Orleans, La., survived the crash just after 9 p.m. with facial lacerations, burns and broken bones, but the \$9 million UH-60 was totaled.

From the air, the crew of its sister helicopter in the lead didn't recognize the tailless, rotorless hulk of metal in the dirt near the runway.

"When I finally realized that was the helicopter, I figured they (the crew) were all done," said Michael Sorjonen, a 36-year-old crew chief and door gunner from Slidell, La.

The injured crew spent the night in the base hospital with their company members at their bedside and then flew Wednesday to Landstuhl, Germany, for further treatment.

It was the first crash for the company in 20 years, crew members said, and one of a few for the U.S. military not attributed to hostile fire in Iraq.

With convoys now under daily attack by roadside bombs and suicide car bombers, flying has become the safest way for foreigners to travel in Iraq.

Last week, when a spate of car bombs unsettled the capital, U.S. embassy staff began requesting helicopter transportation between the International Zone in downtown Baghdad to the airport on the outskirts of the city.

On Tuesday, the two Balad-based Black Hawks left on a "milk run," ferrying a Japanese general and others around Iraq. After receiving special permission to fly longer than normal, the crew donned bulletproof vests, loaded the M-60 machine guns and proceeded to Baghdad.

On the way to Babylon and then Ur, thought to be Abraham's birthplace, the twin helicopters seemed to skim the date palm trees and gallop over power lines. Many children and adults below stopped in the fields or roads to wave. One teen-age boy threw rocks.

After pizza dinner at Tallil Airfield, the helicopters, which fly in pairs for safety, lifted from the runway with their pilots wearing night-vision goggles.

Soon afterward, one helicopter lost power in an engine and plummeted. Its tail snapped off on impact, a fire erupted and the helicopter rolled 100 yards.

The crew of the sister helicopter landed and rushed to the wreck to pull them out.

Pilot Michelle Murphy, 32, of Baton Rouge, smiled when she said she heard the female gunner cuss out the medics for tweaking her broken foot.

"As soon as I heard that I said, 'You're going to be just fine,'" she said.

Crew chief Sorjonen said he gets butterflies every time he steps into a helicopter. But Charles Robertson, 34, a door gunner, said it's easy to become complacent about the dangers.

"You forget that sometimes, then something like this happens," he said. "It's a wake up call."

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)

“Every Unit In Their Battalion Has Sustained Casualties”

Sep. 22, 2004 DENIS D. GRAY, Associated Press

BAGHDAD, Iraq - An ear-shattering blast, a swirl of dust, a sting and I was unofficially awarded the first purple heart in the platoon.

"You're bad luck," joked soldiers of the 2nd platoon, Bravo company, after a mortar round struck 30 feet from our Humvee and a tiny sliver of shrapnel punctured my left arm.

Just moments earlier, the Humvee chief had decided to save fuel by shutting off the air conditioning and opening our armored-plated doors, leaving us partially exposed.

Then the light mortar round, the day's first, slammed into a compound of Jolan Club, an abandoned sports complex, alleged to be a hangout and weapons storage site of the rebel al-Mahdi Army.

But instead of weapons, soldiers bursting into the walled Jolan complex found shoddy weightlifting equipment, empty rooms and an outdoor basketball court with no backboards or hoops.

The troops occupied the compound through the morning, taking occasional sniper bullets as explosions and exchanges of fire rocked the slum around them.

U.S. jet fighters screamed overhead at rooftop level.

Just as the order came to move out of the compound, the mortar round struck - unexpected because they don't whistle in like artillery shells.

A medic extracted the shrapnel fragment from my arm and delivered it to me in a souvenir plastic packet while the soldiers joked around.

Every unit in their battalion has sustained casualties during its seven months in Baghdad.

TROOP NEWS

National Guard and Reserve Mobilized Up 984 In Week

September 22, 2004 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 930-04

This week, the Army, Navy and Marine Corps announced an increase in the number of reservists on active duty. **The net collective result is 984 more reservists mobilized than last week.**

General Confirms Thousands Of IRR Troops To Be Called Up After Election

September 22, 2004 By Rick Maze, Army Times staff writer

Rep. John Murtha of Pennsylvania — confirms he has been told there will be mobilization orders issued to include more use of the Individual Ready Reserve.

Air Force Gen. Richard B. Myers, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, backs up Murtha's account.

Myers said that 800 IRR members have been activated as of Sept. 15. The Pentagon wants to fill 5,600 slots by December and could ask even more IRR members to report, Myers said. "The skill sets that are in the highest demand are transportation, logisticians, mechanics, military police and engineers," Myers said.

Mourning the Warrior, and Questioning the War: Dead Son's Body Disrespected, She Fights To Bring All Troops Home Now

September 22, 2004 By CHRIS HEDGES, New York Times

"I asked him if he wanted to go back," she said. " Seth said no. He told me we were losing the war. He told me we could not win a war when we did not know who our enemies were. He told me it was a waste, but he also told me he had to return to get the 18 men in his platoon home safely."

Monroe Township, N.J.:

WHEN Sue Niederer heard that Laura Bush was planning to speak in nearby Hamilton, N.J., she went to the local Republican headquarters, showed various forms of identification and took a ticket.

Clutching an Army cap and a rolled-up T-shirt, she had come on another mission, one that has defined her life since her only son, Second Lt. Seth J. Dvorin, 24, was killed. He died in February when a roadside bomb exploded in an Iraqi town she says she cannot pronounce.

"I wanted to confront Mrs. Bush because she, too, is a mother," she said at the small office here where she works as a real estate agent.

As Mrs. Bush was lauding her husband's war on terror, Mrs. Niederer slipped on the shirt, which bore a photo of the lieutenant and the words "President Bush killed my son." Standing at the back of the crowd, she interrupted Mrs. Bush, shouting that if the war was warranted, "Why don't your children serve?"

"She did not answer," Mrs. Niederer said. "She looked stunned."

She was escorted from the hall, and as she tried to speak with reporters outside, she was arrested, handcuffed, taken to the Hamilton police station and charged with trespassing. She was released soon afterward, and prosecutors later dropped the charge.

Mrs. Niederer is an unlikely firebrand, a woman who grew up in a Conservative Jewish household in Brooklyn and has spent her adult life substitute teaching, working in real estate and raising two children in Hopewell, a suburb near Princeton. **She said she had never been arrested before or even been politically active. Now she frequently joins protests against the war and is active in Military Families Speak Out, a nationwide antiwar group.**

She says she was opposed to the war from the start, not believing that Iraq posed a threat to the United States. Her son's qualms were more practical; when he was deployed from Fort Drum, N.Y., in September 2003, after finishing officer training school, he told his mother that he felt he had not been properly trained or equipped for combat.

Yet Lieutenant Dvorin loved his first few weeks in Iraq, telling her in phone calls and e-mail messages that he felt he was helping rebuild the country. "He was ecstatic," she recalled. "He was the liaison with the community. **But in the middle of October his**

letters and messages suddenly changed. He was depressed. I asked him what was wrong, and he was evasive. He did not want to talk."

After he was killed, she said, she learned that he had been ordered in October to lead a platoon to search for homemade bombs left on roadsides. Lieutenant Dvorin was wounded in an explosion in November. When he returned on home leave in January, three weeks before his death, he wept in the arms of his stepfather, telling him he was afraid and did not want to return. He said nothing to his mother until they were at the airport in Baltimore.

"I asked him if he wanted to go back," she said. " Seth said no. He told me we were losing the war. He told me we could not win a war when we did not know who our enemies were. He told me it was a waste, but he also told me he had to return to get the 18 men in his platoon home safely."

SOON after he died, Mrs. Niederer said, she and her son's widow ran into a wall of military bureaucracy.

As an observant Jew, Mrs. Niederer asked that her son not be embalmed or undergo an autopsy, requests that she said were ignored. She asked to go to Dover Air Force Base to meet her son's coffin, but says she was told that was against the rules. And she says she has tried reaching members of her son's platoon to learn the circumstances of his death, especially after the Army told her he had been killed trying to defuse a bomb.

"He had no training in bomb detection or in defusing bombs," she said. "He did not have proper equipment. **When I complained in public about the inadequate training and lack of equipment, the Army changed the story. They told me he was not trying to defuse a bomb. I still don't know how he died. They won't let me speak to or contact members of his platoon.**"

Outside her office, Mrs. Niederer sat, swinging from anger to tears and back again, as low storm clouds cast a pall over the parking lot.

"My goal is to bring the troops home as quickly as possible," she said. "This was Seth's wish. I can't save my son, but I can save someone else's son. Seth's mission is mine."

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.

Iraq War Vet & Father Of Soldier Organize Towns' First War Protest

September 20, 2004 By John Keilman, Chicago Tribune staff reporter. Freelance reporter Carolyn Rusin contributed to this report.

When Paul Vogel sought permission last month for an anti-war march in Barrington, local officials were caught off guard.

They had no plan on how to handle a mass demonstration because as far as anyone knew, the village had never seen one.

Sunday was the first. More than 500 activists converged downtown to mourn those killed in the Iraq conflict and call for the troops' withdrawal. The crowd was filled with people of all ages wearing T-shirts and buttons and carrying signs protesting the war.

It was a lot of commotion for a town unaccustomed to having divisive national issues hashed out in the street. **Jim Perille, 81, a longtime resident and former trustee, said not even the Vietnam War stirred a protest.**

"We ask for an immediate withdrawal of all the forces in Iraq," said Chicago resident Rob Sarra, a Marine sergeant who was sent to Iraq for six months and a member of Iraq Vets Against the War. [<http://www.ivaw.net/>] "As we gather here today, soldiers are engaged there with no clear objectives and no end in sight."

Vogel, who owns a temporary staffing agency in Barrington, has been publicly critical of the war since his Army reservist son was sent to Iraq for almost a year. He mounted a sign in front of his business reading "Proud of our soldier! Ashamed of our president!" and planted hundreds of small U.S. flags representing soldiers slain in the conflict.

Pentagon Runs Out Of War Money

[Los Angeles Times, September 22, 2004]

A \$25-billion account was to have been an 'insurance policy' unneeded this year. But insurgents in Iraq changed the equation. **The Pentagon has begun dipping into a \$25 billion emergency fund that Bush administration officials have said would not be needed this year.**

Study Challenges 'Don't Ask, Don't Tell' Bullshit;

Silly Lying Lt. Col. Claims He Never Head Any Criticism Of Policy

September 22, 2004 By Diane Scarponi, Associated Press

Sparks and many of the service members interviewed in the survey said most of their younger colleagues accepted their homosexuality, but older military leaders did not.

NEW HAVEN, Conn. — Brian Hughes served four years with an Army Ranger unit, including assignments in Afghanistan and Iraq, while keeping his homosexuality — a potentially career-ending sexual orientation — secret.

Hughes, 26, left the Army last month in part because of his frustration with the military's "don't ask, don't tell" policy, which allows homosexuals to serve so long as they do not disclose their sexual orientation and do not engage in homosexual acts.

Now enrolled at Yale University, Hughes said the policy forced him to lie to other members of his unit, who frequently bragged about their sexual exploits. Hughes said he found himself substituting "she" for "he" in stories so he could join in conversations.

"It hurt. I was lying to those people," he said. "I eventually withdrew and became quite anti-social because I didn't want to deal with it anymore."

Hughes is one of 30 homosexual current and former servicemen and servicewomen profiled in an unscientific survey released earlier this month about the impact of "don't ask, don't tell" on gay soldiers serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Hughes and study author Nathaniel Frank traveled this week to Washington, D.C., to meet with congressional staffers to encourage an end to the 11-year-old policy.

The survey, conducted through the Center for the Study of Sexual Minorities in the Military at the University of California in Santa Barbara, does not question heterosexual service members about serving alongside gay and lesbian soldiers. It does, however, provide a snapshot of what it's like to be gay and serving in a combat zone.

Some service members who were part of the survey said in interviews that they came out to their colleagues about their sexual orientation despite the policy. Some were discharged when their homosexuality became known; others continued to serve.

Derek Sparks, who now works in information technology in Seattle, was discharged in 2002 after the Navy learned he was gay. Some gay friends on his ship were investigated, and he acknowledged his homosexuality to his commanding officer during the probe.

“All the policy meant to me at the time was that I still had to hide,” said Sparks, who enlisted in 1987. “I think they should get rid of it. I think it’s ineffective. All it does it put more stress on people.”

Sparks and many of the service members interviewed in the survey said most of their younger colleagues accepted their homosexuality, but older military leaders did not.

Wendy Biehl, 28, who served eight years in the Army in Kuwait, Kosovo, Bosnia and Germany, came out to a few friends she trusted, but kept her homosexuality a secret from commanders.

Some colleagues suspected she was a lesbian, and they tried to find out for sure by skirting the “don’t ask” policy. They would ask whether she ever went to a local lesbian bar or would drive around to see if her truck was parked near the bar.

“Some guy friends would claim they were my boyfriend. That kind of helped out a little bit. It helped keep certain people off my back,” Biehl said.

Biehl now sells metal detectors in Florida. She said the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy was a big reason why she chose not to re-enlist. “I really wasn’t happy hiding who I really was, and it gets frustrating after a while,” she said.

The Department of Defense has heard of no such criticisms and believes the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy works as intended, said Army Lt. Col. Joe Richard, an agency spokesman. [Either he's the world's dumbest liar, or he spends 24/7 with his head stuck firmly up his ass, incapable of hearing anything.]

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.

Lawmakers Looking At Curbing Insurance Scams; Scum Disguised As Retired Officers Help Con Green Troops

September 20, 2004 By Rick Maze, Army Times staff writer

Faced with new complaints about service members headed for war being pressured into buying high-cost, low-value products by unscrupulous insurance agents and financial advisers, lawmakers are once again looking at what steps might be taken to protect troops.

Rep. Michael Oxley, R-Ohio said it is “unconscionable, if true,” that groups of recruits have been marched into compulsory briefings on veterans’ benefits by salespeople pretending to be financial planners, who then quickstep them into signing up for what turns out to be long-term life insurance.

“It is also unconscionable, if true, that firms are using retired military officers to make on-base sales pitches to groups of young recruits for mutual funds with 50 percent first-year commissions, a product that has virtually disappeared from the civilian market,” Oxley said, adding a typical first-year commission should be about 5 percent.

In some cases, she said, service members have been sold insurance policies promising \$30,000 or less in coverage with premiums of \$900 a year, and such plans typically have higher premiums in the early years when a young, financially struggling family may have difficulty making payments.

“Any disinterested third party would have a very difficult time justifying life insurance as a rational retirement investment for the typical service member,” she said.

Making Jettson’s point was Army Spc. Brandon Conger, an Iraq veteran and member of the 82nd Airborne Division, who told lawmakers about how he felt tricked into buying an insurance policy while in basic training in 2002.

Conger said he and other soldiers were set up by a drill sergeant for a “financial briefing” on mutual funds that the drill sergeant strongly recommended.

The so-called briefing ended up being a sales pitch by a retired noncommissioned officer who passed out enrollment forms. It wasn’t until later, Conger said, that he realized he had bought life insurance. “I did not need life insurance,” he said.

It wasn’t until this year that he canceled the policy, which he was paying for through monthly automatic deductions from his back account.

Losing money was bad enough, Conger said, but he feels worse about being set up by a drill sergeant for a meeting in which a former soldier misrepresented what was being sold. “That is my biggest disappointment,” he said.

Reservists Forgotten

9.20.04
Letters To The Editor
Army Times

I am the wife of an Army reservist who has been deployed for a year and a half.

I have a very negative view of spouses of full-time, active-duty soldiers. All you see in articles and TV shows is “Poor me, my husband deployed, I need help.”

Please quit whining. I live nowhere near a military installation. I had no family readiness group to hang out with, nor did one ever contact me. I know of no other military spouse in my area with a deployed spouse, so I am faced with dealing with all of this on my own.

Since this is my first deployment, I didn't even know what to expect. The Army sure didn't provide me with any information or any contacts in case I have questions.

Everyone puts so much focus on full-time, active-duty soldiers' spouses that they forget about those spouses of deployed reservists. We don't have access to family readiness groups.

I am always amazed when I go to the base where my husband is stationed and see all the support and activities provided to spouses.

Then there is the issue of Tricare. If you don't live near a base, you can pretty much bet most doctors have no clue what Tricare is or they don't accept it. So my family can no longer see the doctors we've been seeing forever, because they don't take Tricare.

I was just placed on Tricare and given a book when my husband was deployed. I have no clue how Tricare works.

Every time I read an article about what the government is doing for military families I have to laugh.

No family readiness groups, no exchange to shop in, no military spouses as neighbors, no office to walk into to answer your questions.

So please quit crying about not having anything when you do have a lot. Be thankful for what you do have.

Amber Matthews
Lindale, Texas

[Instead of cracking on the families of full time troops, reserve families need to organize to get the same rights and benefits. Divided you fall, united you stand, and insulting families of full time troops just plays into the hands of the people fucking you over. They love it. They feed on division, because they know it's the way they stay on top. T]

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

The Iraqi Resistance Speaks



Mahdi Army resistance fighters keep watch for U.S. soldiers in Sadr City, Baghdad, Sept. 22, 2004. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

25 September 2004, Socialist Worker (UK)

She added that Iraqis felt sorry for ordinary US and British soldiers sent out to Iraq—“Most of them are very young—just boys really.”

“The people of Fallujah have risen in rebellion,” says Sheikh Khalil Ibrahim from the Beni Tamim tribe of Fallujah. “The Americans cannot enter large parts of the city. We say to America and its allies—get out of our country.”

He made a direct appeal to the British people— “The people of Fallujah ask the British people to put pressure on Tony Blair to withdraw their occupying forces from Iraq.”

Sheikh Ibrahim dismissed claims that the resistance is being run by foreigners. “The resistance in Fallujah is controlled by the people of Fallujah,” he said.

Samira al-Gaylani from Baghdad attacked US claims that Iraq would descend into civil war if occupying troops left the country.

“Iraq has been mixed for 7,000 years,” she said. “The resistance has general support among the Iraqi people.” US troops had tied her son to a tank for six hours and beaten him up.

Dr Fatima Saloum from Baghdad said occupying troops were preventing the reconstruction of Iraq—“It is the ordinary people who began rebuilding the schools and cleaning the streets.”

She added that Iraqis felt sorry for ordinary US and British soldiers sent out to Iraq—“Most of them are very young—just boys really.”

“We feel sympathy for Rose Gentle and other mothers who have lost their sons. But we blame Bush and Blair for making these young men our enemies.”

MORE:

Inside The Resistance; “Even The Stones And The Trees Will Fight Them”

25 September 2004, Socialist Worker (UK)

We say, ‘Get out! Get out of our country. America and your allies, get out of our country.

The resistance has many faces. In some towns it started after people lost patience with reconstruction. In others it was a direct response to US raids, arrests and humiliations. But across Iraq the resistance is now known as “al-Muqawama al-Shaabi”—the popular resistance.

Members of the Iraqi delegation at a recent anti-war conference in Beirut spoke to Socialist Worker. The delegation, from Fallujah, Baghdad and Basra, included tribal and religious leaders and community representatives.

Nidal al-Jaz’iri represents women and children’s groups from the southern city of Basra. She says that in the first days after the invasion many people hoped life would improve. But these hopes were quickly dashed:

“In the south we know about the British because we were occupied by them before. Some of our main institutions were set up under British occupation in the 1920s, and there is still a British cemetery near Basra. **We hoped we could cooperate with the British, but we were disappointed.**

“There still has not been any real reconstruction. Non-governmental organisations came to Basra and made lots of promises, but often they just repainted the walls and made superficial repairs.

“Schools have still not been rebuilt. In many schools the roof still leaks and the floor is just mud. Children come home each day covered in dirt from the mud floor.”

Ordinary people began to organise to demand improvements in basic services, like water and electricity. But, instead of listening to these demands, the British troops ignored them and their representatives.

“People protested about the election of the governor and the appointment of the chief of police in Basra,” says Nidal. “Negotiations began with the occupying troops. People began to mobilise. They began to ask, ‘What about the future?’

“But we found it was impossible to negotiate with the troops.”

Dr Fatima Saloum, editor of the al-Mutahid newspaper, says people in Baghdad began to take matters into their own hands: “It is the ordinary people who began rebuilding the schools, cleaning the streets, running the hospitals—many of which were badly damaged by US bombs.

“People began to ask, ‘What use are all these armies? They don’t even know how to reconnect the electricity.’ We quickly realised that we had to do it ourselves—that we had to run our own towns and cities.”

Dr Fatima Saloum says that there was some sympathy for the troops of the occupying powers:

“We see the young British and US soldiers and most of them are very young—just boys really. We wonder why such powerful armies would send these boys to occupy our country?”

“We feel sorry for them because most of them just look scared all the time.

“At first they would give sweets and Coca-Cola to the children, but now they are even scared of the children.

“We feel sympathy for Rose Gentle and other mothers who have lost their sons, but we blame Bush and Blair for making these young men our enemies.

In Fallujah and Samarra, part of the so called Sunni triangle, the resistance began after US troops opened fire on unarmed demonstrators in the early days of the occupation.

Sheikh Khalil Ibrahim, of the Beni Tamim tribe of Fallujah, says the armed resistance was sparked by US troops sweeping through neighbourhoods:

“First come the air raids, then the troops open up with their artillery, and finally they send in the tanks. They enter the town and seize the men, the youth and sometimes even the women. The only way to stop them is to rise against them.”

He says that after the Fallujah uprising it became clear that “cities that resist and are strong can keep the US out”.

“The people of Fallujah have risen in rebellion. The Americans cannot enter large parts of the city. The Beni Tamim have also liberated Yathrib in the Baled region north of Baghdad and towns near Baquba.”

The resistance has also undermined attempts by the US to sow divisions between Sunni and Shia Muslims.

Sheikh Sa'ad al-Ani of the Sufi Islamic Union of Iraq says that people from across the country helped the Fallujah resistance fighters during the April siege:

“People came from Baghdad, Najaf, and Basra to help Fallujah, and to bring us food and oxygen supplies. They came from every province of Iraq to show solidarity with us.”

Sheikh Sa'ad al-Ani says the victory in Fallujah proved it was possible to defeat the Americans: “The creation of the Fallujah Brigade, which ended the siege, was a victory for Fallujah.

“The religious scholars made an agreement with representatives of the US-backed interim government to select members of the brigade from among the people of Fallujah.”

The Fallujah Brigade has now joined the resistance.

Sheikh Khalil Ibrahim also dismissed claims that the country would descend into civil war if the US coalition were to withdraw:

“I am a Sunni Muslim, but the Beni Tamim is a mixture of Shia and Sunni. Do you think that as soon as the Americans leave we will start killing each other? That a father will kill his son?

“This lie about a civil war has only one purpose—to extend the occupation. We say, ‘Get out! Get out of our country. America and your allies, get out of our country. If you are afraid of civil war breaking out, turn the matter over to the United Nations so that it can bring peacekeeping troops to Iraq.’

“As for the US forces they are completely rejected by every man, woman and child in Iraq, of every religious creed—Sunni, Shia, Christian, Yazidi and Sabian, Kurd and Arab.”

Sheikh Khalil Ibrahim says the Turkmen, ethnic Turks of Northern Iraq, have also joined the resistance, and even the Kurds who suffered some of the worst oppression under Saddam's regime are unhappy with the occupation and are refusing to be used as footsoldiers.

“We heard rumours that the Peshmerga [Kurdish forces] were helping the US, but we did not actually see them helping the enemy.”

He also dismissed claims that the resistance in Fallujah is under the control of Al Qaida:

“The Western media claim the resistance is being directed by Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, the Jordanian leader of Al Qaida, but this is not true.

“The resistance in Fallujah is controlled by the people of Fallujah. In the other cities it is the same. We believe this is a deliberate lie spread by the Americans to discredit the resistance and to try to stop it from spreading.”

Samira al-Gaylani, a lawyer from Baghdad and head of the secular Progressive Movement of Iraqi Women, dismissed US attempts to play the sectarian card, saying, “Iraq has been mixed for 7,000 years. The resistance has general support among the Iraqi people.”

“It is important to know that there are two faces to the resistance—the armed resistance, like in Fallujah and Samarra, but also the other resistance, the civilian resistance.”

The Iraqi delegates also dismissed the national elections planned for January.

Nidal al-Jaz’iri says, “People in Basra reject the elections. They are dominated by political forces which are not known to us—people who came from outside Iraq.”

Samira says, “There will not be any democratic elections because the national convention which happened in Baghdad was just a piece of theatre. Everything was decided beforehand. After that kind of convention, you can imagine what the elections are going to be like.”

Sheikh Khalil Ibrahim of Fallujah says elections will not stop the resistance. “Any election which takes place under occupation will not be a genuine, national election, and will not be accepted by the Iraqi people.

“If they impose these elections on the Iraqi people, in order to set up a permanent government which supports America and its allies, the resistance will continue.”

The delegates confirmed the conclusions of a wide-ranging opinion poll sponsored by the US-appointed Coalition Provisional Authority in May.

The poll found that the majority of Iraqis want the US and British troops out of their country immediately, support the rebel Shia leader Moqtada al-Sadr, and consider the coalition forces as occupiers who want to steal the country’s wealth.

The majority of Iraqis, 61 percent, also opposed Iyad Allawi, Iraq’s prime minister and darling of New Labour.

In all categories—security, support for the authorities, services, economic confidence and wellbeing—the US has failed to win Iraqis.

Sheikh Ibrahim made a direct appeal to the British people:

“The people of Fallujah—and the people of Iraq—ask the British people to put pressure on Tony Blair to withdraw their occupying forces from Iraq so that we can forge real links of friendship between our two countries.

“If the British open an embassy in Iraq and treat us with respect we will respect them, but if they come as an occupying army to take over Basra and the south, even the stones and the trees will fight them.”

OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION

BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!

Attack On Occupation Guard Recruits Kills 6: 54 Wounded

September 22, 2004 Canadian Press

An attacker detonated a car bomb Wednesday outside a photocopy shop in western Baghdad where Iraqi National Guard applicants were readying their papers before heading to a nearby recruiting centre, killing at least six people and injuring 54, authorities said.

Bloodied bodies, shattered glass and debris littered the street in the commercial neighbourhood of Al-Jamiyah.

At least 13 vehicles were wrecked and the engine of the suicide car was hurled some 50 metres away.

"A man in a black Opel car drove up near the shop and detonated the explosives," said policeman Ahmed Jassem.

Ali Jabbar, who owns a nearby shop, helped relief workers to pick up human remains and put them into plastic bags. "I found this in the back of my pickup truck," he said, pointing to a piece of a brain in his hand.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“It’s Empire, Pure And Simple”

September 22, 2004 By Robert Burns, Associated Press

The U.S. military is quietly expanding its network of small outposts worldwide to help fight terrorism in Middle East and African hotspots, even as it prepares to send home tens of thousands of Cold War era troops from bases in Germany and South Korea.

William Arkin, a defense analyst who closely tracks U.S. military programs, said he believes oil security is at the top of the reasons for the Pentagon’s interest in “lily pad” bases.

“It’s empire, pure and simple,” he said.

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. Grabs Top Advisors To Al Sadr: Angry Sistani Condemns Action By Occupation

[Miami Herald, September 22, 2004]

U.S. forces raided Muqtada al Sadr's headquarters in Najaf and arrested his top advisors. **Iraq's leading Shiite cleric, Grand Ayatollah Ali al Hussein al Sistani, reacted angrily to the U.S. operation and said the Iraqi government is responsible for what happened.**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Abu Ghraib Or Chicago? Take Your Pick: Attorney General Lisa Madigan Sides With Police Torturers

"An Open Letter to Illinois Senate and House of Representatives"

Death Row 10/Enough is Enough! Campaign, includes the Chicago Police Torture Victims, the Wrongfully Convicted, their Families, Friends, and Supporters

PO Box 377535, Chicago, IL 60637 (773) 643-4078,
enoughisenoughcampaign@yahoo.com

Illinois Senators and House Representatives
Capitol Building,
Springfield, Illinois

Dear Honorable Personages:

If you be men and women of good conscience who know that torture has no home in a democracy, please help us help over 100 police torture victims who are about to suffer an unfavorable ruling by attorneys from the office of Attorney General Lisa Madigan.

Friday morning, October 1st, Madigan's office will argue to deny the petition of former death row police torture victim Victor Safford, aka Cortez Brown, before Cook County Court Judge McSweeney Moore.

This being her first action on behalf of the Burge police torture victims could very well set a precedent and thus help to seal the fate of over one hundred Black and Latino men who were tortured with electro-shock, suffocation and severe beatings by former Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge and his detectives. At the time Madigan replaced State's Attorney Dick Devine on the Burge cases for his conflict of interest, she said as A.G. she "would never cover up the truth."

I ask that you please call her office and ask her to fulfill her promise to Victor's pastor, Larry Turpin, to "wait until Special Prosecutor Judge Egan has released his findings" into Burge and his detectives, "before ruling on any cases." Her refusal to wait proves she is taking sides. **And I say with no exaggeration that she is siding with monsters.**

At Area 3, Victor was brutally beaten by John Palladino, Anthony Maslanka, and John O'Brien—all whom worked with Jon Burge. **These same detectives were involved in the Marcus Wiggins case—a 13-year-old boy who was beaten into confessing for a crime he did not commit and later exonerated.**

The following is an excerpt from M.W.'s appeal:

"When Det. Maslanka, Star #16161, returned to the interrogation room a third time, he carried a rectangular shaped silver box with a round black knob on it and two black cords, each with a small plastic paddle, extending from it. The silver box was attached to a white extension cord that trailed out of the interrogation room on the floor. Det. Maslanka, placed the box on a rectangular table in the room and then handcuffed [13 yr. old Marcus Wiggins] from the wall.

The detective placed (M.W.) in a chair next to the table and placed each of his hands, extended in front of him, on the table. The detective turned the knob on the silver box and it emitted a 'whirring' sound...As (M.W.'s) hands were extended in front of him and rested palm down on the interrogation table, Det. Maslanka, placed a small plastic paddle on each of the handles extending upward from each paddle. When he did so a jolt of electricity was emitted and (13 yr. old M.W.'s) head thrust backwards, his eyes rolled up and back in the sockets, his jaw clamped together, he couldn't keep his eyelids open and felt like he was being 'knocked out.' After being shocked with electricity from the silver box, (M.W.) apparently made a second statement to Det. Maslanka of which he has no memory of making."

These same detectives repeatedly beat Victor Safford with a flashlight on the back of his legs and on his head. They threatened to kill him and members of his family. After hours of abuse without food or use of a bathroom, Victor signed a false statement. He used a false name, "Cortez Brown."

Victor hoped that by signing a false name, he could explain to the courts that the statement was false. Instead, he was convicted of two felony murders and sentenced to death. There are no eyewitnesses to the crimes for which Victor was

convicted. In the first case, a witness simply claimed to have seen Victor a block away from the shooting. At Victor's trial, an eyewitness to one of the crimes could not even identify Victor as one of the shooters.

If America remains a democracy and we condemn torture abroad, then what about torture in our own backyard? Given, as Judge Milton Shadur, said "it's common knowledge that torture did occur," I ask you Illinois' Senators and Representatives please protect our human rights.

Be on the side of progress instead of reaction. Let's not wait for the historians to judge us. Let's be our own judge. Silence = Conspiracy but Truth = Progress. Which side are you on?

Respectfully,

Joan P. Parkin, Coordinator Enough is Enough! Campaign

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed in Afghan Attack; 14 Wounded In Resistance Offensive

September 22, 2004 By STEPHEN GRAHAM, Associated Press Writer

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) - An American soldier was killed in an attack on a patrol in eastern Afghanistan, the U.S. military said Wednesday, the third U.S. service member to die in the country this week.

American spokesman Maj. Scott Nelson said the soldier was killed on Monday in Khost province, close to the Pakistani border, but said he had no further details.

All in all, U.S.-led troops clashed with militants in eight separate locations on Monday, he said. A total of 14 American troops were injured and one Afghan soldier was listed as missing, he said.

The soldiers were conducting a search operation when "a large force of anti-coalition militants was able to launch an attack" with mortars, Nelson said. Six Afghan soldiers were also injured.

Received:

From: DR
To: GI Special

Sent: Tuesday, September 21, 2004 11:47 PM
Subject: Re: GI Special 2#B67: How It Is

Hey, once again, my friend, your email list is incredible.

how can i tell people about signing on to it? is the best way for folks to just email you, or is there a website they can go to to sign on to it that way? i looked on ivaw.net and traveling-soldier.org and didn't see anything obvious. i want to spread the word.

take care,
d

REPLY: Anybody who wants to receive GI Special can just drop a short email to address at the top left of every issue. Both regular and PDF versions go out, so please specify. Deepest thanks for your encouragement! The purpose is to be useful, so anybody can use any way they wish, bits, pieces, or whatever, no credit asked for, and no charge. The objective is to help build a movement to bring all the troops home now. Or as old Karl Marx once put it, the weapon of criticism must precede our criticism by weapons. T.

Received:

CORRECTION: ADDRESS FOR CO VIDEO IS BELOW:

Subject: Conscientious Objector video

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 www.gifightback.org and follow the links to the multimedia page.

Thanks, Jim Carter

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>

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