

GI SPECIAL 2#B68



An Iraqi pipeline is ablaze following a huge attack that halted all exports from Kirkuk. (AFP/File/Marwan Ibrahim)

Why We Cannot Win

(THANKS TO LIZ BURBANK WHO E-MAILED THIS IN)

By Al Lorentz 09/20/04, "LewRockwell.com"

Before I begin, let me state that I am a soldier currently deployed in Iraq, I am not an armchair quarterback.

Nor am I some politically idealistic and naïve young soldier, I am an old and seasoned Non-Commissioned Officer with nearly 20 years under my belt. Additionally, I am not just a soldier with a muds-eye view of the war, I am in Civil Affairs and as such, it is my job to be aware of all the events occurring in this country and specifically in my region.

I have come to the conclusion that we cannot win here for a number of reasons. Ideology and idealism will never trump history and reality.

When we were preparing to deploy, I told my young soldiers to beware of the "political solution." Just when you think you have the situation on the ground in hand, someone will come along with a political directive that throws you off the tracks.

I believe that we could have won this un-Constitutional invasion of Iraq and possibly pulled off the even more un-Constitutional occupation and subjugation of this sovereign nation.

True the possibility of pulling all this off was a long shot and would have required several hundred billion dollars and even more casualties than we've seen to date but again it would have been possible, not realistic or necessary but possible.

Here are the specific reasons why we cannot win in Iraq.

First, we refuse to deal in reality.

We are in a guerilla war, but because of politics, we are not allowed to declare it a guerilla war and must label the increasingly effective guerilla forces arrayed against us as "terrorists, criminals and dead-enders."

This implies that there is a zero sum game at work, i.e. we can simply kill X number of the enemy and then the fight is over, mission accomplished, everybody wins. Unfortunately, this is not the case. We have few tools at our disposal and those are proving to be wholly ineffective at fighting the guerillas.

The idea behind fighting a guerilla army is not to destroy its every man, an impossibility since he hides himself by day amongst the populace. Rather the idea in guerilla warfare is to erode or destroy his base of support.

So long as there is support for the guerilla, for every one you kill two more rise up to take his place. More importantly, when your tools for killing him are precision guided munitions, raids and other acts that create casualties among the innocent populace, you raise the support for the guerillas and undermine the support for yourself. A 500-pound precision bomb has a casualty-producing radius of 400 meters minimum; do the math.

Second, our assessment of what motivates the average Iraqi was skewed, again by politically motivated "experts."

We came here with some fantasy idea that the natives were all ignorant, mud-hut dwelling camel riders who would line the streets and pelt us with rose petals, lay palm fronds in the street and be eternally grateful. While at one time there may have actually been support and respect from the locals, months of occupation by our regular military forces have turned the formerly friendly into the recently hostile.

Attempts to correct the thinking in this regard are in vain; it is not politically correct to point out the fact that the locals are not only disliking us more and more, they are growing increasingly upset and often overtly hostile. Instead of addressing the reasons why the locals are becoming angry and discontented, we allow politicians in Washington DC to give us pat and convenient reasons that are devoid of any semblance of reality.

We are told that the locals are not upset because we have a hostile, aggressive and angry Army occupying their nation. We are told that they are not upset at the police state we have created, or at the manner of picking their representatives for them. Rather we are told, they are upset because of a handful of terrorists, criminals and dead enders in their midst have made them upset, that and of course the ever convenient straw man of "left wing media bias."

Third, the guerillas are filling their losses faster than we can create them. This is almost always the case in guerilla warfare, especially when your tactics for battling the guerillas are aimed at killing guerillas instead of eroding their support. For every guerilla we kill with a "smart bomb" we kill many more innocent civilians and create rage and anger in the Iraqi community. This rage and anger translates into more recruits for the terrorists and less support for us.

We have fallen victim to the body count mentality all over again. **We have shown a willingness to inflict civilian casualties as a necessity of war without realizing that these same casualties create waves of hatred against us. These angry Iraqi citizens translate not only into more recruits for the guerilla army but also into more support of the guerilla army.**

Fourth, their lines of supply and communication are much shorter than ours and much less vulnerable.

We must import everything we need into this place; this costs money and is dangerous. Whether we fly the supplies in or bring them by truck, they are vulnerable to attack, most especially those brought by truck. This not only increases the likelihood of the supplies being interrupted. Every bean, every bullet and every bandage becomes infinitely more expensive.

Conversely, the guerillas live on top of their supplies and are showing every indication of developing a very sophisticated network for obtaining them. Further, they have the advantage of the close support of family and friends and traditional religious networks.

Fifth, we consistently underestimate the enemy and his capabilities.

Many military commanders have prepared to fight exactly the wrong war here. Our tactics have not adjusted to the battlefield and we are falling behind.

Meanwhile the enemy updates his tactics and has shown a remarkable resiliency and adaptability.

Because the current administration is more concerned with its image than it is with reality, it prefers symbolism to substance: soldiers are dying here and being maimed and crippled for life.

It is tragic, indeed criminal that our elected public servants would so willingly sacrifice our nation's prestige and honor as well as the blood and treasure to pursue an agenda that is ahistoric and un-Constitutional.

It is all the more ironic that this un-Constitutional mission is being performed by citizen soldiers such as myself who swore an oath to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States, the same oath that the commander in chief himself has sworn.

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 WAR REPORTS:

ATTACK KILLS ONE 1ST INFANTRY DIVISION SOLDIER IN ASH SHARQAT

September 20, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND
Release Number: 04-09-21C

TIKRIT, Iraq —[Insurgent] forces attacked a 1st Infantry Division patrol near Ash Sharqat Sept. 20 at about 1:15 p.m. One 1st ID Soldier was killed in the attack.

Arkansan Dies In Iraq War Effort

9/20/2004 ABC24.com

Thomas Chad Rosenbaum of Hope is the 15th Arkansas soldier to die in Iraq.

Rosenbaum's father, Jackie, confirmed his 25-year-old son's death last night, but did not want to talk to a news reporter about details of his military service.

Thomas Rosenbaum's mother, Donna, said the family had been notified of her son's death but given no other details.

Neighbor Waylon Lewallen said he attended Hope High School with Rosenbaum, but they were not the same age. Lewallen saw Rosenbaum about two weeks ago in Hope while he was on leave.

Herndon Funeral Home's director said the Hope home is handling the funeral.

U.S. Attacks Terrorist Bulldozer

September 20, 2004 The Associated Press & Agence France-Presse

AT least three people were killed in a double US air strike on the insurgent stronghold of Fallujah in Iraq, witnesses said today.

The US military said it had struck heavy construction equipment used to build fortified fighting positions

Dhia Adel of Fallujah General Hospital said the two killed and three wounded were city municipal employees using a bulldozer to work on construction projects near the Fallujah railway station.

Collaborator Troops Shoot At U.S. Forces And Anything That Moves

September 20, 2004 By Matthew Cox, Army Times staff writer

“They are so undisciplined; we are usually more scared of them than of the enemy.”

BAGHDAD — Haifa Street turned into a shooting gallery Sept. 17 as American and Iraqi forces swept through this suspected breeding ground for insurgents operating near the International Zone.

Before long, friendly Iraqi forces armed with AK47s began firing on anything they perceived to be enemy positions. But that included the American overwatch positions that soldiers occupied on several high-rise buildings.

“Hey! We’re taking fire from that mosque over there!” Sgt. Travin Fox yelled to his fellow soldiers over the sharp cracks of the incoming AK47 rounds. “If you get eyes on that shooter, take him out!” But after a quick radio conversation with his fellow soldiers from the 39th Infantry Brigade of the Arkansas National Guard, Fox reversed his order.

“Wait! Don’t fire!” he shouted. “We have to wait for approval from above.”

The two Iraqis who fired on the soldiers turned out to be members of the Iraqi National Guard in civilian clothes.

Throughout the day, U.S. soldiers continued to be shocked while watching Iraqi forces fire on them or just fire wildly. “They are so undisciplined; we are usually more scared of them than of the enemy,” said 2nd Lt. Rick Caldwell, 1st platoon leader for the 39th Brigade’s C Company, 1st Battalion, 153rd Infantry Regiment. “It’s pretty easy to identify an American soldier, but they still shoot at us anyway.”

On several occasions, throughout the operation, friendly Iraqi forces unleashed withering rifle and machine-gun fire on the slightest hint of enemy contact. "If anything happens, they empty a magazine," Caldwell said.

These free-for-alls happened over and over during the 10-hour mission, with one or two Iraqis firing anywhere they believed an enemy might be. Soon dozens of Iraqis joined their comrades, firing on full-automatic, pelting the sides of high-rise buildings with hundreds of bullets at a time.

"I'm surprised the ING aren't shooting themselves out there," said Spc. Daniel Kelsey, also from C Company.

But C Company commander, Capt. T.J. Foley, was more forgiving of the Iraqi forces' performance since most have received only two weeks of the most basic military training.

TROOP NEWS

Get Pregnant, Or Get Sent To Iraq



IRR member Cristie Oliver gives Asia a bath before bed. **When Oliver got her Army mailgram, she said, "They're going to make me leave my baby."** (Times photo: Lara Cerri)

September 19, 2004 By LEONORA LaPETER, Times Staff Writer, St. Petersburg Times. Researcher Caryn Baird contributed to this report.

GULFPORT - Cristie Oliver sat down heavily at the kitchen table as she read the Western Union mailgram.

"Oh, no," she said, the color draining from her face.

Her mother, Cheryl Sendio, figured Cristie must have just opened a whopper of a bill.

"They're going to make me leave my baby," Cristie whimpered.

The mailgram was from the Army; Cristie was being called back to active duty. The Army wanted as many as 545 days, starting Sept. 5.

It had been more than two years since Cristie had put on a military uniform at Fort Riley, Kan. It was not a place where she had fit in. Twice she had had to repeat basic training, and she had left early after giving birth to her daughter, Asia.

The next day, members of the Chapel on the Hill United Church of Christ of Seminole gathered outside a courtroom to support two of their own, a pair of gay dads trying to adopt foster children. Among the group were Cristie and her mother.

One woman told Cristie that she had a son in the Navy, and she offered advice: "You should get pregnant."

On July 6, the Army began sending out 5,674 Western Union mailgrams to former soldiers in the Individual Ready Reserve. These are inactive reservists who completed their active duty time but are available to fill vacancies in emergencies. Some people call this the back-door draft.

Rarely are these soldiers called back; most assume that when they're done with active duty, they're done. That's why the mailgram that arrived July 15 threw Cristie for such a loop.

She had enlisted during her senior year at Pinellas Park High School. A recruiter approached her several times. She didn't really want to go, but she didn't know what else to do.

Her mother thought it was a good idea. Cristie was shy and quiet, with an innocence that Sendio thought needed to be tempered with confidence. A dose of the Army might do her good.

Cristie smoked and didn't exercise much before she reported for boot camp at Fort Leonard Wood in Missouri. Push-ups, sit-ups, running - she always lagged behind.

"I'm a really sensitive person, and they're all yelling at me, and I'd just go back and cry," she remembered. "I was trying to fail so they'd send me home."

That didn't happen. She completed boot camp and trained to be a chemical operations specialist.

Michael Oliver, who also was in chemical operations, remembers the day he and his buddies were replacing the wheel on a small tank. Cristie and three other fresh-faced female recruits walked up.

Michael took one look at Cristie and called dibs on her - something about her model-like walk. She gave up her boyfriend back in St. Petersburg. Michael sent her a different-colored rose 12 days in a row, and he sent love notes:

Lifetime is all I have for you
Oliver, that's my last name
LOL.

Vase that sits on a table that have priceless memories.
Everyday that I see those pretty brown dreamin eyes.

Cristie got pregnant in September 2001, and they married a few months later. She and a half-dozen other pregnant recruits were assigned administrative tasks at post headquarters.

She wanted to name the baby Africa. Michael didn't. They compromised on Asia.

Cristie left the Army the day after Asia was born, a few months shy of her two-year obligation. Michael got out a month later. They did not look back.

After leaving the Army, they struggled financially.

In the past year, they finally found good jobs. Cristie, 22 now, does office work at the attorney general's office in St. Petersburg, and on weekends she works at a movie theater. Michael works in customer service at PODS, the portable on demand storage company in Clearwater.

Their 1995 Ford Contour broke down and needed \$800 in repairs. Michael took the bus to work; Cristie's mom drove her. Cristie's stepfather picked up Asia from day care.

They talked about having another child, but Cristie wanted their finances in order first. Michael kept pressing, and she finally relented. But they were always so tired at night. Sex came last.

Then the mailgram came and everything changed: Get pregnant, get out of going to Iraq.

A friend of the family gave her an ovulation cycle wheel. She put in the date of her last period and saw a tiny window of time the last week of July.

She and Michael would have just one shot.

Cristie awoke at 3 a.m. Michael lay asleep beside her, the TV still on.

She padded into the bathroom, opened her home pregnancy test, urinated on the strip. And waited.

Minutes ticked by. She thought about Asia without her. And Iraq. And the beheadings on TV. What if she went there and never came back? What would become of Asia? Cristie was just so scared.

The little line signifying that she was pregnant did not appear on the strip. She sat on the toilet and cried.

A week later, Cristie felt cramping in her stomach.

Her report date was three weeks away, and she and Michael had made no preparations. She hadn't even looked at her military gear, stowed in a box in the back of her closet.

Cristie decided she would try another pregnancy test, after Michael got home.

That night, 2-year-old Asia lined up birthday candles on the coffee table. "Dats bootiful," she said.

Cristie ran around the kitchen barefoot, in a long, blue, flowery dress like something out of a painting by Monet. She fixed Asia a waffle. Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella played on TV.

The doorbell rang. In came Cristie's neighbor, 21-year-old Shanetra Wells, holding her 3-year-old's hand and heaving a car seat with her 2-month-old in it. Shanetra's 15-year-old brother, Norman "Trey" Wells III, strolled in behind, chewing on a Coke-can-sized pork rind.

"Did they tell you about my orders to go back in the military?" Cristie asked.

"You going back?" Shanetra said.

"I don't know yet."

Wells picked up her baby and handed him to Cristie, who gently smoothed his soft, curly hair.

"I like this," Cristie said.

"If you have to go back to the Army, it's the wrong time to go," Shanetra said.

"Five hundred forty-five days. It's almost two years."

"Ooooooh, you're their property now."

"Would you like to stick around and see if I'm pregnant?"

"Sure, why not?"

Cristie emerged from the bathroom with a white stick in hand. She left it on the kitchen counter and paced back and forth, hands flat on her face.

"I'm not looking at it," she said, back to the counter. "I'm afraid."

She looked. If pregnant, the stick shows two lines. Only one showed.

Cristie drummed fingers on the counter, walked away, shook her hands, her amber eyes wide, panicked. And back again.

"There's a second line. It's really faint," she said. "I can see it, but it's not all the way there. I don't know. Look at it. I can see it, but it's not coming.

"Michael, come here. Do you see the second line?"

Michael studied the stick. There was a dark maroon line and sort of a shadow next to it. "A little bit," he said. "Last time we saw no color."

"I think I'm excited now," Cristie said.

Again Cristie picked up the stick. The second line was a shade darker, but nowhere near as dark as the first.

"Oooh, it's darker. I'm pregnant. I'm pregnant."

Michael dialed his mother in Arkansas. "She's got to be the first one," he said.

"How you doing, Mom? You're going to be a grandma again."

Cristie called her mother.

Said Sendio: "I'll be convinced I'm a grandmother (again) when you go see a doctor."

On Cristie's lunch break the next day, she sat in an empty waiting room at Planned Parenthood under a sign that read: Behold how good and pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity.

She hoped they wouldn't charge her for the visit; she had no money in her wallet. She wore boots, jeans with diagonal strips of brown corduroy, a tan halter top and a beige sweater. She had told co-workers that she was pregnant.

"Some people think it's a good idea. Some people think it's a horrible idea, that it's for not the right reasons."

She talked about recent news reports that the United States was bringing home tens of thousands of soldiers from Europe and Asia.

"What about the people in Iraq? What about the people dying over there? It doesn't make any sense to me."

She pulled her sweater tighter. "I hate waiting," she said, and frowned.

* *

The clinic assistant tested her urine three times, with three brands of pregnancy tests. All were inconclusive. She told Cristie she would have to test her blood and left the room.

Cristie looked worried and confused.

The assistant came back. "I checked the test again," she said, her face dissolving into a smile, "and you're pregnant. Congratulations."

"I knew it, I knew it. That's awesome."

"Congratulations," the assistant said. "It looks like you're not going to Iraq."

Cristie called the Army the next day to report her news. They sent her a delay and exemption packet that she returned with proof she was pregnant.

She and Michael are relieved beyond words - for now. Cristie learned her pregnancy only delays her entry into the military until four months after the baby is born.

After that, she could be called up again.

Leave Your Children Behind, You Are Both Going To Iraq

09/18/2004 Sam Hamod, <http://www.todaysalternativenews.com/>

In a most immoral way, the American government is now requiring both parents of young children to be deployed to Iraq.

This is an ominous turn in our country's history. It means that politicians and their wars are more important than the health of the nation and the psychological well being of future generations.

Juxtapose this with the failed and failing "No Child Left Behind" bogus program and one can see that children and parents are being misled and abused in abnormal and deceptive ways.

Last night, I watched as the reserves from Sheldon, Iowa were trundled off to their deaths as truck-drivers in Iraq. The young man, a Mr. Crockett and his wife, are in the same unit and are being shipped off together.

In his innocence, he said, "I'll go over there, serve my time and then come home and things will be back again like normal." But later, when he and his wife were departing the depot in Sheldon, he and his wife were both crying.

So it is that our American youth, and even grandfathers are being called up, not to defend our country as it says in their contracts, but to fight a colonial war in Iraq and Afghanistan.

For The Troops On The Ground, Iraq Might As Well Be Vietnam

September 20, 2004, By Wayne Smith, Combat Medic, Vietnam: Army Times

Now that the reasons for their mission are losing credibility, some soldiers will question the legitimacy of being there at all. When this happens, another set of psychological stressors takes hold as soldiers struggle internally to attach a redemptive meaning to their hellish war experience.

For those of us who counseled the psychiatric casualties who came home from Vietnam, it is painful to watch as history repeats itself.

Anyone who studies how certain kinds of war fighting affect the human psyche would have already figured out what the New England Journal of Medicine reported recently: that “many of our troops in Iraq are struggling” with the dark psychiatric fallout from this conflict.

After surveying thousands of soldiers and Marines, the Journal authors concluded that “roughly one in six show signs of distress — ranging from anxiety, all the way to full-blown post-traumatic stress disorder.”

For me, a Vietnam veteran and former counselor in the Veterans Administration’s Vietnam Veterans Readjustment Counseling Program, the study’s conclusions were predictable and betray a sad truth about the Iraq war. **For the boots on the ground, it might as well be Vietnam.**

Highly regarded PTSD researcher John P. Wilson of Cleveland State University, who studied the psychological aftereffects of Vietnam, tells me he is also gravely concerned. Wilson sees the Iraq war as a perfect petri dish for culturing residual psychological problems among our troops.

He posits that the rate for various forms of distress in troops engaged in Operation Iraqi Freedom combat operations will be even higher than reported in the Journal study— and that they could go as high as 30 percent.

Such dire predictions are supported by an understandable limitation in the Journal study’s methodology. The authors admit their survey included data from troops who had been home from Iraq for “only a few months.” **This probably means that their figures are artificially low — they don’t reflect cases that will emerge over time. Some Vietnam veterans didn’t manifest symptoms of PTSD until years after their return to the United States.**

“There is a perception in this country that the young people fighting in Iraq will return home, take off their uniforms and pick up where they left off,” Wilson told me. “The relentless stressors during their Iraq deployment tell us that for thousands of them, this isn’t going to happen without therapeutic intervention.”

A table attached to the Journal study suggests that fighting in Iraq mirrors some of the soul-destroying horrors experienced by my generation. Titled “Combat Experiences Reported by Members of the U.S. Army and Marine Corps after Deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan,” it is a chilling document and offers the first real taste of what life is like for our country’s troops.

It indicates that of the soldiers and Marines serving in Iraq and surveyed by the investigators, 89 percent and 95 percent, respectively, report having being attacked or ambushed. The vast majority know someone who has been seriously injured or killed; 69 percent of soldiers and 83 percent of Marines saw ill or injured women and children they were unable to help.

Perhaps worst of all, 14 percent of soldiers and 28 percent of Marines reported that they “experienced being responsible for the death of a non-combatant.” The high number of harrowing episodes occurred for troops whose maximum stay in Iraq had been only six to eight months.

What may drive the levels of PTSD far beyond what we saw in Vietnam is the imposition of stop-loss on soldiers who already have witnessed more than their fair share of traumatic and stress-inducing events. Some troops in Iraq will likely end up serving tours far longer than their predecessors in Vietnam.

Underpinning it all is a lesson from Vietnam that it seems this country has yet to learn: **It is psychiatric folly to send American troops into combat in service of shaky foreign policy initiatives.** Many Iraqi Freedom troops likely carried with them strongly held convictions that they were keeping the world safe from Saddam’s weapons of mass destruction and that Saddam was connected to al-Qaida and the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

Now that the reasons for their mission are losing credibility, some soldiers will question the legitimacy of being there at all. When this happens, another set of psychological stressors takes hold as soldiers struggle internally to attach a redemptive meaning to their hellish war experience.

For those of us who counseled the psychiatric casualties who came home from Vietnam, it is painful to watch as history repeats itself.

**Bulgaria Nixes Troop Relocation To
“Dangerous Province”:
Tells Coalition To Fuck Off;**

Most Bulgarian Oppose War

September 20, 2004 By VESELIN TOSHKOV, Associated Press Writer, SOFIA, Bulgaria

Bulgaria's defense minister on Monday angrily rejected a Polish military official's suggestion that Bulgarian troops in Iraq should be moved to a more dangerous province.

"The relocation of the Bulgarian unit from Karbala to the Qadisiyah province is not acceptable for the Bulgarian authorities," Svinarov told reporters.

Most of the nations under Poland's command sent troops presuming that south-central Iraq would be relatively quiet, since its population is mainly Shiites, who have largely avoided violence until the recent uprisings. (Stupid presumption.)

"We do not agree to be just informed about decisions that are taken without our participation, especially on such important issues as relocation of our contingent in Iraq," he said.

Svinarov said he had expressed his surprise in a letter to his Polish counterpart, Jerzy Szmajdzinski. **"Bulgaria alone will decide whether to relocate its troops in Iraq,"** Svinarov said, adding that parliament would have to approve any relocation.

Nearly two in three respondents to a recent poll by the Institute for Marketing and Social Surveys said they don't support the country's military involvement in Iraq. Only one in four respondents said they approved of Bulgaria's participation.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Welcome To "Little Fallujah"

2004-09-20 By Jean-Marc Mojon, Middle East Online, BAGHDAD

The high-rises, marble lobbies and elegant palm tree-lined arcades of Haifa Street provide an unlikely setting for what has become Baghdad's new frontline in the US-led crackdown on Iraq's Sunni insurgency.

Residents of the restive area in the heart of Baghdad have proudly dubbed it "Little Fallujah", in reference to the western city that harbours the country's most radical Sunni organisations and has become a no-go zone for US troops.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Vietnam Vet Poet Says: “So Many Things Went Wrong”

9.19.04 Bill Varble, Mail Tribune (Oregon)

"Memory is in the past," Vietnam veteran and poet Steve Mason says. "Trauma is in the present. It's like an elephant on your nose."

One poem, "A History Lesson," begins like this:

Since Vietnam, three things hold my universe together: / gravity, centrifugal force and guilt.

The poem "The Wall Within" begins like this:

*Most real men
hanging tough
in their early forties
would like the rest of us to think
they could really handle one more war
and two more women.
But I know better.
You have no more lies to tell.
I have no more dreams to believe.*

He shudders when he sees the American invasion of Iraq and its continuing violence.

"There's no clearcut objective we can agree on," he says. "Many of the guys and women over there are National Guard people, and they're unprepared.

"I'm not talking politics in a partisan sense, but the plan was not effective. Victory was declared quickly, and so many things went wrong."

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)

OCCUPATION REPORT

Effort To Train New Iraqi Army Is Fucked Up

[New York Times, September 20, 2004, Pg. 1]

The U.S.-led military command in charge of training and equipping Iraq's security forces has fewer than half its permanent headquarters personnel in place, despite being a high priority item.

The Impossible Contradictions Of Being A Foreign Occupier: How To Make New Friends By Grabbing And Terrifying Their Kids

By Gregg Jaffe, Wall St. Journal 9/14/04

KHALIDIYA, Iraq—The Army trained Sgt. John McCary, an intelligence soldier, to interrogate prisoners of war in secure military facilities far from the front lines.

But on a recent day, his best hope for getting information was an Iraqi boy, sobbing at the sight of heavily armed Americans in his home.

Sgt. McCary and a team of soldiers had pushed their way into the cramped house, in search of four suspected insurgents. Once inside, they discovered the men had fled, leaving behind a group of shrieking women in black abayas and children in dirty sweatpants.

“We’re not going to get s—,” Sgt. McCary said. “These women know they can’t be detained so there is no reason for them to cooperate.” The battalion’s general practice is to interrogate the oldest male in a family—in this case, the crying boy, who looked about 8 years old.

As gunfire sounded in the distance, Sgt. McCary, 28 years old, had to make a split-second decision whether to pull the child off to a corner and try to get him to tell the whereabouts of the insurgents.

Sgt. McCary’s experience in Iraq shows why this war is so hard to win. It also highlights why the U.S. Army, a force built for wars against uniformed enemies with tanks and

planes, is still struggling to adapt 18 months into its fight with a brutal insurgency that hides among the local population.

Last fall, he was sent to Khalidiya, an insurgent stronghold near Fallujah. On the way to his battalion's base, his unit was hit with mortar and rocket propelled grenade fire.

"I jump out of my seat every time I hear a whump, crack or thump," he wrote in an e-mail home to his parents in North Carolina on Sept. 28, 2003. But the attacks didn't dim his initial optimism. The Iraqis "are a goodhearted people, steeped in traditions different from ours but not inhuman, incomprehensible or impenetrable" his e-mail said.

In the last year, the sergeant has conducted more than 1,000 interrogations of Iraqi insurgents, trying to figure out how they are organized and where they are hiding. He's walked hundreds of patrols, dodged rocket propelled grenade fire and watched friends—both Iraqi and American—die grisly deaths. So far, 19 soldiers and three Iraqi translators in his battalion have been killed.

In the field, Sgt. McCary learned other critical skills. One was the ability to lie. "If you are not a Muslim brother in this culture you are nothing, so I had to construct an entirely new working persona," he says. Though he has no Arab heritage, he tells Iraqis his mother is Lebanese. He sprinkles every conversation with asides such as "Praise be to God."

When a local says he is afraid to talk because the mujahedeen will kill him, Sgt. McCary recites a phrase commonly used in Iraq: "A good Muslim fears only one person." Then the sergeant points to the sky. As part of the ritual, the other person says, "Allah." (This is about as effective as a Klansman wearing his sheet getting info by going into Harlem and saying, "What's up my man?")

Last month, Sgt. McCary and 30 other soldiers set out to find an insurgent who they believe heads a terrorist cell that has been attacking them. The battalion raided the insurgent's house five months ago and found bomb-making equipment and grenade launchers, but not the insurgent. Recently they got a tip that a local government minister was harboring the cell leader at his home.

But just getting basic information—such as the exact location of the minister's house—is difficult. There are no street signs in most Iraqi cities. Many homes look alike and none of them have numbers.

He also couldn't tell locals why he was looking for the minister's house. In the last few months, insurgents in the area have killed or attempted to kill anyone seen cooperating with U.S. troops.

Sgt. McCary's source told him generally where the minister lived. The insurgent they were looking for drove a green car, which the source said should be parked by the house. To confirm he had the right house, Sgt. McCary pretended to be an Army civil affairs officer, doing a survey of the local infrastructure. The ruse would give him a good excuse to inquire about the minister's house.

"It is tremendously duplicitous, but if you walk up to people and say, 'Damit, we want to know where this bad guy lives; we want to help you,' it is not effective," he says.

Sgt. McCary and his fellow soldiers packed themselves tightly into a small, armored troop carrier. “I hope you put on deodorant today,” he joked to the soldier next to him.

“No, but I changed my underwear this morning,” the young soldier replied.

“Just for me or just in case?” Sgt. McCary deadpanned.

Once in the neighborhood, a hive of brown, two-story houses surrounded by mud walls, Sgt. McCary talked to the locals. A man in a white dishdasha, a long robe-like shirt, complained his family was getting only four hours of electricity a day. Another local in a Los Angeles Lakers T-shirt told him U.S. troops were shooting in their neighborhood at night.

Sgt. McCary spotted a boy of about 11, standing lookout in front of what he thought might be the minister’s house. He wanted to get a picture of the boy for his records. But the boy was adamant he didn’t want his photograph taken by the Americans.

“Don’t be such a girl,” Sgt. McCary teased the boy, telling him they were just in town taking a survey of the local power and water facilities. Another counterintelligence soldier crouched down next to the boy, pretending he was posing for a souvenir snapshot to send back home.

“Wow, we are definitely going to hell,” Sgt. McCary said in English, as he snapped the picture.

In 30 more minutes of questioning, Sgt. McCary duped two locals into telling him where the minister actually lived—by first asking about the local garbage, electricity and other municipal services.

When they identified the minister’s house, the tank platoon accompanying him prepared to raid it. But Sgt. McCary told them to hold off. The green car—which was supposed to belong to the insurgent—wasn’t parked outside. They would have to try another time.

The day was humbling in another way. The insurgent’s hideout was only about 100 yards from where U.S. forces had targeted him five months earlier. The reluctance of locals to tell U.S. troops where insurgents hide is frustrating, Sgt. McCary says, allowing the enemy to move easily. “We are so removed from Khalidiya these bad guys know they can thumb their noses at us.” (Don’t be such a girl, Sgt. It’s not complicated. You’re the foreign invader. They’re the patriots fighting back. Of course nobody will tell you shit. Get it?)

‘You couldn’t design a better counterinsurgent,’ says Major John Nagi, who is third in command of Sgt. McCary’s battalion. “He’s interested in other cultures, willing to question his own beliefs and mores.” **(How about questioning his belief that there’s anything honorable or constructive about his mission: occupying somebody else’s country for George? Even some of the Redcoats questioned that idea in 1776.)**

The next day Sgt. McCary and a team of soldiers set out on the mission to find four insurgents suspected of launching attacks on U.S. forces. Two of the four

men he was looking for are members of the local U.S.-trained Iraqi National Guard security force. Sgt. McCary knew he didn't have enough information to detain the men. But his command was hoping that by questioning them he could put a scare into them and elicit some intelligence.

On a blistering morning, the soldiers pushed through the gate of the suspects' house, finding nothing but shrieking women and small children milling about in a dirt courtyard outside. In the corner was a freshly washed black motorcycle, still coated in suds. Sgt. McCary took the bike's presence as a sign that one of the men they were looking for had been in the house recently but fled. **(Imagine that. Could it be he knew they were coming?)**

He quickly began firing questions at the women in Arabic. "Whose motorcycle is this?" he asked.

"It's broken," a woman replied.

He repeated the question. This time the same woman told him she found it on the street.

Interrogating women rarely produces good intelligence, Sgt. McCary says. Arresting women in this male-dominated society is deeply offensive to most Iraqis, so U.S. troops avoid it at all costs. Because the women know they are unlikely to be detained, they have little incentive to cooperate. **(Here the "reporter" turns into a blind, stupid piece of shit. He's saying that if woman could be arrested, they would turn into informers just like that. As if they're idiots, as if they aren't just as much for the resistance as the men. Here you have a small taste of the kind of Imperial arrogance that has already lost this war.)**

The battalion's unwritten policy is to interrogate the oldest male on the scene. In this case it was the sobbing boy who looked about 8. Sgt. McCary grabbed the child by the wrist and led him into the dark house off the courtyard. When his mother tried to follow, Sgt. McCary yelled at her to stay away. (Now the reasonable good guy mask comes off and the ugly face of occupation stands out as clear as day.)

Outside the mother began crying, in English, "Mister. Baby. Mister. Baby."

Inside the house, Sgt. McCary fired questions at the terrified boy. Once the boy realized Sgt. McCary wasn't going to hurt him, he told different stories; that he didn't know any of the men they were looking for, or that the men had all moved away. **So Sgt. McCary took off his helmet, leaned in close and began to yell in an effort to unsettle him.**

Using a photo that he pulled off the wall, Sgt. McCary got the boy to identify the men he was looking for. He scribbled a name over each face.

Then the sergeant took the picture next door, hoping to get the names confirmed with a second source. The place had no roof or furniture. The floor was covered with dirt and the morning's breakfast. **Sgt. McCary led the oldest male present, a boy of about 6 years old, aside and showed him the picture.**

A few minutes later, the soldiers heard a loud thud. It was the first of four roadside bombs that would explode in Khalidiya that day. Soldiers crouched behind walls for protection. The second boy and his mother confirmed the names Sgt. McCary got at the first house.

Sgt. McCary and the rest of the platoon piled back into the Humvees. The mission was a success of sorts. Sgt. McCary now knew what the suspected insurgents looked like. But it was exhausting. “The fact that I have to terrify a kid ... to get the truth is b—s—,” he said. “Morally it is questionable. But you’ve got to go with what you’ve got.”

Many of the insurgents in Khalidiya seem to be locals, Sgt. McCary and his commanders say, drawn to attack the U.S. by a combination of nationalism and religious obligation. (How did *this* get in the story? Well, only one sentence, maybe nobody will catch it.)

In May, a good friend of Sgt. McCary's had his leg blown off by a rocket-propelled grenade. U.S. forces quickly grabbed the insurgent who fired it. Back at the base, Sgt. McCary asked the enemy fighter if he was a mujahedeen, or holy warrior.

The man shook his head no. “Then why did you blow off my friend’s leg?” Sgt. McCary recalls asking. The insurgent, a small man in his 20s, said he did it because he was told to by his religious leader. **(And this “counterintelligence expert” actually believed that the prisoner was going to say “I want all you assholes out of my country it is therefore my intention and mission to kill every one of you foreign invaders I can?” Some “expert.”)**

Above his bunk, Sgt. McCary keeps photographs of two friends, an Iraqi father and son who worked as translators for the Army in Khalidiyah until insurgents kidnapped them in broad daylight from their home of 40 years. The mujahedeen murdered the 75-year-old father and beat the son unconscious.

Shortly after the kidnapping, Sgt. McCary e-mailed his family back home in North Carolina. “This is such a barbaric place. I cannot fathom the depths the Iraqis endured to reach this level,” he wrote.

(Above his bunk, SS Obergruppenfuhrer Moltke keeps photographs of two friends, a French father and son who worked as translators for the German Army in Paris until insurgents kidnapped them from their home of 40 years. The French resistance murdered the father and beat the son unconscious.

(Shortly after the kidnapping, Obergruppenfuhrer Moltke wrote his family back home in Munich. “This is such a barbaric place. I cannot fathom the depths the French endured to reach this level,” he wrote.) (Clue: Look in the mirror.)

In the e-mail he added that he wished those responsible for the killings, maiming and kidnappings would simply “dissipate.... I wish they would transform into average citizens, fathers, Sons and brothers. I don’t care about bloodlust, justice or revenge,” he wrote.

Sgt. McCary and his commanders know that won't happen. They say the key to defeating this or any insurgency is persuading locals to tell them where the enemy hides. "But the natural inclination of the Iraqis is to support their own people," he says.

He remains hopeful that more Iraqis will eventually help the U.S. track down the enemy. "I just don't see how they could remain loyal to the insurgency, but it is possible. In this culture, Allah trumps all. Religious loyalties can never be questioned," he says.

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(He remains hopeful that more French will eventually help Germany track down the enemy. "I just don't see how they could remain loyal to the Resistance, but it is possible. In this culture, being Catholic trumps all. Religious loyalties can never be questioned," he says.)

Does he think he and his fellow soldiers are winning the war in Khalidiya? "I've learned a lot. **I have been extremely successful. I couldn't have asked for a better command,**" he says. **(We'll be sure and tell Rummy. Kiss kiss kiss.)**

"Am I winning? I don't know. I am just fighting." **(And have defeated every 8-year-old I've met.)**

<p style="text-align: center;">OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME <u>NOW!</u></p>

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Editor's Offer to George Bush: I'll Pay for Your Vacation in Iraq or Afghanistan!

September 18, 2004 TvNewsLIES.org

I have heard you, your administration, members of Congress and your PR firm known as the American news media (http://tvnewslies.org/html/lapdog_press.html), repeat over and over how much better off the world is with Saddam Hussein deposed. I have however, yet to hear any detailed explanation or see any evidence that validates this claim.

Prior to your decision to obliterate a sovereign nation and deliver the equivalent of 10 September 11th events to the people of Iraq, the people of Iraq were not afraid to walk the streets, go to work or send their children to school. Your actions, which have resulted in the murder of thousands more civilians than all the terrorists in history combined have been capable, has made life in Iraq a living hell.

Peace workers, international aid organizations, visiting relatives and the typical Iraqi school child were relatively safe to live their lives. As a result of your invasion they are not. **Iraq was not a free society by any means, and there were many atrocities committed by Saddam, but let's not forget that we did not invade Iraq to free anyone, we invaded Iraq to "protect our freedom!"--Perhaps the funniest claim of the decade!**

As a citizen, I am fed up with you and your cabal making claims that you do not back up. I am offering you a chance to back up your own words. Here is my offer:

Out of my personal funds, I will pay for a vacation trip to Iraq or to Afghanistan, for any one of the people listed below. I have been out of work for 2 years, thanks to the wonderful Bush economy that sent my job overseas, but I will scrounge and borrow if I have to, in order to carry through on this offer. I am sure my readers will help finance this effort as well.

Stipulations:

* The person(s) taking the trip must travel there by making arrangements through a domestic, non military or government, travel industry agent.

* **The person(s) will not be permitted to carry any weapons or anything that can be used as a weapon. Body armor will not be permitted on persons or vehicles used to travel.**

* The person(s) making the trip will be subject to any and all domestic travel security procedures including strip searches if necessary.

* **There can be no escort or any type of security provided, government or private, American or other.**

* **A standard hotel room will be provided, outside any secure location, among the general population. There will be no security at this hotel other than the standard security, as provided during normal hotel operation.**

* No special services will be provided. If there are outages in electricity or water, you will have to make due.

* You will receive water & meals that are similar in quantity, taste, quality and sanitary value as those provided to our active military in the region.

* No special treatment or privileges will be granted.

*** If the person(s) traveling are mistakenly picked up in security sweeps and taken to a holding facility, they will be granted the same rights and they will receive the same treatment as others held in that facility.**

*** A press release will be made prior to your trip, making public your travel itinerary.**

* Other stipulations may apply. I reserve the right to set the rules if I am paying for the trip.

Eligible Persons:

* George W Bush (http://tvnewslies.org/html/bush_lies.html), his wife, his parents, his daughters & his brothers. I will pay for individual trips. They can not travel together.

* Dick Cheney: http://tvnewslies.org/html/cheney_s_secrets.html

* I. Lewis Scooter Libby: http://www.disinfopedia.org/wiki.phtml?title=I._Lewis_Libby

* Paul Wolfowitz: http://www.disinfopedia.org/wiki.phtml?title=Paul_Wolfowitz

* Donald Rumsfeld

* John Negroponte: <http://www.globalresearch.ca/articles/CHO404E.html>

* Colin Powell: http://tvnewslies.org/html/powell_lies_to_un.html

* General Meyers, General Franks

* Douglas Feith: http://www.disinfopedia.org/wiki.phtml?title=Douglas_Feith

* Any member of FOX News (<http://tvnewslies.org/html/foymoron.html>), especially William Kristol, Britt Hume and Sean Hannity: http://tvnewslies.org/html/sean_hannity.html

*** Any member of Congress who repeats the phrase “We are better off without Saddam”, without explaining who is better off and how they are better off.**

* Any board members of Halliburton or the Carlyle Group:
<http://www.hereinreality.com/carlyle.html>

Lesser Weevils

"In 1964, you know all the people who convinced themselves that Lyndon Johnson was the lesser evil as against Goldwater ... Many of them have realized that the spiked shoe was on the other foot; and they lacerate themselves with the thought that the man they voted for 'actually carried out Goldwater's policy.' . . Who was really the Lesser Evil in 1964?"

"The point is that it is the question which is a disaster, not the answer. In setups in which the choice is between one capitalist politician and another, the defeat comes in accepting the limitation to this choice." --[Hal Draper](http://www.internationalsocialist.org/pdfs/democrats_lesserevilism.pdf)
http://www.internationalsocialist.org/pdfs/democrats_lesserevilism.pdf

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Three US Troops Killed In Paktika & Sharqat, Two Wounded

20 September, 2004 BBC & (Reuters)

Two US soldiers have been killed in a gun battle in Paktika, south-eastern Afghanistan, the US military has said.

Insurgents fired on a U.S. patrol with machine guns and rocket-propelled grenades Monday, killing a soldier, the military said. The soldier, who was serving with the Army's 1st Infantry Division, was killed near Sharqat, 168 miles north of Baghdad, a military statement said.

Six Afghan and two other American troops were slightly wounded in the exchange, in the province of Paktika. The six Afghan soldiers had to be evacuated from the scene of the battle,

The American military has given few details about the latest incident in Paktika, but says the injured soldiers were evacuated to a base in a neighbouring province.

There were also reports of clashes on Monday between US-led forces and suspected militants in Uruzgan and Zabul provinces, which are both said to have high concentrations of Taleban militants.

Meanwhile Nematullah Shahrani, one of President Karzai's four deputies, has escaped an apparent assassination bid.

Kunduz Governor Mohammad Omer said that one of the drivers in Vice-President Shahrani's convoy was slightly injured when a remote-controlled bomb hit his vehicle in the northern province's Khanabad district.

Over the weekend, suspected Taliban militants beheaded three Afghan soldiers in Zabul, a local official said on Monday.

Zabul security chief Jailani Khan said the soldiers, who were not in uniform, were traveling in a taxi from Naubahar district to the provincial capital of Qalat when they were stopped by a group of men that included two Pakistanis and an Arab.

The three passengers were beheaded in an attack claimed by a breakaway Taliban faction.

"We have already announced that anyone in the government or aiding the infidels will be killed," said Sabir Momin, a commander of the Taliban Jamiat Jaish-e-Muslimeen (Muslim Army of the Taliban) faction.

The faction announced in August it had broken away from the main Taliban movement, which ruled Afghanistan from 1996 to 2001 before being ousted in a U.S.-led war after it failed to hand over al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

Received:

Wounded In Iraq

From: BZ
To: GI Special
Sent: Monday, September 20, 2004 11:26 PM
Subject: Wounded In Iraq

I copied "What happens to the GIs wounded in Iraq?" by Doris Colmes, MSW <http://portland.indymedia.org/en/2004> from GI Special to the Ongoing Discussion part of www.PBS Bill Moyers' NOW. They printed the whole article and so far received 3 responses:

Shame on the regime that controls this country.

Thanks for posting, I am sending it on to my senators and congressman, they probably will never see it but what else can we do?

Reply: Well, for one thing, we can quit deluding ourselves that this election will have anything to do with stopping the war, and get on with our work of organizing a movement at home and in the armed services to stop it. That's not a bad place to start, instead of pissing away endless hours and what few resources we have wasting time promoting this or that empty suit. T

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.qifightback.org ;
<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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