

GI SPECIAL 2#73



Vietnam Days: From San Diego Military Counseling Project
<http://members.cox.net/sdmcp2/>

THE ROLE Another Open Letter To The Troops In Iraq

Taking aim at critics of the US-led ouster of Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein and the subsequent occupation of Iraq, Bush proclaimed: *"Because our coalition acted, Saddam's torture chambers are closed."*

Bush did not mention the Iraqi prisoner scandal. 5.6.04 WASHINGTON (AFP)

from Stan Goff, MSGT U.S. Army (ret'd) posted 04 may 2004
<http://www.bringthemhomenow.com/>

In 1994, I was running an A-Detachment in 3rd Special Forces, ODA-354 to be precise, a team that specialized in free-fall parachute infiltration and special (strategic) reconnaissance. 3rd Special Forces Group's area of operation encompassed sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, and our team was specifically designated for the Dominican Republic and Haiti. So we had two language requirements on the team, Spanish and French (even though most Haitians actually speak Haitian Kreyol).

I had a communications sergeant on my team named Ali Tehrani. His father was an expatriate Iranian who'd married a German, and Ali had been raised in extremely comfortable circumstances in Europe, where his father and the society around him pushed him to fluency in English, German, Spanish, and French. Ali also spoke decent

Italian. He was the most fluent French-speaker on the battalion, and a year before we were sent to Haiti with the 1994 invasion, Ali had been sent to the camps constructed by the United States military in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, for the purpose of detaining tens of thousands of Haitians who were trying to escape the brutal repression and grinding poverty of Haiti in ramshackle boats. Ali was needed there because of his language fluency.

Ali was typical of many of the "non-white" members of Special Forces in two respects. He was demonstrably patriotic - compelled, it seemed, to prove his devotion to the American security state - and he adopted the prevailing attitude within much of Special Operations of Negrophobia - a kind of institutional disdain for Black troops that served to bloc other "non-whites" with whites in SF. It's a peculiar mechanism of white supremacy where there is not a master-race mentality so much as a deficient-race ideology from which all others could self-exclude. This - along with an anabolic version of masculinity - served as one form of social glue in SF culture, though there were a few exceptions.

Ali's Negrophobia wasn't virulent like that I had witnessed in other SF troops. In fact, he was willing to grant exceptions among individual Black soldiers fairly easily. It was more part of his obsessive desire to fit in.

Ali had spent six months "working the camps" at Guantanamo in 1993.

When we received word of our mission to invade Haiti in 1994, he reacted violently. His revulsion toward Haitians was visceral and white-hot. Given that my own team's mission might depend on both Ali's language capabilities ("my" language was Spanish) and on our ability to establish rapport with local Haitians, Ali's outburst sent up a warning flare in front of me, and I made time to sit down with him for a long talk.

Ali was, aside from his passive racism and the simmering rage that one could always sense just below his surface, a very intelligent and sensitive man. I always suspected that he may have suffered either physical or psychological abuse as a child.

When we talked, we fairly quickly concluded together that his aversion to Haitians had something to do with the role he had been thrown into against the Haitians at the camps, the role of jail-boss, and he agreed to keep that in mind and to subordinate his conditioned reflexes on the matter to mental time-outs in order to assure that he would behave appropriately while we were on the mission in Haiti, which he did... most of the time.

But the point I'm getting to is this. The antagonism that Ali experienced as an individual toward Haitians was structured by the institutional antagonism built into the jailer-and-jailed relationship. Ali had internalized the external reality that he was a prison guard and they were the prisoners. His job was to dominate, to bend Haitians to his will, and every exercise of human agency by the Haitians threatened that. Their very humanity - that combination of independent consciousness and will - was structured by the prison-camp phenomenon to be an enemy force in relation to Ali and the other prison-keepers.

In 1971, Stanford University Professor of Psychology Phillip Zimbardo designed an experiment that would come to be known as the Stanford Prison Experiment. Subjects were recruited and paid a modest stipend, whereupon they were separated into

"prisoners" and "guards," and placed in a mock prison built in a Stanford basement. The prisoners were stripped, deloused, shackled, and placed in prison clothes, while the guards were given authoritative uniforms, sunglasses, and batons. Long story short - within two days there was a near prison riot, psychosomatic illness began to break out, white middle-class kids in the role of guards became rapidly and progressively more sadistic and arbitrary, and the two-week experiment had to be abandoned after only six days... before someone was badly hurt or killed.

The experiment seemed to support the truism that "absolute power corrupts absolutely." But that conclusion serves as a description, not an explanation. It describes what happens to the individual, but it fails to account for the role of rationalization that legitimates the domination, and it completely fails to account for institutional support of that domination.

When one uses the term "systemic," she is saying that the source of this abuse is not individual moral failure, but a predictable expression of the *system* and its structures.

The abuses of detainees, by US troops, by CACI International and Titan Corporation mercenaries, and by the CIA in Iraq, is "systemic."

But in the same way that the *system* found an expression in the thoughts and emotions of Ali Tehrani, in the same way that the structure of domination and subjection pushed him to rationalize away his shared humanity with his Haitian captives, we can now see in the leering grins of the Abu Ghraib prison guards, who are regular people - like the experimental subjects in the Stanford Prison Experiment - who quickly learned to behave as sadistic torturers. **The military has admitted that 60% of these detainees are neither combatants nor threats.**

As this is written, the US military is about to release hundreds of detainees who fall in that category, and there will be more horror stories coming, *because* it was systemic.

People were not only humiliated and forced to pose in degrading positions with each other naked. They were forced to masturbate in front of taunting guards. Some were sodomized with foreign objects. It appears that some were also beaten to death during interrogation - one whose body was put on ice for a day then carted away the next on a litter with a faked intravenous infusion in the arm.

Now the cover stories are being spun out like webs.

We are being asked to believe that:

(1) The only abuse that occurred against anyone detained by American forces in Iraq was photographed and reported.

(2) No abuses occurred anywhere that were not photographed or reported.

(3) The one percent of US troops who are the "bad apples" all happen to serve together in the same unit... the unit that is the only one guilty, and that happened to get caught because of the photographs.

(4) The aggressive investigation now being proclaimed by everyone from George W. Bush to CENTCOM, about abuses that were already on record in the military (an internal investigation had already been launched in February by Major General Antonio M. Taguba, but was kept from the public), would have happened had the photographs and story not been aired on national television.

(5) The military was not attempting to cover up their own investigation, and that they would have informed the public of these abuses even had Seymour Hersh not put the whole miserable episode into print.

(6) The military did not cover anything up in the two weeks between the time CBS warned them that they were going to air an expose and when they actually did air it.

(7) No one in the chain of command above Brigadier General Janis Karpinski is responsible for the failure to halt these abuses, even though Lieutenant General Ricardo S. Sanchez was informed of the investigation of these abuses, complete with sworn statements and photographs, by General Taguba last February.

Other abuses and violations of the Geneva Conventions and Laws of Warfare are already on record, some with videos available on the web, such as:

(1) Shooting people who are clearly not armed and who are engaged in no threatening behavior.

(2) Shooting into ambulances.

(3) Shooting wounded people who are not armed.

(4) Shooting wounded people who are obviously no longer capable of fighting.

(5) Shooting into crowds.

There has never been a Stanford Military Occupation Experiment to complement the Stanford Prison Experiment, unless we just count the military occupations themselves. **There is a structured, systemic antagonism between an occupying military and the people whose land they occupy. And there will be no investigations of any of it, because there never are, unless and until the American public is confronted with them.**

The National Command Authority and its cheerleaders cannot say out loud... this is what we are doing, and it can't get done unless we dehumanize the occupied. This reality, this system, will express itself in the thoughts and emotions of you, the troops who carry it out, because this military occupation is in a sense making a prison of Iraq and making you, the troops, its turnkeys.

It will only be those exceptional individuals among you in the military who refuse to surrender their humanity - no matter how little you may understand the big picture - and who will witness. You who do break with the system and witness are very important people, important to history, because your refusal to surrender your own moral integrity to the system may lead to our collective salvation by ending this felonious occupation.

The troops who filed reports about the abuses at the Abu Ghraib prison were such exceptions.

So were Tom Glen and Ron Ridenhour.

In *The Culture of Narcissism*, Christopher Lasch wrote in 1979 about US leadership during the occupation of Vietnam:

Success in our society has to be ratified by publicity... all politics becomes a form of spectacle. It is well known that Madison Avenue packages politicians and markets them as if they were cereals or deodorants; but the art of public relations penetrates more deeply into political life... The modern prince [an apt turn of phrase for the current member of the Bush political dynasty] ... confuses successful completion of the task at hand with the impression he makes or hopes to make on others. Thus American officials blundered into the war in Vietnam... More concerned with the trappings than with the reality of power, they convinced themselves that failure to intervene would damage American 'credibility...' [They] fret about their ability to rise to crisis, to project an image of decisiveness, to give a convincing performance of executive power... Public relations and propaganda have exalted the image and the pseudo-event.

What these images of the Abu Ghraib humiliation and torture have done in the United States is collide with the "exalted image and the pseudo-event" of the Bush propaganda apparatus, just as the images of the My Lai massacre did in 1969. That collision between the reality and the real image of war startles civilians here in the La-La Land of wide screen TV and suburban SUV's, and it shakes them out of their opiated shopper dream-state.

My Lai is what General Colin Powell was remembering when he implemented "the Powell Doctrine" for the military, which includes a co-opted press and a vigorous attempt to keep things like flag-draped coffins off of those wide screen TVs.

Most of you don't remember My Lai.

On March 16, 1968, units of the Americal Division, to which Powell was assigned as a staff officer in Chu Lai, entered a Vietnamese village called My Lai and spent four hours raping women, burning houses, then finally massacring men, women, and children - including infants who dying women tried to shield with their own bullet-riddled bodies. **The massacre was stopped by a Georgia-born helicopter pilot named Hugh Clowers Thompson who landed his chopper between the few surviving Vietnamese and the blood-intoxicated soldiers, and ordered his door gunners to open fire on the Americans if they failed to stand down.**

A few weeks later, General Creighton Abrams, then commanding general in Vietnam, received a letter from a young Specialist-4 in the Americal Division named Tom Glen:

The average GI's attitude toward and treatment of the Vietnamese people all too often is a complete denial of all our country is attempting to accomplish in the realm of human relations... Far beyond merely dismissing the Vietnamese as 'slopes' or 'gooks,' in both deed and thought, too many American soldiers seem to discount their very humanity; and with this attitude inflict upon the Vietnamese citizenry humiliations, both

psychological and physical, that can have only a debilitating effect upon efforts to unify the people in loyalty to the Saigon government, particularly when such acts are carried out at unit levels and thereby acquire the aspect of sanctioned policy... [American soldiers attack Vietnamese] for mere pleasure, fire indiscriminately into Vietnamese homes and without provocation or justification shoot at the people themselves...

Fired with an emotionalism that belies unconscionable hatred, and armed with a vocabulary consisting of 'You VC,' soldiers commonly 'interrogate' by means of torture that has been presented as the particular habit of the enemy. Severe beatings and torture at knife point are usual means of questioning captives or of convincing a suspect that he is, indeed, a Viet Cong...

It would indeed be terrible to find it necessary to believe that an American soldier that harbors such racial intolerance and disregard for justice and human feeling is a prototype of all American national character; yet the frequency of such soldiers lends credulity to such beliefs... What has been outlined here I have seen not only in my own unit, but also in others we have worked with, and I fear it is universal. If this is indeed the case, it is a problem which cannot be overlooked, but can through a more firm implementation of the codes of MACV (Military Assistance Command Vietnam) and the Geneva Conventions, perhaps be eradicated.

Glen's letter was forwarded from Abrams' office to the Americal Division and ended up with Major Colin Powell in Chu Lai.

Powell never followed up by questioning Glen, and instead ended his "investigation" of Glen's allegations after accepting uncritically the claim by Glen's commander that Glen hadn't been close enough to "the front" (whatever that was supposed to be in Vietnam) to have any knowledge of such alleged abuses.

Powell then began his career as a damage-control expert in the military by writing a letter, dated December 13, 1968, in which he said, ""There may be isolated cases of mistreatment of civilians and POWs... [but] this by no means reflects the general attitude throughout the Division... In direct refutation of this [Glen's] portrayal is the fact that relations between Americal soldiers and the Vietnamese people are excellent." He went on to impugn Glen's account for having been brought to light only reluctantly and lacking sufficient detail.

This was, of course, horseshit. Abuses were systemic.

Glen had only heard through rumors about My Lai. It was another GI, Ron Ridenhour, an infantryman who was not willing to surrender his humanity to occupier-racism, who finally pieced together, on his own initiative, the story of the My Lai massacre, and brought it to public light. When the photographs of the massacre were combined with Ridenhour's account, and the American public was confronted with the reality of an entire unit participating in a systematic massacre of civilians, it marked a turning point in the loss of political support in the United States for continued military occupation of Vietnam.

Powell himself admitted war crimes in his memoir, *My American Journey*, where he wrote, "I recall a phrase we used in the field, MAM, for military-age male... If a helo spotted a peasant in black pajamas who looked remotely suspicious, a possible MAM,

the pilot would circle and fire in front of him. If he moved, his movement was judged evidence of hostile intent, and the next burst was not in front, but at him." Powell would also come to the defense of Brigadier General John Donaldson who had the door gunners on his own helicopter shoot Vietnamese for sport. Donaldson was exonerated, naturally, in a military investigation.

Powell not only developed as a skilled cover-up artist, he would eventually incorporate this ability to manage public perception about war as a key element in the "Powell Doctrine," which he imposed on the military and the press. He never forgot My Lai, and he has always believed that exposure of My Lai and other atrocities were responsible for the US defeat in Vietnam.

Donald Rumsfeld shares these beliefs with Colin Powell. They are both wrong.

The two phenomena that collide with this Powell-Rumsfeld orientation were and are (1) the decision of their 'enemy' never to quit, and (2) the inevitability that someone who is part of the occupation force will be confronted with these contradictions between "the exalted image and the pseudo-event" and the real character of war - and that this someone will expose it in an attempt to rescue his or her own humanity.

The war in Vietnam was lost by the French then the Americans because they didn't belong there, and the resistance endeavored to do whatever was necessary to make that point. This is also the situation in Iraq.

So I'll leave to others the analysis of whether the troops facing courts martial are scapegoats (they are, and they are also probably guilty as hell), and whether or not the military is letting the officers off with reprimands and walking papers to prevent the fire spreading (which it is).

I'll just emphasize that the war in Iraq cannot be won. Not because of the inability of US troops to fight, but because we don't belong there. And since that's the case (which I firmly believe it is) every life - Iraqi, American, or otherwise - that is lost or ruined... is wasted.

All this talk of whether Military Intelligence or the mercenaries working for CACI International or the CIA or the MP commanders were responsible is diversionary bullshit so we won't see how Iraq itself has become the Stanford Military Occupation Experiment.

Because if we conclude that the problem is *systemic*, then the only thing to do to stop this is to walk away. And the Bush administration sent troops there for the purpose not of building democracies, but of building permanent military bases in the heart of oil country, and if they walk away, they can't rightly build bases, can they?

So we can either blithely obey and support our new Neros, or we can continue to cling to the absurd notion that the vandal can rebuild the house they just ravaged, or we can do what we might to make them walk away. Troops that come forward will play a key role in this moral imperative.

Every troop that comes forward with accounts of the inhumanity of this war - while jeopardizing his or her career - is serving to hasten an end to this criminal enterprise of the Military-Petroleum Complex. These troop/witnesses will serve to hasten an end to the suffering of Iraqi families and the suffering of the families of the occupying forces. They will serve to prevent more torture, more humiliation, more suspicion and hatred, and more lives being thrown away on this imperial folly.

Every troop who keeps his secrets, who faithfully serves the system and never bears witness, can travel for the rest of his life.

She can go to Rio de Janeiro.

He can go to Bangladesh.

She can go to Lagos, or Montreal, or Tokyo, or Moscow, or Antarctica.

But no matter where he goes, there he'll be - alone with the growing weight of his own silence on his head, wrapping himself in his own rationalizations, and restlessly turning away from the faces that look back at him in the mirrors of his memory.

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. For copies on web site see:**<http://www.notinourname.net/gi-special/>

The Acts Of Abuse: Specifics (From The Taguba Report)

(The following are some of the key excerpts from the report prepared by Maj. Gen. Antonio M. Taguba on alleged abuse of prisoners by members of the 800th Military Police Brigade at the Abu Ghraib Prison in Baghdad. The report was ordered by Lt. Gen. Ricardo Sanchez, commander of Joint Task Force-7, the senior U.S. military official in Iraq, following persistent allegations of human rights abuses at the prison.)

Between October and December 2003, at the Abu Ghraib Confinement Facility (BCCF), numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses were inflicted on several detainees. This systemic and illegal abuse of detainees was intentionally perpetrated by several members of the military police guard force (372nd Military Police Company, 320th Military Police Battalion, 800th MP Brigade), in Tier (section) 1-A of the Abu Ghraib Prison (BCCF).

In addition, several detainees also described the following acts of abuse, which under the circumstances, I find credible based on the clarity of their statements and supporting evidence provided by other witnesses

- a. Breaking chemical lights and pouring the phosphoric liquid on detainees;
- b. Threatening detainees with a charged 9mm pistol;
- c. Pouring cold water on naked detainees;
- d. Beating detainees with a broom handle and a chair;
- e. Threatening male detainees with rape;
- f. Allowing a military police guard to stitch the wound of a detainee who was injured after being slammed against the wall in his cell;
- g. Sodomizing a detainee with a chemical light and perhaps a broom stick.
- h. Using military working dogs to frighten and intimidate detainees with threats of attack, and in one instance actually biting a detainee.

(T)he intentional abuse of detainees by military police personnel included the following acts:

- a. Punching, slapping, and kicking detainees; jumping on their naked feet;
- b. Videotaping and photographing naked male and female detainees;
- c. Forcibly arranging detainees in various sexually explicit positions for photographing;
- d. Forcing detainees to remove their clothing and keeping them naked for several days at a time;
- e. Forcing naked male detainees to wear women's underwear;
- f. Forcing groups of male detainees to masturbate themselves while being photographed and videotaped;
- g. Arranging naked male detainees in a pile and then jumping on them;
- h. Positioning a naked detainee on a MRE Box, with a sandbag on his head, and attaching wires to his fingers, toes, and penis to simulate electric torture;
- i. Writing "I am a Rapist" (sic) on the leg of a detainee alleged to have forcibly raped a 15-year old fellow detainee, and then photographing him naked;
- j. Placing a dog chain or strap around a naked detainee's neck and having a female Soldier pose for a picture;
- k. A male MP guard having sex with a female detainee;

l. Using military working dogs (without muzzles) to intimidate and frighten detainees, and in at least one case biting and severely injuring a detainee;

m. Taking photographs of dead Iraqi detainees.

These findings are amply supported by written confessions provided by several of the suspects, written statements provided by detainees, and witness statements.

The various detention facilities operated by the 800th MP Brigade have routinely held persons brought to them by Other Government Agencies (OGAs) without accounting for them, knowing their identities, or even the reason for their detention.

The Joint Interrogation and Debriefing Center (JIDC) at Abu Ghraib called these detainees “ghost detainees.” On at least one occasion, the 320th MP Battalion at Abu Ghraib held a handful of “ghost detainees” (6-8) for OGAs that they moved around within the facility to hide them from a visiting International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) survey team. This maneuver was deceptive, contrary to Army Doctrine, and in violation of international law.

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

General Says Bush, Myers Knew About Prisoner Abuses

5.6.04 WASHINGTON (AFP)

Bush sounded vague when asked in the Wednesday Arabic interviews when he had first heard about the photographed abuse of hooded or naked Iraqis.

"First time I saw or heard about pictures was on TV," he said.

Rumsfeld had also not read the report by Monday, five days after the damning photographs were first shown on CBS television, a Pentagon spokesman said.

But General Peter Pace, deputy chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said "everyone was kept apprised orally of the ongoing investigation."

Asked whether Bush and General Myers were well aware of the situation, he said, "Yes."

Myers, the country's top general, raised eyebrows over the weekend when he said that he had not read the report, completed in early March, that documented widespread abuses at Abu Ghraib.

GET 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/>

Soldier-Killer Corned Rat



UNFIT FOR COMMAND

(AFP/File/Stephen Jaffe)

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to the E-mail address up top. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

The Battle Of Najaf Begins;

Busloads Of Pakistani Pilgrims Slaughtered

5.6.04 By The Associated Press

AP correspondent Hamza Hendawi contributed to this report from Baghdad. **(Finally, a reporter who can coherently describe military action has emerged.)**

Amid concerns that U.S. troops were about to move directly against anti-American cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, his militiamen dug in in Najaf, taking positions behind earthen mounds leading into the city center. Gunmen took cover behind buildings as American helicopters flew overhead. An increased number of fighters were seen in the city center.

"We will fight until the last drop of our blood," said Dhia Shami, as he stood behind a dirt barricade.

"We expect the Americans to retreat," said fellow militiaman Malek Holeicha. "We are fighting for our faith. They don't have any faith."

At the city's Imam Ali shrine, one of the holiest sites in Shiite Islam, a coffin wrapped in an Iraqi flag was brought in -- apparently one of the dead from the fighting.

"This is a martyr for Muqtada," mourners chanted.

The Najaf fighting came as chief U.S. administrator L. Paul Bremer announced the appointment of Adnan al-Zurufi as governor of Najaf province, a step that is part of the campaign to regain control of the area from al-Sadr's militiamen.

The United States is planning to hand some sovereignty to a transitional Iraqi government June 30 and is looking to end al-Sadr's uprising, ***which has left parts of southern Iraqi outside of coalition control.***

U.S. troops have been stepping up their assaults on al-Sadr's followers, raiding offices and buildings where weapons are stored in several southern cities in increasingly bloody skirmishes. Moderate Shiite leaders have called on al-Sadr's militiamen to abandon Najaf, isolating the cleric and making it easier for U.S. forces to act against him.

On Thursday, U.S. forces moved to outlying areas of Najaf, drawing militants from the city center and enabling other troops to seize the two-story governor's office without resistance.

After the soldiers took the building, heavy gunfire was heard near the governor's office and smoke was seen rising. Shia resistance soldiers fired from rooftops as motorists fled through deserted streets, honking their horns.

One U.S. convoy of Humvees leaving the area was ambushed twice in 10 minutes by insurgents firing rocket-propelled grenades and automatic rifles from rooftops. An AP reporter who witnessed the attacks saw five militants who appear to have been killed in retaliatory fire.

Elsewhere, coalition troops exchanged gunfire with dozens of al-Sadr militiamen in Karbala, 50 miles north of Najaf. **Militiamen took ambush positions behind cars and a discarded desk a few hundred yards from the city's main Shiite shrines.**

A witness told Associated Press Television News that troops fired on the insurgents and ended up destroying four buses of Pakistani pilgrims, which were seen burning. The witness said "three or four" Pakistanis had been killed.

"We're going to demolish them -- and even Bush," shouted one masked man, waving a Kalashnikov. "We're going to win, by God's will."

Militiamen also fired on Italian troops farther south near Nasiriyah, wounding one, the Italian military said.

In the past two days U.S. soldiers estimate they have killed about 80 militiamen. One U.S. soldier was killed Wednesday.

"I think we are going to gain momentum from now on," said Lt. Michael Watson, a platoon leader with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment in Najaf. **(Just like in Falluja? Maybe so. Faluja didn't have a pack of opportunist scum running around in religious robes selling out the resistance like the Sistani crowd in Najaf and Karbala.)**

Plumes of smoke were seen rising from a cemetery on the fringes of the city, as U.S. helicopters swooped low over the area. U.S. forces have said they will refrain from entering Shi'ite shrines in the city, which would incite widespread fury.

The top U.S. military spokesman in Iraq, Brigadier General Mark Kimmitt, said there was no new U.S. thrust into the city. "We're not going to go wading into Najaf, we know how sensitive it is," he told Reuters.

U.S. Soldier, 15 Iraqis Killed; First Attack On Najaf Repulsed

May. 05, 2004 By SCHEHEREZADE FARAMARZI, Associated Press & (Reuters)

NAJAF, Iraq - U.S.-led forces launched their biggest assault yet against militiamen loyal to a Shiite cleric, raiding hideouts in several cities Wednesday and clashing with Medhi army soldiers in the world's biggest cemetery. At least 15 Iraqis and a U.S. soldier were killed.

The heaviest fighting in the south - part of the military's Operation Iron Saber - came in the holy city of Karbala, where coalition forces raided a hotel, the local former Baath Party headquarters and the regional governor's office, where al-Sadr fighters had been stockpiling weapons, Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt said.

In the overnight raid on the governor's office, troops came under fire, Kimmitt said in Baghdad. He said 10 al-Sadr followers were killed.

A U.S. soldier died south of Baghdad on Wednesday after his Humvee was rammed by a dump truck at the checkpoint he was manning, the U.S. military said.

It said in a statement the soldier of the 1st Armored Division died of injuries in what it described as an attack by the dump truck as it tried to burst through the checkpoint.

It did not say what happened to the truck or its driver.

Outside the city of Kufa, U.S. forces attacked a van where Iraqis were seen unloading weapons. The vehicle was destroyed and five Iraqis were killed, Kimmitt said.

In Najaf, U.S. troops battled al-Mahdi Army fighters outside a cemetery near the Imam Ali Shrine, Iraq's holiest Shiite site. The soldiers opened fire with machine guns on militiamen who had ambushed them.

More than 50 militiamen took part in the fighting in Najaf's sprawling cemetery, ambushing three U.S. Humvees. As the Americans returned fire, mourners who had come to bury their dead ran for safety.

"American forces tried to enter Najaf from Najaf Lake, but they were repelled by the al-Mahdi Army which forced them to flee," said a militia official, Mushtaq al-Khafaji. He said no militiamen were hurt.

In Fallujah, west of Baghdad, the U.S. military distributed leaflets Wednesday inviting residents to apply for compensation for damage done during the Marine siege in April. The military also promised to clean up the streets, improve water facilities and rebuild schools and mosques.

Baghdad Patrols Ambushed

5.6.04 By DENIS D. GRAY, Associated Press Writer

In Baghdad's Sadr city, an overwhelmingly Shiite Muslim enclave and al-Sadr stronghold, militiamen ambushed four U.S. patrols. Ten attackers were killed in retaliatory gunfire, a U.S. officer said, speaking on condition of anonymity. **There were no reports of U.S. casualties.**

Karbala City Hall Under Fire

May 6, 2004 Associated Press & Combined Joint Task Force 7 Release #040505c & Reuters

The city hall in the southern Iraqi town Karbala, guarded by the Bulgarian unit, was attacked Wednesday night.

No Bulgarians were injured, military officials in Sofia announced.

The heaviest fighting in the south - part of the military's Operation Iron Saber - came in the holy city of Karbala, where coalition forces raided a hotel, the local former Baath Party headquarters and the regional governor's office, where al-Sadr fighters had been stockpiling weapons, Brig. Gen. Mark Kimmitt said.

In the overnight raid on the governor's office, troops came under fire, Kimmitt said in Baghdad.

The operations included a raid on the Sadr Bureau building and an adjacent building. Coalition forces confiscated three 60mm mortar tubes, 70 60mm mortar rounds, and 10 RPG rounds. Coalition forces also found another cache of weapons on the east side of the Sadr Bureau building.

About eight heavy armored vehicles and six lighter vehicles had taken up position in the city center, about 500 meters (yards) from the Imam Hussein and Imam Abbas shrines, but later pulled back from the area.

Four Mines Blasted Last Night Near The City Hall In Karbala

07 May 2004 Focus One News, Bulgaria

Four mines exploded at about 10:15 pm local time last night at about 500 meters to the east of the city hall in Karbala, sources of the Polish Command of the multinational division in Iraq told Focus Agency. No soldiers of the coalition were wounded. There are no material damages either.

U.S. Soldier Dead, Two Wounded In Attack On Baghdad Occupation Hq

May 6, 2004 By DENIS D. GRAY, Associated Press Writer

On Thursday morning, a car bomb exploded near a checkpoint to the main complex housing U.S. administrative offices in central Baghdad, killing an American soldier and five Iraqi civilians, a U.S. military officer said. At least 25

people were wounded in the blast, the officer said, speaking on condition of anonymity. **The wounded included two U.S. soldiers and three Iraqi policemen.**

The bomb blast reduced three cars to hulks of twisted, charred metal. Shattered glass from nearby shops littered the area.

Hours after the car bomb, a roadside bomb exploded on Saadoun Street, a busy commercial avenue on the east side of the Tigris River near the Palestine and Sheraton hotels. Two Iraqis were injured.

Two Soldiers Killed, Two Wounded In Baghdad IED Attack

5.6.04 Combined Joint Task Force Seven Release #040506b

BAGHDAD, Iraq - Two Task Force Baghdad Soldiers were killed and two were wounded in an improvised explosive device attack here just before midnight May 5.

The wounded Soldiers are being treated at the 31st Combat Support Hospital.

Three U.S. Soldiers Killed In Diwaniya Attack; Wounded Not Announced

5.5.04 BAGHDAD (Reuters)

Three U.S. soldiers were killed in the Iraqi town of Diwaniya during clashes with the militia loyal to Shi'ite cleric Moqtada al-Sadr, the U.S. military said in a statement Wednesday.

It said the U.S. troops were attacking two buildings in the town south of Baghdad used by Sadr's Mehdi Army to assault U.S. forces Tuesday when the soldiers were killed.

The operation also included a raid on a building housing Sadr's office and an adjacent building by soldiers from the 1st Armored Division and the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, the statement said.

Military Medics Strained;

Hospital Nearly Overwhelmed With Casualties

Baghdad, May. 5 (UPI)

U.S. military staff in Iraq are being strained by the mounting violence and subsequent casualties, the Washington Times reported Wednesday.

April was the deadliest month for the U.S.-led coalition in Iraq, with 136 U.S. soldiers, sailors and Marines killed.

The Baghdad hospital, operated by the 31st Combat Support unit, treated more than 500 wounded U.S. troops last month.

Seriously injured soldiers typically arrive at the hospital within an hour after being injured, often by helicopter.

"If they're alive here, most of the time we can save them, and that's the golden hour," Maj. Kim Wenner said.

On more than one occasion last month, the hospital was nearly overwhelmed with casualties, with battles raging in nearby Fallujah and attacks occurring throughout the Baghdad area.

Wenner, a family doctor from Fort Sill, Okla., recently wrote down her personal reflections after three months at the hospital.

"I go to sleep and dream about them all night long, awaking in a sweat because something is wrong," she wrote.

Soldier From Area Hurt In Iraq Crash

May. 06, 2004 By BONNIE ADAMS, Pa. Times Leader

WILKES-BARRE - Charlene Pappas and her husband were inside a store Saturday afternoon when her son called to tell them he had been severely injured in a crash in Baghdad.

Sgt. Travis Squadrito had just gotten out of surgery when he called.

"I thought I was going to pass out," Pappas said. She handed the cell phone to her husband, Tim Pappas, in the middle of Kmart.

"He sounded good. He was worried about the other guys, concerned about his wife and daughter and he was worried about how we'd handle it," she said.

Pappas said her son was among four soldiers in a Humvee that slammed into the back of another truck early Saturday. Squadrito was riding in the back seat of the Humvee traveling 50 mph when the crash occurred, she said.

The mother said her 23-year-old son has compound fractures in his right leg and a broken right arm. He has undergone surgery for his leg and is being treated at Landstuhl medical center in Germany. The family wants to visit him there. They do not know if he will return to the United States for treatment.

Squadrito's wife and 3-month-old daughter are living in Germany with his wife's family while he is deployed. He graduated from Meyers High School, where he played football. His sister, Ayreonia Pappas, is a sophomore at Meyers.

Squadrito joined the Army shortly after graduation in 1999. He deployed from Fort Carson, Colo. to Iraq in March and was stationed at Camp Quervo, formerly Camp Muleskinner, in Baghdad.

Pentagon Man Taken Prisoner

5.6.04 By The Associated Press & MSNBC.com's Mike Bruner, and Reuters contributed to this report.

A blindfolded man described as an Iraqi-American being held hostage in Iraq was shown pleading for help on an Arab TV station.

The man, speaking English, gave his name as Aban Elias and said he was from Denver.

"I am a civil engineer working here in Baghdad," he said, adding that he worked for the Pentagon.

Elias, shown on Dubai-based Al-Arabiya TV, appealed to Islamic associations to work for his release.

With the tape came a statement from a previously unknown group calling itself "The Islamic Rage Brigade." The group said Elias was kidnapped on May 3. It made no demands.

Kazwan Elias told The Associated Press that his brother, who he said was a naturalized U.S. citizen, had been running a gravel operation near Fallujah to help rebuild roads. Their mother last heard from his brother on Sunday, a day before he is believed to have been kidnapped, he said.

Badly shocked by the photo, Kazwan Elias said he could not confirm that his brother had been working for the Defense Department in Iraq and was unable to provide any other information.

Defense officials told NBC News that Elias was "not on the payroll of either the Department of Defense or the Coalition Provisional Authority." One of the officials speculated that he could be employed by a private contractor.

“This is terrible news. I just don’t understand what’s going on,” he added. (Short answer: your brother was helping George Bush and the rest of the corporate thugs who control the U.S. government invade and occupy Iraq for oil and empire, and the people who live there are really pissed off about it. Does that help? Duh.)

TROOP NEWS

Florida: The Maimed And The Dead Are Coming Home

5.6.04 By Beth P. Krane and Marc Freeman Staff Writers, South Florida Sun-Sentinel

It's not the homecoming James Nappier envisioned, but the Palm Beach County man is coming home alive -- unlike Boynton Beach's Scott McHugh and six others from his Navy unit killed in Iraq in the past week.

Nappier, a petty officer 2nd class from Loxahatchee, survived the mortar attack that took McHugh's life. He expects to return to the United States on Sunday, his 46th birthday, with a severely wounded right leg and the empty feeling of a job undone, his wife, Lacey Nappier, said Wednesday.

"He's more concerned about everyone else who's still there," she said of her husband of 19 years. Nappier has undergone several surgeries at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, in Landstuhl, Germany, to remove shrapnel from his leg and his right arm.

Lacey Nappier said her husband does not appear to know the fate of McHugh or his other fallen comrades. She is waiting for the right time to tell him.

Meanwhile, McHugh's family waited Wednesday for Navy officials to tell them how soon they will be able to bury their 33-year-old son and brother.

"I don't know much except he's coming home and we're going to take care of him," said McHugh's father, Vincent, from his Jacksonville home. "He's entitled to a spot in Arlington [National Cemetery]. He earned it. ... and I think it would be the greatest tribute to him."

Nappier and McHugh belonged to Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 14, a Jacksonville-based reserve unit that spent March training in Gulfport, Miss., before arriving in Kuwait in early April.

Nappier worked as an equipment operator and truck driver, and McHugh as a construction mechanic. Their Navy Seabees unit had been in Iraq for about two weeks before the attack at a campsite 25 miles west of Fallujah.

When he was called to active duty, Nappier left his full-time job with a water-well maintenance company in West Palm Beach, Aquifer Maintenance and Performance Systems Inc.

Lacey Nappier is planning to travel to Bethesda, Md., for her husband's return.

"They are doing the best they can to save his leg, but they are not sure," Nappier said. "He's going to pull through, but it's going to take a long process to heal. He's pretty messed up."

As of Wednesday, no Navy memorials had been planned for McHugh.

But at Spanish River High School, the 1990 graduate's yearbook picture will be shown on the school's Thursday morning television show, accompanied by a moment of silence.

Classmates of McHugh's who annually give a \$3,500 scholarship to a graduating Spanish River senior have received Vincent McHugh's permission to rename the award in his son's honor, said Jeff Ostrow, one of the organizers.

A Thumb That May Never Work Again: "He's Coming Home. He's Outta There."

05/05/2004 Kenosha, Wisc

Teresa and Carl Vrba are planning a welcome home party for their 20-year-old son Dan Holm, who went to Baghdad in February and was badly wounded in fighting that took place over the weekend.

he Marine lance corporal called his family Saturday night to tell them he had just emerged from surgery.

He thought I knew about everything, which we didn't," explained Teresa, who said **her son's call was her first notice that he had been injured near Fallujah.** Holm told her he was driving a humvee on routine patrol when a car bomb exploded five feet away and he was pelted with shrapnel.

It's gonna tear you up mentally as well as physically, and that's what I'm worried about," said Carl.

The former varsity football player from Bradford High has a broken arm and foot, stitches all over his face and left side, and a thumb that may never work again. He's now being treated in Germany.

He's out of harm's way. I'm sorry it's this way. No parent wants their child hurt. But he's coming home. He's outta there," said Teresa.

Carl said Holm was inspired to join the marines by his two older brothers who served in the army.

Dan's little sister took over his room when he joined the military, so the family is planning to let Dan move into the private area in the basement that has been his dad's thinking room for the last three years. Carl says he'll gladly give it up when Dan comes home, hopefully within the next few weeks.

Drafted By Hardship, Mangled By War: Bridgman Soldier Badly Hurt In Mortar Attack

May 4, 2004 By JIM DALGLEISH / City Editor The Herald-Palladium

A 25-year-old Marine from Bridgman suffered wounds in a mortar attack in Iraq, family members said Monday night.

Pfc. Jeremy Binder, a 1997 Bridgman High School graduate, is being treated in a U.S. military hospital in Germany, said his mother, Nancy Binder. She said Jeremy's right triceps was badly damaged in the attack.

Binder said she's grateful her son survived. The family, including his father, Bill, is eagerly awaiting his return home.

"But you just take it day by day, and it's God's will what goes on," Binder said.

She said she and Bill talked briefly on the phone Saturday with their son, who said he had been standing with his unit in front of their Humvee. He was the only one of the group to get hurt in the attack.

The attack occurred either Friday or Saturday, and Binder said she wasn't sure precisely where it occurred. **The Marine Corps has offered the family only sketchy information, she said.**

Jeremy played on Bridgman High School's basketball and baseball teams and was a starting quarterback on the football team. Nancy Binder described her son as tough, a positive thinker and athletic - and she said he likes challenges.

He joined the Marine Corps in June after working as an apprentice electrician, Nancy said. *She said that worries about the local economy and a desire to serve his country prompted him to enlist.*

Nancy said she knew then there was a good chance her son would be sent to Iraq

"We know he's hurt pretty bad," she said Monday night. "There's no way we can see him or talk to him - and that's the hardest part."

Hoosier Marine Badly Wounded

May 6, 2004 Associated Press

ROCHESTER, Ind. -- A Marine who graduated from Rochester High School last year was seriously injured in Iraq on April 28.

The injuries came when Paul Hizo, 19, an infantry mortarman and expert rifleman, was involved in a mine-sweeping operation.

He suffered a broken femur and shrapnel wounds to the leg, an arm and his head and eye area, said his mother, Donna Hanes of Eureka, Calif. She said Hizo, who was sent to Iraq in February, received a Purple Heart.

Hizo has returned to the United States. His mother and stepfather, Bennie Hanes, flew to meet him at a military hospital in Maryland on Wednesday.

Hizo has two sisters, Selena and Erica, who live in Indianapolis.

Minnesota Soldier Shot In Iraq Seriously Fucked Up

05-06-2004 EAST GRAND FORKS (AP)

A soldier from here was recovering from gunshot wounds suffered during an attack earlier this week while he was on guard duty in Iraq.

Pfc. Scott G. Anderson, 25, was with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment when it came under attack in Baghdad on Tuesday. Anderson was shot near his hip and suffered some shattered bones, but his vital organs weren't hurt, said Amy Johnson, Anderson's mother.

Anderson was in critical but stable condition, she said. He was to be transferred from a Baghdad hospital to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany.

Anderson attended his junior and senior years of high school in East Grand Forks, where he played football and wrestled. Johnson said Anderson joined the Army in 2002 and was deployed to Iraq in April 2003.

Family members said Anderson has a 3-year-old daughter.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Iraqis Demonstrate Against Prison Abuses

5.6.04 WASHINGTON (AFP)

In Baghdad and throughout the Middle East there was no sign of abatement in public anger over the abuse.

Crowds of enraged Iraqis protested against "American savagery" in US-run jails.

Occupation Collaborator Killed

5.6.04 By DENIS D. GRAY, Associated Press Writer

Thursday, resistance soldiers assassinated the head of the local Agriculture Department in the northern city of Kirkuk in a drive-by shooting that also killed his driver and wounded his wife, police said.

Najib Mohammed, a Kurd, was riding in his car when the gunmen opened fire from another vehicle, Gen. Sherko Shakir said. **Insurgents frequently target officials working for the government, accusing them of collaborating with Americans. (Imagine that!)**

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

One U.S. Soldier Dead, 16 Injured In “Military Vehicle Accident”

May 5, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND, Release Number: 04-05-10C

BAGRAM AIRFIELD, Afghanistan – One U.S. Soldier died and 16 were injured in a single military vehicle accident today at approx. 9:30 a.m. when traveling from Bagram Airfield to Kabul.

Coalition medical personnel provided immediate first aid to the injured Soldiers.

The injured were transported by ground and air to Bagram airfield to receive care for their injuries.

As of 3 p.m. today, two Soldiers were treated and released for minor injuries. Nine Soldiers are currently undergoing evaluation at the Bagram medical facility. Five Soldiers were admitted to the medical facility, and three of those Soldiers are currently undergoing surgery.

Resistance Ambush Wastes Occupation Cops, Troops

Wall St. Journal 5.5.04

Afghan officials say Taliban guerillas killed 10 soldiers and five policemen near Kandahar.

Two British, One Afghan Occupation Workers Killed

Wall St. Journal 5.6.04

Guerrillas killed two Britons and an Afghan helping prepare for elections. U.S. Marines were deployed to a southern Taliban redoubt.

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.