

## **GI SPECIAL 2#82**

**“Hanging Their Heads Low Right Now”  
Check The Body Language Here: Which Side Has The  
Morale Problem?**



A US soldier walks past Iraqi detainees standing behind razor wire at Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad. (AFP/POOL/File/Damir Sagolj)

**“Troops Will Continue  
To Die, But For What?”  
“Soldiers Have Been Hanging  
Their Heads Low A Lot Longer  
Than You Think!”**

May 08, 2004 posting at [militarycity.com](http://militarycity.com)

Joined: 26 Jul 2003

Posts: 23

Location: back from Iraq!

The last part of this article says, soldiers are hanging there heads a little low right now.

**PEOPLE!! soldiers have been hanging their heads low a lot longer than you think!**  
I was in Iraq for my tour, and will be deploying back within 6 to 10 months. I'm already hanging my head low!

**First we exhaust our military units, than we mobilize guard and reserve units with out proper training, pretty much throwing them into the meat grinder.** Most who deploy go to secure locations, where they never see what really happens on the streets. Unless you are on a convoy and it gets ambushed, or your a "shooter" who is patrolling the streets of Iraq. Patrolling with limits that are unbearable to the GRUNT, the soldier who's job is to fight. Dodge IED's and RPG's without being able to use all the weapons systems that we have.

**The fight now is with the Iraqi people, we have lost the initiative. With the photos of the POW abuse every Iraqi has now become a possible combative, there are no more winning the hearts and minds of the Iraqi people.** These soldiers who took the photos, the soldiers who were embarrassing the Iraqi POW. Yeah we screwed up bigtime, but now at the expense of the "regular" soldier we have to "tippy-toe" with the way we treat Iraqis from here on out. Everytime there is a mission there will be even more restrictions being enforced. when a unit conducts a raid or a cordon and search, troops will be walking into a living time bomb of Iraqis.

**Still we conduct those missions that our leaders issue to us, but we still wonder what the intent is, who are we trying to protect if the iraqi now truly believes that the American soldier is a threat, and not there to help. Soldiers are starting to feel the strain of this so-called 'liberation' in Iraq and back home. Who will now look out for the soldiers, we are walking a thin line, and we are going to pay dearly with the loss of our own military men and women.**

**So Mr. Rumsfield apologizing, spilling his heart out to the people and to the house, but it still won't change a thing. The Iraqis hate us, they hate us more than ever. The longer we stay, the further we fall into a hole, a hole without a cause.**

**Troops will continue die, but for what?**

**Somebody please tell me, because I don't know anymore.**

**(When soldiers write letters like this, the "chain of command" is about to get wrapped around some politicians' neck.)**

**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/>

## IRAQ WAR REPORTS:

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Killed In Karbala

May 17, 2004 United States Department of Defense News Release No. 468-04

2<sup>nd</sup> Lt. Leonard M. Cowherd, 22, of Culpeper, Va., died May 16 in Karbala, Iraq, when he received sniper and rocket propelled grenade fire while securing a building near the Mukhayam Mosque. Cowherd was assigned to Company C, 1<sup>st</sup> Battalion, 37<sup>th</sup> Armor Regiment, 1<sup>st</sup> Armored Division, Friedberg, Germany.

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### Urbandale Soldier Dies in Iraq

Urbandale, May 16, 2004 WorldNow and WHO-TV

An Urbandale family is mourning the loss of a U.S. Marine killed in action in Iraq. The family of 19-year-old Marine Private Brandon Sturdy learned Friday that he died in combat near Fallujah.

**Sturdy's family says he was killed by a homemade bomb while on patrol near Fallujah last week.** The soldier had already been awarded a purple heart for an earlier injury.

The Urbandale native joined the marines a year ago.

**The Department of Defense has not yet released confirmation or any other details of Brandon Sturdy's death to the public.**

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### TWO SOLDIERS KILLED IN AL ANBAR PROVINCE

May 17, 2004 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND Release Number: 04-05-31C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq - Two U.S. Soldiers assigned to I Marine Expeditionary Force were killed in action today in the Al Anbar Province while conducting security and stability operations.

I MEF force protection measures preclude the release of any information that could aid enemy personnel in assessing the effectiveness or lack thereof with regard to their tactics, techniques and procedures. **(Bullshit.)**

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# Seven 1st ID Soldiers Wounded In Mortar Attack

May 18, 2004 By Steve Liewer, Stars and Stripes

A mortar attack against Logistical Support Area Anaconda, a large air base just outside of Balad occurred about 5:20 p.m. and injured 10 people, including seven soldiers from the 108th Infantry Regiment — a New York National Guard unit attached to the division's 2nd Brigade in the Balad area and three non-American civilian workers, said Maj. Richard Spiegel, spokesman for the 13th Corps Support Command, based at Anaconda.

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## Suicide Suspected In Death Of N.C. Airman

May 18, 2004 The Associated Press

**COLUMBIA, Tenn. (AP) - An airman from Tennessee and Seymour Johnson Air Force Base in North Carolina who died of non-hostile injuries in Iraq is believed to have committed suicide, the Defense Department said.**

Senior Airman Pedro I. Espailat Jr., 20, of Columbia, died of an apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound Saturday in Kirkuk, Iraq, Air Force spokeswoman Jennifer Stephens said. The official cause of death is awaiting an autopsy report.

Espailat was assigned to the 4th Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Seymour Johnson in Goldsboro, N.C., Air Force officials said. He worked as an airplane mechanic.

**He died about a month before he was scheduled to return to the United States, said his father, Pedro Espailat Sr.**

The father said he tried to persuade his oldest son to go first to college to study engineering, then make the military a career.

But Espailat, a 2001 honors graduate at Spring Hill High School, chose to enlist. He did so one week before the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

**"After he was in boot camp, I couldn't pull him out. He wanted to be an engineer since he was little. Now he never will," said the father.**

Espailat came to Tennessee in 1993 with his mother and two brothers from the Dominican Republic. His father, an assembly worker at Saturn Corp., had arrived about three years earlier.

The son excelled in school, graduating 38th in a class of 228 at Spring Hill High.

Velma Oden, secretary for the guidance counselors at the school, remembered when the recruiting officer visited him at Spring Hill High.

"It was like going into the military was something he really wanted to do, one of his goals," she said.

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## Civilian Foreigner Said Killed in Iraq

May 18, 2004 Associated Press

Mosul, Iraq-AP -- The U-S military says gunmen have fired on a convoy of civilian cars in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul.

**One foreign security guard was killed. No word on where the victim was from.**

The attack occurred in the center of the northern city of Mosul. American troops sealed off the area after the attack, witnesses said.

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## Ex-Marine Mercenary Shot Dead

5.18.04 icWales UK

**A former Royal Marine has been shot dead in Iraq while working as a private contractor.**

Brian Tilley, 47, was killed after a gunman reportedly walked into the house where he was staying and opened fire.

**According to The Times, he had been due home two days earlier but missed his flight and was waiting for another.**

Mr Tilley is said to have left the Royal Marines Special Boat Squadron two years ago and had been based in Baghdad for 14 months.

He set up his own company called Peak after leaving the Royal Marines and was believed to have been working with an Egyptian company on a communications project.

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## Sistani Office Under Fire In Najaf

5.18.04 Associated Press

Najaf, Iraq-AP -- U-S troops have clashed with Iraqi militiamen in the holy city of Najaf.

The fighting damaged a hotel housing correspondents of Arab T-V channel Al-Jazeera and a Kuwaiti T-V crew. The office of Iraq's most influential Shiite cleric also came under fire. There were no casualties reported in either incident.

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## **Loud Explosion Rumbles Across Baghdad**

May 18, 2004 AFP

A loud explosion rumbled across central Baghdad on Tuesday, just hours after the funeral was held for the slain president of Iraq's Governing Council who was killed in a suicide bombing one day earlier.

The explosion shook buildings in the centre of the capital at around 2:00pm (local time), AFP correspondents said.

**The force of the blast was also felt in the headquarters of the US-led coalition.**

A spokeswoman said the US military was investigating the source of the blast,

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## **TROOP NEWS**

### **Family Of Injured Soldier Must Beg For Help**

May 17, 2004 Paragould Daily Press, Greene County, Arkansas

**MARMADUKE -- The family of a local soldier who was recently injured in combat in Iraq is seeking donations to a fund the family has set up.**

Sgt. Timothy Garner, originally of Marmaduke, who was stationed in Colorado and deployed to Iraq, was injured when he and four others riding in a Humvee in Iraq were struck by an explosion to the vehicle's left. The vehicle swerved to avoid total impact and hit a dump truck that pulled out in front of them.

According to Garner's mother, Pamela, he is now at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., due to the several injuries he sustained.

**She said that he had a golf ball-sized hole in the back of his head, in addition to several lacerations that received stitches, two collapsed lungs and a broken jaw. He now has a plate and his jaw was wired shut. His right arm, femur and hip were broken; his left hip was fractured; and all of the bones in his face were broken.**

**Pamela said that Garner's right foot was crushed and was to be operated on Monday. She said that he was on a ventilator of which they are slowly attempting to wean him off.**

Pamela said that the two soldiers in the back seat of the Humvee were able to walk away, the driver of the vehicle received two broken legs, and the gunner received several injuries resulting in his paralyzation. She said that he is beginning to feel some sensations now.

**Pamela and her husband, Michael, have set up a benefit account in their son's name at the Bank of Paragould in Marmaduke. They would appreciate funds from whomever can help.**

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## **“It Seems Like About Half The People Don’t Want Us And They’re Not Stupid:” Injured Loxahatchee Seabee Back From Iraq**

May 18 By Jane Daugherty, Palm Beach Post Staff Writers

More than three dozen sailors and their families shouted greetings to the seriously wounded Loxahatchee Seabee nicknamed Papa Smurf when his plane finally landed about 1 a.m. today at Palm Beach International Airport.

**Petty Officer 2nd Class James Nappier, 45, was wounded by mortar fire in the yard of the Marine base at Ramadi, west of Baghdad May 2. The attack killed five sailors and wounded 28.**

"I'm just glad to be home," Nappier said. "I'm not a hero. I'm just somebody who was doing my job."

A heavy equipment operator at home, his job in Iraq was driving a truck for the Naval Mobile Construction Battalion 14 in Iraq. Their assignment in Ramadi was repairing bombed infrastructure including electrical, water and sewer systems. **They were in Iraq only two weeks when the mortars hit.**

A bit overwhelmed by the Seabees from his unit who were on hand to welcome him home despite almost three hours in flight delays, Nappier said, "I do worry about my comrades who are still over there. I think we've got good intensions about what we're doing over there. A lot of people want our help, but the clerics and the insurgents, **it seems like about half the people don't want us and they're not stupid. They're using smart tactics ... It's dangerous.**"

Nappier sustained extensive wounds in the mortar attack. Two local sailors in his unit were killed: Petty Officers 2nd Class Scott R. McHugh, 33, of Boynton Beach and Robert B. Jenkins, 35, of Martin County.

**Shrapnel in his right arm and right leg almost forced the amputation of his leg, Nappier's wife, Lacey, said Tuesday.**

"Those doctors at Bethesda (Naval Hospital) saved his leg," she said, "I can't say enough about their skill and caring. What they did is amazing.

"And the welcome home was pretty amazing too. There were a lot of people there at 1 o'clock in the morning. Today we're just hiding out, trying to relax."

**She said when her husband recovers he wants to get a motorcycle to go riding with his friends in a local Harley club. "But that might be awhile," Nappier said. "The hardest part now is my arm. I got hit in the elbow and I'm trying to get my hand working again."**

Nicknamed Papa Smurf by the younger sailors in his unit, Nappier is not round, short, bearded or blue, but he said he felt as happy as a Smurf cartoon character today.

Nappier had been eager to serve in Iraq, his wife said. His father and a sister both served in the Navy. He joined the Marine Corps in Kansas City and served six years.

Nappier has a grown daughter by a previous marriage. The couple married in Dallas in 1985, and moved to South Florida in 1999. Nappier has relatives here.

He was among 400 Seabees shipped out April 2. They spent time in Kuwait before moving to the camp. Other members of their unit are awaiting possible deployment to Iraq.

Nappier spent his 46th birthday Sunday in the hospital at Bethesda. "We don't really have any belated birthday party plans," Nappier said, "I just want to relax and keep my leg elevated so it heals."



Damon Higgins / The Palm Beach Post

## **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/>**

# **Baghdad: Life In Combat**

By Yochi J. Dreazen, Wall St. Journal 5.5.04

BAGHDAD, Iraq—The members of Staff Sgt. Russell Frazier's platoon call him Boom-Boom. Some of Sgt. Frazier's subordinates rub his hands for good luck. "But a lot of us also just want to stay as far from him as we can," says Staff Sgt. David Ward.

After just a few weeks in Iraq, Sgt. Frazier has already had three very close calls. His Humvee was targeted by a roadside bomb that studded his gunner's arm with shrapnel. A rocket-propelled grenade flew so close that Sgt. Frazier could smell the propellant. And another roadside bomb knocked the wind out of him and left his ears ringing.

His unusual string of near-misses has made him famous in his platoon—but it also reflects the surging violence that many of the new troops arriving in Iraq are now confronting. Since January, the military has moved about 110,000 troops into the country as part of the largest troop rotation since World War II.

**But the rotation has meant that troops with little knowledge of Iraq or experience managing the complexities of guerrilla war here have been thrown into combat almost immediately.** They have also been given an unwelcome crash course on two of the militants' weapons of choice: rocket-propelled grenades and the hidden roadside bombs known as "improvised explosive devices," or IEDs.

**They have already wounded nearly a dozen soldiers from Sgt. Frazier's unit, including several who have lost legs.**

"We were kind of thrown right into the thick of things," says the brigade's commander, Col. Stephen Lanza. "There was no ramp-up."

Sgt. Frazier's series of near-misses, he says, "shows that timing really is everything." He adds: "The amazing thing is that he still showed up for work the next day, and is still out there doing his job."

A 32-year-old native of Bennington, Vt., Sgt. Frazier enlisted in the Army right after high school. His wife, Nitaya, whom he met in the Army and married 10 years ago, is now studying to be a nurse.

His chemical-decontamination unit swept into southern Iraq a year ago in March, shortly after the outbreak of the war, and it spent nearly four months preparing for an unconventional attack that never came. **Sgt. Frazier returned home last summer without having fired his machine gun.**

**His second tour, which began March 26, has been very different.** Sgt. Frazier's brigade polices a restive area of the city that is home to many followers of the firebrand Shiite cleric Muqtada al Sadr. The sergeant's first near-miss took place almost immediately after he arrived at his heavily fortified base here. He was in the lead Humvee of a two-vehicle convoy that was on its way to a mosque to see whether its imam was spreading anti-U.S. messages. Sgt. Frazier and his men were to monitor the situation but take no action against the imam.

**The narrow road curved to the right, and the Americans swerved to avoid a car parked on the shoulder. Seconds later, an enormous explosion a few feet off the road rocked the Humvee.** The force of the blast knocked his gunner, who was standing at an open turret, back into the cabin of the vehicle, with jagged pieces of shrapnel sticking out of his arm.

**Three days later, Sgt. Frazier and his men were sent to relieve another unit from the base that had taken casualties and was pinned down in a nearby neighborhood by machine-gun fire and rocket-propelled grenades.**

Sgt. Frazier's men came under fire immediately and, under orders, raced their Humvees down the empty streets to search alleyways and parking lots for militants. As the vehicles slowed to turn around and begin a new search, the startled soldiers inside suddenly saw a rocket-propelled grenade flying right at them. Sgt. Frazier says they could smell the propellant as the grenade drew closer. "It looked like a really big firework, and I was sure it was going to hit us," he remembers. But the projectile flew past the three vehicles, smashed into the corner of a nearby building, and detonated, injuring no one.

A week later, Sgt. Frazier was patrolling a crowded commercial street when he received word a roadside bomb had been discovered by Iraqi security personnel.

American explosives experts were summoned to defuse the bomb, but Sgt. Frazier and his men were ordered to keep passersby away in case it went off in the meantime. His men parked their Humvees in the street and stood in a line, guns out, as they waited for the bomb squad to arrive.

The bomb detonated without warning 20 minutes later, and Sgt. Frazier felt his chest collapse as the powerful blast knocked the air out of him. Ears ringing, he turned around slowly and saw several Iraqi security personnel lying on the ground with cuts, burns and shrapnel wounds. None of the Iraqis were badly hurt, and there were no American injuries. Sgt. Frazier had again survived a close call unharmed.

**With his unit finding as many as seven new IEDs each day, Sgt. Frazier increasingly worries that he will have another, less fortunate, run-in with a roadside bomb.** A few days ago, he received a call to investigate a possible IED near the base. As he drove closer, Sgt. Frazier saw a blackened hole on the side of the road

and realized that it was the crater from the bomb that almost killed him when he first arrived in the country. Nearly four feet deep and eight feet across, the cavity was full of water, reminding Sgt. Frazier of a small swimming pool.

"My soldiers were laughing as they saw me staring at it," he recalls. "They were pointing at it from their windows and saying, 'Look, sarge, there's your hole.'"

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## **Congress Members Told of Abuse Months Ago**

**(THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN: B WRITES: Bush knew, Rumsfeld knew, and both parties in Congress knew. They should all be in the dock, not just the handful of GIs they're using as scapegoats.)**

5.16.04 By DAVID DISHNEAU, Associated Press Writer

HAGERSTOWN, Md. - **Two months before pictures of Iraqi prisoner abuse became public, the family of one accused soldier wrote to 14 members of Congress that "something went wrong" involving "mistreatment of POWs" at Abu Ghraib prison.**

**Separately, a suspended Army officer in Iraq wrote to Republican Sen. Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania that he was being unfairly punished after "pictures of naked prisoners" were discovered. He sent the letter six weeks before the CBS program "60 Minutes II" first broadcast photographs of the prisoners on April 28.**

**The strongest reply any of them got was a note saying what they already knew — that the Army was investigating, according to documents released last week by Specter's office and the family of Army Reserve Staff Sgt. Ivan L. "Chip" Frederick.**

**In late February, his family sent letters or e-mails to 11 Democrats on the Senate Armed Services Committee, plus three of their local congressional members and Virginia Gov. Mark Warner, seeking information on Frederick's status, said Frederick's uncle, William W. Lawson, of Newburg, W.Va.**

A Feb. 23 letter from Lawson to Sen. John D. Rockefeller IV of West Virginia said Frederick was relieved of prison-guard duty without explanation Jan. 14, two days before the Army publicly announced a criminal investigation of alleged prisoner mistreatment.

**Rockefeller responded on March 2 that the Army could not act on the request unless it came from Frederick's wife or mother.**

"The senator is eager to talk to Mr. Lawson and tried to call him ... but didn't reach him," Ferrell said. **(Right. And the check is in the mail.)**

Frederick's mother, Jo Ann Frederick, wrote on Feb. 24 to Sen. Paul Sarbanes, D-Md., and Rep. Roscoe G. Bartlett, R-Md.

Sarbanes replied on Feb. 27 that he had "written to the appropriate officials" and would contact her when he received a reply.

**Bartlett forwarded to her a response he received from the Army, saying that "inquiry into this matter has been initiated."**

On March 18, Lt. Col. Jerry Phillabaum, formerly second-in-command at Abu Ghraib, wrote an e-mail to Specter mentioning "digital pictures of naked prisoners," In the letter, Phillabaum sought Specter's help in expediting the investigation so he could return to his family in Lansdale, Pa.

Specter's office released copies of its electronic correspondence with Phillabaum and his family last week. ***In a statement accompanying the e-mails, Specter's office said it paid little attention to the Abu Ghraib references because "Phillabaum stated an investigation was underway,"*** the Inquirer reported.



Iraqi detainees show their wounds behind razor wire at Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad..(AFP/Pool)

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

**Guard And Reserve "Bullet Magnets"  
Prepare For Frontline;  
Four Days Training For War**

Suzanne Goldenberg in Fort Bliss, Texas March 1, 2004 The Guardian

The lead vehicle in the convoy has disappeared over the hill. The road ahead is flanked by two suspicious-looking car wrecks. In the back of the pick-up truck, the troops are getting twitchy.

All six soldiers jump out of the truck and sprawl in the dirt, triggers at the ready. Minutes later, they clamber back in. Nobody thinks to look behind until a smoke grenade explodes three yards away. The buzzer sounds. "A grenade. We're dead, dude," says Private Tyler Franzen.

They were wiped out within the first five minutes of their drill on convoy movement, and the implications register quickly. Days from now, Pvt. Franzen and the 319th Signals Battalion could be in Iraq. "This makes me more scared," he says. "I am preparing for the worst."

**Their trainer calls troops like these "bullet magnets" - army reservists or National Guard soldiers, weekend warriors with minimal combat training pressed into service.**

By late March, 130,000 troops will be leaving Iraq and 105,000, including some of the 319th, will arrive. As many as 50% of these will be reservists or National Guard.

Some units, like the 319th, will be raised virtually from scratch. The signals battalion, based in Sacramento, California, was barely at half-strength when it was mobilized, and reservists have been drafted in from as far away as Puerto Rico, Delaware, and Georgia to be sent off to what the troops call the "sandbox"

A number of officers and troops at Fort Bliss say it is important to draw a line between personal feelings and duty. **Nobody at Fort Bliss is raring to go off to war, but they are going to honor their obligations.**

Specialist Michelle Matthis, 21, volunteered to fill vacancies in the 319th once it became clear her own unit would not be deployed. **But even she seems somewhat ambivalent. "It's so I can get the war over with," she says.**

**Others are resigned to going to this war, but they say it will be their last. The cost on family life is just too great,** says Jim Akers, 40, a warrant officer. This is his first deployment after 22 years in the reserves.

He knows the Pentagon is worried about a steep drop in re-enlistments in the National Guard and reserves, but after Iraq he will have done his bit. **"Even \$1,000 extra a month is not going to keep me there," he says. "I will retire when I get back. I am not going to put my family through this - or myself."**

By the time the troops have arrived at Fort Bliss in western Texas, they should be all but ready to go. **But the fact of their deployment has yet to sink in. "I kind of expected this, but I didn't think it would happen,"** Pvt. Franzen says. **He signed on for the college benefits in January last year. Two days before basic training, his girlfriend learned she was pregnant. Now he is 19 - too young to drink in Texas - has a three-month-old son, and is days away from war.**

**The shock of deployment was even greater for veterans like Maritess Leyson, 37, a computer systems administrator from Chicago who describes her 18 years in the army reserves as a "hobby job". When the call came last November, the single parent was in a panic to try to soften the news for her three teenage children. Then she had to find them a home after her sister balked at taking them. "When it was time for me to go, it hit me like a brick wall, oh my goodness," she says. "It's scary, but I signed on the dotted line."**

None of the reservists raises the possibility that they might be killed - their instructors do that for them. "If the Iraqis executed an ambush with any degree of efficiency some of you might not come home," says Major Shawn Marshall, after drill.

**What he does not need to say is that the death toll in Iraq has been especially high for reservists, National Guard members and support units.** There is no frontline in Iraq, and no zone of safety for non-combat forces. Most reservists and support units have not been trained for a guerrilla war - with lethal consequences.

**They simply do not know how to fight. Some freeze in training exercises. At the firing range, they blast away, and the targets still stand. They were trained in technical skills, not combat capabilities.**

**"These people are what I call bullet magnets," says Colonel Rick Phillips, who is in charge of training. "What they find over there is that these kids aren't pulling the trigger. They are waiting to engage."**

At Fort Bliss, that knowledge is especially acute. The base was the home of Private Jessica Lynch and the mechanised unit that took heavy losses in the opening days of the war when their truck took a wrong turn near Nasiriya, and drove into an ambush. Eleven soldiers were killed; and others taken prisoner.

Those blunders led the Pentagon to institute basic battleground drills for all forces departing for Iraq. **Col Phillips has four days to drill survival instincts into his people.** He knows he can not make warriors out of them. "I just want to give them enough to help them to come home."

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## Utahn Gets Two Purple Hearts

5.18.04 The Salt Lake Tribune

Pfc. Quinton D. Graves, 19, of Salt Lake City is the first Marine in the 1st Marine Division to be awarded two Purple Heart medals for wounds received in Iraq.

Graves, assigned to Company G, 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, was awarded the first medal on March 13 when his vehicle was hit by a bomb, according to the Marine Corps News.

**"Everybody was sitting straight up in the Humvee," said Graves. "We weren't getting down behind the blast doors. We didn't think it could be that bad."**

**Five minutes later, he said, the bomb exploded. Graves figured that he must have blacked out. When he realized what was going on, the Humvee was sitting still. No one inside was moving. He reached back for a corporal, only to see he was severely wounded. One Marine lost an eye. Another's jaw was torn apart.**

"I didn't even know I was injured until everyone was medevaced and I was checked out," Graves said. "They said I was hit. I took shrapnel to my left arm."

**Graves' second award came April 7, during the fighting in Ar Ramadi. His platoon was sent out to reinforce a pinned down squad when a grenade was tossed over a wall.**

**I saw it land," he said. "It was one of those pineapple-looking grenades. We just started running and I kept thinking 'It should have blown by now.' "**

**Graves was all too aware when the grenade exploded: Shrapnel peppered his left calf, left thigh, buttocks, back and left shoulder.**

"After it blew I was still running, so I figured it couldn't be that bad," he said. "A hail of gunfire followed and I kicked in a gate to a house and took cover."

Another Marine patched Graves' wounds and he finished the mission. For the second time in less than a month, he called home to his mother.

"I tried to explain it wasn't that bad," Graves said. "I couldn't lie and say I'm not around the fighting. That lie doesn't work anymore."

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## **Stop Loss Soldier Wounded Instead Of Home**

5.18.04 10NBC, Rochester NY

A local soldier is recovering after being injured in Iraq. 22-year-old Roberto Santiago was wounded by a rocket propelled grenade May 13th near Karbala. **Santiago suffered wounds in the face, left arm and leg, and back.**

**Santiago's year of service was supposed to be up in April, but a week before he was injured his unit was notified they wouldn't come home until August.**

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# **"How Many More Deaths Will It Take Before They Realize It's Not Worth It?"**

# Sister Of Dead 20-Year-Old Soldier Condemns War

May. 18, 2004 Associated Press

**McKEES ROCKS, Pa.** - A 20-year-old western Pennsylvania reservist was killed Saturday by a bomb in or near his vehicle, according to his family.

Pfc. Mark Kasecky, of Stowe Township, a National Guardsman, was apparently on patrol when a bomb blew up his Humvee, according to his mother, Emily Arnold, who said she learned of his death from a chaplain and Army sergeant.

Kasecky had joined the Army National Guard two years ago, his family said.

**He left for Iraq in January and was scheduled to come back on leave last month but it was canceled as fighting intensified, his mother said.**

About two months ago, Kasecky was hit during a battle, but his bulletproof vest stopped three bullets, and he sustained only lacerations and rib injuries, relatives said.

One of his sisters, Veronica Horton, of Wilkesburg, said Kasecky found little time to call his family, but he had called her Friday night.

**"He said, 'It's crazy over here.' He said it was scary.** He said he was doing OK, and he joked with my kids. He said he loved us all and missed us all," Horton said. "I told him, 'We miss you. Be careful. Keep your head up.'"

**"How many more deaths will it take before they realize that it's not worth it?" Horton said. "My brother wasn't married and had no children. All we got are our memories. It's not enough."**

Relatives described Kasecky as a jokester who liked to play football and basketball and as a devoted uncle to his 11 nieces and nephews.

A year ago, Kasecky sent his family pictures of himself in uniform, standing beside an American flag. "Hey, man, just thought you'd like a picture of a real, true American soldier boy!" he wrote on the back of one photograph.

**He is survived by his mother, three sisters and two brothers.**

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**“You’ll Never See Me In This Uniform Again,” Iraq Vet Tells Delay Students;**

# Condemns Military's Deadly Abuse Of Troops

April 30, 2004 By Lois K. Solomon, Education Writer, South Florida Sun-Sentinel

DELRAY BEACH \* Army Sgt. Seth Cole was no ordinary show-and-tell guest at Banyan Creek Elementary School. At 6-foot-3, in a pressed, beribboned uniform and just back from Iraq, the infantryman was the son of teacher Allyne Cole and the school's yearlong pen pal, home at last.

**But what began as a school-wide homecoming celebration became an emotionally charged catharsis Thursday when during visits to several classrooms Cole spoke candidly of the disillusionment he felt after 12 months in the combat zone, and urged the pupils not to be fooled by notions that warfare is glorious.**

**"You'll never see me in this uniform again,"** Cole, 30, told a roomful of fifth-graders as his mother fought to hold back her tears. **"There is no glory in war. Seven hundred people are not coming back. A lot more don't have eyes, arms or legs."**

Allyne Cole said that she knew little about the horror and danger of her only child's service with the 115 Military Police Company in Baghdad, Fallujah and Balad until he spoke to the students at the school where she has taught for 20 years. "This was not easy to hear," she said. "He tried to protect me. He knew I was worried."

**Cole's visit began with what looked like a patriotic festival. More than 900 students -- many wearing red, white and blue -- cheered when Cole arrived, and mobbed him for autographs. The school cheerleaders were there, a flag-decorated cake was rolled out and a fourth-grade student sang The Star-Spangled Banner.**

But it was only when he began to talk to the students, beginning with his mother's kindergartners, that he revealed how troubled he was over his experiences in Iraq.

**"In the beginning, I was keen to go. I couldn't wait to do my part,"** Cole said. **"But then my philosophy changed. I thought what we were doing was just, but I didn't like the way the military was treating its soldiers."**

**Cole had trouble getting enough water to drink and weapons that worked well. He said he participated in 550 combat missions, including raiding Iraqis' houses and snatching suspects for interrogation. After he was told he could go home, he received an order to direct traffic in downtown Kuwait City, a three-week assignment he described as "a kick in the teeth."**

Speaking deliberately, in the accent of his native Boston, Cole tried to temper students' enthusiasm for guns and bombs by detailing his struggle to do what he believed was right for the United States. Describing Iraq as "a weird country that's difficult to understand," he said he had served four years on active duty, then volunteered for the Rhode Island National Guard, in part to follow the example of his father, a Vietnam veteran.

**But Cole was sharply critical of the way the military manages its fighters, and he complained of poor equipment and inadequate training.**

Sgt. Scott Keegan, 36, a Boston reservist who returned from Iraq with Cole just two weeks ago, agreed with his longtime buddy's assessment.

**"They sent us on some crazy missions, night patrols without night-vision goggles, in old Humvees that were always breaking down," said Keegan. "We were told to wear bulletproof vests, even though there were no bulletproof ceramic plates to put in them."**

Keegan said three members of their unit were killed in Iraq and several more were wounded.

Still, Cole said he felt there was little support for his fellow soldiers' personal traumas on the battlefield and numerous acquaintances went home because their mental health deteriorated.

Students said they were surprised the people who served had become psychologically scarred by their experiences.

"I had never thought of that before," fourth-grader Chrislyn Corvil said.

**Even though recounting his wartime experiences was painful, Cole said he owed it to the children who sent him hundreds of cards and letters in a campaign his mother admitted organizing to help allay her fears about his safety.**

"I read every single letter," he said.

"I'm proud of what I've done," he added. "It was a pleasure to serve my country. But it's not like I want to go down to a bar and talk about it more."

**Neither does Cole plan to extend his commitment to the National Guard when his enlistment ends in three months.**

Cole's mother said her son conveyed some of his feelings during occasional calls home, but she knew almost nothing about his experiences. "He told me that after today, he wasn't going to talk about it again," she said.

"He put everything into context, the reality of violence," she said. "And I said to him later, this is one of those things from elementary school they will probably remember forever."

**Cole asked the students not to be impressed with his stories about guns and bombs but to go home and give their parents a hug.**

**"Life is short and life is very precious," said Cole, a salesman who lives in Boston. "If you remember anything I've told you, please remember that."**

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# **Court Martial for First Veteran to Refuse Further Military Duty in Iraq Begins May 19, 2004; Defense To Desertion Charge Based On US, International Law.**

Wednesday, May 19, 2004, at 9:00 a.m.

**Court Martial Building:** Ft. Stewart, GA (41 miles SW from Savannah, GA (Get directions from gate sentry)

**Staff Sgt. Camilo Mejia**, 28, of Miami, FL. Mejia, as a squad leader, from March-October 2003 in Iraq with the 1-124 Infantry Regiment of the 53d Infantry Brigade of the activated Florida National Guard. After 5 ½ months combat, he decided that, based on his experience, including witnessing abuse of Iraqi detainees by Army personnel, he had a legal duty under international law, not to return to Iraq.

**Citizen Soldier**, a non profit GI/veterans advocacy organization is organizing legal and political support for Sgt. Mejia. The court martial is open to public and media.

More info: Tod Ensign  
(917) 374-1678  
(days of court martial)  
New York office: (212) 679-2250

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Sadr Gains Support; Falluja Sends Food**

May 17, 2004 David W. Staub, [Interpax@yahoo.com](mailto:Interpax@yahoo.com)

If you recall, al Sistani and the conservative Shiite elders had given Sadr a May 15 deadline for moving out of Najaf and away from holy mosques. Al Jazeera predicted that Sadr would have to accede to these demands by the Shiite religious hierarchy. But the deadline is past and Sadr remains in Najaf.

**A planned anti-Sadr demonstration last Friday by pro-occupation supporters of the Council for the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI) was called off. The reason**

given was to avoid confrontation with Sadr's militia. But actually, among several million shiites, fewer than 1,000 took part in anti-Sadr protests.

On Saturday, a delegation from Fallujah met with Sadr offering to send fighters to Najaf if requested (a return favor for what Sadr did when Fallujah was circled by U.S. forces). Food and aid in the form of 9 truckloads arrived in Kufa over the weekend.

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

# **Iraq Vet Says “I Despise This War, Bring Our Troops Home Now” But Kerry Ducks War Issue:**

Time Magazine May. 16, 2004

At a town-hall meeting in Orlando, Fla. a young Army reservist named Charity Thompson, recently returned from Iraq, who said she was having trouble getting medical care from the Veterans Administration.

Her story, and her implicit anger about the war, was greeted with a vehement standing ovation. Kerry responded to the health-care point but stayed clear of the war.

Later Thompson told me, "I wanted to hear what he had to say about Iraq. I despise this war, and 99.9% of the people I served with feel the same way. We should bring our troops home now. I'd really like to know what Kerry thinks about that."

The answer Thompson eventually receives will be the most important decision Kerry makes in this campaign, but it won't be coming soon

Kerry's aides insist that the Senator's Iraq reticence is merely an act of patriotic high-mindedness reflecting a desire to show support for the troops and to not "politicize" the issue. Oh, please.

Ultimately, and this is the hardest decision of all, he will have to decide whether to tell Charity Thompson something she doesn't want to hear.

(For more see the article “Bush Or Kerry.” By John Pilger at [www.isreview.org](http://www.isreview.org).)

**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.

## OCCUPATION PALESTINE

# “Shelllllllling Us Now”

Iraq? Palestine? Same Old Same Old.



A Palestinian woman wounded in an Israeli missile strike is rushed into Najar hospital in the Rafah refugee camp, southern Gaza Strip May 18 (AP Photo/Kevin Frayer)

**From: "M" In Rafah, Occupied Palestine**

To: GI Special

May 16, 2004 7:03 p.m.

thomas

**here is shelling shooting by apaches, hell hell hell, we are getting killed so many fragments and parts of bodies at the moment, please see the website and let all know [www.rafahtoday.org](http://www.rafahtoday.org)**

the apaches are shelling us right now, many many fragments and parts of injured people everywhere in the area.

**i wasn't able to identify the body of my relative who get killed, they brought him to the hospital as parts and fragments, i cant believe how many arrived like this, cant cant really cant.**

**why they shell him with a group of children , why , i don't know why god why is this!!**

hundreds of houses are demolishing now . a Spanish radio called me and they were surprised to hear the yells of the injured people and the apaches shelling the houses, and the noises of the bulldozers and people asking for help.. so many parts of bodies are under the rubble of the houses.

**oh, this journalist needs his laptop computer now, it has only 18 % or electricity, he needs it now, as he lent it to me for 10 minutes to write this two e-mails , as the electricity is off and so many many injured and killed people here..**

still the doctors can't identify and collect the flesh parts of the injured and killed people.. they can't do anything at the moment.

i'm exhausted and tired now, i'm faint, yes the soldiers targeted shoot towards the camera, i take pictures for some parts and flesh spread in the ground here..

they are shelling everyone here, i'm in bad need now for protective bullets vest, i need to protect my body now from those bullets, i need a protective vest and it's not founded here, i used to use one of the vest of my friends, he is wearing it now..

**not so many journalists to cover the massacres, but i don't know even that camera didn't take the picture that my eye want to take, it's a poor camera and a slow.. i don't know , i must find a way to get the vest cause i'm really in bad need, ohh, shellllllinsnng shelling shellllling now now.**

they are shelling us more from the apaches and f61s , many injured and killed people, the ambulances cant reach the area, **i will deliver that computer for that journalist, caus it's ringing lack of batteries, please please and for the sake of those children do tell the people about what is going on.**

**tell them about the parts of the bodies here.. well, more rockets now, i must leave now to the entrance of the hospital to report things here**

**if i get killed so please give my regards to all the people who support justice and peace,** i must leave now, and if i didnt answer that means there is no electricity as they might disconnect water as well.. i will see what we can do now..you can call my mobile if i didn't answer 0097259330583 i dont know.. ok shellllling gets increased now.. i must run'

m

(To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by a foreign power, go to: [www.rafahtoday.org](http://www.rafahtoday.org) assuming M is still alive. The foreign army is Israeli; the occupied nation is Palestine.)

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**Received:**

**From:** [Mark Shapiro](mailto:Mark.Shapiro)

**To:** GI Special  
**Sent:** May 16, 2004  
**Subject:** 'justice for the victims of agent orange' petition

If you can find a little space in 'GI Special 'could you mention the 'Justice for the Victims of Agent Orange' Petition. The Petition is sponsored by my friend Len Aldis the Secretary of the 'Britain-Vietnam Friendship Society. Over 22,000 people worldwide have already signed the Petition. Many thanks—Mark

For info and the petition: <http://www.petitiononline.com/AOVN/petition.html>

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## Inside The Resistance

From: RS  
To: GI Special  
Sent: May 17, 2004

Just read a superlative piece on Iraq fighting that may be of use to you.

Latest, June, Harper's cover story: Patrick Graham, "Beyond Fallujah: A Year with the Iraqi Resistance." Author is Arabic speaking, Canadian journalist who has written for London Observer. My guess is that Harper's will post on web site for discussion.

There are 4-5 paras that you may want to use, written from inside the resistance ranks looking out.

<b>Typical aside: one Iraqi fighter takes time off from fighting to do contract work for the occupation authorities, most of the proceeds of which are channeled back into the resistance, so the US taxpayer finances both sides of the conflict.</b>
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Best, R

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