

GI SPECIAL 4H7:



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

“He Was Disillusioned With The Military” “He Felt They Had Lied To Him. He Had Been Brainwashed” Marine From Flushing, Queens Killed In An Explosion

July 22 2006 BY DEBORAH S. MORRIS, Newsday Staff Writer

Juan David Ramon looked up to his older brother, Cpl. Julian A. Ramon.

"He was a good influence, a role model," said Juan David, 16. "I wanted to be like him, follow him. But that is all changed now."

Julian A. Ramon, 22, of Flushing, died Thursday while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar province, Iraq, during his second tour of the country, according to the Department of Defense.

"I'm in shock. I can't believe it," said Juan David Ramon, a student at Academy of American Studies in Long Island City.

Ramon said military officials came to their house at 6 a.m. Thursday and told him, after his mother, Yolanda, refused to speak to them, about Julian's death.

"She knew it was bad," Juan David Ramon said. "He had told her if anything bad were to happen to him they would come early in the morning. So she knew."

The three officials, he said, told him there had been an explosion and "Julian got caught in it." He had been assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 8th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Lejeune, N.C.

According to the younger Ramon, Julian, a 2002 graduate of John Bowne High School in Flushing, had decided to focus on his future by joining the Marines after working at Wendy's and at a local Off-Track Betting outlet.

"He wanted money for college, that's why he joined," Ramon said. "He wanted to work in criminal justice. I think he eventually wanted to be a lawyer or something along those lines."

But after completing his first tour in Iraq, the dream began to turn sour.

"He was unhappy and tired. He was disillusioned with the military and what they were offering him," Ramon said. "He felt they had lied to him. He had been brainwashed."

Julian, the oldest of Yolanda and Luis Ramon's three sons, had last spoken to his family Monday and told them he couldn't wait until September, when he was due to come home.

"He was counting down the days," Ramon said. "We were looking forward to seeing him. But you could tell in his voice how unhappy he was."

With his brother's death, Juan David's future has changed as well. "I was thinking of going into the military, but now I would never," he said.

"He was just a great friend and person to be around. He's not really dead until you forget him, and I won't."

Funeral arrangements were incomplete as of Friday.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Three U.S. Troops Killed By IED

06 Aug 2006 Reuters

Three Multi-National Division soldiers were killed by a roadside bomb on Sunday night southwest of Baghdad.

Marine Killed In Iraq Shot By Insurgents In Fallujah

8.6.06 The Burlington Free Press

MONTPELIER, Vt. -- A U.S. Marine from Springfield who died in Iraq was shot and killed by insurgents in Fallujah on his birthday.

Lance Cpl. Kurt Dechen, 24, was on a foot patrol in the insurgent-dominated city on Thursday when his unit came under fire and he was shot, said Gunnery Sgt. Pete Walz, a spokesman for 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment. He was evacuated for medical treatment but died of his wounds, according to a statement from the Marines.

A spokesman for the family said it will be at least a week before a funeral is held.

Dechen was part of a reserve unit based in Plainville, Conn., that was sent to Fallujah for duty five months ago.

He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 25th Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, which was a part of Regimental Combat Team 5, I Marine Expeditionary Force, based in Camp Pendleton, Calif.

He was remembered in his hometown of Springfield where he graduated from high school in 2001 as a "good kid."

"He was a good kid," his mother Dale said. "Proud of being a Marine."

Jo Coleman said Dechen played sports with her son.

"He was very outgoing. He had big smile on his face all the time," she said. "When he was on the basketball court that's what you could see, his big smile."

Dechen joined the Marines with a friend right after high school.

April Coen said Dechen and her son wanted to be in the military like their fathers had. Her son Pat had wanted to enlist in the Army but Dechen urged him to go into the Marines, she said.

"Kurt kept saying, 'We're going to do the Marine Corps. They're the way to go. They're the best of the best,'" Coen said.

The two joined the Marines in November of 2001, five months after graduating from high school, but waited until the summer of 2003 to enter, she said. They were in different units and were deployed to Iraq at different times.

Dechen was the 22nd serviceman with Vermont ties to be killed in combat in Iraq or Afghanistan. A 23rd Vermonter died of natural causes in Kuwait.

“Several” Marines Wounded In Fallujah; “A Few” Vehicles Were Destroyed

Aug 6, 2006 By RAWYA RAGEH, (AP)

Several U.S. Marines were wounded and a few vehicles were destroyed by a car bombing in Anbar province, the U.S. military said without further details.

[My my, getting shy about the facts, are we? “Several” and “a few” takes downplaying casualties into the realms of the absurd.]

Iraqi police said the attack was in Fallujah, a heavily guarded city 40 miles west of Baghdad.

U.S. Forces Attacked In Mosul; Casualties Not Announced

Aug 6 (KUNA)

Unidentified armed men opened fire against a Multi-National Forces in southwest Mosul. The scene was then besieged but the casualties have not been reported.

Australian Mercenary Blown Up

August 7, 2006 The Age Company Ltd.

An Australian security contractor has been seriously injured in a bomb blast in Iraq.

The 34-year-old Queensland man was injured when a roadside bomb exploded early on August 3, about 45km northeast of Baghdad, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) said. Two Iraqi citizens were killed in the same blast, a DFAT spokesman said.

The injured man had been evacuated from Iraq for medical treatment, the DFAT spokesman said. The man's condition was still listed as serious, he said.

Notes From A Lost War:

Insurgents In Ramadi Are Using Increasingly Sophisticated Tactics: “‘Darwin Works Every Day For The Insurgency,’ Said A Marine Intelligence Officer”

Yet in Ramadi, it is a constantly changing battle. As soon as the Americans think they have figured out how the insurgents are operating, the techniques change.

"We change our tactics, they change their tactics," said Sgt. Joey Catron of India Company. "We watch them and they watch us. It is a big cat-and-mouse game."

August 6, 2006 By Julian E. Barnes, L.A. Times Staff Writer

RAMADI, Iraq

The orange-red glow of the tracer rounds burns bright in the dusk, forming a perfect cone over the heads of the Marines and Iraqi soldiers patrolling a dusty walled street.

As the rounds ricochet off the walls, the bullets fly like a shower of sparks. One hits the leg of an Iraqi soldier. Just a few feet ahead, an alleyway offers protection from the bullets and a chance to return fire.

In the alley, hidden behind a small shrub, lies an artillery shell with two protruding wires — an improvised explosive device waiting for the patrol.

Insurgents in Ramadi, the capital of restive Al Anbar province, are using increasingly sophisticated tactics against U.S. and Iraqi forces.

As in the rest of Iraq, the improvised explosive device, which the military calls the IED, is the most common and deadliest weapon. But after three years of fighting,

insurgents here are combining roadside bombs with small-arms fire or rocket-propelled grenades to lethal effect.

"Darwin works every day for the insurgency," said a Marine intelligence officer, whose work with classified information prohibits him from speaking publicly. "The guys who are left know their business. The dumb ones are weeded out very quickly."

Here, fighters are increasingly operating in small units, with two men serving as spotters and others firing weapons or setting off bombs.

Marine officers say some of the insurgent teams coordinate their attacks with other groups of fighters, sometimes signaling to each other with pigeons.

When insurgents or their supporters spot an American patrol moving through the streets or a squad holed up in a house watching over a street, they release pigeons from rooftop coops. A flock of birds rising in the sky is a sign that Americans have been spotted.

In Ramadi, such coordinated attacks occur many times a day.

"Last year, when I got IEDed, I looked around for the triggerman," said Chief Warrant Officer Jonathan Rabert, an infantry weapons officer. "This year, I look for an ambush."

The Marines here, part of the 3rd Battalion, 8th Regiment, say they faced a far less sophisticated enemy last year when they operated around Fallouja and the Abu Ghraib prison.

"He never came out and fought us with complex attacks," said Lt. Col. Stephen Neary, the battalion commander. "Last year there was nothing complex. Here he likes to put things together."

The danger of the complex attacks, along with the rising heat, has forced the Americans to put a stop to most daytime patrols. Instead, they roam the streets after sunset, when their night-vision goggles give them an advantage.

When the Americans venture forth on a daylight patrol, the insurgents attack — as the U.S.-Iraqi patrol along the walled street discovered.

When the patrol came under fire, the Marines saw the alley but instinctively did not move toward it. Some jumped over the wall next to them. Others kicked in a courtyard gate and ran through it.

Part of the patrol was caught on the other side of the street.

Sgt. Ron Nipper, a squad leader with India Company's 4th Platoon, quickly organized covering fire with a SAW, a light machine gun, so the rest of the Marines and Iraqi soldiers could dash into the courtyard.

"Spray that SAW, and you move over here!" Nipper yelled.

Boosh-boosh-boosh; the Marines opened fire. Moments later the rest of the patrol ran into the courtyard.

Behind the protection of the walls, Roger Noel, a Navy corpsman, bandaged the leg of the injured Iraqi soldier and the Marines plotted their return to base.

The far wall of the courtyard led to the alleyway and an exit. The Marines jumped over the wall and into the alley. There, one Marine moved toward the alley entrance to provide security for the rest of the patrol.

"Stop! Stop! Stop!" Nipper shouted. "IED! IED!"

Less than 20 feet from the Marines was the simple but deadly bomb.

Later, Staff Sgt. Joe Modesto, the patrol leader, said the insurgents did not expect to hit any of the Marines or Iraqi soldiers in the initial volley but wanted to drive them to the alley.

"They were trying to find a way to get us toward the IED so they could detonate it," Modesto said.

Knowing what might be coming next, Americans have adjusted their own tactics to try to avoid the traps.

"They try to bait us into running into an IED," Neary said. "But we are wise to those tactics. That is why you see us go through doors and over walls."

Yet in Ramadi, it is a constantly changing battle. As soon as the Americans think they have figured out how the insurgents are operating, the techniques change.

"We change our tactics, they change their tactics," said Sgt. Joey Catron of India Company. "We watch them and they watch us. It is a big cat-and-mouse game."

Brain Dead U.S. Commanders Try Again To Pick A Fight With The Mahdi Army

Aug 6, 2006 By RAWYA RAGEH (AP)

In Baghdad, sounds of heavy gunfire and explosions rattled the Sadr City district starting about 1 a.m. Monday. Iraqi government television and aides to Muqtada al-Sadr said U.S. aircraft were attacking buildings in the area.

"Several aerial and ground raids began in central Sadr City," al-Sadr aide Jaleel al-Nouri said by telephone as detonations could be heard in the background. "We can see several houses on fire."

Kadhim al-Mohammedawi, a civil servant who lives in Sadr City, said by telephone that he could see two houses ablaze and "there's gunfire from all sides."

"We can hear women and children screaming," he said.

Col. Hassan Chaloub, police chief of Sadr City, said U.S. jets were flying over the city and at least three houses were ablaze. He said calls of "God is Great" and "There's no God but God" were blasting from loudspeakers in area mosques.

Late Sunday, scattered clashes broke out between Shiite militiamen and Iraqi soldiers near Hamza Square on the edge of Sadr City, police said. Two militiamen were killed and five combatants were wounded, including two Iraqi soldiers, police said.

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“The Challenge Is How Much Combat Power I Have,’ Said Digiambattista, Whose Forces Are Stretched South To Baghdad”

August 6, 2006 By Ann Scott Tyson, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

ABU SAYDAH AL-SAGHIR, Iraq

One look at the charred and desolate street, empty but for armed men, told Capt. Chris Turner that what he feared was true: A recent spate of deadly sectarian warfare had driven almost all the families from a mud-brick village where for months he'd worked to broker peace between wary Sunni and Shiite tribes.

"What's going on? Where's everybody at?" Turner asked a small group of Iraqi soldiers and policemen sitting around a makeshift roadblock last Tuesday.

"They left," said one of the soldiers, who wore a head wrap, an AK-47 assault rifle slung over his back. "They were scared."

The number of attacks in Diyala each month has more than doubled, from about 200 before the Samarra mosque bombing to an average of just under 500 this summer, according to U.S. military figures.

And compared with a year ago, far fewer U.S. troops are in Diyala to keep a lid on the violence. Last summer, three times as many U.S. soldiers patrolled the region now covered by Turner's battalion.

"It's not safe for us to go to the orchards. They're in the palm groves," [1st Lt. Khalan Adnan] Rahim said, motioning to the trees on the village edge.

The following day, when resident Salman Ahmed Hamza told Turner's soldiers about a possible bomb down the street, Iraqi police refused to venture beyond their checkpoint to investigate.

"It's dangerous there," said police Lt. Hasam Khalilf. "We can't go there."

U.S. commanders are weighing what to do to restore calm to embattled Abu Saydah al-Saghir.

"A tool on the table is to occupy the place, but the challenge is how much combat power I have," said Digiambattista, whose forces are stretched south to Baghdad.

"We can't just wash our hands of it, but ultimately the Iraqis will have to handle it," Turner said. "We won't be in Iraq forever."

**REALLY BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
HOPELESS WAR:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



US army soldiers at the scene of an exploded improvised explosive device in the Wazariya neighborhood in northern Baghdad. 7.12.06 (AFP/Ali Al Saadi)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

UK Soldier Killed

August 6, 2006 KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)

A British soldier was fatally shot on Sunday.

The soldier was taking part in a NATO attack on insurgents in Helmand province's Musa Qala, where three British soldiers were killed last week, according to a NATO statement.

Foreign Occupation Soldier Wounded In Kandahar; Nationality Not Announced

Aug. 6 The Associated Press

A bomber blew up his small truck as a military convoy drove by outside the southern Afghan city of Kandahar on Sunday, wounding a U.S. soldier, officials and eyewitnesses said.

The soldier received "superficial wounds" as a result of the blast which occurred about 4 miles outside the city on the main highway to Kabul, said Maj. Scott Lundy, a NATO spokesman.

Eyewitnesses at the scene said a small truck exploded as the convoy was passing, lightly damaging a U.S. armored vehicle.

"The small truck exploded and one of the military vehicles burst into flames," said Abdul Mohammad.

It was unclear who controlled the convoy.

Senior Officer Says UK Soldiers 'On Brink Of Exhaustion' In Afghanistan

Aug. 6, 2006 Press Association 2006

The head of the Army today defended Britain's military strategy in Afghanistan after it was claimed soldiers were "on the brink of exhaustion".

General Sir Mike Jackson, Chief of the General Staff, told BBC News 24 that tackling the country's security situation was a vital part of nation building.

But a senior officer told the Sunday Telegraph troops were extremely tired after fighting 25 major battles since May, in temperatures of up to 50C.

"The men are knackered - they are on the brink of exhaustion. They are under considerable duress and have suffered great hardship," he told the newspaper.

"This is a situation which is ultimately unsustainable. The shock of battle, the lack of sleep and back-to-back operations are beginning to impact on the troops.

"They are now close to what is realistically achievable - even for the Paras."

The newspaper said 700 troops were bearing the brunt of the heavy fighting.

Assorted Resistance Action

Aug. 6 (Xinhua) & (AFP) & The Associated Press

On Saturday, two policemen were killed and eight others wounded in Kandahar, the stronghold of Taliban, in a roadside bomb explosion aimed at a district governor of Kandahar.

Two Afghan border police were killed and two were missing after armed men stormed a checkpoint in northwestern Afghanistan, police have said.

A group of unknown armed men attacked the police post overnight in Murghab district of Badghis province using rocket-propelled grenades and heavy machine guns.

Northwestern Badghis province has been relatively quiet and free of violence compared to the south and southeast of the country where the Taliban have stepped up an insurgency which has claimed over 1,000 lives in the recent months.

Meanwhile, in Ghazni province, where floods killed three and destroyed 1,600 houses on Friday, an official said he had still not received any aid promised by the central government, the U.N. and private organizations.

Abdul Ali Fakuri, a spokesman for Ghazni's governor, said 100 tents and some food had been provided to the thousands left homeless.

"We are very hopeful the assistance will arrive soon because the people lost almost everything," he said.

TROOP NEWS

“Tomorrow I Have To Show Up At The Army And Get Sent To Lebanon. I Will Go There To Declare That I Am Refusing”

August 06, 2006 From Israel: Adam Keller's diary report, a day after the 8.5.06 rally, Gush Shalom [Excerpt]

"My name is Zohar Milgrom. I am 26 years old, an activist in Yesh Gvul.

“I have got an emergency call up order. Tomorrow I have to show up at the army and get sent to Lebanon. I will go there to declare that I am refusing.

“This is the only thing I can do in face of the public silence, in face of the war crimes committed in our name, in face of the leaders who have sent soldiers again into the Lebanese swamp.

"I will dedicate my time of imprisonment to all the people who suffer in this war, the Jews and the Arabs, the Israelis and Lebanese and Palestinians, to stopping the madness and saving their lives.

"Before I finish I would like to read to you the words of my friend, Isma'il abd-el Hal of Gaza, who would have liked to stand here in Tel-Aviv and address you, were it possible.

"This is what he asked me to tell you: Stop this war now! This war is the mother of terrorists and extremists! We are all in danger! We have to struggle together, to end this horror, to live together in peace, in two states."

Israeli Pilots Deliberately Miss Targets; Angry Troops Confront Defense Minister

[Thanks to D, and to Joshua Karpoff, who sent this in. JK writes: The article below shows that there seems to be a growing mistrust between the pilots and those who actually give the orders. These sorts of low key refusals are important signs that show that Israeli troops don't believe what they're being told about their missions, ideas that can expand to mistrust in their entire mission and the system they live under.]

August 6, 2006 Inigo Gilmore at Hatzor Air Base, Israel; The Observer

At least two Israeli fighter pilots have deliberately missed civilian targets in Lebanon as disquiet grows in the military about flawed intelligence, The Observer has learnt. Sources say the pilots were worried that targets had been wrongly identified as Hizbollah facilities.

Last week saw Hizbollah's guerrilla force, dismissed by senior Israeli military officials as 'ragtag', inflict further casualties on one of the world's most powerful armies in southern Lebanon. At least 12 elite troops, the equivalent of Britain's SAS, have already been killed, and by yesterday afternoon Israel's military death toll had climbed to 45.

As the bodies pile up, so the Israeli media has begun to turn, accusing the military of lacking the proper equipment, training and intelligence to fight a guerrilla war in Lebanon.

Israel's Defence Minister, Amir Peretz, on a tour of the front lines, was confronted by troubled reserve soldiers who told him they lacked proper equipment and training.

Israel's chief of staff, Major-General Dan Halutz, had vowed to wipe out Hizbollah's missile threat within 10 days. These claims are now being mocked as rockets rain down on Israel's north with ever greater intensity, despite an intense and highly destructive air bombardment.

As one well-connected Israeli expert put it: 'If we have such good information in Lebanon, how come we still don't know the hideout of missiles and launchers?... If we don't know the location of their weapons, why should we know which house is a Hizbollah house?'

The Observer has learnt that one senior commander who has been involved in the air attacks in Lebanon has already raised concerns that some of the air force's actions might be considered 'war crimes'.

Yonatan Shapiro, a former Blackhawk helicopter pilot dismissed from reserve duty after signing a 'refusenik' letter in 2004, said he had spoken with Israeli F-16 pilots in recent days and learnt that some had aborted missions because of concerns about the reliability of intelligence information.

According to Shapiro, some pilots justified aborting missions out of 'common sense' and in the context of the Israeli Defence Force's moral code of conduct, which says every effort should be made to avoiding harming civilians.

Shapiro said: 'Some pilots told me they have shot at the side of targets because they're afraid people will be there, and they don't trust any more those who give them the coordinates and targets.'

He added: 'One pilot told me he was asked to hit a house on a hill, which was supposed to be a place from where Hizbollah was launching Katyusha missiles. But he was afraid civilians were in the house, so he shot next to the house.'

'Pilots are always being told they will be judged on results, but if the results are hundreds of dead civilians while Hizbollah is still able to fire all these rockets, then something is very wrong.'

So far none of the pilots has publicly refused to fly missions but some are wobbling, according to Shapiro.

He said: 'Their target could be a house firing a cannon at Israel and it could be a house full of children, so it's a real dilemma; it's not black and white. But ... I'm calling on them to refuse, in order save our country from self-destruction.'

Meron Rappoport, a former editor at the Israeli daily Haaretz and military analyst, criticised the air force's methods for selecting targets: 'The impression is that information is sometimes lacking. One squadron leader admitted the evidence used to determine attacks on cars is sometimes circumstantial, meaning that if people are in an area after Israeli forces warned them to leave, the assumption is that those left behind must be linked to Hizbollah ...'

Some IDF officials have continued to refer vaguely to Katyushas being launched 'near houses' in the village and to non-specific 'terrorist activity' inside the targeted building.

In a statement on Thursday, the IDF said it the air force did not know there were civilians in what they believed was an empty building, yet paradoxically blamed Hizbollah for using those killed as 'human shields'.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action

Aug 6 (KUNA) & Reuters & (AFP) & By RAWYA RAGEH, (AP)

Four truck drivers were killed and their vehicles destroyed near Ishaqi, 100 km (60 miles) north of Baghdad, when guerrillas attacked a convoy transporting barbed wire to a U.S. military base.

At least five Iraqi soldiers were killed Sunday during an armed attack against their patrol in southwest Kirkuk in northern Iraq. A senior police official in the city told KUNA that unidentified armed men attacked a vehicle belonging to the Iraqi army during which five Iraqi soldiers were killed.

The casualties among the perpetrators were not reported.

Two policeman were killed and five wounded in clashes with insurgents on the edge of Baghdad, police said. Insurgents also killed a police officer on Saturday in Baghdad, police said.

A sniper killed a government security guard in southern Baghdad, police said.

Guerrillas attacked an army checkpoint, capturing a sergeant and seizing a number of weapons in the town of Taza, near Kirkuk.

Armed fighters captured a contractor in Hawija.

A member of one of the security protection agencies was killed in an armed assault north of Baquba, police said.

One roadside bomb wounded two Iraqi police commandos and two civilians in the Jihad neighbourhood, an interior ministry official said.

A bomber has killed at least 10 people and wounded about 18 others at a funeral in the Iraqi city of Tikrit. The attack took place at about 2015 local time (1615 GMT) in a tent filled with mourners at the funeral of the father of a provincial councillor. A man wearing a vest packed with explosives walked into the tent before blowing himself up.

The BBC's Paul Wood in Baghdad said that because of the provincial council link, the attack may have been carried out by insurgents who continue to strike at anyone associated with the Iraqi state.

Police said the casualty toll from the funeral attack in Tikrit, 175km (110 miles) north of Baghdad, was expected to increase. Police captain Laith Hamid said council member Saab Abd Bedeiwi, the son of the man for whom the funeral was being held, was among the dead, the Associated Press news agency reported.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

**NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING
SOLDIER**

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

WELCOME TO BAGHDAD: HAVE A NICE DAY



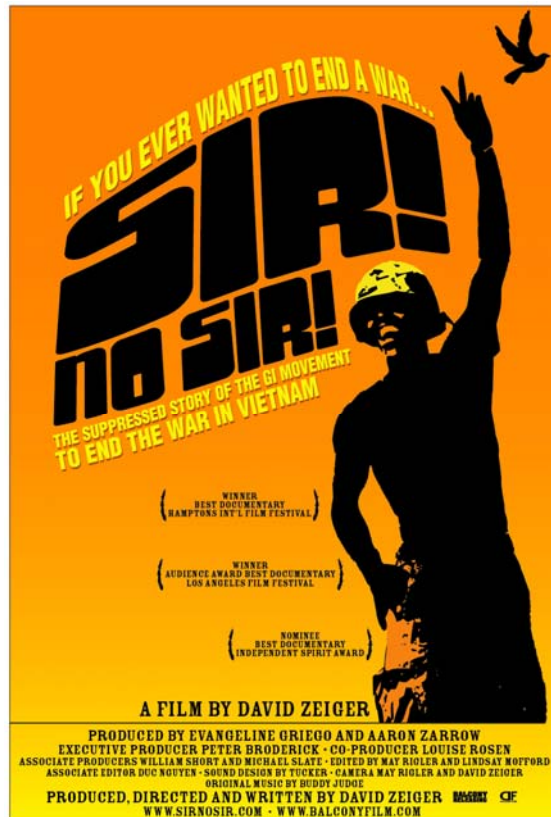
8.5.06: A Mehdi Army soldier during a march in Baghdad condemning the U.S. occupation of Iraq, and Israel. (AFP/Ahmad Al-Rubaye)



[August 06, 2006 Ewa Jasiewicz]

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“Heroic GIs Helped Stop US War Crimes In SE Asia Once Before And They Could Well Do It Again In The Current Madness”



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

August 5 / 6, 2006 By MICHAEL DONNELLY, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

David Zeiger's "Sir! No Sir!" documentary chronicles the "seditious" Anti-war Movement of active duty GI's and their supporters during the Vietnam War.

This lost, er, stolen, from our collective memory Movement had as much or more to do with the US Military Machine's eventual abandonment of its devastating multi-million corpse-creating SE Asian wet dream as did its civilian counterpart.

The film is populated with the GIs and supporters telling their story themselves; no war criminals seeking to remake themselves; no "stars" except for a short take with Jane Fonda, who recently has been apologizing for that famous photo posing with a North Vietnamese anti-aircraft gun.

She certainly has nothing to apologize for concerning her, Donald Sutherland and company's brilliant and well-received FTA ("Fuck the Army") counter-Bob Hope troop tours.

The archival footage of those tours and the thousands of appreciative GIs in the audiences gives ample proof of FTA's and Fonda's true impact.

And, we can certainly be thankful that the self-serving, sonorous John Kerry is nowhere to be found.

Rebellion In The Ranks

This history with the Pentagon itself citing a total of 503,926 "incidents of desertion" from 1966 through 1971 alone; officers being "fragged" (killed by their own troops); and, by 1971, entire units refusing to go into action is brought to life here at a yet another time of Imperial overreach.

Superb archival footage is shrewdly used. though some of it is tough to take, such as shots of entire villages, fields and forests being obliterated.

We see the story of the Presidio 27 unfold and then hear from its vets; prisoners in the San Francisco base's stockade who are threatened with execution for treason when they refuse to work after a mentally-ill fellow prisoner is killed by a shot in the back.

We see the history and hear from the vets of the Ft. Hood 43: Black soldiers who refused to do "riot-control" duty at the 1968 Democratic National Convention; each was sentenced to 18 months hard time. (Can you just imagine if they HAD been there and armed when Mayor Daley's thugs went on their rampage?)

The story is told of how the Long Binh Jail (LBJ was the appropriate nickname for Vietnam's largest prison) was taken over by Black soldiers who held it for two months. Riots broke out at US military prisons all over the world!

Thousands were jailed for refusing combat. Tens of thousands deserted and fled to welcoming nations; primarily Canada, France and Sweden.

Anti-war coffee houses sprung up around military bases. Zeiger himself worked at one of the main ones, the Oleo Strut, started in 1968 outside Ft. Hood, the base with the most sustained GI opposition.

Up to 300 underground anti-war, soldier-run newspapers came out. Underground radio blossomed under the noses of the brass in Vietnam itself, at a time when hit songs like The Animals' We Gotta Get Out of This Place, John Fogerty's Fortunate Son, Edwin Starr's War and Kenny Rogers' Ruby, Don't Take Your Love to Town were banned from official Armed Forces Vietnam Network stations.

The American Serviceman's Union and the Vietnam Veteran's Against the War (VVAW) were formed. On Christmas Eve 1969, 50 GIs even staged an anti-war protest in Saigon!

On January 31, 1971, with funding raised by Fonda, Sutherland, social critic/comedian Dick Gregory, musician/activists David Crosby, Stephen Stills, Graham Nash and Phil Ochs, VVAW held the three day Winter Soldiers Investigation (WSI) in Detroit.

This citizen tribunal of honorably discharged GIs brought to light the enormity of the war crimes still occurring in SE Asia. VVAW also staged the dramatic (maybe, the most dramatic) protest of the era when they threw their medals onto the Capitol steps. The documentary has archival footage of both these events.

Kicking "Vietnam Syndrome" With Myths?

The movie also debunks the intractable "Myth of the Spitting Hippie." You know, it goes like this: valiant GIs return home to America-hating dirty hippies and are spat upon on the tarmac.

Tediously wading through media accounts of the era, the producers cannot find a single instance of any such spitting; though the lie can be traced directly to Sylvester "Rambo" Stallone's whiney use of it in the 1982 movie First Blood.

Returning soldiers first arrived at military airfields, not the San Francisco airport of the myth in the first place!

Sure, they weren't welcomed home with marching bands and all; but the real disgrace ever since has been the abandonment of Viet vets by the government, not the public.

The spitting legend was and is an integral part of the government's playing the "kicking Vietnam Syndrome" card to justify its later incursions in Central America and today in the Middle East.

The fable was amplified during the 1990 run-up to the Middle East Wars, as was the erasure of the very history of this ground-breaking and vital GI movement.

In 1991, after the end of the Persian Gulf stage of the Middle East wars, President Poppy Bush weirdly said, "The ghosts of Vietnam have been laid to rest beneath the sands of the Arabian desert."

Former Assistant Secretary of State and Kerry campaign advisor Richard Holbrooke accused Bill Clinton of caving into "Vietmalia Syndrome" when Bubba quickly withdrew all troops from Somalia after the disastrous Battle of Mogadishu in 1993.

(This fixation with how the public views ineffective military actions undoubtedly cost Holbrooke the Secretary of State job when Clinton replaced Madeline Albright with Warren Christopher in 1997 --- not that "Vietmalia Syndrome" stopped Clinton from blasting the Balkans.)

Just a few months into the disastrous Iraq occupation, General Ricardo Sanchez angrily asserted, "It's not Vietnam and there's no way that you can make the comparison to the quagmire of Vietnam."

Out of the over 100 movies to date about Vietnam, not a one tells the history of the GI anti-war movement.

None mentions the heroic account of navy nurse Susan Schnall, who was jailed after dropping anti-war leaflets from a plane over the Presidio.

None tell the story of Greg Payton (and comrades), one of the organizers of the LBJ revolt.

None tell of Dr. Howard Levy who served three years in jail for refusing to train troops, or the many others who tell their stories here.

See this necessary documentary. Better yet, buy the DVD and send it to an active duty GI you know.

Heroic GIs helped stop US war crimes in SE Asia once before and they could well do it again in the current madness.

**Sir! No Sir!:
At A Theatre Near You!
To find it: <http://www.sirnosir.com/>**

**The Sir! No Sir! DVD is on sale now, exclusively at
www.sirnosir.com.**

Also available will be a Soundtrack CD (which includes the entire song from the FTA Show, "Soldier We Love You"), theatrical posters, tee shirts, and the DVD of "A Night of Ferocious Joy," a film by me about the first hip-hop antiwar concert against the "War on Terror."

MORE:

Ward Reilly, Charter Member, “FTA Army”



“FTA: I Hate This Fucking Place”

August 03, 2006
From: Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace
To: GI Special

I am proud of both my resistance from 71-74, and of my work as a weapons expert in my platoon in Charlie Co. of 1st & 16th (Rangers), which allowed me to get a normal "Honorable Discharge" in spite of all the trouble I caused...being the "Top Gunner" in the Army in 73 and 74 saved my ass more than once...

I stayed in the same platoon for over 30 months, from 1971 until late 1974... it wasn't until "Sir, No Sir!" came out that I really felt extra proud of my trouble making back then, as an organizer, resister, and rabble-rouser.

The first Special Court Martial was for Desertion (myself and 2 other squad members deserted together for 44 days), and the second was for disobeying practically ALL orders, and being generally disrespectful...specifically for disobeying orders and being AWOL from Guard Duty...

In my second SCM, they basically tried to have my suspended sentence of 40 days Hard Labor, which was the sentence from the first SCM, "vacated", and to send me to prison for continuing to be a fuck up...

I was found guilty of Desertion in the first SCM(I plead guilty) and got reduced in rank to E-1 private, 40 days Hard Labor, which was "suspended" (didn't have to go to prison if I kept my nose clean, which I didn't)

I was found Not Guilty in the second SCM....

In both of my Court Martials, my Commanding Officers received reprimands for THEIR actions towards me...which fucked up both of their careers.

The second SCM was because I continued to be a troublemaker after my first Court Martial...

So there you have the roots of my activism... Uncle Sam made me do it!

The photo is the back side my original Army address book, and the "FTA" dog tag I wore for 3 years.

Peace from Ward Reilly,
Charter Member, FTA Army
Fuck The Army!)

THE WELL

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: August 02, 2006

Written by Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, Veterans For Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

THE WELL

You see, the problem is
that I was just talking with Wilson
he was a good kid, he would make silly puns.
We were sitting in a village by a well,
Where are we going ? he asked,
I said, I don't know.
Oh well, he said, looking
down the dark inside of the well.
I liked him.
Then we moved out
and an ambush came down,
they were all over us
bullets were buzzing
like bees attacking
the ground was smoking.
the smell of dead flesh
like a possum
eating the inside
of a bloated dead deer
in summer
and gunpowder
black dirt
and bouncing betty land mines,
I'm guarding our back
while we try to find
our way out.
The Lieutenant wants it
but the soldier
is on all fours
puking his guts out
and CAN NOT
get Wilson's ammo belt off
so I moved him aside
and tried and his stomach
and chest are like jelly
and I CAN NOT GET IT
OFF
and I'm staring at Wilson's brain
where his face used to be
into a well.

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 inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

FOR WHAT?



From: Richard Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: August 03, 2006
Subject: FOR WHAT?

These are the names of American soldiers killed during the Vietnam War--it's called, "The Wall."

Fast forward 30 years and it's the names of American soldiers killed in Iraq.

For What?

For What?

For What?

I'll tell you why--they died for Rich American Corporations who made billions of dollars off of war profiteering.

When it comes to war, business has no conscience.

The war in Iraq

is DEAD, just like it was in Vietnam when I was there.

I never had one conversation with another soldier in Vietnam, about the merits of being in Vietnam.

As a fellow soldier once said to me, "Vietnam Is A Cluster Fuck."

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
August 3, 2006

Don't Trust A Veteran
Who Isn't Angry.

Photo from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

OCCUPATION REPORT

“As Americans Handed Over Responsibilities To The Iraqis, Violence In Baghdad Increased”

In the Baghdad neighborhoods of Dawra and Amariya, for instance, Iraqi soldiers and policemen are often unable to retrieve the bodies of civilians or their own men killed in gun battles because they fear they will be attacked.

August 6, 2006 By DEXTER FILKINS, The New York Times Company [excerpts]

A review of previously unreleased statistics on American and Iraqi patrols suggests that as Americans handed over responsibilities to the Iraqis, violence in Baghdad increased.

In mid-June 2005, Americans conducted an average of 360 patrols a day, according to statistics released by the military. By the middle of February this year, the patrols ran about 92 a day, a drop of more than 70 percent.

The first Iraqi brigade took over a small piece of Baghdad early last year. Now, Iraqi soldiers or police officers take the leading role in securing more than 70 percent of the

city, including its most violent neighborhoods. They control all of Baghdad's 6,000 checkpoints.

Even after the attack on the Askariya shrine in Samarra on Feb. 22 unleashed a wave of sectarian violence, the American patrols remained at a level lower than in the past. At the end of July, Americans were patrolling Baghdad 89 times a day, a quarter of their patrols in mid-June last year.

Thirteen months ago, Baghdad had about 19 daily violent events, like killings. Today, the daily average is 25, an increase of more than 30 percent.

In the Baghdad neighborhoods of Dawra and Amariya, for instance, Iraqi soldiers and policemen are often unable to retrieve the bodies of civilians or their own men killed in gun battles because they fear they will be attacked.

The Americans often have to retrieve the bodies; the insurgents leave them alone.

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

“Demonstrators Burned Tires And Blocked Roads To Protest High Fuel Prices And Poor Living Conditions”



An Iraqi man runs past burning tires put up by demonstrators during a protest, in Chamchamal about 50 kilometers (30 miles) south of Sulaimaniyah, Iraq, Aug. 6, 2006. (AP Photo)

Aug 6, 2006 By RAWYA RAGEH, (AP)

In the Kurdish province of Sulaimaniyah, security forces fired warning shots to disperse hundreds of demonstrators who burned tires and blocked roads to protest high fuel

prices and poor living conditions. Three people were injured in the protest in the town of Chamchamal.

Police Lt. Col. Ahmed Nadir said the protest began peacefully, but then some demonstrators hurled stones, burned tires and attacked shops. Witnesses said the protesters were angry over fuel shortages, high prices and frequent electricity outages.

"This is too much. We demand the regional government improve the services in Chamchamal," said Ahmed Mohammed, 18, a taxi driver. "This is not the first time that we have complained. We started more than a year ago but there is no solution."

OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

COMMENT UNNECESSARY



A Palestinian boy walks among the remains of his family home after it was demolished by Israeli troops at Rafah refugee camp in Gaza strip August 6, 2006. (Ibraheem Abu Mustafa/Reuters)

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

Their Burnt-Out Tanks Litter The Ground, But Few Israeli Troops Can Be Found In Southern Lebanon

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

August 7, 2006 Jonathan Steele in Marwahin, The Guardian [Excerpts]

It is perhaps the world's most dangerous road, snaking up and down through boulder-strewn hills and wadis along the Lebanese-Israeli border.

By Israel's account, its forces are moving between four and six miles beyond it to take control of a long strip of Lebanese territory before the UN security council votes for a cessation of hostilities.

But reporters travelling along the border road on Saturday found few signs of an Israeli presence, let alone success. People in only one village had seen Israeli troops recently. Elsewhere, there was evidence of Israeli failures: burnt-out or crippled tanks.

At the western end of the border road just inland from the headquarters of the UN peacekeeping mission in Lebanon (UNIFIL) at Naqura, Hizbullah fighters were launching Katyusha rockets from positions within three miles of Israel.

Driving east through Alma ech Chaab and Dhaira, reporters could see clusters of antennae and army huts on the Israeli side of the border but no sign of any incursion.

At Marwahin, where the road offers a clear view of the greenhouses and neat red-tiled roofs of the Israeli community of Zarit only 200 yards away, the ground was scarred with tank tracks. A broken metal towing cable lay on the ground, an apparent sign of mishap. Nearby were bits of caterpillar track.

A mile further at the junction of the side-road to Debel a burnt-out Merkava tank was stuck in the trees, its cannon pointing limply downwards.

Here the border runs along the top of a hill where a heavily fortified Israeli base sits cheek by jowl alongside UN monitoring position 5-42, a collection of white trailers and a watchtower inside blast walls.

The road to Debel was littered with more broken tracks and towing cables. Hizbullah's resistance had clearly made its mark.

Beyond the Debel turnoff, reporters could hear a fierce battle for the village of Aita ech Chaab. Israeli shells and tank rounds were pounding it and setting fire to bushes on the hillsides to deny Hizbullah fighters cover.

It is the only place on the north-south border where Israel seemed to be trying to advance.

Israel has not sought to penetrate the next village of Rmeish, which has a Christian population of several hundred.

The last portion of the border before it turns north towards Metulla -the current centre of the fighting - contains the towns of Bint Jbeil and Aitaroun, which Israeli forces tried to take in the first days of the war and then withdrew after losing nine men.

The trip along the border road became possible when Israel allowed a UN convoy to bring food aid to the isolated Christian village of Debel. This was the first access to border villages for 10 days.

Before the convoy set off from UN headquarters, monitors said Israeli forces came in by day but pulled back at night, remaining a few hundred yards inside the border. As a claim to control territory this seemed less than convincing. Israeli troops were still being shot at from villages, the observers said.

The deepest Israeli presence inside Lebanon that the convoy encountered was at Jibbain, a Sunni village two miles from the border.

“They Say They’ve Destroyed Hezbollah, But Hezbollah Remains Where It Was” “If You Ask Me What Is The Strategy, I Don’t Know”

August 5, 2006 By Anthony Shadid, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpts]

QALAOUAY, Lebanon, Aug. 4

The vineyards burned Friday, a white mist wafting over the terraced hillside along this front line. Behind them were the plumes of darker smoke curling into the air, enveloped by the din of war: the insect-like drone of unmanned Israeli aircraft, the whisper of jets, the crash of artillery shells and missiles and, occasionally, the whistle of Hezbollah's rockets.

The valley was the scene of some of the fiercest fighting between Israeli forces and Hezbollah guerrillas Friday. As it was Thursday. And as it was the day before, along a

rugged ribbon of southern Lebanon where the front has often moved by yards rather than miles, a grinding war of attrition that U.N. officials say may remain unresolved before a truce takes hold.

"They say they've destroyed Hezbollah, but Hezbollah remains where it was," said Hussein Rumeiti, the leader of a nearby village, pointing at the pillars of clouds rising near the town of Taibe. "There's the proof."

He stood with a knot of men, nodding at his words. Success, they said, was measured not in land, but in time.

Two days, Rumeiti said, "and they haven't taken Taibe."

Three weeks into Israel's war with Hezbollah, its forces are still fighting along a wrinkled strip of territory that stretches 50 yards to more than three miles inside Lebanon, far short of a zone Israeli forces said would soon expand deeper inside the country all along the border.

U.N. officials said they estimate that at this pace, with guerrilla battles still pitched in border towns, Israel would need another month to reach the Litani River, a push that Israel's defense minister has urged his top army commanders to prepare for.

The officials said that Israel probably has destroyed 40 or so of Hezbollah's positions along the 49-mile border, but that the group's communications remain intact, with messages passed between guerrilla leaders in different regions. The Hezbollah fighters still seem to have freedom of movement across terrain they know intuitively; one was sighted in Bint Jbeil on Monday, another in Qalaouay on Friday. The officials estimate Hezbollah could keep firing missiles into Israel for four more weeks.

"If they continue the same tactics, I doubt they'll be able to drink champagne before four or five weeks," said Ryszard Morczynski, the political affairs officer for the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon, which patrols the border.

"The victory is clear," Rumeiti added, his moped parked next to him in the town square. "Israel says they've destroyed the infrastructure of Hezbollah. What has been destroyed are the houses, the lives of civilians, the bridges and the roads."

Jamal Sarhan, a 34-year-old friend, drew on the 1982 invasion, one of the most devastating chapters of Lebanon's 1975-90 civil war. "In the past Israel occupied the south in six days," he said. "Now, after 24 days, they haven't occupied a single village." U.N. officials believe the slow pace of the Israeli advance is designed to minimize casualties among the 10,000 soldiers.

The advance has left Israeli troops in control of the border region, but confounded the U.N. officials who have tracked the fighting: Hezbollah has continued to fire missiles, and the Israeli military seems reluctant to occupy much territory in what it has described as an effort to eliminate Hezbollah's armed presence across the frontier.

"We see what they're doing on the ground," Morczynski said. "If you ask me what is the strategy, I don't know."

Israeli officials have said they control 20 villages along the border. Morczynski said Israeli troops were present in probably eight or nine villages, with varying degrees of control over the torn hinterland.

"Of course they are capable of taking 20 villages in two days if they want," he said. "The problem is at what cost."

He added, "Everything is a matter of time and resources you commit. If you have a lot of time and put your entire army in southern Lebanon, there would be no question who would be the winner of this war. But it's a question of time and resources and the willingness to accept casualties in greater numbers than there are so far."

He dismissed talk of occupying southern Lebanon to the Litani River, an advance that would risk extending Israeli supply lines and put them in fixed positions that would be most vulnerable to the kind of guerrilla raids that Hezbollah favors.

"Militarily, it's not possible to occupy that much land, judging from what we've seen so far," he said.

So far in the conflict, Israel and the United States have scaled back their ambitions -- from disarming or even destroying Hezbollah in the early days to the more modest aim now of creating a frontier that would push the militia back from the border.

The growing signs that Hezbollah will emerge from the fighting intact, though battered, have already inspired its portrayal of the war as a victory, by everyone from its grass-roots activists to the senior leadership.

"Entire brigades are facing off with small groups of resistance fighters," the group's leader, Hasan Nasrallah, said in a speech broadcast Thursday on al-Manar television. "This is a miracle by any measure."

The Sunni Muslim village was not a Hezbollah stronghold, nor was there any affection for Israel. They were especially angry at the soldier who had shown up daily with a loudspeaker. They recalled his message: "Get out of this town, or we'll bring the houses down on your head." He shouted sometimes at 10 p.m., sometimes 9 p.m. or 3 p.m. For two days, he hadn't come.

A rocket was fired, one of many this morning. "Did you hear that?" Abu Ali asked. "Wait for a little while."

It detonated in the valley behind them, a crash that echoed. No one flinched.

"You see," he said.

"Thirty years," the matriarch said. "We have experience."

For a moment, she disappeared, wearing a baseball cap that read "Dutch Boy" over her veil. She returned a few minutes later, with a smile, and offered three roses -- red, dark pink and blood orange.

"Don't think I'm giving you the flowers for a funeral," she said. "I'm giving them as a wish for your safety."

Abu Ali looked on, in a moment that seemed somehow tranquil.

"God willing, it will return to the way things were before," he said. "When there's a cease-fire, it will be back as it was."

UNCONQUERED UNCONQUERABLE



A Lebanese man flashes a V-sign as he walks out of the scene where Israeli jets fired missiles at the southern suburbs of Beirut, Lebanon, Aug. 6, 2006. (AP Photo/Hussein Malla)

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

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