

## GI SPECIAL 415:



“Stay The Course”

**“I Am Devastated. Feel I  
Need The Truth”**

**Mother Of 10th Mountain  
Soldier KIA Appealing For  
Information:**

**“I Was Told One Version By 3 Military  
Upper Command. And, Then I Was**

# Told Another Version Through "The Grapevine"

From: Cheryl Nussberger  
To: GI Special  
Sent: September 04, 2006

I pulled your e-mail address of the site GI Special.

**I fell across it while searching articles regarding my son KIA Gowardesh Afghanistan 6/21/06.**

**My son's name is SSG Patrick L. Lybert. He was serving with the 1 3-71 Cav, 10th Mountain Division.**

I am not that skilled with the computer.

**I am desperately seeking specific news regarding what actually happened during the conflict he was killed in.**

**Do you have anything specific submitted regarding that? If so could you e-mail it to me.**

**I was told one version by 3 military upper command. And, then I was told another version through "the grapevine".**

**I am devastated.**

**Feel I need the truth.**

**If you have some info, truthful, valid only. Please relay it to me.**

Thank you,  
Cheryl

## Reply

GI Special has readers deployed to the wars overseas, and your request for information will be posted.

To protect you from stupid people and other harassment, GI Special will not print your email address, unless you wish that posted.

**Anyone with information can write to GI Special at the email address upper left, front page , and that information will be forwarded on to you.**

***Further, absolutely security will be enforced to protect the identity of the writer, nor will any response to your request be published in GI Special.***

Unfortunately, there is a long record of misinformation given to the families of those killed in these wars. Here is an article about that.

Respect & condolences,

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**MORE:**

## **Army Abuses Families Of Friendly-Fire Casualties: “It Makes Me Ashamed Of The United States Army” “I Served Proudly For 23 Years And I, To This Day, Can’t Believe We Were Treated Like That”**

**Ritter, of Avon, Minn., said a soldier who was with her brother during the ambush was not allowed to tell them that Hellermann died by friendly fire. The soldier became a family friend because he is a fellow Minnesotan, and after he left the Army he was able to tell the family what happened, she said.**

September 04, 2006 By Michelle Tan, Army Times Staff writer [Excerpts]

Sgt. Donald Oaks Jr., 20, 3rd Infantry Division, killed April 3, 2003, in Iraq in an F-15 bombing.

Pfc. Jesse Buryj died 13 days after Cpl. Pat Tillman. Just as his enlistment in the Army attracted none of the fanfare the former pro football player’s did, his funeral was a quiet family service, a world apart from the nationally televised memorial for Tillman.

**But in both cases, their loved ones initially were told they died either by enemy fire or during movement to evade hostile action. And in both cases, the families only learned later that the truth was far different from what they were told.**

Their experiences are common among the family members of troops who died in friendly fire, those killed by their comrades rather than the enemy.

**Many of these family members told Army Times of deep frustrations with the casualty-notification system and months or years of depressing delays in getting answers to explain the deaths of their loved ones.**

Les Nott and his wife, Raffaella, traveled to Fort Hood, Texas, in May 2004. They spent about 10 days there, together with Leif Nott's wife, Melanie.

They finally learned bits and pieces of what happened to their son from a soldier with him on the night he was killed. Sgt. Mickey Anderson had been badly injured in the same incident that killed Nott.

On July 30, 2003, in Balad Ruz, about 40 miles northeast of Baghdad, Leif Nott, Anderson and two other soldiers were tasked to bring an interpreter to a group of soldiers waiting in two Bradley armored vehicles. They were investigating gunshots from a nearby neighborhood.

Turns out the gunshots were to celebrate a wedding, Les Nott said.

**The soldiers, with help from Leif Nott and his team, responded on foot and confiscated an AK47 and detained three men. While walking back, other soldiers at the base mistook their comrades for the enemy and opened fire, killing Nott. Anderson and one other soldier were wounded.**

**But Nott's family was given none of the details. They finally decided to ask their representatives in congress for help in learning what happened.**

**The Army, after prodding from the politicians, reopened the investigation into the incident, Les Nott said.**

"I believe they knew that the investigation wasn't complete," he said. "They knew that there were questions that hadn't been answered, questions that hadn't been asked and should've been asked. It had already been almost a year, and they just preferred to believe it was over, better not talk about it."

On Jan. 22, 2005, the Nott family finally got a full briefing from the Army about how their son died.

**"It makes me ashamed of the United States Army," Les Nott said. "I served proudly for 23 years and I, to this day, can't believe we were treated like that."**

**Chief Warrant Officer 2 Stanley Harriman, of Wade, N.C., died March 2, 2002, in Afghanistan when an AC-130 hit his convoy after mistaking it for the enemy.**

**But his wife, Sheila, was told he was killed by enemy mortar fire, according to a report by CBS news.**

**A few weeks later, a reporter from a local television station knocked on her door. He told her the Army was investigating her husband's death as possible fratricide. That was the first time she had heard that her husband was a possible victim of friendly fire, CBS reported.**

**Members of Staff Sgt. Brian Hellermann's family didn't know for almost two years that he had been killed by friendly fire.**

Hellermann, of Freeport, Minn., and Pfc. Kyle Gilbert of Brattleboro, Vt., both members of the 82nd Airborne Division, were killed when they were caught in crossfire during an ambush Aug. 6, 2003, in Baghdad.

“Why didn’t they tell us off the bat?” asked Sue Ritter, Hellermann’s sister.

**Ritter, of Avon, Minn., said a soldier who was with her brother during the ambush was not allowed to tell them that Hellermann died by friendly fire.**

**The soldier became a family friend because he is a fellow Minnesotan, and after he left the Army he was able to tell the family what happened, she said.**

Ritter said Hellermann’s wife, Michelle, also went to the Army, demanding information about his death.

“To me, honestly, it doesn’t matter if it was enemy fire or friendly fire. It’s still war. It still happened. Nothing can change it. However, I don’t think (the Army) should’ve played the game like that,” Ritter said. “You go through that healing thing and for them to come back with all that extra stuff, it makes you go through it again. It just brings it all back up.”

First Lt. Ken Ballard, 26, a fourth-generation soldier, enlisted in the Army after high school and became a tank loader.

“He talked about green Army men, he drew tank battles,” said his mother, Karen Meredith of Mountain View, Calif. “He loved being a soldier.”

Two years later, Ballard decided to go to college, and in May 2002 he was commissioned as an officer. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 37th Armor, 1st Armored Division, in Germany, the same unit he belonged to as an enlisted soldier.

Ballard got to Iraq on May 12, 2003. On April 3, 2004, almost a year after arriving in Iraq, Ballard and his unit turned in their weapons and prepared to go home. But fierce firefights broke out in the Sadr City neighborhood of Baghdad, their area of operations, and the unit’s 12-month deployment was extended by three months.

“They were in battle every single day, sometimes lasting up to seven hours,” Meredith said. “We had planned his welcome-home party for May 22, and he was killed on May 30.”

When he died, “every deal I made with God was off,” she said. “Every prayer was unanswered, and I just didn’t know what my life was going to be. We were on our own since he was 10 months old, so we were a team.”

**When officials notified Meredith of her son’s death, they said he was killed by enemy fire. Two days later, they said it was a single gunshot wound to the head, she said.**

Her casualty assistance officer never contacted her again after her son’s memorial service 10 days after his death, Meredith said.”

**It took five months to get Ballard's personal effects, and she didn't get his death certificate for about 100 days, she said.**

**Meredith was told to file a Freedom of Information Act request for the incident report and the autopsy.**

"I just wanted to know what happened that night," Meredith said. "His unit was still in Iraq. His friends were still there."

**Fifteen months after her son's death and after seeking help from her local congresswoman, Meredith finally learned how her son died.**

**"Imagine, here I've moved on (with) my life 15 months, and all of a sudden my scab is ripped open, my heart is ripped open," Meredith said. "We're talking about our little boys. The Tillman family has had to go through this for almost two years, too."**

On that faraway battlefield on May 30, 2005, it was late, almost midnight. The soldiers were in battle, and they were about to pull out, Meredith said. Ballard's tank provided cover fire so the rest of the platoon could back up the tanks and leave the area.

Ballard was standing in the commander's hatch when the tank backed into a tree, Meredith said. The tree branch engaged the unmanned M240 machine gun on the tank, causing it to fire on Ballard, killing him.

**Ballard's actions that night saved 60 lives, Meredith said the Army told her at his memorial service.**

**All she wanted was to know what really happened, Meredith said.**

**"You can't treat Army families like that," she said. "If somebody knows the truth, you have to tell us."**

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Two Marines Killed In Al Anbar**

Sept. 4, 2006 Multi-National Corps Press Release No. 20060904-03

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq: Two Marines assigned to Regimental Combat Team 5 died Sept. 3 due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province.

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### **Two British Soldiers Killed Near Basra,**

# Two Wounded

09/04/06 Telegraph Group Limited & MOD

The Ministry of Defence announced two soldiers were killed. The soldiers died following an attack on a British patrol near the town of Ad Dayr, north of Basrah City this morning. Two soldiers were injured - one critically - in the attack in Basra, southern Iraq.

Their patrol is understood to have been struck by a roadside bomb and small arms fire.

**There has been criticism of vehicles used by British forces in Iraq for lacking sufficient armour to withstand increasingly sophisticated roadside bombs.**

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## Stryker Soldier Killed By Mosul IED

Sept. 4, 2006 Multi-National Corps Press Release No. No. 20060904-05

TIKRIT, Iraq: A Soldier from the 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division died Sunday from wounds sustained after his vehicle was struck by an IED near Mosul.

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## U.S. Soldier Killed By IED Near Baqubah

Sept. 4, 2006 MNF RELEASE No. No. 20060904-10

TIKRIT, Iraq – A Soldier from the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division was killed by an IED yesterday near Baqubah.

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## Soldier Dies Of Non-Combat Related Causes

Sept. 4, 2006 MNF RELEASE No. 20060904-06

CAMP ANACONDA, Iraq: A 15th Sustainment Brigade Soldier died of non-combat injuries during the early morning hours on Sep. 4.

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## Wisconsin Soldier Killed

August 30, 2006 By Hal Bernton and Christine Clarridge, Seattle Times staff reporters

Defense Department officials on Tuesday announced the deaths of Spc. Kenneth Cross, 21, of Superior, Wis., and Pfc. Daniel Dolan, 19, of Roy, Utah.

Cross, who served as a Stryker driver, dropped out of high school and earned a General Educational Development certificate because he wanted to go right into the service, his parents told The Daily Telegram in Superior, Wis.

Cross met his wife, Heidi Cross of Steilacoom, through an online dating service and the two soon married.

"He treated me like a queen and an angel. I don't think we ever had a bad moment," she said. She said she spoke to her husband two hours before his death and was grateful she had a chance to tell him she loved him.

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



US soldiers patrol the Baghdad neighborhood of Ameriyah on 28 August 2006.  
(AFP/File/Ali al-Saadi)

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**AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**



# **General Admits His Troops Are In Deep Shit: British Soldier Killed In Kabul, Another Wounded; Two More Occupation Troops Wounded, Nationality Not Announced**

**Gen Sir Richard Dannatt, the new chief of the general staff, was reported last night as saying that his soldiers were fighting at the limit of their capacity.**

**"We are running hot, certainly running hot," he said. "Can we cope? I pause, I say 'just'."**

09/04/06 Telegraph Group Limited

A bomber targeted a NATO convoy in Kabul, killing one British soldier and seriously wounding another.

**Gen Sir Richard Dannatt, the new chief of the general staff, was reported last night as saying that his soldiers were fighting at the limit of their capacity.**

**"We are running hot, certainly running hot," he said. "Can we cope? I pause, I say 'just'."**

This morning's incident in Kabul occurred when four-wheel drive vehicle loaded with explosives was driven into a NATO convoy.

Four Afghans were also killed in the attack, and two other NATO troops - not thought to be British - were lightly wounded.

The Ministry of Defence said in a statement today: "We can confirm that a UK military convoy has been attacked by a suspected suicide bomber in Kabul at approximately 10.30 local time this morning.

"Sadly, one UK soldier has been killed and another very seriously injured as a result of this attack.

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# Foreign Occupation Troops Attacked By Foreign Occupation Aircraft; One Dead, “Others” Wounded

Sept. 4 (Xinhua)

One ISAF soldier was killed and some others wounded in a friendly fire incident Monday morning in the southern Kandahar province, said a statement of the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

The incident occurred at 5:30 a.m. local time (0100 GMT) in Panjwai district in Operation Medusa, which was launched by about 2,000 ISAF and Afghan troops on Saturday to wipe out Taliban militants there, it said.

Some ISAF troops, who were engaged in fighting at close range with Taliban insurgents, called for and received close air support, according to the statement.

**Two ISAF aircraft provided the support but regrettably engaged friendly forces during a strafing run, using cannons, killing one ISAF soldier and injuring some others. The statement didn't say the exact number of the wounded.**

**The soldiers' nationality is yet to be announced, while ISAF said an investigation into the incident is under way.**

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## Already More Foreign Occupation Troops Killed Than In All Of 2005

September 4, 2006 By NOOR KHAN, AP

The weekend's fatalities increased the total of foreign troops killed in Afghanistan so far this year beyond the 130 who died during all of 2005 -- an indication of the escalation in violence sparked by an upsurge in Taliban attacks.

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## Assorted Resistance Action

Sept. 4 (Xinhua)

Two policemen were killed and three others injured as Taliban militants raided two districts in Afghanistan's southeast Paktika province early Monday morning, a local official said.

"A large number of Taliban insurgents attacked the districts of Yusuf Khil and Yahya Khil, which are close to Pakistani border at 1:00 a.m. and police fought back," deputy provincial police chief Shah Mohammad Spand told Xinhua.

Spand said a number of rebels were also killed in the 3-hour clash, but he failed to give the exact number.

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

## **“The Death Of Boneca Ripped The Lid Off Dissent Brewing Just Below The Surface In The Canadian Military” Soldier “Was Disillusioned With The Military And The Mission In Afghanistan”**

7.16.06 Socialist Worker By Doug Nesbitt (Canada) [Excerpts]

The Canadian body bags are starting to pile up as our part in the occupation of Afghanistan meets stiffer resistance.

July 22, Corporal Francisco Gomez, 44, and Corporal Jason Patrick Warren, 29, were killed when a car packed with explosives rammed their armoured vehicle. Eight other Canadian Forces personnel were injured.

This followed hard on the heels of the death, July 9, of Corporal Anthony Joseph Boneca, 21, of Thunder Bay. A reservist, he was killed in a gun battle with resistance fighters some 25 kilometres west of Kandahar.

**The death of Boneca ripped the lid off dissent brewing just below the surface in the Canadian military.**

**William Babe said that his nephew Boneca, was disillusioned with the military and the mission in Afghanistan, and that he wanted to return to Canada and return to school in the fall. Babe had spoken to Boneca over the phone shortly before his death.**

“He said, ‘Uncle Bill, it’s not like it was on TV’ and ‘I would never do this again.’”

“I don’t think he believed totally in what he was doing because I think he saw things he didn’t expect to see and didn’t want to see and probably did things he didn’t want to do.”

**Babe said he wanted Canada to pull its troops out of Afghanistan, calling his nephew’s death a “horrible waste”.**

Boneca’s fiancée, Megan DeCorte, confirmed Babe’s testimony. She added that Boneca had spoken to an army chaplain about pretending to be suicidal in an effort to be discharged.

Megan DeCorte’s father, Larry DeCorte, said Boneca felt misled and mistreated by the military.

**“All that went on and the treatment they were getting by the Canadian army and by the people over there, wasn’t what he bargained for ... they’d go out on tours ... they’d be out for 22 days, not enough rations, not enough water. The people of Canada have to realize this kind of stuff, that they’ve been treated like that.”**

Larry DeCorte has called on [Prime Minister] Harper to withdraw troops from Afghanistan.

**Boneca did not go public with his views and his close friends and family only went public after his death.**

**This is an indication that opposition to the war exists in the Canadian military hut has yet to take on a public expression.**

<p><b>This is certainly true in regards to Harper’s support of Israel. A Canadian soldier of Lebanese descent present at a protest against Israeli aggression told Socialist Worker that he was disgusted with Harper’s support of Israel and had come to the protest, although military personnel are forbidden to do so.</b></p>
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Following Boneca’s death, this anti-war opposition increased.

**A Globe & Mail/CTV poll taken in midJuly reveals 41 per cent of Canadians (54% in Quebec), support an immediate withdrawal of troops.**

Another 34 per cent support a Canadian presence for a limited period of two years. The poll also finds that 48 per cent feel the war is going worse than expected while only 12 per cent say it is going better.

**Most importantly, a clear 56 per Cent of Canadians are now opposed to the mission compared to 39 per cent in support.**

All the elements of the Iraq war are starting to surface in the Canadian mission in Afghanistan.

And now we finally see the cracks within the Canadian military.

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.

## TROOP NEWS

# Even The New York Daily News Turns Hard Against The War

[Time was, not too long ago, when this rabidly pro-war paper couldn't heap enough scorn on anybody and everybody who objected to the war. But they have to sell papers and guess what: their working class New York City readers hate Bush, and the war, and a lot more too. So now, this. T]

## Minorities Pay Heavy Toll In Iraq

September 3rd, 2006 New York Daily News

**It is unfortunate that 38 young New Yorkers have already been killed in the Iraq war.**

**And now that, in full electoral mode, President Bush, Vice President Cheney and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld are again trying to put the blindfold back over the eyes of Americans, only God knows how many more will be lost.**

That is why a three-part series by Eva Sanchis, a reporter for the Spanish-language daily El Diario-La Prensa, published last month, is so important.

**Sanchis shines a powerful light on the disproportionate contribution in blood and guts of immigrant and minority communities to this senseless war.**

**According to her second article, dated Aug. 29, of the 38 New Yorkers killed, 21 were Hispanic, eight black, four Asian and five white.**

"The impact of the war on minority communities has been brutal," Sanchis said. The figures "confirm that minorities are making a greater sacrifice."

**A large number of the dead are immigrants, although the rabid anti-immigration crowd conveniently ignores this fact.**

Directly related to this tragic toll are Sanchis' findings about how intense recruitment efforts are in minority communities.

"An analysis of the location of the Armed Forces' 26 recruitment centers in the city, listed in their Web page, show that most are located in the poorest neighborhoods."

Recruiters find fertile ground there.

"Poor young people need work, training, scholarships, but these are so scarce that they join the military not realizing that this is an institution created for war and not an employment program," said Anne Durston, of the pacifist organization American Friends Service Committee.

Three of the five recruitment centers in the Bronx are in the South Bronx; six of eight in Brooklyn are in Crown Heights, Flatbush, East Flatbush, Fort Green, East New York and Greenpoint, and the four in Queens are in the immigrant neighborhoods of Elmhurst, Flushing, Jamaica and Long Island City. In Manhattan, three of six centers are in Hispanic and black areas.

In Morris Heights, in the South Bronx, 58 people joined one of the three branches in 2004.

**"Yet, in the upper East Side, the richest neighborhood in the city, which is 77% white and has a per-capita income of \$67,010, only seven people enlisted in 2004," Sanchis said. Not one center is located in this area.**

An Armed Forces spokesperson told Sanchis that they "are not trying to go after any specific ethnic groups."

But Sanchis disagrees.

She quotes 2004 Defense Department statistics published by the American Friends Service Committee's Peacework Magazine: Although 51% of city residents are Hispanic and black, a whopping 70.4% of the recruits in 2004 belonged to these two groups. Hispanics made up 37% of the recruits and blacks 33.4%.

The series struck a nerve with El Diario readers. Sanchiz has received an inordinate amount of e-mails and phone calls. Some, like a Dominican father who we will not identify, shared their own bitter experience with the recruitment tactics.

"My only son was seduced three months ago and joined, but by what I read in his letters he is tired of the Army. I don't know where they are sending him.

**"The sergeant who recruited him told me that it would be for only three months.**

**"From the day he left I have been in great pain, he is my only son. I would like to get in touch with some groups that oppose this kind of recruitment. Please, send me their addresses if at all possible. Thank you."**

Let Sanchis' findings be a wakeup call for immigrant and minority young people and their parents all over the city.

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# **“When You See Us Out On The Streets, Don’t Mistake Our Protesting To Be Against Any Of You”**

**NEWSLETTER TO OUR TROOPS  
August, 2006**

**MILITARY MOMS AGAINST THE WAR  
 (“MMAW”)**

**BRING OUR TROOPS HOME NOW!**

Letter from a Peace Mother

My son is currently serving in the 1-25 Weapons Company and I am so proud of him I sometimes can't even say it out loud.

He's a young man of privilege who signed up for various reasons, as all of you did, but one main reason was because he felt it was not fair for only poor kids to have to go into the military because it is one of the few ways left to get ahead nowadays. He didn't need to go in to get his education - he joined after he graduated from college. And that is why I am a Peace Mother, and, frankly, a protester.

Please don't tune me out just yet.

There is something very important that I want to say to all you marines and others reading this.

You see, I feel that you soldiers who all are serving our country so honorably have a right to expect respect from our politicians. And, I don't think you are getting it.

You have all volunteered to take a huge risk by becoming marines - knowing full well that you could be called to make the ultimate sacrifice. And, you know I what? You have the right to be sent into battle only when it is worth it.

I don't know about you all, but I don't think that getting rid of Saddam Hussein was worth the risk you are taking.

From all accounts, all the WMD's were removed in 1992 after the 1st Gulf War, and President Bush did not even wait for the inspectors to finish their job and make a report before he attacked.

There was no good reason that I can think of that we went in the first place, except that the oil companies are right now making obscene profits - the biggest quarterly profits ever recorded by any company anywhere.

I don't think the building of 1,000 schools in Iraq is worth the risk to your lives.

And I don't believe that my son's life is worth 100 brand new democracies.

**And I certainly don't think he should make the ultimate sacrifice so that Exxon Mobile can make over 10 BILLION DOLLARS profit in ONE QUARTER!!!!**

What I really want to say here is that I belong to three different peace groups and I participate in three separate actions each week trying to bring about awareness in my small town so that citizens will make the right choices in November - and I believe we have to vote on one issue, and that is the war.

By being out on the streets holding my sign I am not in any way, shape or form disrespecting you soldiers. I am trying to support you.

All the members of all three of my groups feel exactly the same way. And, I think all over the country the peace protestors feel the same way.

This is not Vietnam. We know that you have no choice but to be where you are and to try and survive.

I know this because of my son, and I want him to do whatever is necessary to get out of Iraq in one piece and to help his buddies do the same.

**So, please, when you see us out on the streets, don't mistake our protesting to be against any of you. We are there on the streets because of you, because we love and support all of you, but most of all because we respect the choices you made and feel you deserve the respect of our current administration and we feel you are not getting it.**

Sincerely and with Gratitude to All of You,

Annie  
MilitaryFamiliesSpeakOut.org (mfso.org)  
NashuaPeace.org  
MoveOn.org

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**VA SPENT \$348 MILLION ON TRAVEL  
IN 2005:**



# [And Congress Is Proposing To Cut Money For Combat Vets With Brain Injuries]

09-03-06 VA Watchdog dot Org: VA NEWS FLASH

Air fares, hotels, rental cars, meals and other expenses total more than one-third of a billion dollars.

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## Pentagon Scum Fighting Idea Of Paying Reservists For War Duty By Lowering Retirement Age

September 04, 2006, Editorial, army Times

**After four years of congressional torpor on the issue of lowering the age at which reservists can draw retirement pay, the patience of military advocacy groups is wearing thin.**

Broadsides are being fired at lawmakers over their inability to make headway on this high-profile issue, and they are justified. Various proposals have been floating around the congressional ether in one form or another since at least 2002, yet somehow they always seem to fall by the wayside.

The most recent proposal would tie a lower reserve retirement pay age, as low as 55, to the length of time a reservist spends mobilized in support of the war on terrorism or some other contingency.

**The Pentagon hates the whole idea of lowering the reserve retirement pay age, saying it would erode retention.**

**In truth, however, defense officials are concerned about a huge new personnel funding liability at a time when they have been striving to minimize retiree personnel costs.**

That's not good enough. This is a fairness issue in that reservists are the only federal employees who must wait until age 60 to see any retirement pay. Federal civilians get their full annuity at age 55, and active-duty members, of course, can cash in as young as age 37.

Ideally, a lower retirement pay age would apply to all reservists. But if targeting those who have been mobilized for lengthy periods is the best that can be done right now, then let's follow through on that.

Pushing ahead on lowering the reserve retirement pay age is one of the most powerful statements Congress could make in support of the hundreds of thousands of National Guard and reserve members who have stepped up, done their duty and fulfilled all expectations in the war on terrorism.

It's past time to make progress on this issue.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

### **The War In Iraq**

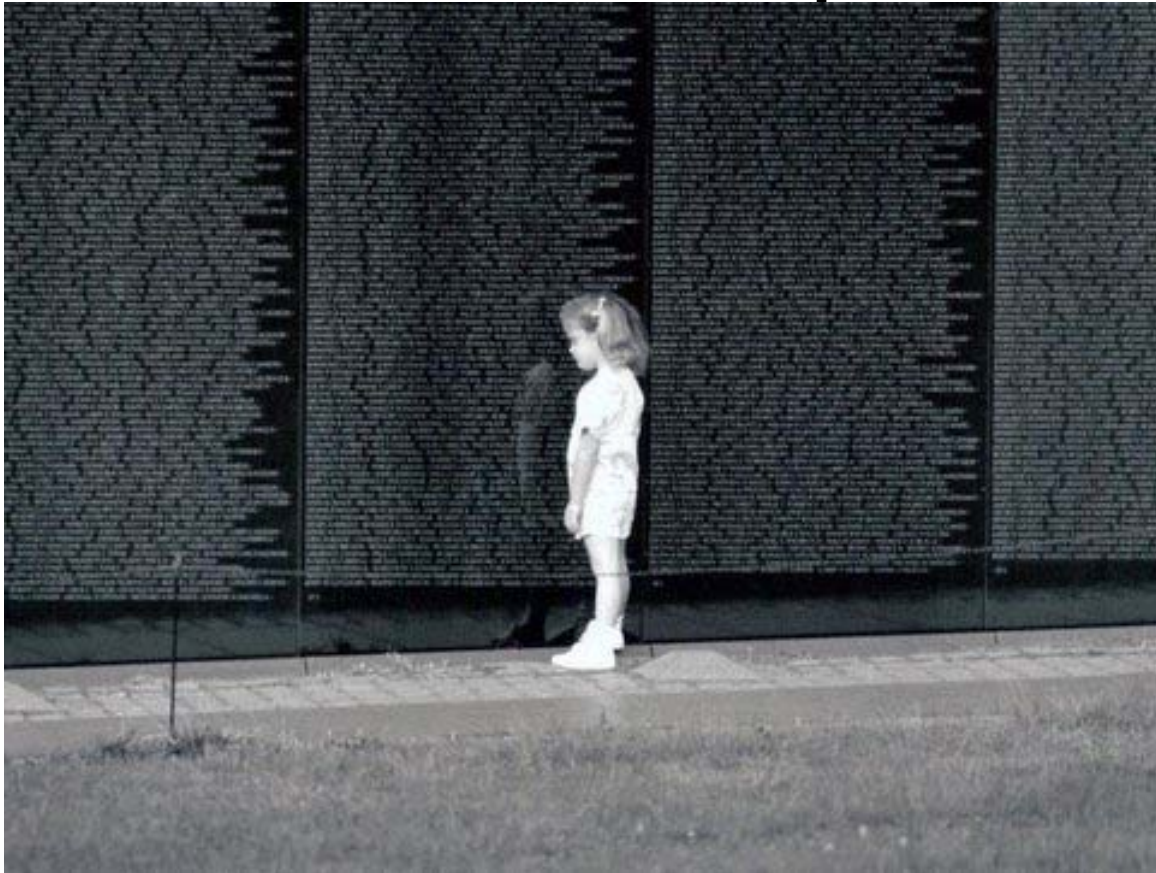


Photo from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: ([hastiemike@earthlink.net](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T)

From: Richard Hastie, Vietnam Veteran  
To: GI Special  
Sent: August 27, 2006

## The War In Iraq

As God walks atop this Wall and weeps,  
I hear him say, "These were my sons."  
The sound of his tears fall silenced,  
As hands are washed in the Potomac,  
And it runs red with waste!  
The Pontius Pilates of the new Rome,  
Repeat history on full automatic.

Nicholas James Weber  
Vietnam Veteran

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## OCCUPATION REPORT

### **“The Resistance Is Fighting Basically A Military War And It Is Winning”**

08/30/06 By John Pilger, Johnpilger.com [Excerpt]

In Iraq, in contrast to the embedded lie that the killings are now almost entirely sectarian, 70 per cent of the 1,666 bombs exploded by the resistance in July were directed against the American occupiers and 20 per cent against the puppet police force. Civilian casualties amounted to 10 per cent.

In other words, unlike the collective punishment meted out by the US, such as the killing of several thousand people in Fallujah, the resistance is fighting basically a military war and it is winning.

That truth is suppressed, as it was in Vietnam.

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

## OCCUPATION PALESTINE/LEBANON

# **“Powerless To Confront This Human Wave, The Israelis Abandoned Their Positions And Began Fleeing To The Border”**

08/30/06 By John Pilger, Johnpilger.com [Excerpts]

What Vandana Shiva calls an "insurrection of subjugated knowledge" is on the rise in Britain and across the world, perhaps as never before, thanks to a revived internationalism aided by new technologies.

**Whereas Reagan could get away with many of his lies, Bush and Blair cannot. People know too much.**

In Lebanon, the pattern continues.

An armed resistance a few thousand strong has humbled the fifth-most powerful army in the world, which is supplied and backed by the superpower. That much we know.

**What is not known is the extraordinary and decisive part played by the unarmed people of southern Lebanon.**

**Reported as a trail of victims, the spectacle of people heading back to their homes was an epic act of defiance and resistance.**

**On 13 August, as the Israeli army advanced in southern Lebanon, they warned people not to return to their homes.**

**This was defied almost to a man, woman and child, who abandoned the refugee centres and headed south, jamming the roads and flashing victory signs.**

**An eyewitness, Simon Assaf, described "gangs of local men along the route clear paths by dragging away the piles of electrical cable, rubble and twisted metal that littered the highway. A new stream of cars would rapidly form through every breach in the rubble. There were no army or police . . . it was the locals who directed traffic, guided cars past dangerous craters and pushed buses up dirt tracks around collapsed bridges.**

**“As they neared their homes, the refugees would form great processions. Town after town, village after village was reclaimed. Powerless to confront this human wave, the Israelis abandoned their positions and began fleeing to the border. This flood of people emerged out of an unprecedented mass movement that grew up across the country as the bombs rained down.”**

The Lebanese resistance, armed and unarmed, is from the same wellspring as other movements throughout the world.

Each has learned to put aside its sectarian differences in the face of a common enemy - rampant empire and its proxies.

In Bolivia, Latin America's poorest country, the first government of indigenous people since their enslavement by Spain was elected by a landslide this year, after hundreds of thousands of unarmed campesinos and former miners faced the guns of an army sent by the oligarchic dictator, Gonzalo Sánchez de Lozada. Marching on La Paz, the capital, they forced him to flee to the United States, where he had sent his millions.

This followed a mass resistance to the privatising of the water supply of Cochabamba, Bolivia's second city, and its takeover by a consortium dominated by the mighty Bechtel company. Now Bechtel, too, has been forced to flee.

Here in the west, as people abandon the political parties they once thought were theirs, there is much to learn from resistance movements in dangerous places and their tactics of informed direct action.

**There is no difference in principle between the people's movement that saw off the Israeli invaders and the stirring of people everywhere as they become aware of the real meaning of the ambitions and hypocrisy of Bush and his vassal, who want us to be ever fearful of and cowed by "terrorism" when, in truth, the greatest terrorists of all are them.**

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## **Loathsome Zionist Cowards Couldn't Beat Hezbollah, So They Beat Young Palestinians With Hezbollah Music**

30 August 2006 Palestine News Network

The popularity of Hezbollah's Secretary General Hassan Nasrallah remains fixed in the minds of Israeli soldiers, as their actions at checkpoints indicate.

**The days of detaining Palestinians with photos of Nasrallah as their mobile phone screen savers, or celebratory cassettes in their cars, are not over.**

**At the northern West Bank's Zatará Checkpoint, Israeli forces stopped three young men listening to one of the most popular songs written in Palestine on their car stereo.**

**An Israeli soldier ordered the young people to disembark as soon as he heard the song "The Hawk of Lebanon" coming from their car.**

Ala' Abu Al Haija, from the band Firkat al Shamal, wrote the song after watching footage of the Israeli attack on Qana which killed tens of people in the southern Lebanese town, including many children.

"I hail thee, hawk of Lebanon  
I welcome thee, Hassan Nasrallah  
Here are your men, Hezbollah  
Victory, victory with the help of God.  
Nasrallah, this brave person  
He responded to the calls to take vengeance  
The Arab blood became hotter and hotter  
The boldness and the courage that characterizes this battle is an Islamic courage  
You can launch as many rockets as you want  
But our people will never surrender  
History will write your story  
And God will always bless you  
Your rockets in Israel all generations will talk about  
And your Katyushas have scared the Zionists  
Nasrallah, raise your voice  
Our people are used to welcoming death  
We do not want money or treasures or wealth  
All we want is to live a free life  
Blood only brings blood  
And I hope we can destroy your life and make you worry  
Zionism and Zionists are the biggest poison in Arab land"

The soldier told the young men to stand behind a cement blockade in the vicinity of the military checkpoint.

**Other soldiers arrived and the young Palestinians were forced to sit on the ground. A soldier hit one of them and was joined by several more soldiers who beat the young man.**

The scene was witnessed by a Qaliqila worker whose bus was being held at the checkpoint. The man had ample time to watch the proceedings get underway.

However he told PNN Wednesday, "I did not witness what happened in the end because the soldiers at the checkpoint let us pass and continue our travels.

**"I do not know the fate of the young man who several Israeli soldiers beat and kicked with great strength."**

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

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**DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

# Bubba, Junior And The Blonde

September 03, 2006 Art and Kathy

Bubba and Junior were standing at the base of a flagpole, looking up. A blonde lady walked by and asked what they were doing.

"We're supposed to find the height of the flagpole," said Bubba, "but we don't have a ladder."

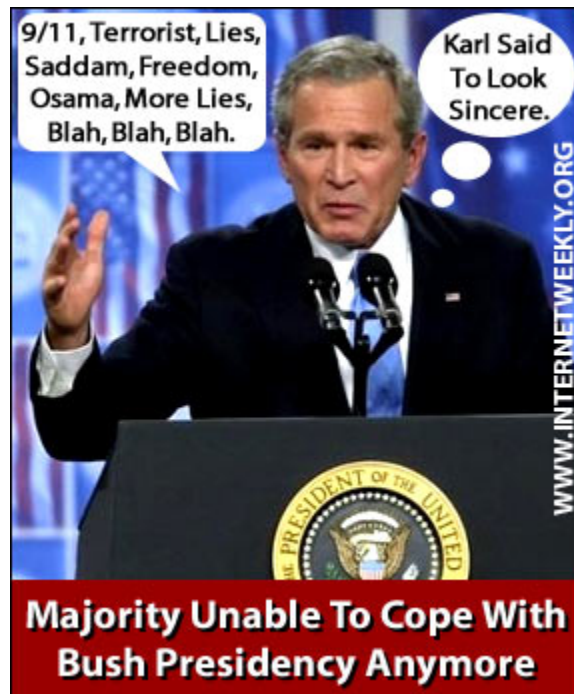
The woman took a wrench from her purse, loosened a few bolts, and laid the pole down. Then she took a tape measure from her pocket, took a measurement & announced, "Eighteen feet, six inches," and walked away.

Junior shook his head and laughed. "Ain't that just like a dumb blonde? We ask for the height, and she gives us the length.

Bubba and Junior are currently supervising the reconstruction of New Orleans.

Any questions?

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## Western Union:

# **Idiot Racists Busy Profiling: If Your Name Is Ahmed You're Fucked: "Are They Blocking Money Transfers To People Whose Name Is Timothy Or Mcveigh, Too?"**

Aug. 30, 2006 By Sahar Kassaimah, IOL Correspondent

**WASHINGTON: Western Union, a global money transfer agency, has delayed or blocked thousands of cash deliveries by American Muslims on suspicion of terrorist connections simply because senders or recipients have names like Mohammed or Ahmed, drawing rebuke from the community as a yet another form of identity harassment.**

Mohammad Kamran Habib, a 29-year-old engineer at Cisco Systems in San Jose, California, tried to make a payment to an Arabic teaching institution when Western Union blocked his money transfer without any clarification.

"I just enrolled recently in a distance learning program for Arabic Language," he told IslamOnline.net.

"The institute is based in Cairo and the only way for students to pay their tuition fees is to send them via Western Union," he explained.

Habib said he wasn't able to send his money transfer to Egypt and the online transaction gave him an error.

"It didn't even give me a MTCN number which it should do even if a response was rejected," he noted.

Habib took pains to understand from Western Union official what the problem was but in vain.

"When I called them and explained the situation to them, their employee told me very politely that she didn't understand what was going on and she tried to approve the transaction because I answered all the three security questions she asked me," he added.

"But she was unable to approve it."

Habib said that after asking the supervisor, the same employee told him that apparently the system is not allowing her to approve the transaction because of "business justification"



He took his complaint to the supervisor, asking why his transaction was not being approved.

"She kept repeating the same thing that her computer is saying that it cannot be approved because of business justification."

Habib, a software engineer, knows that computer programs don't automatically know what the business justification is until it's defined on the system.

But when he told that to the supervisor, she refused to give him any more information.

"And to date, my money is still blocked," he fumed.

**Western Union routinely delays or blocks transfers between customers whose names even partially match names on the Treasury list, which features names that contain hundreds of Mohammeds and Ahmeds.**

Some Muslims and Arabs are thinking of alternative money transfer agencies from where they can send their wires with less monitoring and pressure.

Many of them are also left wondering if the so-called war on terrorism will cause them to actually lose the exact freedom and civil rights that such policies are aimed at preserving.

Iman al-Asyouti believes these regulations seem like an accusation for every single Muslim American.

**"It means that they treat us as terrorists until we could prove the opposite," she said.** "It seems like a joke to me and I still can't believe that things like this are happening here, in America," she fumed.

However, some Americans believe that these regulations are not justified but the natural result of what Muslim extremists have done.

But Muslims and Arab Americans counter that there must be a better way to fight terrorism without tightening the noose around the necks of innocent citizens.

"It is not my mistake that some terrorists have the same name as mine," complained Ahmad Najati, a student at a California State University. "Our government needs to realize that not all terrorists are Muslims or Arabs," he said.

**Najati, 21, asserted that American Muslims should not have to pay for Muslim extremists' mistakes just as Christian Americans shouldn't pay for those of Timothy McVeigh, the terrorist responsible for the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995.**

**"Are they blocking money transfers to people whose name is Timothy or McVeigh, too?"**

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# Politicians Stoking Hate Toward Arabs And Muslims

[Thanks to PB, who sent this in.]

**It is time to make a clear distinction between legitimate resistance movements-- against imperialist invasion and occupation, and so-called "terrorism."**

August 25, 2006 By Sharon Smith, Socialist Worker [Excerpt]

BRITISH AUTHORITIES grabbed headlines on August 10, claiming to have foiled Muslim terrorists harboring incriminating liquids in their homes, sending U.S. and British airports into an anti-terrorist frenzy.

**But the U.S. Department of Homeland Security was simultaneously zeroing in on another alleged conspiracy: men of "Middle-Eastern descent," who were scooping up cell phones at Wal-Mart stores in Ohio and Michigan.**

**On August 8, two such suspects, Ali Houssaiky and Osama Sabhi Abulhassan of Dearborn, Mich., were arrested in Marietta, Ohio, after a traffic stop, when officers discovered 12 cell phones, \$11,000 in cash and "airplane passenger lists" in their car.**

The men claimed the passenger lists were left by a relative who worked at an airport and said they were buying cell phones to resell them at a profit. They were nevertheless charged with supporting terrorism.

**Within days of the Ohio arrests, three Palestinian men from Texas, Adham Othman, Louai Othman and Awad Muhareb--were arrested in Caro, Mich., with 1,000 cell phones and digital photos of the Mackinac Bridge, linking Michigan's upper and lower peninsulas. They also were charged with terrorism.**

The men claimed they merely took photos of the bridge as visiting tourists. But CBS News informed viewers that the alleged "Texas Trio" had been charged with "collecting or providing materials for terrorist acts and surveillance of a vulnerable target for terrorist purposes."

***Within days, the government's allegations quietly unraveled, when all of the accused were proven to have told the truth and all terrorism charges were dropped. But the damage had been done.***

Although George W. Bush denied in the months after the September 11 terrorist attacks--having declared "either you are with us or against us"--that the world's Muslims were enemies of the U.S., he has seemed less concerned with this matter as the U.S.'s Middle East war aims continue to backfire, from Iraq to Lebanon.

Indeed, Bush has used the term "Islamic fascism" to describe America's enemies on at least two occasions in recent weeks.

Bush argued on August 14 that Lebanon is a front in the “global war on terrorism.” He continued, “Hezbollah terrorists kidnapped two Israeli soldiers, Hamas kidnapped another Israeli soldier...We must not allow terrorists to prevent elected leaders from working together toward a comprehensive peace agreement in the Middle East.”

By invoking the war on terror abroad, Bush has emboldened the cause of racial profiling against Arabs and Muslims at home. Fox News’ Bill O’Reilly asserted just days ago, “All young Muslims should be subjected to more scrutiny than Granny (at U.S. airports). And we should blend some Israeli screening procedures with our own.”

A significant minority of Americans apparently agree. A USA Today/Gallup Poll conducted in late July showed nearly 40 percent of Americans said they felt at least some prejudice against Muslims. The same percentage favored requiring all Muslims, including U.S. citizens, to carry a special ID “as a means of preventing terrorist attacks in the United States.” Nearly one in four, 22 percent, said they wouldn’t want to have Muslims as their neighbors.

Recent U.S. polls tail trends in Israel, where an October 2005 Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies’ opinion poll showed 46 percent of Israel’s Jewish population favored “transferring” (i.e., ethnically cleansing) Palestinians from Israel’s occupied territories, and 31 percent supported transferring Israeli Arabs out of Israel’s borders.

**Al-Qaeda is a terrorist organization. Hezbollah is not. It is a genuine resistance movement against Israeli occupation.**

**Nor does Hezbollah seek to establish an Iranian-style Islamic state in Lebanon. In an interview with Adam Shatz for the New York Review of Books in 2004, Hezbollah leader Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah stated: “We believe the requirement for an Islamic state is to have an overwhelming popular desire, and we’re not talking about 50 percent plus one, but a large majority. And this is not available in Lebanon and probably never will be.”**

**Israel, ostensibly the only “democracy” in the Middle East, is now detaining five Cabinet ministers of the Palestinian Authority and has captured more than two dozen elected members of the Palestinian parliament.**

Not surprisingly, an early-August poll by Near East Consulting, based in Ramallah, showed that 97 percent of Palestinians support Hezbollah--including 95 percent of Christian Arabs in the Palestinian Authority.

**It is time to make a clear distinction between legitimate resistance movements--against imperialist invasion and occupation, and so-called “terrorism.”**

## **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.

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