

GI SPECIAL 5A5:

SATAN



"The marines that I have had wounded over the past five months have been attacked by a faceless enemy. But the enemy has got a face. He's called Satan."
US Marine Colonel Gareth Brandl (AFP/Tim Sloan)

The Surge

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: January 04, 2007
Subject: The Surge

By Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, Veterans For Peace 50 Michigan, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

The Surge

**A surge is like relieving the pressure
on the urinary bladder mixing oil sand
oil blood into a devilish oasis in the desert.
Surge is blasphemy of forward**

**young soldiers heaped upon each other
as logs of wood and oil dowsed and lit
so the world can see a surge of tens
of thousands Iraqi children mothers fathers
brothers elders on fire that glows
so the world can see
before desert sands turns bodies into bones
forward march forward more dead soldiers
talk draped with flags who didn't know
who to kill as they kill everything
including themselves in a satanic surge
a black sabbath time time when good
will die time when evil wins
where Americans do not want to go
but a government of Corporations
run by rich men candy-coat the war
workers below them are so low to them
their lives mean nothing so they send
their sons to war only to use them
to wipe their filthy asses
and flush them down into graves.
Our soldiers are not fighting
for the USA they are fighting
for men dressed in blood
on a ranch in Texas where
the devil dwells.**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Soldier Killed In Baghdad

04 January 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20070104-09

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division Baghdad patrol was attacked by small arms fire, killing one Soldier in the western part of the Iraqi capital today.

The unit was returning from conducting a security patrol when they came under attack by small arms fire. One Soldier was killed in the attack.

U.S. Armoured Vehicle Burns In Fallujah; Casualties Not Announced



A U.S. armoured vehicle burns after a roadside bomb attack in Falluja January 5, 2007. A roadside bomb hit what appeared to be a U.S. tank or armoured vehicle in Falluja, residents said, and television footage showed it burning and billowing black smoke. U.S. officials had no immediate comment on the attack or whether there were any casualties. REUTERS/Mohanned Faisal (IRAQ)

Lake Jackson Marine Killed In Iraq

Dec. 25, 2006 By ANITA HASSAN, Houston Chronicle

A Lake Jackson family spent Christmas Day mourning the loss of a son — a Marine killed Sunday in the line of duty in Iraq.

Stephen Lloyd Morris, 21, was killed in fighting in the Anbar province, said his father, Lloyd Leroy Morris Jr., who was informed of his son's death Sunday evening by two staff sergeants.

"I was hoping they were going to tell me he was injured," he said. "I knew it wasn't going to be good news."

Morris was sent to Iraq about four months ago. He was supposed to return home in March, his father said.

It was the second time Morris had been sent overseas since he joined the Marines about 2 1/2 years ago after graduating high school, his father said.

He was in Afghanistan about a year ago.

"It was fearful for us (after Morris joined the military)," Lloyd Morris said.

Morris called his family and spoke with his father on Saturday morning. Lloyd Morris said his son seemed fine.

"He missed us," he said.

He also told his father he was a bit concerned with his post because he drove a Hummer, and those military vehicles seemed to be targets lately.

Described by his father as a religious man who also loved to surf, Morris loved to share his faith with his fellow soldiers in Iraq.

"He was a very committed Christian," Lloyd Morris said, adding that his son was very close to his family. "He loved the Lord."

In addition to his father, Morris is survived by his mother, Anna; sisters Kristin, 24, and Kathryn, 19; and a brother, Jonathan, 14.

Howell Soldier Killed In Iraq



Army Spc. Wilson Algrim: Photo courtesy of Department of Defense

December 28, 2006 By Lon Medd, Livingston Daily Press & Argus

Judy Algrim remembered when her oldest son, Wilson, would play around the house as a child and pretend to be his favorite superhero.

"He liked Superman," she said. "He used to run around the house in a Superman outfit and pretend that he was flying."

Army Spc. Wilson Algrim grew up to become a real-life hero who served his country in Iraq and made the ultimate sacrifice. On Wednesday, the Department of Defense announced that he died from wounds suffered when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle during combat operations.

"I would say he was gregarious, courageous, curious," said Judy Algrim, when asked to describe Wilson. "He was very friendly and smiled a lot. He was loving and affectionate."

Wilson Algrim was one of three soldiers from Michigan who died on Dec. 23 in Salman Pak, Iraq. Army Spc. Chad J. Vollmer, 24, of Grand Rapids and Army Pvt. Bobby Mejia II, of Saginaw, also died Saturday. All three were assigned to the Michigan Army National Guard First Battalion, 125th Infantry from Big Rapids.

He is the second soldier in the span of a week from Livingston County who has died in the Iraq war. Army Spc. Andrew P. Daul, 21, of Brighton died Dec. 19, in Hit, Iraq, from an improvised explosive device that went off near his tank. Wilson is the ninth person with ties to Livingston County to die in action in Iraq.

Wilson Algrim was born in Antioquia, Columbia. When he was 8 years old, he and his two sisters and one brother were adopted by Don and Judy Algrim. Judy Algrim had lived in Columbia when she taught at the University of the Andes, located in Bogota, Columbia.

She and her husband had been living in Columbus, Ohio, while she was a professor at Ohio State University, when they decided they want to adopt a child from Columbia.

"We had been married 13 years and hadn't had children," Judy Algrim said. "We wanted to do something useful, so we decided to dedicate our lives to children."

They eventually adopted four children — Wilson, Janet, Lisa and Jason. The family has been living in Marion Township for the past seven years.

According to his parents, Wilson Algrim liked to draw action figures and graphic designs.

"He was quite an artist," Don Algrim said.

Judy Algrim said he wanted to get know other cultures, and liked sports such as basketball and soccer.

Wilson Algrim attended Howell Public Schools for a short time, but since he had never gone to school in Columbia, he was far behind his classmates.

"The kids didn't know their colors," Judy Algrim said. "He couldn't count even at 8 years old."

To get the kind of education Wilson Algrim needed, he was sent to Michigan Youth Challenge Academy at Fort Custer Training Center in Augusta, near Battle Creek. Don Algrim said the challenge program is comparable to a high school program, but it give students a lot of extra help as far as tutoring and vocational education. Wilson Algrim graduated from that program two years ago in December 2004.

"After going through that program, he decided he wanted to join the National Guard," his father said.

Wilson Algrim went into basic training at Fort Benning, Ga., in January 2005. He returned to Michigan and was a member of Michigan Army National Guard, 125th Infantry Battalion, based in Big Rapids.

The last time both Don and Judy got to see Wilson was in May, when the battalion deployed for Fort Dix, N.J. where soldiers spent four to six weeks on mission-specific training before leaving for a year-long tour in Iraq in August. The 125th Infantry Battalion provided security for main supply routes and assisted in training Iraqi forces.

No memorial services have been planned yet.

GR Soldier Killed In Iraq 'Loved This Country'

December 28, 2006 By John Agar, The Grand Rapids Press

GRAND RAPIDS -- As he left Grand Rapids for the U.S. Army National Guard, preparing to serve in Iraq, Chad J. Vollmer realized he hadn't said goodbye to a neighbor he called Aunt Jill.

On a cell phone, he said he would be right back. She figured he meant months, and said a prayer. A few minutes later, he pulled into her driveway on Plymouth Avenue NE.

"He started sobbing, I started sobbing -- I said, 'I just love you so much.' "

Jill Skinner had watched Vollmer, always an active little boy, grow into a young man who didn't have to be asked to help out around her house.

Earlier this week, she watched his mother, Sandy, who saw the government vehicle parked outside, slam her front door shut -- her only protection against the terrible news coming her way.

"She knew. She knew," Skinner said Wednesday.

Vollmer, 24, a Grand Rapids Central High School graduate and an Army specialist, was among three Michigan soldiers killed Saturday in Salman Pak, Iraq, when an improvised roadside bomb exploded near their vehicle during a combat operation.

Also killed were Pfc. Wilson A. Algrim, 21, of Howell, and Pvt. Bobby Mejia II, 20, of Saginaw. All three were assigned to the First Battalion, 125th Infantry in Big Rapids.

They are among 119 service members with known Michigan ties who have died in Iraq since the war began. Five Michigan soldiers have been killed in the past few days.

Army Sgt. Curtis L. Norris, of Ingham Township, died Saturday in Baghdad of wounds he received when an improvised explosive device went off near his vehicle.

Most recently, Army Pfc. Andrew H. Nelson, 19, of St. Johns, was in an explosion in Baghdad on Monday.

Gov. Jennifer Granholm has ordered that flags be lowered Friday for a sixth soldier, Army Spc. Andrew P. Daul, 21, of Brighton, who was killed by a roadside bomb Dec. 19.

On Wednesday, the flag was at half-staff outside Sandy Vollmer's house.

Chad Vollmer's father, Terry Vollmer of Grand Rapids, said his son died a hero, doing what he wanted to do. He was in the ROTC in high school, and signed on with the Army National Guard after his junior year.

"He loved the military, and he loved this country," his father said. "I empathize with all of the families of all of the young men that have sacrificed their lives, not only in this war, but any other war. Service to his country -- that's what he wanted to do."

The family, which includes his mother and sister, Heather, loved him dearly, Terry Vollmer said.

Chad Vollmer wanted to join the U.S. Coast Guard once he was released from duty. He already had served his six years, but was called back for service in Iraq, said Paul Magnan, a friend of the family.

He said Chad Vollmer took classes at Kalamazoo Valley Community College, and spent time on boat crews in Grand Haven. He also enjoyed golfing, and took trips with his father, Magnan said.

"Just one terrific kid," he said.

Magnum e-mailed him frequently, and followed Vollmer's Internet blog. Vollmer wasn't one to complain. Under his favorite quote, he wrote: "Cause that's the way things ... are, and you better get used to it. Quit your (complaining)."

Skinner, the next-door neighbor for 30 years, thought of Chad Vollmer as one of her own. Early on, he called her "Aunt Jill," and it stuck.

She said it is hard to imagine his parents' grief.

"I sent him a Christmas card that said, 'God bless you, child. You take care of yourself, and I'll take care of your mom.' Oh my God. How did I know that's the way it was going to be? He brought nothing but happiness. Just a love, a kid that any mom would want for a son."

Notes From A Lost War:

“Insurgents Here Appear To Have Gained The Upper Hand”

They demonstrated their freedom of movement last week by barreling a dozen trucks through the streets of Baqubah's Amin neighborhood, shouting militant slogans and brandishing machine guns and shoulder-fired rocket launchers.

January 3, 2007 By Solomon Moore, L.A. Times Staff Writer [Excerpts]

[S]ecurity has collapsed in Diyala province, which now ranks as one of Iraq's most troubled regions. Insurgent attacks have more than doubled in the last year. Violence has devastated the provincial police force and brought reconstruction to a virtual standstill.

Assassinations have claimed the lives of mayors, tribal chieftains, police officials and judges, including a Shiite Muslim member of the provincial council who was killed Tuesday.

Many government officials here sleep on cots in their offices because driving home is too dangerous.

And Iraqi security forces have been implicated in so many abuses that the U.S. commander here recently gave his Iraqi counterpart an angry lecture, likening the Iraqi troops to an "undisciplined rabble."

For now, insurgents here appear to have gained the upper hand.

They demonstrated their freedom of movement last week by barreling a dozen trucks through the streets of Baqubah's Amin neighborhood, shouting militant slogans and brandishing machine guns and shoulder-fired rocket launchers.

Until October, the main U.S. force in the province was the 4th Infantry Division. It largely followed the strategy laid down by top U.S. commanders in Iraq last year: Pull American forces back as much as possible and allow Iraqi troops to take the lead in fighting insurgents. U.S. officers here say that approach did not work.

"4th ID tried to keep a low profile after they handed over security to the Iraqi army, but that approach backfired," said an officer with the 3rd Heavy Brigade Combat Team, 1st

Cavalry Division, which now has responsibility for the province. The officer spoke on condition of anonymity because he was criticizing another U.S. military unit.

Under the 4th Infantry's plan, Army convoys stayed on main roads and rarely ventured into Baqubah's dense neighborhoods, military officials said.

"Iraqis told us that 4th ID drove in here with their Humvees and told them, 'If you don't shoot at us, we won't shoot at you,' " the 3rd Brigade officer said. "So the insurgents actually took over this place."

Making matters worse, Iraq's Shiite-dominated government appointed a provincial commander who U.S. military officials say was handpicked by the Badr Brigade, a militia implicated in hundreds of death squad killings in Baghdad. The militia is linked to Iraq's largest Shiite political party, the Supreme Council for Islamic Revolution in Iraq.

Under orders from the Iraqi Ground Forces Command in Baghdad this fall, the commander, Brig. Gen. Shakir Hulail Hussein Kaabi, and his 5th Iraqi Division started a campaign of what U.S. officials now describe as abusive raids and detentions.

The problems were so serious that Col. David W. Sutherland, commander of the 3rd Brigade, took the unusual step of lecturing his Iraqi counterpart during a mid-December briefing at Forward Operating Base Warhorse near Baqubah.

"Six weeks ago, the people of Diyala and Baqubah were disgusted with the disrespect and disregard the Iraqi army had shown them," Sutherland told Shakir through an Arabic interpreter.

"Bullying an innocent person is unacceptable. Taking things from houses is unacceptable. Taking cars or things from cars is unacceptable," he said.

"Before we send an undisciplined rabble into this fight, I will pull the plug," Sutherland told the general. "We are soldiers, not barbarians."

Since taking command of Diyala in October, Sutherland has increased the number of U.S. advisors traveling with Iraqi units and required U.S. approval for any Iraqi operation, in effect rescinding Iraqi control of the 5th Division.

American commanders won at least a partial victory in late December when the government agreed to replace Diyala's police chief. The chief, Ghassan Bawi, had been accused of tacitly or directly supporting death squads in the province, according to U.S. officials, who had lobbied for months for his removal. Like Shakir, Bawi was endorsed by the Badr militia, U.S. officials say.

Detainees reported kidnappings and torture at the hands of Iraqi policemen, according to U.S. and Iraqi officials. One of Bawi's most infamous underlings is known as Cable Ali, after his favorite coercive tool.

In an interview, Shakir said he had changed tactics and now used more focused operations. But he clung to the view that his main targets were Sunnis, not Shiites.

"The nature of the target is that they are all Sunnis," Shakir said. "All these problem areas are all Sunni, so our operations are all in Sunni areas. There are actually no Shiites left, because 8,000 Shiites have been killed or displaced."

But the shift in strategy may have come too late.

Diyala's Sunni politicians refuse to attend provincial council meetings until Shakir is stripped of his command, and the governing body has been unable to reach a quorum for weeks.

The U.S. has spent roughly \$220 million toward reconstruction in Diyala, but as winter temperatures plunge, food transport, electricity generation and petroleum shipments are beset by chronic delays, when shipments occur at all. Most Baqubah shops are closed and most streets devoid of traffic. Sewers are dysfunctional, spilling sludge across the refuse-covered streets and contaminating the water supply.

Many Iraqi contractors now refuse to enter the province, fearing for their lives.

Baqubah's Government Center building is regularly attacked by insurgents, but still serves as a nighttime refuge for government officials afraid to return home at the end of the day.

"The Government Center has become something of a dormitory," said Kiki Munshi, a State Department official who leads the Provincial Reconstruction Team.

Munshi said poor security and government bureaucracy had brought reconstruction to a virtual standstill.

U.S. military officials also complain that poor coordination among the military, State Department officials and the Iraqi government continues to hinder projects.

At a recent meeting between various local ministry representatives and Diyala's mayors and other officials, the politicians complained that Baghdad was not responding to their needs.

The mayor of Khalis said food and clean water were scarce in his area.

"The Iraqi army and the coalition forces arrested a lot of workers for our water treatment project," he said.

Baqubah's mayor said the Iraqi army had confiscated several fuel tankers from Oil Ministry drivers. The mayor of Khanaqin said at least 2,500 families had come to his city to escape violence elsewhere in the province, overwhelming services.

The officials seemed unable to agree on whether poor security was preventing reconstruction or whether reconstruction failures had caused security to erode. It is a conundrum that U.S. soldiers in the field also face.

While on patrol a few days earlier, Capt. Christopher Conley parked his armored vehicle in a Sunni neighborhood to attempt to gather intelligence from a tribal sheik.

"I want the coalition to have a good relationship with your neighborhood," Conley told the elder tribesman.

"We would like to cooperate with you," said the wizened sheik, who identified himself as Abu Mohammed. "But I can promise you that it will come to nothing because of the situation here. All the jobless men. All the closed shops."

"I want to fix the security situation," Conley told him. "I have money to fix things, but no one will come to help because of security."

"If you ask me, no one is ready to hear you right now," Abu Mohammed said. "If security gets better, we'll do whatever you want."

FUTILE EXERCISE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!



A U.S. soldier from the 172nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team searches a car at a checkpoint in Baghdad, October 29, 2006. REUTERS/Mahmoud Raouf Raouf (IRAQ)

TROOP NEWS

“3,000 KIA FOR A LIE In North TX

“The Response Was Overwhelmingly Positive, Particularly From Truckers”

I said that this was not a somber memorial for the 3,000 KIA already lost; but rather it was an in your face public awareness event intended to stop another 3,000 from being lost for nothing but the war profiteer campaign contributors to the Bush regime.

From: David Honish [Veteran]
To: GI Special
Sent: January 04, 2007
Subject: 3,000 KIA FOR A LIE in North TX

On behalf of Vietnam Veterans Against War, I started coordinating with local Veterans For Peace and Peace Action Denton folks a couple months ago in anticipation of doing a street politix event for the inevitable 3,000th KIA in Iraq. We posted the planned event on the AFSC site to broaden the potential participant notification.

In keeping with the AFSC suggestion, we planned our event for the day after the announcement was made on <http://icasualties.org>

Local media was notified a week in advance, but it was apparently too difficult for the local paper to keep track of the website and be flexible in their response? I got an email from them on TUE asking when the demonstration would be so they could cover it? They of course missed it on MON.

About 20 men, women, and children turned out for our freeway overpass demonstration. Our signs were probably only readable to frontage road and cross street traffic.

There were Veterans For Peace banners on both sides of the bridge to face freeway traffic from both directions. These banners were large enough to be read by even those exceeding the speed limit, as was the Peace Action Denton banner facing northbound traffic.

The response was overwhelmingly positive, particularly from truckers. It would appear that the Bush regime is fooling nobody about who is fighting this illegal war, and who is getting rich from it.

A local democratic precinct chairman prior to the event emailed me to ask if his planned sign would be too offensive? He had a photo of Saddam captioned, HE'S DEAD NOW, SO BRING THE TROOPS HOME.

I told him I could not conceive of anything that he could come up with in text or image that could possibly be more offensive than the war itself.

I said that this was not a somber memorial for the 3,000 KIA already lost; but rather it was an in your face public awareness event intended to stop another 3,000 from being lost for nothing but the war profiteer campaign contributors to the Bush regime.

SUPPORT THE TROOPS, BRING THEM HOME NOW!

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward GI Special 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 email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE



The casket of Marine Lance Corporal Brent E. Beeler before Beeler's funeral in Jackson, Michigan December 19, 2006. Beeler was killed in combat near Falluja, Iraq.
REUTERS/Rebecca Cook

Lying Bullshit About KIA From The New York Times

1.1.06 Lizette Alvarez and Andrew Lehren, New York Times:

"The service members who died during this latest period fit an unchanging

profile.

They were mostly white men from rural areas, soldiers so young they still held fresh memories of high school football heroics and teenage escapades."

HAVE SOME REALITY



http://icasualties.org/oif/US_CITY.aspx

“No Parent Should Expose Their Children To These Predators”



R. CRUMB ©2005 PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE

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

1-3-2007 By Charles Sullivan, Information Clearing House [Excerpts]

I will make no effort to conceal my contempt for military recruiters who prey upon unsuspecting and inexperienced youth, especially the poor and economically disadvantaged. No parent should expose their children to these predators.

Recruiters are the moral equivalent of ambulance chasers, and they should be accorded no more respect than them, or the corporate con men who sell us goods that are detrimental to our health.

These people are not concerned about the welfare of our children or the country; they are the representatives of imperialism, empire, and Plutocracy; and they are in search of cannon fodder.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004**

“Placing Soldiers In Peril When There Is No Threat To America Is A Treasonous Offense”

1-3-2007 By Charles Sullivan, Information Clearing House [Excerpts]

President Bush and his kind, always eager to exploit a photo opportunity, frequently pay homage to the troops stationed around the world and in return garner their respect and admiration, neither of which is deserved. Placing soldiers in peril when there is no threat to America or to national security is an expression of utter contempt for them; it is a treasonous offense worthy of the most severe punishment short of execution.

Aside from photo ops, Bush and his wealthy brethren do not associate with enlisted men, whose petty lives transpire far below the lofty socio-economic status the elite were born into. Enlisted men and women are permitted to wipe the cow dung from the president's cowboy boots, but they are not allowed to wear them or travel in the same social circles as their owner.

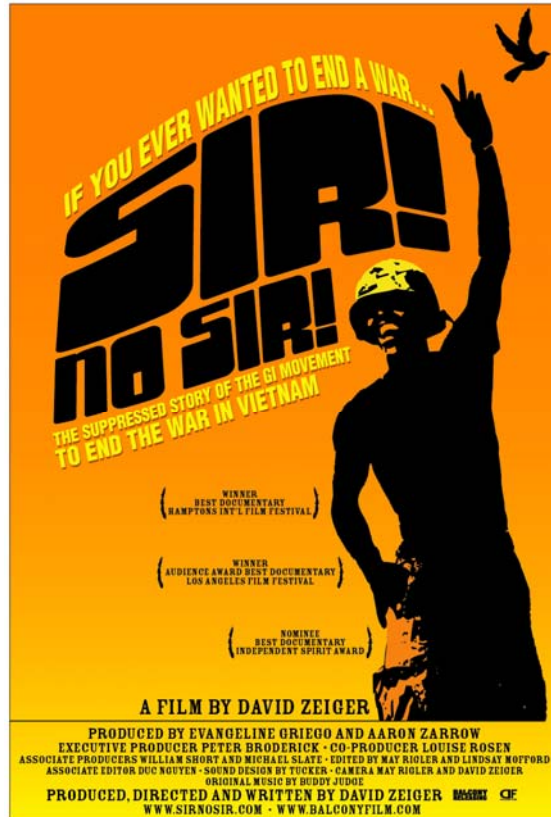
The parasites that are running the country produce nothing, and have no more loyalty to the American people or to the Constitution than Frito-Lay or Halliburton. Their only allegiance is to accruing ever more wealth and power to themselves by all possible means, including war.

You see, America is also an occupied country.

**LIAR
TRAITOR
TROOP-KILLER
DOMESTIC ENEMY
UNFIT FOR COMMAND**



Bush Jan. 4, 2007. (AP Photo/Charles Dharapak)



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 about the first hip-hop antiwar concert against the "War on Terror."

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

Bush To Announce Exit Strategy From Reality; Plans Complete Withdrawal From His Senses By Year End

January 3, 2007 The Borowitz Report

President George W. Bush has been working around the clock to put the finishing touches on a speech to the American people in which he will announce a comprehensive exit strategy from reality, White House aides confirmed today.

When reports emerged that the president was considering deploying an additional “surge” of troops in Iraq against the advice of military experts and overwhelming public sentiment, many in Washington suspected that the move was part of a larger plan to withdraw from reality entirely.

But not until spokesperson Tony Snow addressed reporters today did the White House officially confirm that the president was about to announce an exit strategy from the land of rational thought.

“The president never intended to occupy the world of reality indefinitely,” Mr. Snow told reporters. “He is planning a new way forward, and that way forward is a one-way ticket to fantasyland.”

Moments after Mr. Snow announced Mr. Bush’s plan to unveil an exit strategy from reality, members of the press corps started peppering him with questions about a deadline by which the president will have totally taken leave of his senses.

The White House spokesperson said that the president refused to set a formal timetable for his withdrawal from reality, but added that it was realistic assume that Mr. Bush’s exit from the real world would be complete by year’s end: “It helps that he’s ninety percent of the way there already.”

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send to contact@militaryproject.org:. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential. Same to unsubscribe.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

The Shame Of New Orleans: Flood Victims Raped Wholesale By The Rich And Powerful

December 28, 2006 by Bill Quigley, Common Dreams

Bill Quigley is a human rights lawyer and law professor at Loyola University New Orleans and is one of the lawyers representing thousands of families who want to return to their apartments in New Orleans: Quigley@loyno.edu

Gloria Williams and her twin sister Bobbie Jennings are 60 years old.

They are two of the over 4000 families who lived in public housing in New Orleans before Katrina struck who are still locked out of their apartments since Katrina.

Their apartments are two of 4534 apartments that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) has announced plans to demolish.

Demolition is planned even though it will cost more to demolish and rebuild many fewer units than it does to fix them up and open them. Ms. Williams and Ms. Jennings, and thousands of families like them, are fighting HUD, they want to return.

Gloria and Bobbie started working early. As children they picked cotton, strawberries, snap beans and pecans before and after grade school every day in rural Louisiana. "We were raised up to work," they said.

They moved to New Orleans after their father drowned. Their home was marked by regular domestic violence. A few years later, their mother was murdered by a boyfriend.

As teens they moved in with an abusive relative. They ran away, came back, and stayed with other relatives. They can even remember nights when they slept under their aunt's bed in a hospital while waiting for her to recuperate.

As young women they continued working. They worked in restaurants before starting careers as Certified Nursing Assistants. Then they worked for years in nursing homes and in private homes caring for the elderly and disabled. They fed people, cleaned people, bathed people, cared for people. Each married and raised children and grandchildren. Like 25% of the households in New Orleans, neither owned a car.

Both sisters are now 60. In the past few years, their years of physical work took its toll and they could not longer work. Ms. Jennings had back surgery and suffers with high blood pressure. Ms. Williams has heart and lung problems, high blood pressure, and clots in her legs that prevent her from standing or walking for long periods. Each lives solely on about \$600 a month from disability. No pensions.

When Katrina hit, they had been living in the C.J. Peete apartments for years. Ms. Bobbie Jennings had been there for 34 years. Her twin sister, Ms. Gloria Williams lived there for over 18 years.

Their combined families, 18 in all, evacuated to Baton Rouge to ride out the storm. When it was clear they would not be going home any time soon, their host family told them it was time to move on. In September 2005, the family of 18 moved into one daughter's damaged home in Slidell, about 30 miles away from New Orleans - all sleeping on the first floor because the roof was still damaged.

One of their sisters, Annie, was in the hospital with cancer when Katrina hit. It took the family weeks before they finally found her in a hospital in Macon, Georgia.

When the city opened, they got rides into town and checked on their apartments. No water had entered their apartments at all. But their doors had been kicked

down and all their furnishings were gone. The housing authority told them they could not move back in for a couple more months while their apartments were secured and fixed up.

The housing authority started fixing up and painting apartments in her complex, but abruptly stopped after a few weeks.

Slidell was getting tight, so they accepted an offer to relocate to California. After a month, they returned. Being 3000 miles apart from family was too heartbreaking. A four day bus ride brought them back to Slidell in January 2006. After hitching rides into New Orleans, Ms. Williams found a subsidized apartment. The only way the landlord would accept her, though, was if she paid him an extra \$400 under the table. Otherwise, he would rent it to someone else who would.

So Ms. Williams paid the extra money and moved in with her grandchildren while she waited for her old apartment to reopen. She used FEMA money to buy new furniture. In late February 2005, Ms. Williams was hospitalized for three weeks for surgeries on her legs.

In June 2005, HUD announced they were not going to let any residents back in her apartment complex and three others (Lafitte, St. Bernard and BW Cooper) because they were going to be demolished.

Over one hundred maintenance and security workers for the housing authority were let go. HUD took over the local housing authority years ago and all these decisions are being made in Washington DC.

The demolished buildings would make way for much newer and many fewer apartments which would be built by private developers. The demolition and private development would be financed by federal funds and federal tax breaks designed to help Katrina victims!

Nearly \$100 million in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds were designated for the private developers. Another \$34 million in Katrina Go-Zone tax credits were also donated to the developers.

In July 2005, Ms. Williams apartment caught fire and again she lost everything. Her landlord did not want to let her out of her lease. He told her that she and her grandson could still live there, all they had to do was clean the soot off the walls and ceilings.

At this, Ms. Williams broke down and went back into the hospital.

Ms. Jennings got an apartment and allowed her daughter and her grandchildren to live there because they have no place to stay. She also took her in her little sister, Annie, who was dying of cancer. Annie died on August 17, 2005.

Both sisters have severe problems every month making ends meet. Utility bills eat up most of their monthly checks. With no car and their apartments across the river from New Orleans, they cannot get to the doctor.

Christmas was very tough. Ms. Williams said "We didn't have a Christmas. We didn't have food to put on the table." Her grandson went to her sister's house to get a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

Ms. Jennings cried as she said "Behind Katrina and my little sister dying, my life just stopped. This is the second year we didn't have a Christmas. It is so hard to try to start over. I let my daughter and her two grandchildren sleep on the bed. I sleep on a pallet on the floor. Before Katrina I was on blood pressure medicine once a day. Now I take 4 blood pressure pills three times a day. I also take pills for depression, nerves and stress."

"We just want to go home," Ms. Williams said. "People knew us in our neighborhood. They never messed with us. I could leave my back door open when I went to the grocery. People don't understand that was our home. We want to go home."

Why would people want to go back into public housing? Aren't the developments dangerous and crime-ridden? Isn't this an opportunity to start over and make something better?

Public housing residents know full well the problems of public housing, but still they want to return.

Why?

Start with the fact that New Orleans is in the worst affordable housing crisis since the Civil War.

Tens of thousands of houses still remain in ruins after Katrina. Rents for the rest have gone up 70-80 percent since Katrina. Even before Katrina, there was a waiting list of 18,000 families seeking to get into public housing - now it is much, much worse.

HUD's demolition plans target 4,534 apartments of public housing in the community. They plan to demolish 1546 apartments in BW Cooper, 723 in C.J. Peete, 1400 in St. Bernard, and 865 in Lafitte.

These are not the dense high-rise towers. Public housing in New Orleans is made up of development clusters of mostly two and three story buildings with six to eight apartments in each.

New York Times Architecture critic Nicolai Ouroussoff, criticized plans to demolish these apartments, saying on November 19, 2006: "Modestly scaled, they include some of the best public housing built in the United States. Solidly built, the buildings' detailed brickwork, tile roofs and wrought-iron balustrades represent a level of craft more likely found on an Ivy League campus than in a contemporary public housing complex."

Most of the public housing apartments rented for very modest rents tied to the resident's incomes. Most did not pay separate utility charges. Leases were essentially for life, unless someone in the family was caught breaking the law.

HUD initially said they had to demolish because the buildings were so damaged they were dangerous to the residents.

That was not true.

John Fernandez, an Associate Professor of Architecture at MIT, inspected 140 of these apartments and concluded in papers filed in court that "no structural or nonstructural damage was found that could reasonably warrant any cost-effective building demolition.

"Therefore, the general conclusions are: demolition of any of the buildings of these four projects is not supported by the evidence of the survey, replacement of these buildings with contemporary construction would yield buildings of lower quality and shorter lifetime duration; the original construction methods and materials of these projects are far superior in their resistance to hurricane conditions than typical new construction and with renovation and regular maintenance, the lifetimes of the buildings in all four projects promise decades of continued service that may be extended indefinitely."

Residents promise to fix up their apartments themselves if given the chance. "I clean for a living," said one young woman resident at a recent public hearing where 100% of the residents opposed demolition. "I clean for a living and I am proud of it. I clean every body else's houses, I will sure clean up my own house - just let me back in to do it!"

After the public understood that the buildings were not actually in such bad shape, the authorities then said it would cost much more to repair the buildings than to demolish and start over.

That too was not true.

The housing authority's own documents show that Lafitte could be repaired for \$20 million, even completely overhauled for \$85 million while the estimate for demolition and rebuilding many fewer units will cost over \$100 million.

St. Bernard could be repaired for \$41 million, substantially modernized for \$130 million while demolition and rebuilding less units will cost \$197 million.

BW Cooper could be substantially renovated for \$135 million compared to \$221 million to demolish and rebuild less units.

Their own insurance company reported that it would take less than \$5000 each to repair each of the CJ Peete apartments.

HUD suggests that less-dense "mixed income" communities are the way to go.

But residents and the community knows that if HUD has its way, only about 20% of the families who lived in these developments will be allowed to return.

New Orleans has suffered through the experience of HUD's "mixed income" policies before.

The St. Thomas housing development, once home to 1510 families, was demolished with promises that people would be returning to a beautiful redeveloped community.

Instead, there is now a Wal-Mart on the site and hundreds of cute gingerbread pastel houses.

How many of the 1510 families who used to live in St. Thomas have been allowed to move back in? About a hundred.

A few of these families have had to force their way in with litigation by the Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center. The demolition of St. Thomas is hailed as a mostly-good outcome by nearby developers and some of the young professionals who moved into the surrounding neighborhood knowing what was coming.

What do the 1400+ families who were moved out and not allowed to return think? Don't ask - no one else is.

HUD has the same plans for the neighborhoods where they are trying to demolish housing.

According to documents filed with the Louisiana Housing Finance Agency: St. Bernard will go from 1400 apartments to 595 apartments, only 160 of which will be for low-income public housing residents. There will be 160 tax credit mixed income and 145 market rate units.

CJ Peete will go from 723 units to 410, 154 will be public housing eligible, 133 mixed income and 123 market rate; BW Cooper will go from 1546 to 410, 154 public housing eligible, 133 tax-credit mixed income, and 123 market; And Lafitte will be downsized in the same way.

As a result HUD plans to spend tens of millions of Katrina assistance funds to end up with far fewer affordable apartments.

The new Congress is looking into this. Representatives Barney Frank and Maxine Waters chair the committee and subcommittee with oversight of HUD. There is also a federal class action lawsuit filed by the Advancement Project, Jenner & Block, and local attorneys.

Residents of the St. Bernard housing development and their allies plan are not waiting any more.

On Martin Luther King day, January 15, 2007, they are going in with or without permission. "What better way to celebrate Martin Luther King day than to risk going to jail for justice?" says Endesha Jukali, a neighbor who lived and worked in St. Bernard for years.

But the clock is still ticking. HUD, who has not "officially approved" its own announcement, says the demolition needs to get started to take advantage of the Katrina tax credits.

Neither the Congress nor the federal courts have yet stepped in to stop the demolitions.

What do the sisters think about this?

Ms. Jennings says: "I lived there for 34 years. That is my home. I just cannot afford to live outside the development. I don't know how else to explain it. I have the tears, but I do not have the words."

Her twin sister, Ms. Williams cries and says: "That was my home for over 18 years. I never gave them no trouble. My home never flooded. I will clean it myself, just please let me back in.

"I wish I could make people understand. I just want to go home."

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)

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

<http://www.williambowles.info/gispecial/2006/index.html>;

<http://imagineaworldof.blogspot.com/>; <http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>;

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/; <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>;

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

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.