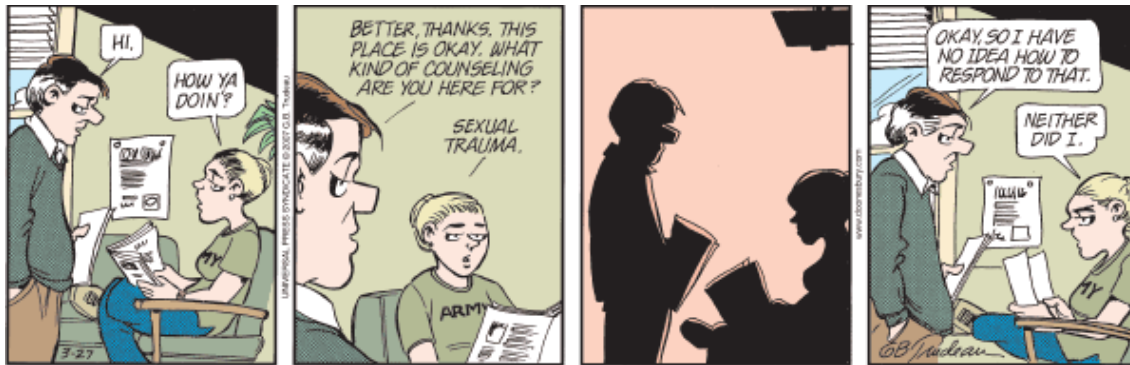


GI SPECIAL 5D12:



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

Hello From Iraq!

From: XXXX
To: GI Special
Sent: April 10, 2007
Subject: Hello from Iraq!

[Note: All identifying information removed. T]

My name is xxxxx.

I'm an active duty [X] who has been speaking out against the war.

I don't know why I haven't heard of your publication until now.

Please keep up the good work.

Please add me to any mailing lists you have and by all means, keep in touch.

Keep fighting the good fight! :D

XXXX

REPLY:

It's you fighting the good fight where you are: sitting at a computer doing a newsletter here involves minimal risk, so far.

Your situation is understood, and it's important to take care.

If you wish to write anything for GI Special, it would be an honor to publish.

Nothing that comes in from anybody serving anywhere is ever published in GI Special or circulated privately within The Military Project with any form of ID intact unless the individual specifically requests he or she be IDd. This means name, email address, and any other info that would enable anybody out there to read who wrote in, is cut out. As with your email above.

Anytime you feel like writing anything to express your views, that's what we're here for, with the protections described above in place by default.

You are 100% right to be careful. People who get kicked out of service or locked up are less effective in advancing the cause.

Anyone in the armed services, veterans and military family members are cordially invited to receive GI Special. Never a penny charged.

Respect for your service and come home safe.

T

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, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Soldier's Father Remembers



April 5, 2007 By Matthew Shaw Daily Times Staff Writer

There were constant knocks at the door of their Spring Hope home.

The buzz of activity almost, but never quite, distracted the Vicks from the reason why everyone was there.

“It’s been in and out, in and out all day,” Reginald Vick said Wednesday evening, finding a quiet corner to talk to a caller.

“It actually helps keep our minds off it,” he added. “But whenever anyone says, ‘I’m sorry about what happened to Eric,’ it makes us break down again.”

Eric Vick, 25, was killed in Iraq early Sunday morning. Vick, an Army staff sergeant, was in a group of four military police officers going to the aid of soldiers hurt in an insurgent attack when they were caught in a roadside explosion.

Eric Vick’s wife, Stephanie; his parents; and his brother, Milton, learned of Eric’s death Sunday, but the family’s private pain didn’t become public until the U.S. Department of Defense announced the soldiers’ deaths Tuesday evening.

That led to an outpouring of grief and support from friends and strangers alike.

For those who didn’t know his son, Reginald Vick offered some descriptions – a newlywed; a soldier; a gentleman and a gentle man.

“He was a loving young’in,” Vick said. “He was easy-going. If you treated him right, he’d treat you right. He’d give you the shirt off his back.”

Eric Vick was the type to avoid trouble if he could avoid it and who’d stand by you during difficult times, his father said. “If you needed him, he’d be there in five, 10 minutes.”

When he graduated from Bunn High School in 1999, Eric had not known exactly what his future held, his father said.

He had always done well in chemistry classes – “all As,” Reginald Vick said – and had taken classes at Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount. But he needed more money to continue. He then tried to open a restaurant in Chapel Hill, but it didn’t work out.

He enlisted in the Army only a few months after the 9/11 attacks, primarily concerned with continuing his education.

Eric trained as a military police officer and planned to return to college and finish his degree, his father said. He had the goal of working for a law enforcement agency, possible as a crime scene investigator.

Eric met his future wife, the former Stephanie Fisher, when he was stationed at Fort Bragg and she was working at a Fayetteville mall. They had only been married two years, “newlyweds,” Reginald Vick said.

“She’s torn all to pieces, just like all of us are,” he said.

Eric was in his third tour in Iraq.

“I’d ask about Iraq,” Reginald Vick said. “He’d say, ‘I’d rather not talk about it.’ So I stopped asking.”

Eric was supposed to return to the U.S. in August. “But he didn’t make it,” Reginald said, his voice strained.

The news hit others who knew Eric hard.

“You hear about people being killed in the war, but when you know one, it really comes home then,” said Barbara Hardeson, a member of Vick’s church, Peach Tree Baptist Church.

Hardeson saw Vick grow up from a small boy to a man, she said Wednesday. “He was just an average country boy, maybe smarter than most.”

Michael Angelmo, a mechanic in Spring Hope, remembered Vick as a smiling, nice guy, always willing to shoot the breeze.

“I can picture his face,” Angelemo said at his shop Wednesday.

Robin Faulkner, assistant principal at Bunn High School, was a guidance counselor when Vick was a student there.

“He was always one of those students who’d have a smile on his face and who’d make you laugh,” she said Wednesday.

The news of Vick’s death stirred the memories of many of the teachers who knew him, Faulkner said. “People thought of him as a highly motivated student, the kind of person who had goals. He wanted to do well, but he also wanted to help his family out.”

Vick had perfect attendance throughout high school, she said.

Also, Vick played the saxophone in the high school’s marching band all four years, she said.

He set the school record in pole vault, topping 11 feet, a feat that is still noted on the school’s list of athletic accomplishments, she said. He competed at the state track finals.

Funeral arrangements are being handled by Cornerstone Funeral Home and Cremations in Nashville. It will likely be next week before the military can bring Vick’s body back to the U.S. for service.

Burial is expected to be in the cemetery of Peach Tree Baptist Church, near the grave of his grandfather and namesake.

Vick is the third local man killed in the Iraq conflict.

Sergeant Embraced Challenges,

Did Charity Work in Guatemala

April 3, 2007 By Martin Weil, Washington Post Staff Writer

Jason R. Arnette, who grew up southwest of Richmond, played soccer in high school and made many friends, was a man marked by a distinctive set of goals, attitudes and ambitions.

As a teenager, he went on church-sponsored trips to Guatemala to build an orphanage and a medical center. His wife said he wanted to adopt a son of another race. And, his mother said, he had wished since age 3 to be a soldier.

On Sunday, Staff Sgt. Jason R. Arnette, 24, of Amelia, Va., died of wounds suffered the previous day in Baghdad when a roadside bomb blew up near his vehicle, the Pentagon said last night. "My son lived and died doing what he liked doing," his mother, Michelle Arnette, said last night. "He loved the discipline and the structure."

The bigger the challenge, his mother said, "the more he aspired to do it." During his five years in the Army, she said, he served one tour in Korea and was sent three times to Iraq.

Her son, she said, was "a special young fellow" who was so friendly that "he never met a stranger." At Amelia County High School, he had been in the ROTC and had played soccer, she said. Those who played with him remained among his closest friends, she said.

At 13 and again at 16, she said, Arnette and others from Amelia's Faith Christian Church traveled to Guatemala for the building projects.

In school, Arnette was a year ahead of Shenandoah Sky Hughes; they became close while he was in the Army and married in 2004.

"He was ready to start a life," his wife said last night. "He wanted kids. He would have been a really great father."

Arnette was adventurous, a lover of sports and the outdoors, and wanted to become a history teacher, his wife said.

She said he "accepted everybody" and believed he could "connect with anybody."

One of Arnette's ambitions, she said, was to adopt an African American child because he felt it would send a message against racism.

He loved to tell stories, she said, and "he loved me very, very much."

The last time she saw him, Hughes Arnette said, was in December. It was the month of her graduation from Radford College, and he paid a surprise visit home from Iraq.

His father-in-law, Roger Hughes, said that he learned from Arnette on that visit that the sergeant “really, really did not want to be” in Iraq, although “his wife doesn’t want to say that.”

Arnette was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 14th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, at Fort Drum, N.Y.

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO
COMPREHENSIBLE REASON TO BE IN THIS
EXTREMELY HIGH RISK LOCATION AT THIS
TIME, EXCEPT THAT A RAT WHO LIVES IN
THE WHITE HOUSE WANTS YOU THERE
That is not a good enough reason.**



US soldiers take cover as a fire fight with insurgents broke out in Baqouba Jan. 14, 2007. (AP Photo)

Notes From A Lost War:

**“We’re Getting A Lot Of ‘You’re-
Not-Going-To-Catch-Us’ Smiles”**

“I See A Whole Lot Of Money And A Whole Lot Of American Lives On The Line,” He Said. “Two Weeks After We Leave, It’s Going To Go Back To The Way It Was”

April 10, 2007 By Karin Brulliard, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD -- No, there have been no problems, the police commander was telling the armor-laden American soldiers squeezed into his office in the vast Shiite enclave of Sadr City. Except, he said, for the text-messaged death threats he often received from militia members.

Suddenly the meeting was interrupted by a loud mortar blast, followed by another explosion. A third, thunderous boom rattled the room, sending ripples through the yellow curtains and bringing the U.S. soldiers to their feet.

The soldiers later learned the target was a nearby outpost they had recently established with Iraqi security forces on the edge of Sadr City. The third explosion was a car bomb that upended a blast barrier and punched three neat holes through a concrete wall 50 yards away.

The holes, the soldiers said, were telling: The bomb was one of the potent projectile-emitting weapons.

As part of a nearly eight-week-old plan to temper violence in Baghdad, U.S. forces last month set up a permanent base and resumed security sweeps in the enclave for the first time in three years.

But soldiers with a U.S. military police unit that has provided police training and patrols in Sadr City for most of the past 10 months said the Mahdi Army disrupts their efforts every day.

Most of the Iraqi police they train are either affiliated with the militia or intimidated by it, the soldiers said. At worst, they said, militia infiltration in the police might be behind attacks on Americans, even though Iraqi officials offered assurances that the Mahdi Army was lying low.

“I don’t really think there is an end or a beginning. I think it’s all intermingled,” Staff Sgt. Toby Hansen, 30, said about the Mahdi Army’s relationship to the police trained by his unit.

“Eventually, when we leave, they’re going to police their own city. They’re going to do it their way.”

Soldiers of the 118th Military Police Company, based at Fort Bragg, N.C., had worked in Sadr City from last summer until November, when the security situation was deemed too precarious. The unit has returned to train police officers and back up their checkpoints, patrols and neighborhood outreach efforts.

Many soldiers said that since the troop buildup in Sadr City, residents seemed happier to see them -- and more willing to deal with Iraqi police.

Still, as the American Humvees patrol dusty streets bearing posters and billboards of a scowling Sadr, their gunners often carry rocks, to defend against the stones they know will be thrown at their vehicles along the way.

The convoy pulled up to al-Thawra police station, a beige building in a walled-off complex that houses three Sadr City police stations responsible for different districts. Trash littered the dirt lot.

In the office of the station commander, Col. Saad Abbas Hussein, the soldiers sipped tea from tiny glasses. Above them were new whiteboards listing patrols and the station's chain of command, the results of some of the Americans' training.

As he sprayed air freshener in the room, a distracted Hussein told Mixon he had had no problems with the militia. Col. Salim Muhsin, the station's liaison to the Interior Ministry, piped up from the corner, saying Sadr had ordered his fighters to avoid the Americans.

"We received that information," Mixon said. "But we are still seeing some lower-level activity, possibly rogue or outside, that might be Mahdi militia, still affecting the coalition forces."

The soldiers said they do not know which police officers are involved with the Mahdi Army.

Their Iraqi interpreters, who also serve as cultural barometers, tell the soldiers that all the police officers are.

"That's why they're still alive," said interpreter "Adam" Abdul Kareem, 29, who uses a false first name and covers his face to conceal his identity while working.

Outside, the U.S. soldiers asked some policemen to accompany them on a patrol.

The Iraqis initially refused, saying they would be kidnapped by the Mahdi Army if seen with the Americans. Mixon insisted.

So they tagged along in a beat-up SUV -- placed second in the convoy, Hansen explained, so they could not lead the Americans into a trap.

"This area good," said an old man with a white beard. "All area with the government."

Later, after the blasts interrupted their second meeting, the squad checked out a possible mortar launch site identified by U.S. soldiers. The site was well inside Sadr City.

Hansen's Humvee turned down narrow streets lined with staring people. Mixon's voice crackled over the radio: "We're getting a lot of 'You're-not-going-to-catch-us' smiles."

Finding nothing, the convoy headed toward the joint station, passing a poster of Sadr.

Inside the two-story building covered in peeling blue paint, Iraqi soldiers and police and U.S. soldiers gathered in separate clusters.

No one had been injured in the earlier attack on the outpost. But the soldiers at the station -- many of them infantrymen from the 2nd Brigade, 325th Airborne Infantry Regiment, out of Fort Bragg -- were clearly shaken. All the building's front windows had shattered.

"We need to bring a bunch of troops into Sadr and (expletive) this place up," said Spec. Josh Saykally, 25, of Minocqua, Wis., meaning soldiers should be living in the center of the district, not just on the edge.

Staff Sgt. Jesse Benskin, 24, fumed.

The car bomb, he said, was the work of Mahdi militiamen fed information by Iraqis at the station.

Benskin said they all made phone calls right after the blast, which he read as a sign they were reporting results to the attackers. "In my opinion, they're not really holding back," Benskin said of the Mahdi Army.

"I see a whole lot of money and a whole lot of American lives on the line," he said. "Two weeks after we leave, it's going to go back to the way it was."

In a nearby conference room, the joint station's newfound collaboration was on display: whiteboards showing who was on patrol and where, a mission statement in Arabic and English. As Mixon and others looked on, Col. Shaker Wadi Hamoud al-Maliki, the officer in charge, approached a map.

The mortars were launched from here, he said, pointing to a Sunni neighborhood outside Sadr City.

His launch sites were completely different from those U.S. soldiers had identified. Mixon shrugged.

"There are no militias in Sadr City now," the colonel said.

The next morning, two more mortars hit near the joint station. Again, the U.S. soldiers' analysis determined they were launched inside Sadr City.

U.S. soldiers marveled at the damage done by the previous day's car bomb. The hot projectiles had traveled at least 200 yards, past the overturned blast barriers and through two concrete walls.

Later, the convoy headed to the police station complex to meet with another commander, Maj. Mohammed Lefta Flaih -- a man Sgt. Dennis Gurney, 38, the squad's jovial leader, deemed a "good cat."

After a conversation about training, emergency response and Flaih's need for whiteboards, Gurney jokingly asked whether Flaih would host a going-away party for the unit at his house, with whiskey and beer. Flaih did not laugh.

"I'd love to, but you know what the consequences would be," Flaih said. Making a stabbing motion, he whispered: "Militia."

TROOP NEWS

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



A hearse carrying the casket of Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin L. Sebban to Christ Church in South Amboy, N.J., March 28, 2007. Sebban died March 17 of wounds suffered in the city of Baqubah, northeast of Baghdad when an improvised bomb exploded near his unit. (AP Photo/Mike Derer)

**“I Wanted To Think This American
Kid From The Midwest Could Help
The Oppressed Iraqi People”**

“Then I Awake To My Weapon Pointed At The Hungry, And I Am The Oppressor”

[Thanks to John Gingerich, who sent this in.]

April 9, 2007, Saif Rahman and John Feffer, Foreign Policy In Focus

Aaron Hughes is an artist and a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

He served in the Illinois National Guard from 2000 to 2006 and was pulled out of the University of Illinois in January 2003 and deployed to Kuwait and Iraq in April 2003 to July 2004 as an 88M truck driver.

His artwork can be seen at the National Vietnam Veterans Art Museum and on his website www.aarhughes.org. Saif Rahman is the Youth and Activism Editor for Foreign Policy In Focus at the Institute for Policy Studies and John Feffer is the co-director of Foreign Policy In Focus at the International Relations Center.

Saif Rahman: First and foremost- you are a veteran, an activist, and an artist. How does your work help to express your feelings about the war?

Aaron Hughes: To me “art” provides a space to present and communicate complexity. It is not restrictive to a language, a symbol, an ideology, a system, a narrative... but instead “art” can provide a freedom to find new ways to express memories, thoughts, and emotions that can challenge historical ways of communicating.

I didn’t understand the war. I did not understand the ease of dehumanization or the ambiguous, anxious convoys of nothingness, for nothing.

I did not understand the day-in-day-out reality of dust-covered skin, uniform, truck, and children.

I wanted to think this American kid from the Midwest could help the oppressed Iraqi people.

Then I awake to my weapon pointed at the hungry, and I am the oppressor.

No thoughts express the realization of the “Others” humanity. So I struggle through the gray complexity of “art” to deconstruct the social, cultural, racial, economical, and political walls of dehumanization. In a hope that for an instant “art” can bring about the realization of ones own and others humanity.

Saif Rahman: On that same note, more specifically -how does your work describe a narrative about the war that cannot be fully expressed simply by words? Please explain.

Aaron Hughes: I do believe I am trying to get at a narrative of the war. But that narrative cannot function like the modern narrative of progress.

The war is without progress.

My experience in the war was not only without progress but was also without clarity of any sorts. There was not a right or wrong, a logic, or reason -- just reactions and actions. That is why I hope to create a narrative that instead functions with ambiguities, gray areas, and a cyclical postmodern structure. In war there is no hero and no villain just individuals stuck in a role that only has one outcome: sad, destructive death.

Saif Rahman: Your work spreads across many mediums - mixed mediums, drawing, performance art, poetry - how do you feel the different methods that you use gets at different points, stories, and possibly different audiences?

Aaron Hughes: I am not sure. The choice in medium is something I think little about.

Different mediums function to me like different tools in a toolbox. I hope the more tools and variety of tools that I use will allow me to get closer to fixing the broken perspective of humanity held culturally across the world. In many ways I use one system of communication to deconstruct another. With a thought that a space will be formed in the contradictions that must be filled by the viewer.

John Feffer: Aside from your own work, what do you think have been some notable art inspired by the Iraq War?

Aaron Hughes: Other Iraq Veterans Against the War such as Joshua Casteel and Cloy Richards are writing some of the most powerful testimonies to the pain of humanity lost in myths of war.

Returns, a play written by Casteel leaves the audience with the honest complexity of a veteran struggling to carve out a new space for his new identity in the midst of history, nostalgia, memories, and flash backs.

James the lead character is trapped in the midst of other characters that represent alter identities, memories, friends, ghosts, victims, the guilty, and the repenting.

In Returns, James lives dreading the next news of a suicide of a fellow veteran in a family of veterans. The ghosts increase as the need to structure a life of narrative and meaning tries to combat the nightmare of post traumatic stress...

This type of vulnerable honesty is what can bridge the gap between the war and the spectacle of American culture.

John Feffer: What kind of reactions have you heard from people who have seen your art?

Aaron Hughes: A notable reaction is from my fellow veterans that can relate on an individual basis to the work.

When they have a chance to reflect on their experience in an alternative way that is not dictated to them by mass media or some false heroic narrative there is an opportunity to reclaim their experience, emotions, and memories.

On second thought, perhaps it is the reaction of the families of those that have been deployed.

A mother of a soldier from my sister unit of the 1644th Transportation Unit came to me in tears thanking me for sharing with her what she would never hear from her son.

I hope whatever the reaction, the work can create a space for reflection and empower individuals to act.

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

IRAQ VETS LEADING MARCH ON PENTAGON 3.17.07



Photo by Jeff Paterson, Courage to Resist (jeff@paterson.net) Indybay.org

Another Soldier Said “After A Hundred Home Invasions He Never Found Anything Illegal Apart From The Occupation”



Home invasion by foreign occupation soldiers from U.S. Baker Company 2-12 Infantry Battalion in the Dora neighborhood of southern Baghdad. (AFP/David Furst)

04/05/07 by Reuben Apple, Eye Net [Excerpt]

Three weeks ago, another soldier, Joshua Key, spoke at the Bloor Street United Church. He shared his experiences of Fallujah and Ramadi, of his return to the United States and of his escape to Canada, where he wrote his story and published it as *The Deserter's Tale*.

In his small-town Oklahoma accent, he told a Toronto audience why he fled the army and gave up his extended family, his friends and his country.

He said he could not keep blowing the doors off Iraqi houses and arresting every man inside because after a hundred home invasions, he never found anything illegal apart from the occupation.

British Ministry Of Defense Paying Out Huge Sums To Injured Troops Who Sued The Government

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.] **[OK, figure like this. One British £ is worth about two bucks. So, below, the soldier who got shitty medical treatment and collected £1 Million got two million \$.]**

The MoD is still settling claims by homosexuals who were wrongly dismissed from the force. Three former members were paid a total of £52,000 last year.

April 10, 2007 Stewart Tendler, The Times [Excerpts]

The total MoD bill for compensation payments and legal fees in 2005-06 was £78 million.

Most of the payments, revealed in a report issued under Freedom of Information legislation, were to service personnel and civilian staff who sued after injuries while on duty.

A total of £26.3 million was paid out in settlements to 621 service personnel and a further £21.9 million was paid to 1,290 civilian claimants.

Another £8.28 million went to death and serious injury claims from Iraqi civilians, of which there were 48 new cases.

Clinical negligence cases accounted for £4.5 million. The 28 cases settled during the year ranged from the payment of £1 million for the negligent treatment of a soldier's head injury after he fell from a military vehicle, which resulted in brain damage, to a £500 settlement for the negligent treatment of a wart.

The MoD continues to deal with a number of group actions including one from servicemen who became "volunteers" for biological and chemical research tests at the infamous Porton Down laboratories in Wiltshire in the 1950s and 60s.

Although it does not give a figure, the report says that a settlement was reached with the family of Leading Aircrafts-man Ronald Maddison, who died at the Chemical Defence Experimental Establishment in 1953 after being injected with the nerve gas Sarin. Three other veterans who participated in the Porton Down tests were paid a total of £10,000 in compensation.

The MoD is still settling claims by homosexuals who were wrongly dismissed from the force. Three former members were paid a total of £52,000 last year.

Ex-Army Officer: Troops Are Dying In Iraq For A 'Doomed Project'

“I Came Out Of The Army Fucking Angry”

[Thanks to Alberto Jaccoma, The Military Project & Z, who sent this in.]

“I came out of the Army fucking angry - I felt I had a right to come out and say something,” he said. “My friends had been killed, so I thought: ‘I’m not going quietly.’”

08 April 2007 By Paul Bignell and Ian Griggs, Independent News and Media Limited

A former captain in the Scots Guards who has served in Afghanistan and Iraq describes both operations as a political and military shambles in a book to be published next week.

Leo Docherty, 30, was formally reprimanded six months ago for breaking the Army’s code of silence by criticising the top brass for a catalogue of failures in both countries. He left the Army disillusioned and under a cloud in September, but now risks further ire from his former masters by publishing an account of his time in Iraq and Afghanistan, called Desert of Death.

Mr Docherty, who speaks five languages, including Arabic and Pashto, became a captain in 2001 and was deployed to Basra in Iraq in November 2004.

“None of us in the officers’ mess believed in the weapons of mass destruction nonsense - we all saw that as a kind of pretext,” he said.

But things started to go wrong quickly, and Mr Docherty began to feel that Operation Telic was causing as many problems for the population as it solved.

“There are nearly 10,000 British troops there just getting on with the job, taking terrible risks and dying for the sake of a doomed project, and yet they crack on like it’s inevitable, reasonable and sensible to be there,” he said.

“A lot of what you’re doing is often counterproductive, in the sense that it’s damaging relations with local people.”

After a six-month tour in the country and following his return to the UK, Mr Docherty took up a new role as aide-de-camp and interpreter for Colonel Charlie Knaggs, commander of the Helmand taskforce in Afghanistan.

Not long afterwards, he received orders to seize the town of Sangin. “Sangin was a sudden order, made on the back of a fag packet, that was in no way prepared for,” he said. “I had barely two minutes to give orders to my team and show them how the mission was to pan out.

“As we approached the town, I was sitting on the bonnet of my Snatch vehicle when shots started to crackle to our left. I jammed my helmet on and made a crouched run to a ruined wall to our left to try to see who was shooting at us.”

Sangin was taken, but during the battle an 11-year-old Afghan boy was shot dead, a poignant reminder of the dangers of waging war in a dense civilian area.

“I think we’ve lost the sympathy of a generation of people,” he said. “We’re perceived as an invading army, and we’re radicalising the population.”

Mr Docherty resigned his commission last autumn, but not before attacking those who sent him to Iraq and Afghanistan in the press. His comments earned him a formal reprimand for speaking out without clearance from his superiors.

“I came out of the Army fucking angry - I felt I had a right to come out and say something,” he said.

“My friends had been killed, so I thought: ‘I’m not going quietly.’”

Conclusive Proof African-Americans Have Superior Intelligence; They Refuse To Join The Army And Die For Bush In Iraq

Apr 10, 2007 By Tom Philpott, The Honolulu Advertiser

When Danny Edwards, 26, enlisted in the Army in April 2001, he expected to stay for a career. He changed his mind while serving in Iraq in 2003, a war fought for reasons he said he still doesn’t understand.

Edwards, who is black, has since advised black youth in his neighborhood in Savannah, Ga., to avoid the Army and “the hell” of Iraq.

Black youth across the country appear to be heeding similar advice from parents, teachers, ministers, coaches and other black veterans.

Racial data on enlistees, compiled for Military Update by the Defense Manpower Data Center, show that in fiscal 2002, the year before the U.S. invasion of Iraq, the Army had 43,400 blacks among its first-term soldiers, representing 21 percent of the total.

By 2006, the number of blacks on their first hitch had fallen to 30,000, down to 14.5 percent.

Over that same period, while the number of black first-term soldiers fell by 13,400, the Army's overall first-term enlisted population rose by 2,700.

The number of white soldiers increased to close that gap while the proportion of Hispanics serving first enlistments didn't shift significantly.

The Marine Corps, another ground force under enormous strain from the war, likely has seen a decline in black enlistees proportional to the Army.

Marine Corps data, however, are less useful for tracking changes in racial composition because a large number of Marines elect not to indicate race on their records.

DMDC data on the Marine Corps show there were 12,600 blacks serving first-term enlistments in 2002, which represented 11.8 percent of all Marines on their first hitch.

By 2006, the number of first-term black Marines had fallen below 8,000, or to 7.2 percent, a drop of more than a third.

All services saw declines in the proportion of blacks in their enlisted forces from 2002 through 2006. The overall proportion fell in the Army from 27.5 percent to 22.2 percent; in the Air Force from 18.1 percent to 16.6 percent; in the Marine Corps from 15.2 percent to 10.8 percent; and in the Navy from 21 percent to 18.6 percent.

Army and Marine Corps personnel chiefs, both black three-star officers, declined interview requests to discuss the DMDC data.

One officer who finds the data disturbing is retired Brig. Gen. Robert A. Cocroft, head of the National Association for Black Veterans Inc. Cocroft said blacks for decades have viewed the military as a path out of poverty and as a "meritocracy."

A downshift in enlistments "is a telling indication that something is amiss about the military experience" for black people, he said.

That difference, he said, appears to be the war in Iraq.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

**IN CASE YOU MISSED, HUNDREDS OF
THOUSANDS OF IRAQIS MARCHED TO
SAY GET THE FUCK OUT OF OUR
COUNTRY**



Demonstrators hold Iraqi flags as they march during an anti-Occupation protest in Najaf, April 9, 2007. Hundreds of thousands of people, responding to a call by powerful anti-Occupation nationalist Moqtada al-Sadr, waved Iraqi flags and demanded the withdrawal of U.S. forces. (Ceerwan Aziz/Reuters)

Interview With A Resistance Leader:

“The Resistance Will Continue As Long As The Occupation Is On The Land Of Iraq”

“Anyone That Thinks Otherwise Would Be Wrong”

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in.]

As for the death squads, most of them belong to the militias of the Shiite parties and the Kurdish political parties that are participating in the government. These

do not represent the masses of our Shiite and Kurdish brothers. They represent the agendas of the parties to which they belong only.

Most of the Shias and the Kurds are against them and they dissociate themselves from their criminal deeds.

March 27, 2007 Al-Safir [Excerpts]

Head of Iraqi Muslim Scholars Interviewed on 4th Anniversary of 'Invasion': Interview with Shaykh Harith al-Dari, head of the Association of Muslim Scholars in Iraq, by Khalil Harb;

The US government Open Source Center translates an interview with Harith al-Dhari, a leader of the Association of Muslim Scholars, printed by al-Safir newspaper in Lebanon.

(Harb) Four years have passed since the occupation of Iraq. What does this mean to you?

(Al-Dari) It means the worst four years of my life and the life of every sincere Iraqi citizen that is loyal to his homeland and nation.

(Harb) In light of the position of the Association of Muslim Scholars regarding what has been happening in Iraq during the years of the occupation, do you think that you have been wrong in any of your positions? Have the events demonstrated that the positions you have taken on the major issues been sound positions? Would you cite some examples?

(Al-Dari) I do not think that we in the Association of Muslim Scholars made a mistake in any position we have taken so far both on the political level as well as on the level of Shari'ah.

The events have demonstrated the soundness of our positions.

For instance, take our position on the so-called political process. From the very beginning, we said that it is a failed process that would not lead to the liberation of Iraq and to rescuing it from the situation in which the occupation has put it.

Furthermore, this process does not provide us with the security and social living conditions that are needed.

The events have shown the soundness of what we had expected.

This political process was designed to be a cover to the US project and was established on sectarian and ethnic foundations.

There is also our position on the constitution that was imposed by the occupation and the forces that have imposed their hegemony on Iraq.

These forces inserted articles and paragraphs in the constitution that might lead to dividing the land of Iraq and the people of Iraq and might destroy Iraq's Arab and Islamic identity.

Another example, which is the most important, is our position on the occupation.

From the start, we demanded the departure of the occupation - and at least the scheduling of this departure - and we said that it is the basis of the whole problem.

As the days passed, we saw the savagery, butchery, and bad intentions of the occupation that led to the strengthening of the resistance against it.

(Harb) In your opinion, what is the ideal way out from what Iraq is going through?

(Al-Dari) (The ideal way out) is canceling the political process that has brought all these evils and calamities to Iraq and that has brought it to the brink of the abyss that was expected. This political process should be replaced with a strong government that is reinforced with the nucleus of a strong national army that is loyal to Iraq and to all its sons rather than to the sectarian and factional parties and militias.

This should be accompanied with a serious scheduling of the total withdrawal of the occupation forces from Iraq without delay.

As we have repeatedly pointed out and warned, the events and the positions have shown that it is the occupation that holds all the threads of this dirty game.

(Harb) Many have wagered that the resistance against the occupation would come to an end, but the days have shown that this did not take place. What is your comment?

(Al-Dari) Yes, many have wagered and many have conspired that the resistance would end or would be stopped but it continued.

It disappointed them and dashed all their expectations.

In fact, it gained strength and became more effective against the enemies and their agents.

The resistance foiled and continues to foil their schemes in Iraq because it was not driven merely by emotions or incorrect calculations of the material power of the enemies as some have wrongly thought.

Therefore, the resistance will continue as long as the occupation is on the land of Iraq.

Anyone that thinks otherwise would be wrong.

(Harb) Some are arguing against the resistance operations. How do you distinguish between the resistance against the occupation forces and the attacks against civilians by any faction or sect?

(Al-Dari) The difference between the resistance and other forces is very clear except to those that hate the resistance against the occupation forces or think badly of it either because they are agents or are envious of the resistance.

We - and others like us that recognize the legitimacy of resistance and the right of nations to resist against their enemies and occupiers - believe that the resistance should be against the occupying enemies and their obvious agents that cooperate with, support, and fight with the occupiers.

Those that target innocent and peaceful Iraqis from all sects, denominations, and faiths are condemned criminals that transgress against Shari'ah and are outside the law and the national values.

They are like the enemies and occupiers of the homeland regardless to which sect or faction or faith they belong.

(Harb) How true are the reports that are spread every now and then that the resistance is a Sunni resistance only, that the death squads are Shiite, and that the suicide bombers are Sunni terrorists? In your opinion, what is the purpose of using such classifications?

(Al-Dari) The resistance in Iraq is an Islamic and national resistance in which most of the components of the Iraqi people participate and the majority are Sunnis.

As for the death squads, most of them belong to the militias of the Shiite parties and the Kurdish political parties that are participating in the government. These do not represent the masses of our Shiite and Kurdish brothers.

They represent the agendas of the parties to which they belong only.

Most of the Shias and the Kurds are against them and they dissociate themselves from their criminal deeds.

As for the suicide bombers, the majority of them are Sunni Iraqis and others that represent the policy of one known faction of the resistance. At first, their operations were directed against the occupation forces only and later expanded to include the government forces these forces helped the occupation forces to repulse the resistance and to attack some cities that reject the occupation, such as Al-Fallujah, Samarra, Al-Najaf, and other cities.

From the start, the association opposed this style because it is not necessary and due to the dangers inherent in its tragic consequences in most cases.

(Harb) One of the consequences of the invasion and occupation are the attempts to foment a sectarian conflict in Iraq. How are you dealing with this?

(Al-Dari) One of the goals - not the consequences - of the invasion and the occupation was to foment sectarian and ethnic strife in Iraq. This was obvious in several matters:

The Governing Council was formed on sectarian bases. The drafting of the constitution that consecrated hegemony was left in the hands of the Shiite and Kurdish political leaders that support the US project.

Other components of the people were marginalized, including the majority of the Shias and the Kurds that reject the occupation.

The elections that were overseen by the occupation were rigged in favor of the interests of its known allies.

Despite all these exposed to foment sedition, the occupation did not succeed. This is due to God Almighty first and to the steadfastness and fraternal and patriotic cohesion of the Iraqis throughout history.

When they failed to ignite civil war, they resorted to the satanic act of detonating the mausoleums of the two imams Ali al-Hadi and Hasan al-Askari, may peace be upon them.

This act was carried out by the security organs of the Interior Ministry with the supervision of the intelligence service of a neighboring country and the knowledge of the Americans.

This led to the organized criminals deeds that were masterminded by the security forces of the Iraqi government that was led by Dr Ibrahim al-Ja'fari.

These criminal deeds were reinforced with fatwas several religious authorities issued that and that were based on the statement issued by the highest Shiite religious authority that accused a specific side minutes after the news was announced without verifying the quarter that actually carried out that heinous criminal deed.

Despite all this, the situation did not deteriorate into a civil war due to the self-restraint and discipline that the Sunnis demonstrated. The Association (of Muslim Scholars) urged this self-restraint in order to contain the sedition that was planned by those we just mentioned. In our efforts, we were helped by brothers Shaykh Jawad al-Khalisi, Ayatollah Al-Sayyid Ali al-Baghdadi, Ayatollah Al-Sayyid Mahmud al-Husni al-Sarkhi, and other figures and well known patriotic authorities.

(Harb) In your opinion, who is the primary beneficiary from the sectarian sedition and the slaughtering on the basis of one's identity card? Why do some organizations of the resistance sometimes claim responsibility for attacks against civilians? Is this not wrong?

(Al-Dari) The immediate beneficiary from the sectarian sedition and the slaughtering on the basis of one's identity card are the enemies of Iraq and the enemies of Iraq's unity and power led by the occupation.

It has been proven with irrefutable evidence that the occupation stands behind many of the evil and criminal quarters that target the sons of our people.

After the occupation, those that stand to gain are its allies, the advocates of sectarian and separatist schemes, and the agents of the countries that hate Iraq and that do not wish the welfare of Iraq.

As for the targeting of civilians, this is due to many factors.

Some of these factors are purely sectarian in character, other factors are ideological, and others are destructive and intended to foment sedition and shuffle the cards in order to reach a certain specific goal or objective that may include pure vengeance and revenge.

This serves the interests of those that promote sectarian sedition and slaughtering on the basis of one's identity card.

Some organizations of the resistance sometimes endorse such actions for reasons of their own. But this is a wrong endorsement and is prohibited by Shari'ah.

It is not an act of acceptable jihad and does not help its proponents to reach their legitimate goals, if they have legitimate goals. We in the Association (of Muslim Scholars) have denounced such un-Islamic and inhuman acts and methods. We pray to God to distance us from such perpetrators regardless to which faction or sect they may belong.

(Harb) Do you contemplate returning to Iraq soon? The Iraqi government has ordered your arrest. Are you worried that it might ask the Interpol to apprehend you?

(Al-Dari) Yes, I think of returning soon and when the reasons are available. As for the Interpol, I am not worried about that.

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

**Ex-Army Officer:
Troops Are Dying In Iraq For A
'Doomed Project'
"I Came Out Of The Army Fucking
Angry"**

[Thanks to Alberto Jaccoma, The Military Project & Z, who sent this in.]

“I came out of the Army fucking angry - I felt I had a right to come out and say something,” he said. “My friends had been killed, so I thought: ‘I’m not going quietly.’”

08 April 2007 By Paul Bignell and Ian Griggs, Independent News and Media Limited

A former captain in the Scots Guards who has served in Afghanistan and Iraq describes both operations as a political and military shambles in a book to be published next week.

Leo Docherty, 30, was formally reprimanded six months ago for breaking the Army’s code of silence by criticising the top brass for a catalogue of failures in both countries. He left the Army disillusioned and under a cloud in September, but now risks further ire from his former masters by publishing an account of his time in Iraq and Afghanistan, called Desert of Death.

Mr Docherty, who speaks five languages, including Arabic and Pashto, became a captain in 2001 and was deployed to Basra in Iraq in November 2004.

“None of us in the officers’ mess believed in the weapons of mass destruction nonsense - we all saw that as a kind of pretext,” he said.

But things started to go wrong quickly, and Mr Docherty began to feel that Operation Telic was causing as many problems for the population as it solved.

“There are nearly 10,000 British troops there just getting on with the job, taking terrible risks and dying for the sake of a doomed project, and yet they crack on like it’s inevitable, reasonable and sensible to be there,” he said.

“A lot of what you’re doing is often counterproductive, in the sense that it’s damaging relations with local people.”

After a six-month tour in the country and following his return to the UK, Mr Docherty took up a new role as aide-de-camp and interpreter for Colonel Charlie Knaggs, commander of the Helmand taskforce in Afghanistan.

Not long afterwards, he received orders to seize the town of Sangin. “Sangin was a sudden order, made on the back of a fag packet, that was in no way prepared for,” he said. “I had barely two minutes to give orders to my team and show them how the mission was to pan out.

“As we approached the town, I was sitting on the bonnet of my Snatch vehicle when shots started to crackle to our left. I jammed my helmet on and made a crouched run to a ruined wall to our left to try to see who was shooting at us.”

Sangin was taken, but during the battle an 11-year-old Afghan boy was shot dead, a poignant reminder of the dangers of waging war in a dense civilian area.

“I think we’ve lost the sympathy of a generation of people,” he said. “We’re perceived as an invading army, and we’re radicalising the population.”

Mr Docherty resigned his commission last autumn, but not before attacking those who sent him to Iraq and Afghanistan in the press. His comments earned him a formal reprimand for speaking out without clearance from his superiors.

“I came out of the Army fucking angry - I felt I had a right to come out and say something,” he said.

“My friends had been killed, so I thought: ‘I’m not going quietly.’”

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR; RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



A foreign occupation soldier from U.S. B Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment sitting in an Iraqi citizens' living room after searching their house in west Baghdad's Ghazalayah neighborhood, Iraq, March 22, 2007. Iraqi citizens have no right to resist home invasions by occupation soldiers from the USA. If they do, they may be arrested, wounded, or killed. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnjakovic)

[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

[But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?]

The women and children were moved into a room, where they huddled together in silence. The men had been forced down onto their knees wherever they were apprehended, their hands secured behind their backs with plastic handcuffs and their eyes covered by makeshift blindfolds. YOCHI J. DREAZEN, Wall St. Journal, 3.12.07

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

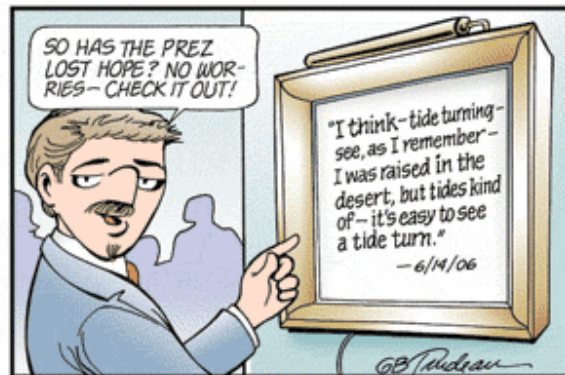
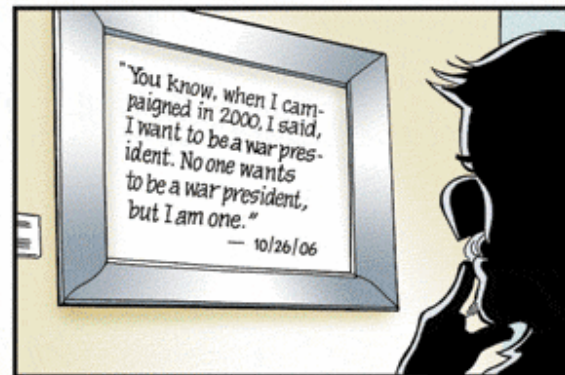
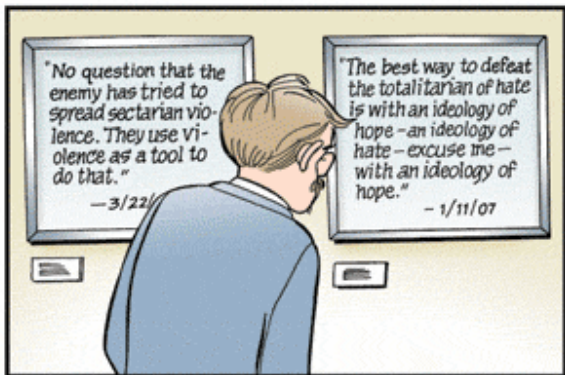
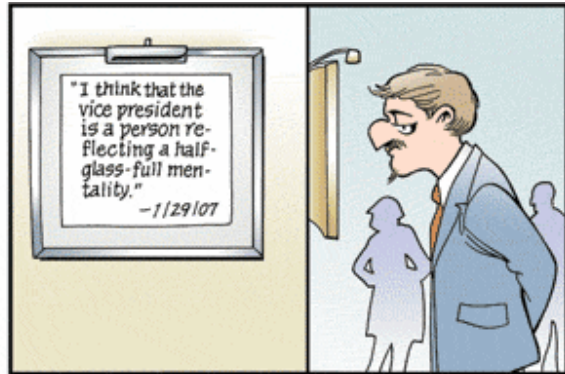
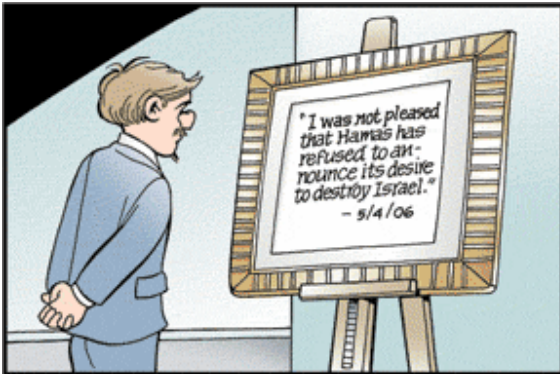
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<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

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DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

Troops Invited:

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

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