

GI SPECIAL 5K21:



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

“You Don’t Want To Want To Be Pegged As A Terrorist?”

By Travis Daub, LostBrain Media

Men, planning to leave the safe confines of your home, and you don’t want to want to be pegged as a terrorist?

Be sure to slap on your mandatory flag pin.

Here are some handy tips to help you blend in with the rest of the patriotic public.

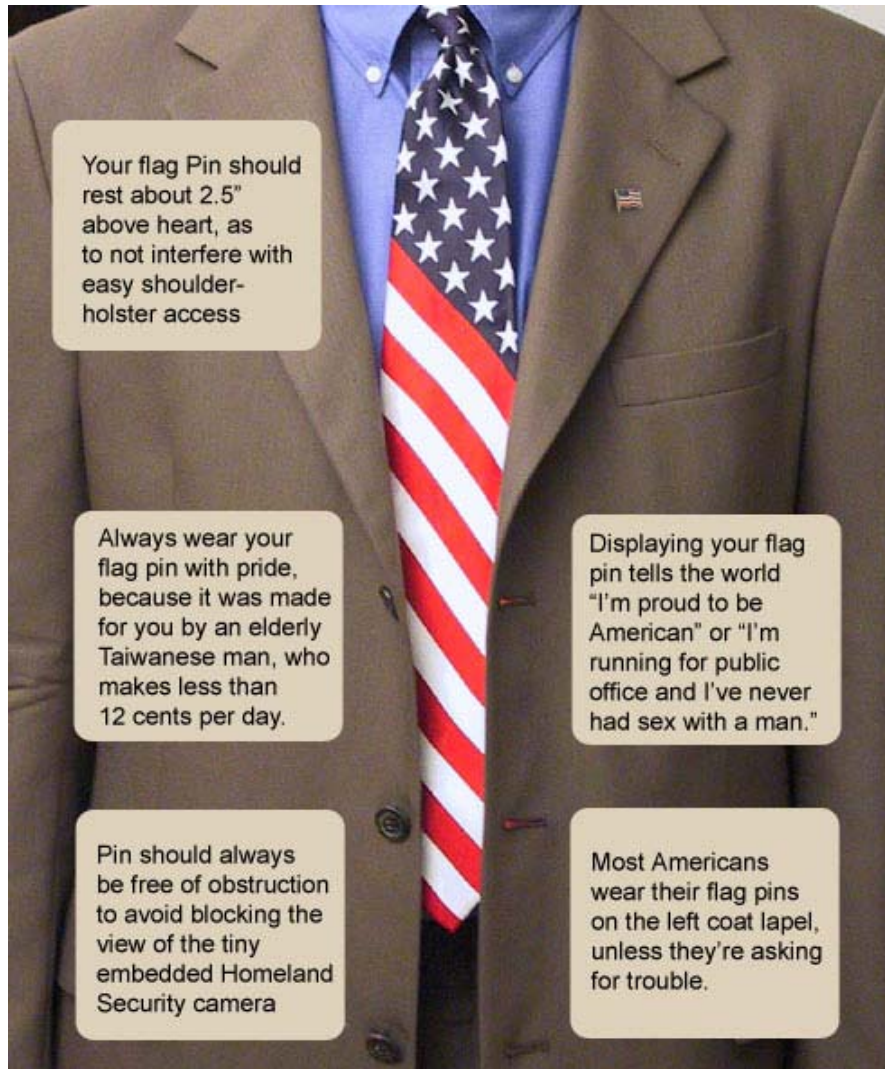
About the flag

The 18 stars represent the only 18 states free of known al-Queda cells.



The 7 stripes, (3 white, 4 red) represent the new, truncated 7-amendment Bill of Rights

The 25 karat gold flagpole represents how we kicked Iraq's ass, all over the place.



Your flag Pin should rest about 2.5" above heart, as to not interfere with easy shoulder-holster access

Always wear your flag pin with pride, because it was made for you by an elderly Taiwanese man, who makes less than 12 cents per day.

Pin should always be free of obstruction to avoid blocking the view of the tiny embedded Homeland Security camera

Displaying your flag pin tells the world "I'm proud to be American" or "I'm running for public office and I've never had sex with a man."

Most Americans wear their flag pins on the left coat lapel, unless they're asking for trouble.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Soldier From Indiana Dies In Iraq Bombing

11/19/2007 VEVAY, Ind. (AP)

Residents in this small Ohio River town in southeastern Indiana are mourning the death of a hometown soldier who was killed in Iraq last week by a roadside bombing.

A statement released Sunday by the Pentagon said Sgt. Kenneth R. Booker, 25, died Nov. 14 in Mukhisa, Iraq, from wounds he suffered when a bomb exploded near his vehicle. It gave no additional details.

But Booker's father, Charles Booker, said the family was told that his son's vehicle, a Stryker eight-wheel-drive truck that he was commanding, was struck by a new form of improvised explosive device while on patrol.

The military began using Stryker vehicles in Iraq in March, believing that their speed and design would make them less vulnerable to roadside bombs than other vehicles.

Booker's mother, Becky Graham of Milton, Ky., learned of her son's death Thursday, the same day she had mailed a Christmas package to him. That package includes a note stating that since he couldn't be home for Christmas, Christmas was coming to him.

Graham had enclosed a little Christmas tree, a movie, Christmas music, a Christmas mug and cocoa for her son.

"I didn't know he was already gone when I sent it," she said Friday.

Graham said her son joined the Army in 2000 after graduating from Switzerland County High School in Vevay, about 90 miles southeast of Indianapolis.

She said he had a clever sense of humor, liked to have fun and to go hunting.

"He was a funny person," she said. "He had a really great sense of humor. He liked to joke around, he liked to hunt, was goodhearted, kind. He was quiet. He was just a wonderful person."

Booker turned 21 in Afghanistan and 22 in Iraq during previous deployments, both when he was with the 82nd Airborne based at Fort Bragg, N.C., said his father, Charles Booker.

"I always had faith he was going to be all right, but you never know," he said. "Even the best soldiers, it happens to."

Booker was the 94th member of the military from Indiana to have died since February 2003 after being sent to the Mideast for the war in Iraq.

He was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash. The Army transferred him to Fort Lewis, Wash., and into military intelligence, but he didn't like it because he spent most of his time at a desk, Graham said.

She said that he asked for a transfer back to infantry, and joined a Stryker Brigade Combat Unit at Fort Lewis knowing it was headed for Iraq, she said.

Booker was sent to Iraq about six months ago and had recently been home for an 18-day leave. He left to return to Iraq on Sept. 12, the day after his brother, Kaleb Daniel Booker, turned 22, she said.

Graham said he son always downplayed the dangers he and other soldiers face in Iraq.

"He always told me, 'It's pretty dull here,'" she said.

But once when she was talking to him on the telephone, there was a loud explosion on his end. He asked if she had heard it; she said yes and asked what it was.

"Just another explosion," he said.

Local Soldier Dies During Third Tour Of Iraq

11/24/2007 Paul Thomas, WKYC-TV

BELLEVUE - Army Staff Sgt. Jon Martin of Bellevue, Ohio earned a Purple Heart during his second tour of duty in Iraq.

A platoon leader for the 101st Airborne Division, Martin, 33, told his family, according to published reports, that he returned to Iraq because he wanted to make sure that his men returned home safely.

Martin was critically injured November 9 when a roadside bomb ripped through the vehicle he was riding in. He died on Thanksgiving in a hospital in Germany.

Flags flew at half-staff in the small town of Bellevue Saturday where Martin grew up and still has family.

Martin leaves behind his wife, Becki and three young children.

Family friend, Bill Ruffing wiped away tears as he talked about Martin. "You think about it every day," Ruffing said. "Jon went over, he's doing things for us. "He's one of the heroes."

Ruffing and his sons have organized a benefit dinner for the Martin family. The dinner will be held Sunday, November 25, at the Sports Hut at 938 West Main Street in Bellevue.

All of the proceeds from the steak, fish and barbecue chicken dinners along with the money raised during a silent auction of sports memorabilia will be given to Staff Sgt. Martin's family.

A fund for the Martin family has been set up at the First National Bank of Bellevue. For information about donations, call (419) 483-7340.

Spinning The Bad News About Fuel Convoys

11.23.07 Los Angeles Times

The Army is spraying insulating foam on tents and other structures in Iraq in a pilot project to reduce dependence on fuel, and the dangerous convoys that supply it.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



4th Platoon, Bravo Company I-327th Infantry 1st Battalion 101st Airborne Division Air Assault after finding a handmade explosive on the side of the road during a patrol in Siniyah, around 70 km (40 miles) north of Tikrit, November 23, 2007. REUTERS/Stefano Rellandini

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Memories Of Lost Son Haunt Family

11/13/2007 By Shelly Leachman, Staff writer; Post Telegram

They got engaged last December, after their long friendship had bloomed into love.

And although Lester Roque's Friendster.com Web page refers to fiance Lyka (no last name given) as his spouse - he even bought her a pink T-shirt that in yellow letters reads "Lester's wife" - the pair had yet to tie the knot.

"They were so much in love they considered themselves already husband and wife. So much in love," Roque's mother, Liza, said Tuesday, surrounded by youngest son Leo, 20, and husband Tony at their home near Carson. "The girl was an inspiration for him."

Lester and Lyka were to be married in January, before family and close friends in the Philippines, where he grew up, where they met and where she still lives and works as a nurse.

Instead Army Spc. Lester Roque, who would have turned 24 on Dec. 4, will instead be buried next week in Cypress. The combat medic died Saturday of wounds suffered a day earlier, when insurgents ambushed his patrol in eastern Afghanistan.

Matthew C. Ferrara, 24, a 1st lieutenant from Torrance who graduated from South High in 2001, died Friday in the same attack. Both men were assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 503rd Airborne Infantry Regiment, 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team based in Italy.

Roque was on the home stretch of a 15-month deployment to Afghanistan, his second since enlisting in 2004. He planned to spend five years in the service then study nursing back here in California.

"At first I didn't believe that it was my son," father Tony recalled of hearing the news this weekend. "Two Army officers came here - a chaplain and a colonel. They asked me, 'Are you the father of Lester?' and right away I was scared. They said, 'Let's talk inside.' They showed me the report that said my son had died."

"I was getting ready for work," Liza recalled. "When I saw the two guys I knew something was wrong with my son. I started to cry at once."

A generous man who sent money home to his mom, gifted brother Leo with his car on departing for the Army and often sent gifts and flowers to his fiance Spc. Roque also "never missed a call (home)," Liza said.

"He always called on my days off - Wednesday and Saturday nights - after his patrol," she said. "He's a sweet guy. He always opens up to me, tells me always what's on his mind. He was talkative and curious for everything."

Roque was a huge movie buff - action flicks were his favorite - and a video gaming fan. He loved cars, playing basketball, snowboarding and traveling.

“He was funny, outgoing and cheerful, and sometimes he could be, like, a daredevil,” Leo remembered. “He helped me a lot, especially when I had problems with school. And when we hung out he was pretty fun to be with.”

Joining a handful of relatives sprinkled around Southern California, including grandparents in Cypress and cousins in San Diego, the Roques moved to the South Bay from the Philippines in 2003.

Tony landed a job in his profession, architecture, and Liza worked at a Philippine products store in Carson. Leo enrolled at Carson High.

Lester Roque took classes at Harbor College and worked several jobs: in the cafeteria at Harbor/UCLA Medical Center, in a Honda parts warehouse, and at his dad’s office. He was biding the time until his green card arrived and he could enlist in the U.S. Army, which took about a year.

Growing up in Bulacan Province, Philippines, he always dreamed of joining the military, his family related.

“That was his life,” a sullen Tony said Tuesday, wearing an Army T-shirt, sitting next to a giant photo collage of his ever-smiling eldest son. Three such displays now stand the family home, as does a small shrine - white roses, a burning candle, a cross, a picture of Roque in his fatigues and two of his name patches.

“Soldier,” Tony continued. “That was his life. And he was a good soldier. A good son. Twice a week he called. When I talked to him I told him always, ‘Watch your back. You are in the war.’”

Roque’s body will arrive in Los Angeles later this week, his father said. A two-day viewing next week, on Thanksgiving Day and Friday, Nov. 23, will be followed by a private burial next Saturday at Forest Lawn Cemetery in Cypress.

Fiance Lyka is hoping to secure a travel visa quickly enough to fly in from the Philippines and attend the memorial services for the man she was soon wanted to marry.

“She’s very upset,” Liza said. “We talked to her this morning. She cannot sleep.”

“I keep waking up, too,” Tony said, “in the middle of the night. I get up and go outside, waiting for my son to show up, to talk to him.

“But nothing.”

Decorated Green Beret Killed In Afghanistan Attack

November 15, 2007 By Charlie Coon, Stars and Stripes

BÖBLINGEN, Germany — A 25-year-old Green Beret based in Stuttgart died Saturday during a combat operation in eastern Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. Patrick F. Kutschbach of Company B, 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne) was a weapons sergeant with Operational Detachment Alpha Team 021.

Kutschbach was conducting combat operations with his team when his vehicle was attacked with rocket-propelled grenade and small-arms fire, according to press releases from the U.S. Army Special Operations Command.

The attack occurred when Kutschbach was working in the southern part of the much-contested Tagab Valley in Kapisa province, about 30 miles north of Kabul, the Afghan capital. He deployed earlier this year as a member of the International Security Assistance Force-Afghanistan.

Two other soldiers with Kutschbach's unit were wounded in the attack and are currently hospitalized at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, officials said. The incident occurred during a patrol with Afghan forces. Maj. Kelley Smith of 1st Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group said that the Americans were in a Humvee, which was hit by enemy fire.

Kutschbach had deployed on previous operations, but this was his first deployment to Afghanistan, according to the command.

Kutschbach enlisted in the Army in October 2003 and attended infantry basic training at Fort Benning, Ga. He attended the Special Forces Qualification Course at Fort Bragg, N.C., and became a Green Beret in 2004. He was assigned to his current unit in December 2006. His awards and decorations include the Bronze Star Medal and Purple Heart.

At least 102 U.S. troops have been killed in action this year in Afghanistan, according to The Associated Press, making this the deadliest year there for Americans since the 2001 invasion.

Kutschbach was a native of the Pittsburgh suburb of McKees Rocks, Pa. He was a 2000 graduate of Montour High School in Robinson Township, where he was an all-state volleyball player.

A memorial service has been tentatively scheduled for Nov. 27 in the Stuttgart area, but the location and time have not been decided, according to a spokeswoman from the U.S. European Command.

Kutschbach is survived by his wife, Ginger; son, Bastian; father, David; mother, Debbie Huffner; and brothers David and Andrew.

Sac City's Adrian Hike Killed In Afghanistan In Bomb Attack

November 15, 2007 By JOHN MOLSEED, Messenger staff writer

For Martin Bird, learning that his oldest brother, Sgt. Adrian Hike, was killed in Afghanistan was hard to believe.

“He’s my older brother. He’s invincible,” Bird said.

Hike, 26, from Sac City, was killed Monday when a bomb struck the Humvee in which he was riding. Six other soldiers were also killed in the attack.

Bird, 21, remembered when it took him and his three younger brothers to take on their oldest sibling when they were younger.

In 2005, Hike was injured in a suicide bomb attack while serving in Iraq. He returned to Iowa for about a month before returning to duty in Germany. When he was sent to Afghanistan with the 173rd Airborne Paratroopers this year, Bird remembers he wasn’t as worried about his big brother as much as he did during his deployment in Iraq. Bird had hoped his brother had weathered the worst after recovering from his injuries.

“He recovered fine,” Bird said. “When he came back he looked like himself.”

While Hike was in Afghanistan, he didn’t say much about his missions. “He was not allowed to talk about his job,” Bird said.

He was deployed on a mission when the explosive struck the vehicle.

At first Hike’s family members weren’t sure the Army would be able to recover Hike’s body. When Army officials notified Hike’s father, Robert Bird Sr., in Sac City of his son’s death, they said they hadn’t been able to recover Hike’s remains because of darkness.

However, Hike’s body is at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware, Bird said, to be officially identified and returned home. Plans for a service in Carroll are still pending.

News of his death shook his friends back home.

Natalie Flynn, who knew Hike from when he was in high school, had kept in touch with Hike via the Internet. The two would chat and exchange messages on MySpace or instant messaging.

“I’d always leave him comments and ask him how things are on the other side of the world, and ask him to be careful and safe,” Lynn said.

The same tools that Hike stay in touch with his friends helped them support each other in their loss. By Thursday his friends were on the Internet to memorialize Hike. His MySpace profile filled with comments and memories. Another friend established a Facebook group Thursday afternoon that had dozens of members by the evening.

Family and friends converged on Ralston in Carroll County where his mother Kim Bird lives.

Lynn said she plans to visit his family later this week to offer her support and share memories. She described Bird as an uplifting person who was a good friend.

Martin Bird said his brother enjoyed fishing and hunting.

Those who knew him in high school said Hike had changed and grown since he decided to join the Army. A graduate of Sac City High School in 2000, Hike also worked at Casey's General Store before joining the army.

"You could tell he grew up," said Darwin Otto, store manager. "He's a fine and upstanding young man. He didn't deserve what happened."

"He loved his job," said Bird. "He wouldn't have traded being in the army for nothing."

TROOP NEWS

Big Surprise: **20,000 Combat Brain Injuries Missing From Pentagon Numbers**

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

11/23/2007 By Gregg Zoroya, USA TODAY [Excerpts]

At least 20,000 U.S. troops who were not classified as wounded during combat in Iraq and Afghanistan have been found with signs of brain injuries, according to military and veterans records compiled by USA TODAY.

The data, provided by the Army, Navy and Department of Veterans Affairs, show that about five times as many troops sustained brain trauma as the 4,471 officially listed by the Pentagon through Sept. 30. These cases also are not reflected in the Pentagon's official tally of wounded, which stands at 30,327.

The number of brain-injury cases were tabulated from records kept by the VA and four military bases that house units that have served multiple combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan.

One base released its count of brain injuries at a medical conference.

The others provided their records at the request of USA TODAY, in some cases only after a Freedom of Information Act filing was submitted.

Soldiers and Marines whose wounds were discovered after they left Iraq are not added to the official casualty list, says Army Col. Robert Labutta, a neurologist and brain injury consultant for the Pentagon.

More than 150,000 troops may have suffered head injuries in combat, says Rep. Bill Pascrell, D-N.J., founder of the Congressional Brain Injury Task Force.

"I am wary that the number of brain-injured troops far exceeds the total number reported injured," he says.

MORE

***Another Big Surprise:* Marine Didn't Recognize Signs Of Brain Injury**

11.23.07 USA Today

Marine Lance Cpl. Gene Landrus was hurt in a roadside bomb attack outside Abu Ghraib, Iraq, on May 15, 2006, and faces medical separation from the Corps. Along with 20,000 other veterans, he is not included in the Pentagon's official count of U.S. troops wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. That is because Landrus' wound was to his brain and hidden from view.

Landrus, 24, of Clarkston, Wash., says he did not realize the nausea, dizziness, memory loss and headaches he suffered after the blast were signs of a lasting brain injury. **[Well how the fuck could he? The assholes didn't tell him about the possibility of the wound, nor did they tell him what symptoms to look out for. That's his fault. Of course. Right.]**

Disabled Veterans Sent Back To War:

**“And To Me, That's Just Atrocious”
“They Don't Care About Our Men And Women That They Are Sending Over. They Are Just Worrying About The Numbers”**

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

November 11, 2007 WCVB-TV [Excerpts]

BOSTON -- Thousands of soldiers coming home from Iraq and Afghanistan are disabled by post-traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD.

But Team 5 Investigates has uncovered that case after case, the military is violating its own policy and shipping them back to the front lines before they are well.

One day after Michael DeVlieger was released from an Army hospital in Kentucky for acute stress disorder, he got the redeployment order. Now he's on the front lines.

"The closer that it got, he kept saying 'Mom I'm going to die, I'm not coming back this time. I'm feeling it, I'm dreaming it. I'm not coming back,'" said Sue DeVlieger, his mother.

Critics say there's a contradiction between military policy and its practices. The official policy of the Department of Defense states that soldiers with serious psychiatric problems could only be sent back to the war zone if they were stable for at least three months.

"They should be given the time to heal, make sure that they can handle themselves over there so that we are sending an able Army," said DeVlieger.

"So I am extremely disappointed in the Army because they don't care about our men and women that they are sending over. They are just worrying about the numbers. And to me, that's just atrocious."

Dr. Judith Herman is a psychiatrist who specializes in PTSD. She said she does not think it is safe to send a mentally ill soldier back to war.

"Personally I'm appalled by the practice," Herman said. "I don't think it's safe for the individual soldier. I don't think it's safe for his unit either to send someone who is so impaired back into a situation of danger."

Those who have worked with veterans for decades say a big problem is that the Department of Defense and Veteran Affairs don't share crucial medical information.

"There are veterans diagnosed with PTSD and the Department of Veteran Affairs knows. But VA doesn't share that information with the Department of Defense," said Paul Sullivan of Veterans for Common Sense. "So those soldiers are sent back. It also works the other way. There are soldiers diagnosed by the Department of Defense and can't get help from the VA, so the system is broken in both directions."

Fernandez's mother fought tirelessly to keep her son at home. Two years later the decorated soldier is still struggling to put his life together again.

DeVlieger's mother couldn't keep her son home.

British Army In Crisis, As Number Of Troops Leaving Soars: Up 50% In Last Year

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

24/11/2007 By Thomas Harding, Defence Correspondent; Telegraph Media Group Limited

The Army is facing a major shortfall in manpower after the latest figures released today showed that the number of troops leaving had increased by 50 per cent in the last year.

The difficulty in finding troops for the frontline has become evident after the Ministry of Defence admitted it was short of 4,500 soldiers - the equivalent of almost an entire brigade.

With most of the Army on continuous operations for the last four years in Iraq and Afghanistan the strain on soldiers and their families has been immense.

In the last two years the manning shortage of soldiers excluding officers has more than quadrupled from 1,000 to the most recent figure making the Army short of nine battalions in manpower.

The MoD's requirement for soldiers is 88,450 but yesterday the figure stood at 83,860 which includes almost 7,000 men recruited from Commonwealth countries.

More worryingly the number of people resigning from the Army has increased by 10 per cent in the last year to 12,500.

Overall the Armed Forces are now lacking almost 7,000 personnel out of a total required force of 181,000.

Guantanamo: The American Way: Lawyers Have To Argue By Secret E-Mails "In Closed Sessions For Which No Transcripts Or Summaries Are Available"

11.21.07 MiamiHerald.com

Five news organizations complained that they are being denied access to much of the military commission proceedings against a Canadian terror suspect at the Guantanamo Bay detention center. Various arguments in the case of Omar Khadr, apparently are made by e-mail to which the public has no access, and in closed sessions for which no transcripts or summaries are available, the news organizations wrote in a filing.

MORE:

Guantanamo: More Suicides Than Trials

At Guantanamo, The Trial Everyone Faces Is Waiting
(Boston Globe, November 23, 2007)

In the nearly six years that detainees have been held at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, the prison has seen more suicides than trials: Four detainees have killed themselves, while only one case has been completed, through a plea bargain. The military commissions system that President Bush set up from scratch after Sept. 11 has faced so many legal challenges that even basic questions, including whether constitutional protections extend to the detainees, remain unresolved. So judges, lawyers, and detainees are forced to do what people on the isolated island base do most often: They wait.

MORE:

Guantanamo: Got A Powerful Rich Bush Buddy? You Get To Go Home!

11.22.07 Boston Globe

Saudi Arabia, a wealthy, influential U.S. ally, has seen more than 100 of about 130 citizens return home from Guantanamo, including dozens a military review panel found were security threats.

But Yemen, a poor country that lacks close ties to Washington, has had only 13 of about 110 citizens repatriated, including the body of one who committed suicide. Yemen now has overtaken Saudi Arabia as the nation with the most citizens in Guantanamo besides Afghanistan, with about one-third of the current 310 detainees.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

23 Nov 2007 & 11.24.07 Reuters & November 25, 2007 By HAMID AHMED, The Associated Press & Reuters

One Iraqi soldier was killed and four were wounded when Iraqi forces opened fire on an explosives-laden truck speeding towards a checkpoint in the city of Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said. Three soldiers were still missing after the truck exploded, police added.

Two car bombs targeting police patrols killed six policemen in southeastern Mosul.

Guerrillas on a motorbike killed a doctor who was working with the U.S. military in Kut, 170 km (105 miles) southeast of Baghdad, on Thursday, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded two members of the Interior Ministry's anti-crime unit when it targeted their patrol in central Baghdad, police said.

The body of a policeman was found with gunshot wounds in Tuz Khurmato in northern Iraq, two days after he was captured, police said.

A car bomb killed three policemen and wounded 11 others near the city of Samarra, police said.

One Iraqi soldier was wounded by a roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol in the Jadiriya district of southern Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb targeted an Iraqi army patrol at an intersection in a northeastern neighborhood, killing one soldier and wounding six soldiers.

An attack wounded a policeman in Falluja, 50 km (30 miles) west of Baghdad, police said.

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

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

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

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

OCCUPATION REPORT

60% Of Iraqis Want U.S. Troops Dead: Big Surprise



Foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division Air Assault, question **suspects** during a patrol in Baiji November 24, 2007. REUTERS/Stefano Rellandini

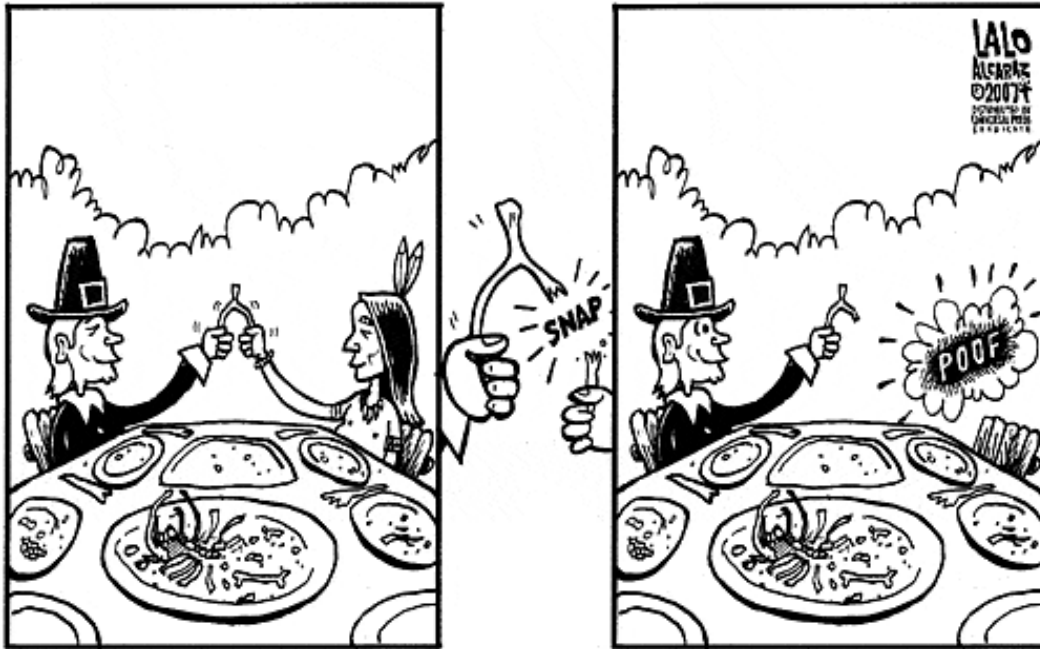
[Yeah, right. Suspected of being Iraqi. Handcuffed, kneeling on the dirt. In their country. Put there by foreigners with weapons.

[61% of Iraqis say they approve of attacks on U.S.-led forces in their country, up from 47 percent in January. A solid majority of Shiite and Sunni Arabs approved of the attacks, according to the poll. 9/27/2006 By BARRY SCHWEID, AP & Program on International Policy Attitudes

Iraqis feel about U.S. troops trampling them in the dirt the same way Americans felt about British troops trampling them in the dirt in 1776. They are right to resist by any means necessary. T]

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



11/19

Demorats Fake “Anti-War” Bill Would “Allow For Tens Of Thousands Of U.S. Troops To Stay Deployed For Years To Come”

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

11.22.07 By ANNE FLAHERTY AP [Excerpts]

The Democrats' flagship proposal on Iraq is aimed at bringing most troops home.

Yet if enacted, the law would still allow for tens of thousands of U.S. troops to stay deployed for years to come.

This reality — readily acknowledged by Democrats who say it's still their best shot at curbing the nearly five-year war — has drawn the ire of anti-war groups and bolstered President Bush's prediction that the United States will most likely wind up maintaining a hefty long-term presence in Iraq, much like in South Korea.

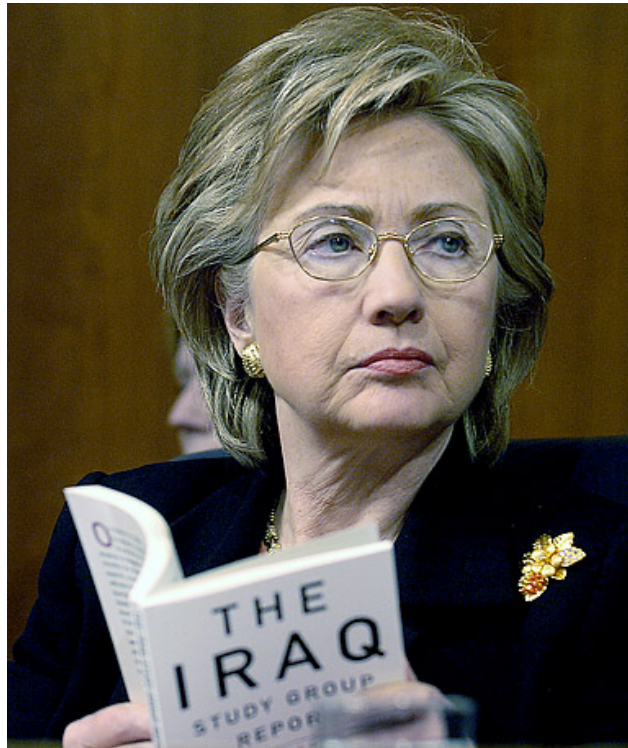
Despite the GOP's fierce opposition and a White House veto threat, military officials and analysts say the proposal leaves open the door for a substantial force to remain behind.

[A]s Anthony Cordesman, a national security analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, put it: "As long as you're discussing a bill that is designed for political purposes, you don't have to get down to the issue of whether it would work or not."

Wow! Democracy! You Get To Choose Which One Will Order You To Die In Iraq!

**NOT ANOTHER DEATH?
NOT ANOTHER DAY?
NOT ACCORDING TO THESE RATS**

Rat #1



[powerlineblog.com]

Rat #2



washingtonpost.com

Rat #3



graphics.jsonline.com

Rat #4



pbs.org

On PBS Newshour, 10.4.07, Kucinich made clear his opposition to bringing all the troops home now, and bragged about his plan to keep on killing more U.S. troops and more Iraqis until some “international security and peacekeeping force” that exists nowhere but in his stupid, murderous fantasy life arrives to replace U.S. occupation forces.

Repeat: According to this rat’s “plan,” U.S. troops keep right on dying and killing Iraqis, on and on and on.

There is no “international security and peacekeeping force” to replace them.

He is not, repeat for the dimwitted, *not* in favor of stopping the killing and dying *now*.

T

[Kucinich, 10.4.07, PBS Newshour interview:

JUDY WOODRUFF: But what about today? How is your position different?

REP. DENNIS KUCINICH: But today what’s different is this, that not only did I reflect the capacity for judgment and wisdom at the moment of crisis when it really counts, but also today I have a plan that would bring our troops home and stabilize Iraq at the same time, and also leave Iraq in control of their oil.

REP. DENNIS KUCINICH: Well, you have to keep in mind that my plan calls for a parallel process.

We end the occupation, close the bases, bring the troops home in parallel with an international security and peacekeeping force that moves in as our troops leave.

I mean, that's the way you bring an end to the U.S. involvement in Iraq.

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

MORE:

[GI SPECIAL 5118 [9.18.07]

Democrats Have Enough Votes To End The War Now [If They Choose To Do So]

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

Sep 13, 2007 FAIR [Excerpts]

Following a pattern set when Congress passed supplemental funding for the Iraq War last May (FAIR Media Advisory, 6/1/07), major media outlets continued to “explain” the politics of the war in incomplete and misleading ways.

The point made by these media outlets again and again is that the Democrats have little power to affect policy in Iraq because it would be difficult to pass legislation over a potential Republican filibuster, and even harder to pass a bill over a presidential veto.

This sentiment is also voiced by many Democratic politicians, many of whom consider themselves opponents of the war.

But passing a filibuster- or veto-proof bill is not their only option.

As the Washington Post's Shailagh Murray and Dan Balz (9/10/07) put it: “Because of a Senate rule requiring 60 votes to shut off debate and 67 votes to overturn a veto, (Senate Majority Leader Harry) Reid faced an almost impossible challenge. Even if all his troops stood together, he started with just 49 votes.”

Newsweek's Howard Fineman declared that the Democrats' powerlessness was built into the constitutional system on NBC's Chris Matthews Show (9/2/07):

“Politically, what the president has been trying to do is to keep discipline among the Republicans because as long as he can keep most of the Republicans in the Senate, in

the House with him, there's no way to overturn the policy because of the way the Constitution reads.... I hate to keep coming back to the Constitution. Sixty votes to stop a filibuster, 67 to overturn a presidential veto in the Senate.”

This sort of analysis was used to explain the Democrats' need to compromise with Republicans, watering down a firm withdrawal date in the hopes of winning bipartisan support.

This approach was endorsed in an Associated Press report (9/11/07) by Matthew Lee:

“If Republican support for the war holds, as it might for now, Democrats would have to soften their approach if they want to pass an anti-war proposal. But they remain under substantial pressure by voters and politically influential anti-war groups to settle for nothing less than ordering troop withdrawals or cutting off money for the war--legislation that has little chances of passing.”

The problem with all these accounts is that Congress does not have to pass legislation to bring an end to the war in Iraq--it simply has to block passage of any bill that would continue to fund the war.

This requires not 67 or 60 Senate votes, or even 51, but just 41--the number of senators needed to maintain a filibuster and prevent a bill from coming up for a vote.

In other words, the Democrats have more than enough votes to end the Iraq War--if they choose to do so.

The Democratic leadership may believe--rightly or wrongly--that such a strategy would entail unacceptable political costs. But that's very different from being unable to affect policy.

To insist, as many media outlets have, that the Constitution makes it impossible for Congress to stop the war obscures the actual choices facing the nation--by confusing “can't” with “won't.”

PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL SAYS BUSH KNEW MILITARY DICTATORSHIP WAS COMING

11.23.07 Wall Street Journal, November 23, 2007

In the days before Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf imposed emergency rule and jailed thousands of his opponents, the general's aides and advisers forewarned U.S. diplomats in a series of meetings in Islamabad, according to Pakistani and U.S. officials.

One of Musharraf's closest advisers said U.S. criticism was muted, which some senior Pakistanis interpreted as a sign they could proceed.

Bush Regime Traitors At It Again; Using Your Cell Phone To Track Your Movements Without “Probable Cause” Warrants

23 November 2007 By Ellen Nakashima, The Washington Post [Excerpts]

Federal officials are routinely asking courts to order cellphone companies to furnish real-time tracking data so they can pinpoint the whereabouts of “drug traffickers, fugitives and other criminal suspects,” according to judges and industry lawyers.

In some cases, judges have granted the requests without requiring the government to demonstrate that there is probable cause to believe that a crime is taking place or that the inquiry will yield evidence of a crime.

Privacy advocates fear such a practice may expose average Americans to a new level of government scrutiny of their daily lives.

Such requests run counter to the Justice Department's internal recommendation that federal prosecutors seek warrants based on probable cause to obtain precise location data in private areas.

The requests and orders are sealed at the government's request, so it is difficult to know how often the orders are issued or denied.

The issue is taking on greater relevance as wireless carriers are racing to offer sleek services that allow cellphone users to know with the touch of a button where their friends or families are.

The companies are hoping to recoup investments they have made to meet a federal mandate to provide enhanced 911 (E911) location tracking.

Sprint Nextel, for instance, boasts that its “loopt” service even sends an alert when a friend is near, “putting an end to missed connections in the mall, at the movies or around town.”

With Verizon's Chaperone service, parents can set up a “geofence” around, say, a few city blocks and receive an automatic text message if their child, holding the cellphone, travels outside that area.

“Most people don’t realize it, but they’re carrying a tracking device in their pocket,” said Kevin Bankston of the privacy advocacy group Electronic Frontier Foundation.

“Cellphones can reveal very precise information about your location, and yet legal protections are very much up in the air.”

The phone data can home in on a target to within about 30 feet, experts said.

The trend’s secrecy is troubling, privacy advocates said. No government body tracks the number of cellphone location orders sought or obtained. Congressional oversight in this area is lacking, they said.

And precise location data will be easier to get if the Federal Communication Commission adopts a Justice Department proposal to make the most detailed GPS data available automatically.

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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CLASS WAR REPORTS

While Post-Katrina Casinos Prosper, Working-Class Areas Rot:

“More Than 10,000 Displaced Families Still Live In Trailers Provided By The Federal Emergency Management Agency”



Shirley Salik, 72, stands in front of her camper, which she has parked in her son's yard.
Peter Whoriskey / Washington Post

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, Military Project, who sent this in.]

Nov. 25, 2007 By Peter Whoriskey, Washington Post [Excerpts]

BILOXI, Miss. - Nowhere has the rebound from Hurricane Katrina been gaudier than along Mississippi's casino-studded coast.

Even as the storm's debris was being cleared, this city's night sky was lighted up with the high-wattage brilliance of the Imperial Palace, then the Isle of Capri, then the Grand Casino. More followed, and so did vacation-condo developers.

Yet in the wrecked and darkened working-class neighborhoods just blocks from the waterfront glitter, those lights cast their colorful glare over an apocalyptic vision of empty lots and scattered trailers that is as forlorn as anywhere in Katrina's strike zone.

“At night, you can see the casino lights up in the sky,” Shirley Salik, 72, a former housekeeper at one of the casinos, said this month while standing outside her FEMA camper with her two dogs. “But that’s another world.”

More than two years after the storm, the highly touted recovery of the Mississippi coast remains a starkly divided phenomenon.

While Gov. Haley Barbour (R) has hailed the casino openings as a harbinger of Mississippi's resurgence and developers have proposed more than \$1 billion in beachfront condos and hotels for tourists, fewer than one in 10 of the thousands of single-family houses destroyed in Biloxi are being rebuilt, according to city permit records.

More than 10,000 displaced families still live in trailers provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

Now, long-standing resentment over the way the state has treated displaced residents has deepened over a proposal by the Barbour administration to divert \$600 million in federal housing aid to fund an expansion plan at the Port of Gulfport.

The port's recently approved master plan calls for increasing maritime capacity and creating an "upscale tourist village" with hotel rooms, condos, restaurants and gambling.

"We fear that this recent decision . . . is part of a disturbing trend by the Governor's office to overlook the needs of lower and moderate income people in favor of economic development," 24 ministers on the Mississippi coast wrote in September in a letter to state leaders.

"Sadly we must now bear witness to the reality that our Recovery Effort has failed to include a place at the table . . . for our poor and vulnerable."

State leaders rejected the complaints.

Louisiana leaders designed a homeowner grant program that is far broader. Essentially, any homeowner with significant hurricane damage is eligible to receive as much as \$150,000 for rebuilding, less any insurance payouts received. A special provision for low-income homeowners added as much as \$50,000 to the award if the damage claim was not enough to rebuild.

Mississippi's primary homeowner grant program, by contrast, was much narrower.

The program, known as Phase 1, focused only on the relatively narrow group of homeowners who lived outside the designated flood-prone areas -- and as a result did not have flood insurance -- but were flooded by Katrina.

It excluded thousands who lived in the flood zone and lacked adequate flood insurance, as well as anyone who experienced only wind damage.

Bailing them out, the argument went, would encourage homeowners to forgo insurance coverage in the future.

But because low-income households were more likely to lack insurance or to be underinsured, Mississippi's exclusions fell most heavily on the poor, advocates said.

Mississippi's program for rebuilding affordable rental properties has lagged even more.

A proposed \$262 million program for the owners of small rental complexes or houses, the primary type of rental on the coast, has yet to dole out any money. Another program, for low-income housing tax credits, is supposed to generate about 5,730 affordable rental units, but fewer than 1,100 have been built.

The post-storm scarcity of rentals has driven prices up as much as 30 percent, making it more difficult for families in FEMA trailers to find new homes.

"Renters -- well, a lot of us sort of fell through the cracks," said Salik, the former casino housekeeper.

A widow, she quit her job after having a knee replacement years ago but still works three days a week at a mini-storage facility.

For a month after the storm, Salik lived in a tent. After a few more temporary living arrangements, she landed a FEMA camper that she has parked in her son's yard. Her son's camper flanks his house on the other side. He is still repairing the house, and though Salik had rented a house before Katrina, she expects to move in with her son when he finishes.

Like many of the residents struggling to rebuild in eastern Biloxi, Salik said she opposes spending housing aid for the port.

All along the road Salik lives on, Hoxie Street, people are struggling to get back into their homes. And while city officials have blamed the slow recovery on new FEMA guidelines that call for elevating houses by as much as 12 feet off the ground -- an expensive and sometimes impractical requirement -- those rules do not affect everyone, and most said their primary challenge is financial.

Daniel Beavers, 52, a surveyor, is rebuilding his house himself because his insurance payout and a state grant fell well short of what he has needed.

Emily Sponsler, a bartender, and her 11-year-old son are living in a FEMA trailer while they wait for their landlord to gather enough money to rebuild the house they once rented for \$625 a month.

Earl Parrish, 72, a retired pipe fitter, and his wife, Betty, are still living in their grandson's home in Ocean Springs, the next town over, trying to put their Hoxie Street house back together on a limited budget.

They received about \$50,000 from the housing grant program, but it was not nearly enough to complete the job. Katrina flooded their house with about six feet of water.

They have put in their own savings, and a Lutheran church group handled a lot of the labor. But their home is not quite ready for them to move in -- it has no furniture.

Like his neighbors, Earl Parrish opposes redirecting the housing aid to the port. But he seemed to regret making a complaint.

“We’re grateful for what we got -- don’t misunderstand,” he said. “But the people around here were just working folks who didn’t have much. You see all these empty lots around here? These are people who just can’t afford to come back.”

Received:

“A Little Present From Spain...”



From: argüelles carlos
To: thomasfbarton@earthlink.net
Sent: Sunday, November 25, 2007 4:34 PM
Subject: a little present from spain...

in reason of the dispute of chavez and the king.

times are good for changes, things we thought impossible are becoming reality.

latin amerique is standing up and can only be a good thing fr every body!

carry on with your work, it will pay!

**hlvs!
carlos raúl**

Received:

Seeking Iraq Vets To Speak On December 4 Panel On Iraq War; California

From: Nancy Fulton
To: GI Special
Sent: November 24, 2007 6:25 PM
Subject: Seeking Iraq Vets to Speak on December 4, California

Here are the details: Santiago Canyon College, 8045 E. Chapman Ave., Orange CA 92869

714-628-4900 School's main Number; 714-628-4940 My Office; 949-842-6828 My Cell

December 4, 2007 11:00 am to 12:30 pm in D-101.

Panel on Iraq War. Brief 2-5 minute bio by each panelist and then questions from the audience. If the members of the panel have pictures they'd like to share, they can email me the pix and I will construct a power-point presentation.

There is some monies for their time and mileage etc. I so greatly appreciate your help w/ this.

Thanks a lot!!!!

Narges

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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