

GI SPECIAL 4A9:

**HOW MANY MORE FOR BUSH'S WAR?
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



1.15.05: The coffin of Philippines-born US Army Sergeant Myla Maravillosa. (AFP)

**How Walter Reed
Quacks And Butchers
Disguised As Doctors
Destroy Soldiers Lives:
The Scum Accuse Them Of
Faking Traumatic Brain Injury,**

Tell Them It's Hereditary, Delay And Deny Them Treatment

Col. James F. Babbitt, president of the Physical Evaluation Board, accused Wilson of being a liar. "I believe that the preponderance of the evidence available to the Board supports an alternative diagnosis ... one of malingering," Babbitt wrote in that memo.

It's hard for them to believe, after two hard tours of duty, that this is the kind of treatment he has received. "I just want to be taken care of," he says. "I just want healthcare."

Jan. 05, 2006 By Mark Benjamin, Salon.com [Excerpts]

After fighting in heavy combat during the initial invasion of Iraq, Spc. James Wilson reenlisted for a second tour of duty. Now 24 years old, he loved the life of a soldier.

In the fall of 2004, his 1st Cavalry Division was mostly fighting in Sadr City, a volatile sector of Baghdad.

On Sept. 6, Wilson was manning a .50-caliber machine gun atop a Humvee when a bomb or bombs went off directly under the vehicle, rocking his head forward and slamming it into the machine gun. A fellow soldier told Wilson that his Kevlar helmet had been split open by the impact. The heat from one blast felt like "a hair dryer" on his skin, multiplied "times 20," Wilson later wrote in his diary. To the best of his recollection, the force of the blast also knocked the gun from its mount, smashing it into his leg.

Although battered in the attack, Wilson didn't appear badly hurt, on the outside, at least. But in the days that followed, the young soldier from Albany, Ga., says he often felt "really dizzy, lightheaded and dazed." Two weeks after the battle, Army medics felt Wilson was suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and evacuated him out of Iraq for medical evaluation. Wilson was first flown to Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, where wounded troops are stabilized, and then sent to Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., in October 2004.

After arriving at Walter Reed, Wilson repeatedly told doctors that he had experienced a hard blow to the head during combat in Iraq.

He suffered from symptoms strongly associated with a traumatic brain injury, which occurs when the brain is rocked violently inside the skull, tearing nerve fibers: seizures, short-term memory loss, severe headaches with eye pain, and dizzy spells that have made him vomit.

During a visit to the Pentagon around Christmas 2004, Wilson got so dizzy he vomited "all over" the carpet while meeting Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz in his office.

Despite Wilson's description of his injury and his symptoms, Walter Reed officials repeatedly questioned his mental state and the authenticity of his combat story.

In a June 2005 memorandum from an Army Physical Evaluation Board, some Walter Reed doctors stated that Wilson exhibited "conversion disorder with symptoms of traumatic brain injury." Conversion disorder holds that symptoms such as seizures arise from a psychological conflict rather than a physical disorder.

Col. James F. Babbitt, president of the Physical Evaluation Board, accused Wilson of being a liar. "I believe that the preponderance of the evidence available to the Board supports an alternative diagnosis ... one of malingering," Babbitt wrote in that memo. [Which would be less dishonorable than this incompetent piece of shit, who pretends to have some medical knowledge. A malingerer doesn't write filthy slanders of others, or deny them the treatment that can help them until it's nearly too late to do any good, as the story points out below. Let's get a ticket to Iraq for Col. James F. Babbitt, one way. He can spend his time on patrols, without a helmet. Or just tie his worthless, vicious, ignorant ass on top the nearest Humvee, so his observation of "malingerers" will be unimpeded. Col. James F. Babbitt is a classic example of why troops in Vietnam found fragging such a constructive and lifesaving exercise of time and energy.]

Wilson and his wife, Heidi, who has been staying with him at the hospital, vigorously fought the psychological diagnosis and furiously sought medical treatment.

The malingering charge was especially painful. "I want my dignity, pride and respect back," Wilson says. After serving his country, being accused of misleading doctors, he says, "is the worst thing in the world." [Perhaps the incompetent Col. James F. Babbitt has written a public letter of apology to the soldier for smearing him? Why does that seem so unlikely? An alternative to sending Babbitt to Iraq: When he gets some cancer or other deadly disease, early enough to cure, let's find him a doctor who will decide he's a "malingerer" and deny him treatment until the disease is terminal. That would be real old time justice.]

Today, Wilson is thin and has a shaved head. He often clenches his eyes shut, as if to squeeze at the pain in his skull, or search out an elusive word or memory. Whenever a dim detail of his combat duty bubbles up in his mind, he types it into his diary. He holds his hands awkwardly, with his thumbs folded over his palms. His speech is at times slow and slurred.

"I have been dealing with this all year because no one would help me," he says.

[OK, now we know who and where the enemy is. The enemy isn't in Iraq and it isn't Iraqis. It's filth in human form located in Washington DC. "No one would help me." That says it all. Betrayal.]

On Dec. 19, 2005, more than a year after he was admitted, Walter Reed finally sent Wilson to a neurological center to be treated for traumatic brain injury.

Neuropsychological testing done at Walter Reed on Oct. 11, 2005, led officials to conclude that "there was no indication of malingering."

According to a neurosurgeon with extensive experience treating combat head injuries, an October 2004 MRI of Wilson, combined with a description of his symptoms, showed that he should have been treated for a traumatic brain injury right then.

Medical experts say the failure to treat a brain-injury victim promptly could hinder recovery.

[Get it? Medical experts say the failure to treat a brain-injury victim promptly could hinder recovery.

[One more time: Medical experts say the failure to treat a brain-injury victim promptly could hinder recovery.]

Spc. Wilson is not alone among Iraq veterans who have been misdiagnosed or waited for treatment for traumatic brain injury.

Other soldiers interviewed at Walter Reed with apparent brain injuries say they too have been deeply frustrated by delays in getting adequately diagnosed and treated.

[Medical experts say the failure to treat a brain-injury victim promptly could hinder recovery.]

The soldiers say doctors have caused them anguish by suggesting that their problems might stem from other causes, including mental illness or hereditary disease.

According to interviews with military doctors and medical records obtained by Salon, brain injury cases are overloading Walter Reed. As a result, a significant number of brain-injury patients are falling through the cracks from a lack of resources, know-how, and even blatant neglect.

[Medical experts say the failure to treat a brain-injury victim promptly could hinder recovery.]

Exactly how many brain-injured patients are being missed, going without care, or left waiting, as opposed to those who get prompt, top-shelf treatment, is difficult to say.

Walter Reed officials and doctors say the Army is getting better at treating brain-injured patients but admit cases like Wilson's are a significant problem.

A November 2003 report from the Army News Service states that because brain injuries aren't always obvious, they "may be neglected, or even pushed aside as merely psychological."

Patients with traumatic brain injuries "are suffering as much, but may not get the same support as someone who has an observable injury like a bullet wound or a

broken leg," says Dr. Louis French, a neuropsychologist at Walter Reed, in the article.

[Medical experts say the failure to treat a brain-injury victim promptly could hinder recovery.]

One thing is certain: Due to today's military technology and insurgent tactics in the Iraq war, more U.S. soldiers than ever before are sustaining and surviving serious head injuries. In fact, traumatic brain injuries are a major problem among soldiers arriving at Walter Reed.

According to the hospital's brain injury center, 31 percent of battle-injured soldiers admitted between January 2003 and April 2005, 433 patients, had traumatic brain injuries. Half of those had what the hospital calls a "moderate, severe or penetrating brain injury."

Through a spokesperson, Walter Reed and other Army officials, including Col. Babbitt, who accused Wilson of malingering, declined to be interviewed. [So, Col. Babbitt is also a cringing coward, peeing his pants rather than face a few questions about his miserable incompetence.]

"We cannot discuss specific cases with anyone except the Soldier due to the Privacy Act and HIPAA (the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act), nor could we address the case or responsibilities of the president of the (Physical Evaluation Board) without violating some portion of HIPAA," wrote Lt. Col. Kevin V. Arata, an Army public affairs officer, in an e-mail. "Therefore, I cannot arrange an interview."

[Any soldier, or civilian, may order the release of any and all information about his or her medical treatment. Having so ordered, it is unlawful to withhold that information. Somebody needs to have a word with this piece of shit too. Ask your local hospital about HIPPA: every hospital worker gets endless training in what the law means. And Rata is giving the reporter fifty yards of really stupid bullshit.]

There are many success stories, says John DaVanzo, clinical director at Virginia Neurocare, a rehabilitation center in Charlottesville, Va., where Wilson is receiving treatment. "Yes, there are soldiers being missed," DaVanzo admits, but many others with brain injuries, who would've been overlooked in past wars, are being identified and treated.

Still, working in partnership with Walter Reed, DaVanzo has seen the strain on the system during the Iraq war. "There is a massive influx of injured soldiers," he says. "People are overworked." [Nothing new about that in medicine. The problems are scum like Babbitt, who aren't working, except to lie and maim.]

Walter Reed hospital is renowned for state-of-the-art technology and certain kinds of care. One Walter Reed physician tells Salon that the care for amputees at the hospital is "amazing," and praises the work of colleagues, adding that the nurses "work their butts off."

However, the physician is worried that a distressing number of patients at the hospital with brain injuries aren't getting adequate screening and care, and says many doctors at the hospital know little about brain injuries and are prone to making a wrong diagnosis.

"A lot of things are missed because the doctors are swamped," the physician says. Many military doctors are away serving in Iraq or Afghanistan, and some patients are forced to wait too long for surgeries they need.

"We're overwhelmed in terms of resources," the physician says. (Salon agreed to withhold the identity of the physician, who was not authorized to speak to the media, and feared retribution from the hospital.)

The delay in proper diagnosis and treatment for Wilson and others with apparent brain injuries is particularly troubling because patients tend to benefit from a prompt response.

An April 13, 2005, article about brain trauma from the Department of Defense's own press service says that "if the injury is detected and treated early, most victims can recover full brain function, or at least return to relatively normal lives."

But Dr. Gene Bolles, a former chief of neurosurgery at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, says it is plain wrong to place the burden of proof on wounded soldiers.

Soldiers coming out of combat who say they've suffered a head blow and who show symptoms of traumatic brain injury should be treated for it, says Bolles.

"You do what you can for them," he says flatly. "You believe them."

Bolles reviewed a summary of Wilson's October 2004 MRI from Walter Reed. He says it showed "evidence of loss of blood supply" to the brain and was "compatible with a head injury." Alongside Wilson's story and symptoms, he says, "This sounds like typical head injury syndrome to me; you can make that diagnosis."

He notes that the "shearing effect" on nerve tissue that comes with a serious head blow can be invisible to MRIs and CAT scans and that "there are no definitive tests that prove this syndrome." But soldiers even remotely suspected of having a brain injury, he says, should be treated aggressively for it, rather than with skepticism.

Bolles, who now practices at Denver Health Medical Center, treated U.S. soldiers evacuated from Iraq and Afghanistan for two years at Landstuhl.

While many soldiers get good treatment, in other cases "the system is kind of like you have to prove yourself with an injury before anyone believes you," he says.

"I wish we would accept the word of a patient if a patient says, 'This is what I'm feeling,' rather than trying to prove somebody is malingering."

It is better to treat soldiers for what they say is wrong with them, he says, even if that means a few cheaters get through the system.

Annette McLeod says her husband, Spc. Wendell McLeod Jr., was belatedly diagnosed with a traumatic brain injury.

McLeod landed at Walter Reed in August after being hit by a truck in Iraq but was not diagnosed with a brain injury until December. "If you come in and are missing a limb, they know how to handle you," says Annette McLeod. "Anybody with injuries you can't see is shoved to the side."

McLeod says that to her knowledge her husband, Wendell, was not initially screened for brain injury, even though he'd been hit by a truck.

But his behavior was so erratic and his memory was so horrible, she says, that she badgered doctors until they ran some tests that identified his problem. "I knew there was something wrong because of the changes in him," she says. "He kept saying, 'I can't remember. I can't remember.' This is a man who used to remember everything."

McLeod, 40, arrived at Walter Reed last August with a fractured vertebra, a chipped vertebra, four herniated discs in his back, and a shoulder injury. He also began suffering from bizarre mood swings. "I can't hardly remember anything," he says.

Annette, who is staying with him at Walter Reed, took McLeod to the supermarket recently. "He walked down the aisle three times and could not remember what I asked him to get," she says. She makes her husband sit in the back seat of the car because ever since his accident he wildly grabs at the steering wheel.

McLeod was tested for traumatic brain injury in September but did not hear anything about the results until he was diagnosed in the first week of December.

In the meantime, McLeod was told by officials that he might have been born with his brain problem. "They tried to say it was inherited," McLeod says. Annette says they were also told it could be psychological. The misdiagnosis and delays have been excruciating, she says angrily, with a lot of "just waiting around and waiting around."

Sgt. Steve Cobb, age 46, tells a similar story.

Injured in an armored personnel carrier accident in Iraq in 2004 while serving with the West Virginia National Guard, a head blow left him with short-term memory loss, hearing loss and the loss of peripheral vision in his left eye. He slurs his words and is so dizzy that he walks with a cane.

Medics in Iraq first missed his brain problem completely and gave him aspirin. He served another eight months after the accident.

Cobb arrived at Walter Reed last May. In July, he was diagnosed with traumatic brain injury, but did not start getting therapy until September. He says that he, too, was told by hospital officials that he may have been born with his problem. "They said it was hereditary," Cobb says with disgust. [Obviously somebody wrote a script for these quacks. "Let's save money: just tell them it's hereditary."]

His memory is so bad that his wife, Natalie, is afraid he can't take care of himself. She has left her 13- and 19-year-old kids at home with family in West Virginia to be with her husband at Walter Reed. "We heard it was brain disease. We heard it was hereditary," she says over dinner one evening at a restaurant near the hospital. "I feel that they are letting the traumatic brain-injury patients slide through the cracks."

The stress of being misdiagnosed can further harm soldiers, says Bolles, the neurosurgeon, especially if patients get stuck in a pattern where doctors are denying that their injuries exist. "That in and of itself becomes a disability to these people if they get angry and frustrated," Bolles says. "That alone makes it worth treating these people early."

Wilson came back from Iraq a totally different man, according to his wife Heidi. In a photo of the couple from before his injury, the two are sitting on the edge of a fountain. Wilson stares squarely at the camera with a deft, slight smile. Heidi, in a white dress, sits in his lap, holding a bouquet.

Wilson's injury has left him so sensitive to light that his room at Malogne House, a residential facility behind the main hospital at Walter Reed, looks cavelike, lighted only by two dim bulbs. Looking at bright light, Wilson says, "is like welding without your mask on." Sometimes even the dim bulbs are too much.

"It kills him," Heidi says one evening in the room. "He puts little blankets over them." Heidi says her husband's brow turns a deep red during his worst headaches, which he says feels like his eyes are being sucked back into his skull. "I just want to take a drill and drill into my head," he says.

Sometimes Wilson remembers events from long ago, but not what happened five minutes ago.

He still writes bits in his diary, attempting to piece his memory back together. He used to enjoy cooking Cajun food but now that's gone.

"Everything tastes like rubber," he says. "I look at stuff I want to taste. I feel like I remember what it tastes like, but I can't."

When Heidi is away for a few days, his memory loss and olfactory problems collide, though he tries to keep a sense of humor about it.

"If she is away, I may not take a bath for six days, until she gets back," he says. Heidi nods vigorously. "I'll get his bath ready and say, 'Time to get in the tub,'" she says.

But when the conversation returns to Wilson's treatment, their smiles quickly fade.

It's hard for them to believe, after two hard tours of duty, that this is the kind of treatment he has received. "I just want to be taken care of," he says. "I just want healthcare."

[What were these "doctors" who specialize in making charges of "malingering" and denying and delaying treatment for hurt troops doing before Walter Reed? Working for S & M escort services, wielding whips and chains? Dissecting frogs? Drowning kittens? Raping kids? Is this their duty station after torturing prisoners at Abu G? Obviously they have no skills of any other kind, except telling stupid lies. Well, let's feel just a bit sorry for them. They were born too late. Hitler could have used this kind of sadistic talent doing experiments on prisoners in his concentration camps. Those "doctors" were arrested, indicted, tried, and sentenced to hang when that war was over.

[How many have these Walter Reed doctors killed? This is reckless or "depraved heart" murder at the minimum. Let them face a jury of wounded combat veterans, and their families. Payback is overdue. And let's not forget the political scum infesting Washington, willing to spend billions a month trying to grab Iraq's' oil for themselves and their corporate accomplices, but who won't come up with the money to get wounded troops the best medical care money can buy. The politicians are premeditated murderers, or, if you prefer, traitors.]

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Marine Dies From Non-Hostile Gunshot Wound At FOB Haditha Dam

01/15/06 MNF Release A060115c

CAMP FALLUJAH , Iraq – A Marine assigned to Regimental Combat Team 2, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force (Forward), was found dead from an apparent non-hostile gunshot wound aboard Forward Operating Base Haditha Dam, Jan. 14.

Casualties Not Reported In Two Attacks On U.S. Patrols

Jan 15, 2006 By DPA

An Iraqi civilian was killed by the explosion of a roadside bomb targeting a U.S. military patrol in a suburb of Hillah, 100 kilometre south of the capital, said police.

Information on casualties among the U.S. soldiers was not available.

The targeting of another U.S. patrol, near a joint Iraqi-U.S. checkpoint at the eastern entrance of Fallujah led to the destruction of a U.S. vehicle, said Iraqi police.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



US Marines take cover after coming under fire during a patrol in the northern area of the Sunni city of Fallujah. (AFP/File/Mauricio Lima)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Wounded In Helmand

15 January 2006 By Carlotta Gall, The New York Times

Kabul, Afghanistan - Two gunmen on a motorcycle killed a former Taliban leader on Saturday outside his home in Kandahar, police officials said.

The victim, Mullah Abdul Samad Khaksar, was a deputy interior minister under the Taliban government in Afghanistan. He switched loyalties and supported Afghanistan's American-backed government after the Taliban militia was ousted in late 2001.

A Taliban spokesman, Qari Muhammad Yusuf Ahmadi, said the group had killed Mullah Khaksar because he was a traitor and said the same fate awaited other turncoats.

A suicide car bombing on Saturday targeting an American-Afghan military convoy in southern Helmand province wounded an American soldier, said a local police chief, Khan Mohammed. An American military spokesman said the soldier was hospitalized and in stable condition.

TROOP NEWS

“A Lot Of Soldiers Are Debating Whether This War Was Fraudulent To Begin With”

January 14, 2006 Huffington Post

On January 5, 2006, Congressman Murtha held a town hall meeting with Cong. Jim Moran (D-VA 08).

John Brumes, Infantry Sgt. US Army:

Everything that the Bush Administration told us about that mission in Iraq is absolutely incorrect. Furthermore, I'd like to say ... I came home to no job, no health insurance. Until we take care of this war, we can't take care of the problems that matter like health care.

I've witnessed both ends... Congressman Murtha, I implore you to keep doing what you're doing.

John Powers, Capt. 1st Armored Division, served 12 months in Iraq:

The thing that hits me the most is the accountability. ...

Where is the accountability for those men (who took us to war), as well as where is the accountability for Paul Bremmer, who misplaced millions of dollars and claims to keep accountability in the war zone?... I know that if we lost \$500 we would be court marshaled.

So where is the accountability for this leadership?

Garrett Reppenhagen, served as a sniper in Iraq for a year in the First Infantry Division:

My question is also about accountability.

The soldiers that you see, Congressman Murtha, at the hospitals... those are my friends.

After coming back, being a veteran, my question is why?

Why did we go to this war, why the hell did it happen, why are we in this condition.

A lot of soldiers are debating whether this war was fraudulent to begin with. And there doesn't seem to be a clear answer.

A lot of Americans now are debating the fact over whether or not the war was fraudulent in the first place. How come there hasn't been an investigation on the fraudulent lead up to the war by this Administration?

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.

“After Seeing Friends Die And Almost Dying Myself, I Think We Need To Bring Everybody Home”

15 January, 2006 By MICHAEL RUBINKAM and KIMBERLY HEFLING, Herald News Daily [Excerpt]

Nearing the end of a year in Iraq, Army Sgt. Bob Knowles and his closest friends became disillusioned. And not because they thought the war was a mistake. It was just the daily grind of battle.

"Guys were away from their wives and their kids, away from their families and home. After 13 months, you're tired," says Knowles, 28, of Pottstown, Pa. "It's not a kind of tired you can sleep off in a couple days. It's long-term exhaustion."

He adds: "We wanted to keep each other alive, that was the biggest goal. Everything else was details."

Knowles, a tank gunner, just barely got out alive.

On May 4, 2004, he was riding in an M1 Abrams tank that was ambushed. A rocket-propelled grenade hit the top of the tank, where the hatch was open. Shrapnel pierced Knowles' back and went out his shoulder

As he waited for a medical helicopter, feeling himself going into shock, he thought about his German-born wife and their infant daughter. Doctors later told him that fragments had come within 1 millimeter of his heart and 2 millimeters of his lung. But he would be OK, except for lingering shoulder pain.

Knowles left the service in October 2004. He's now a train conductor for Norfolk Southern.

He has come to oppose the war.

"After seeing friends die and almost dying myself, I think American soldiers are, I wouldn't say dying for nothing," he says, "but it's needless and I think we need to bring everybody home."

Yeah, Those Troops Have It Too Fucking Easy

January 8, 2006 By Thanassis Cambanis, Boston Globe Staff [Excerpt]

Soldiers in Somma's platoon inherited a wireless Internet network set up by an Iraqi contractor.

Commanders ordered it dismantled after Christmas, in part because it seemed too cushy.

First Sergeant Jason Larson, who turned 35 on Christmas Day and has spent 15 years in the Army, said he had always thought the Army would be his last job. But the inevitability of returning to Iraq, he said, has persuaded him to leave the military when his contract runs out in five years.

"I won't stay a day longer, even if I have to go work as a greeter at Wal-Mart," Larson said.

“I Am The Wife Of A National Guard Soldier Who Served A Year In Iraq”

“I Will Fight Even Harder To Bring The Soldiers Home!”

If the Pentagon thinks this program of theirs helps families of Soldiers by teaching them to laugh if off by acting like a penguin is humiliating and disgusting.

January 13, 2006 VetPax

To the editor of USA Today:

I am a member of Military Families Speak Out and the Wife of a National Guard Soldier who served a year's tour in Iraq. I would appreciate it if you would publish my reply to the article below:

Pentagon to families: Go ahead, laugh

1/12/2006

By Gregg Zoroya, USA TODAY

When the stress of the war in Iraq becomes too severe, the Pentagon has a suggestion for military families: Learn how to laugh.

I am writing in reply to the January 13th article titled "Pentagon to families: Go ahead, laugh."

Go ahead and laugh? While our loved ones are in harms way, still without proper armor, proper food, in a war that is an illegal, immoral and unjust?

Laugh while our loved ones are dying for nothing?

The families of these soldiers have a right to be worried, frightened and angry!

What does the Pentagon imply when they say "this is supposed to prevent hardening of the attitudes" in the families of deployed soldiers? Does this imply that we need not worry, not to feel for our loved ones, just shut up and obey? That we shouldn't have a voice? Just laugh it off?

This is just another huge slap in the face of our military personnel and their families.

When our loved ones go off to war we endure so much pain and worry for our loved ones and their future, if they ever have one.

The Military doesn't offer us any emotional support.

If the Pentagon thinks this program of theirs helps families of Soldiers by teaching them to laugh if off by acting like a penguin is humiliating and disgusting.

Offer us real support by bringing our loved ones home.

I am the Wife of a National Guard Soldier who served a year in Iraq.

I feel for the Soldiers still in Iraq. I never intend to shift my attitude on this war and I will fight even harder to bring the Soldiers home!

Debra Anderson
Staten Island NY 10310

Brig. General Says Bush In Iraq Like Hitler In Czechoslovakia: "We Should Get Out Fast!"

January 9, 2006 by John F. McManus, [Thenewamerican.com](http://thenewamerican.com) [Excerpt]

One of our nation's most highly decorated combat veterans offers his thoughts on the current war against Iraq, including why "we should get out fast!"

Brigadier General Andrew Gatsis is one of our nation's most highly decorated veterans.

Awarded numerous medals for bravery in combat during both the Korean and Vietnam Wars, he retired from active duty in 1975 after more than three decades of service in the U.S. Army.

THE NEW AMERICAN sought him out for his thoughts about the current war against Iraq, and he minced no words. "We never should have gone in there in the first place since we weren't immediately threatened," he thundered.

"There were no weapons of mass destruction; Saddam Hussein's regime had no connection to Osama bin Laden and al-Qaeda, and wasn't responsible for the attacks on the Pentagon and the World Trade Center; and there wasn't any evidence to back up the claim that Iraq was building nuclear weapons capability.

"All the reasons given by the administration to justify this war have been shown to be false."

The general is angry at what the president and his administration have done.

They originally claimed the attack on Iraq was needed to fight terrorism and now insist that the effort is needed "to build democracy" in Iraq. He wants to know: "Who are we to tell the Iraqi people what kind of government they should have?"

"We invaded a country that posed no threat to us," says the general.

"What's different about what we have done in Iraq and what Hitler did when he sent his forces into Czechoslovakia in 1939?"

"This war in Iraq has already cost the lives of 2,200 Americans, wounded over 15,000 more, and left at least 30,000 Iraqis dead, most of whom were non-combatants caught in crossfires or victimized by Islamist terrorists. And look at the billions of dollars being poured into this flawed effort. It saddens me to see all of this happen to our troops, and all for an unjust cause."

Asked what he believes the Bush administration should do, he declared, "We should get out fast!"

Brass Condemn Bush Regime Soldier-Killing Rats

Jan. 11 U.S. Newswire

Army General Wesley Clark:

"The fact is that the Administration is not providing the resources to protect our soldiers. The men and women who are serving are just not getting the support they need.

"The rhetoric from the Administration doesn't match its actions, and the result is unnecessary combat fatalities. I think this is a clear case where Congressional investigation is warranted."

Lt. Colonel Andrew Horne, a Marine who served two tours in Iraq:

"Commanders on the ground: their primary responsibilities are completion of their mission and the welfare of their troops.

"The fact that commanders asked for this equipment, asked for the studies to see what changes could be made, and then, for literally the cost of a Humvee, they were denied funding for the full investigation is just deplorable."

“How Does The Pentagon Expect Us To Laugh Off Our Anger And Our Fears?”

“This ‘Support Group’ Should Be Ashamed Of Themselves!”

From: Debbie Anderson, Vet Pax

Sent: January 15, 2006

Subject: Another Letter to editor Re: “Pentagon to families: Go ahead, laugh”

I was asked to forward this letter out to you in response to the article in USA today. It is from Francine who is a member of MFSO and a dear friend of mine.

Debbie Anderson

In response to the 1/13/06 article "Pentagon to families: Go ahead, laugh." I am a wife of a New York Army National Guard soldier, my husband just returned this past fall from a year long tour of duty in Iraq.

Though, "laughing" may be considered "support" by those in the Pentagon, let me tell you what we really need, and do not get! As National Guard families, we are in complete shock when our soldiers get those orders. Our soldiers enlisted to help here at home, with hurricanes, floods and other National Disasters.

And in a post 9/11/01 world, they are here to work to keep us safe during times of terrorism threats. Unlike our active duty counterparts, we do not live on the same base or the same town or in many instances the same state! So we go through the deployment alone. We are lonely, we need to share our feelings, we need to be able to talk about the latest email or phone call that we got from our loved one.

And we need to share our complete and total fear when those phone calls don't come, because during those times, our lives completely stop.

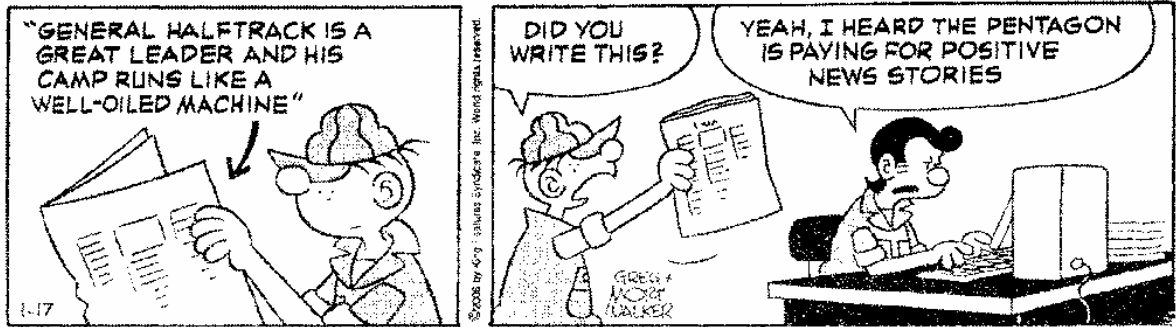
We imagine the worst, we don't know if we will ever see our husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters again.

So, yes military families need support, but it needs to be something of substance and understanding. How does the Pentagon expect us to laugh off our anger and our fears?

I am insulted and mortified by this article.

And this "support group" should be ashamed of themselves!

Francine
Queens, NY



***As V.A. Fails The Wounded:* “They Lose Their Arms And Legs. And We Just Discard Them. You Know, Like They Are Ipods Or Old Telephones Or Something”**

“(Increased funding) is an obligation that the nation has, and needs to pick up,” Wiblemo said. “You can’t send (soldiers) over there and bring them back here and say, ‘Oh, sorry, you’re on your own!’ ... The recognition needs to be there, and the bill needs to be paid.”

Jan. 13, 2006 By Jessica Bennett, Newsweek

With record numbers of soldiers surviving injuries that would have killed them in earlier wars, veterans' organizations are questioning whether the federal government is able or is willing to cope with the demand for health-care benefits, rehabilitation services and ongoing treatment. And if Washington can't do it, then who should?

Enter the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund. Since last July, the nonprofit group has raised more than \$25 million in private funds for the construction of a training and rehabilitation center for soldiers returning from battle with catastrophic injuries and amputations.

But should such an institution really be funded by private sources?

The debate is being fueled by syndicated radio host Don Imus, who has donated \$250,000 and has made raising money for the fund a regular feature on his morning show.

On Friday he told listeners he doesn't know why "the government wouldn't just simply pay for (the center), considering the extraordinary amount of money they spend on ... this idiotic war."

And later said "We have a tradition in this country, well, going back to the Civil War, in which we send off young people to fight these wars. Stuff happens to them. They lose their arms and legs. And we just discard them. You know, like they are iPods or old telephones or something."

In 2004, military officials, including then-Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, unveiled plans for a multimillion-dollar amputee-training center to be built at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington.

At the time, Maj. Gen. Kenneth Farmer, commanding general of the North Atlantic Regional Medical Command and the Walter Reed staff praised "the record time" at which the project had gone "from concept to reality."

But that plan was put on hold in August when Walter Reed was put on a closure list as part of the federal base-closing process. It is slated to shut down in 2011.

At one VA hospital, says Cathy Wiblemo, deputy director for healthcare at the American Legion, there is a seven-year backlog to receive dental care.

At another, a surgery ward was closed because there wasn't sufficient staff to operate it.

"(Increased funding) is an obligation that the nation has, and needs to pick up," Wiblemo said.

"You can't send (soldiers) over there and bring them back here and say, 'Oh, sorry, you're on your own!' ... The recognition needs to be there, and the bill needs to be paid."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Al-Mada'ain Peoples Declare Civil Disobedience Against Collaborator Troops

January 14, 2006 Association of Victims of American Occupation Prisons (NGO)

The peoples of the town Al-Mada'ain declared a civil disobedience as a protest against the police and the national guards' exercises when they arrested a big number of the citizens that reached to 500 arrested and also the assassination of many of the well-known men of the town by them.

The aggression was through the breaking into the houses that they did attack women.

The town people complained about closing all the roads using the concrete barriers (blocks) and barbed wire which made it hard for living and delay the citizens to get to their work and school for many hours.

The town people doubt the seriousness of the government in handling their problems that most of the governmental offices in the town have been moved outside the town and the employees who are from the town people have been fired and dismissed.

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

Assorted Resistance Action: Collaborator Officers Targeted

Jan 15, 2006 By DPA & (Xinhuanet) & Reuters & By JASON STRAZIUSO, Associated Press Writer

BAIJI - Guerrillas shot dead a police colonel on Saturday in the oil refinery city of Baiji, the local authorities said.

ULWIYA: Guerrillas shot dead a police brigadier and major after abducting them on Saturday in the village of Ulwiya near Hawija, 70 km (43 miles) southwest of Kirkuk, police said.

A senior police intelligence officer was killed Sunday in Baquba, 60 kilometres northeast of Baghdad, said security sources. Guerrillas killed 1st Lieutenant Qahtan Mohammed while he was at an auto repair shop, the sources said.

Meanwhile, an assassination attempt on a high-ranking Iraqi army officer from the northern city of Kirkuk caused serious injury to the official and four of his guards, said police sources. Their vehicle destroyed in the attack.

The convoy of Brigadier General Fraidoun al-Talabani was struck by a roadside bomb in west of the Toz Khormato town near Tikrit. **Earlier, four policemen were seriously wounded when a makeshift bomb went off near their patrol in the town.**

Al-Talabani is assistant commander of the Iraqi fourth brigade which is deployed in Kirkuk, Tikrit and Baquba.

TAZA: Four policemen were wounded when a makeshift bomb exploded near their patrol near Taza, police said.

BALAD - An Iraqi soldier was killed and another wounded on Saturday when a roadside bomb went off near their patrol in the city of Balad.

Guerrillas in Baghdad killed two police.

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

How Bad Is It? “Even The Iraqi Shops On US Bases Have Closed For Fear Of Rebel Infiltration”

January 12, 2006 Times Newspapers Ltd.

Much of the damage was done early on. Battle-hardened troops launched house raids that horrified Iraqis, who jealously guard their privacy and the modesty of their women. Doors were kicked in. Money and valuables were reported stolen.

But little has changed. “I’m a door kicker-inner,” one young Marine blurted out in Fallujah last month, to the dismay of his superiors.

The intensifying violence has only increased the distance between US troops and ordinary Iraqis, with ever-higher walls being built around bases, and US military vehicles warning drivers they will be shot if they come close.

Even the Iraqi shops on US bases have closed for fear of rebel infiltration.

Exactly

01/14/2006 (AP)

Commanders in both units say insurgents are adept at hiding their work and improving their bombs. And they are quick to learn.

"All the stupid ones are dead," said Capt. Jamey Turner of Baton Rouge, La., a brigade commander in Beiji.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Fifteen Years Of War, And Who's Better Off? Ask Cindy Sheehan And Most Any Other Mother Who Has Lost A Child To War

[NOTE: IN THE PREVIOUS GI SPECIAL, THE LINE CREDITING THE AUTHOR WAS DROPPED. HERE IS PAGE ONE AGAIN. APOLOGIES TO RON JACOBS. For the full article see GI Special 4A8 at: <http://www.militaryproject.org/>]

To: GI Special
Date: 1.14.06
Subject: 15 Years Of War

By Ron Jacobs

[Ron Jacobs writes frequently and well for a variety of publications opposed to the war in Iraq.]

"I've told the American people before that this will not be another Vietnam, and I repeat this here tonight.... I'm hopeful that this fighting will not go on for long and that casualties will be held to an absolute minimum.

"This is an historic moment. We have in this past year made great progress in ending the long era of conflict and cold war. We have before us the opportunity to forge for ourselves and for future generations a new world order..."

--George Herbert Walker Bush on January 16, 1991 announcing the attack on Iraq

Fifteen years have passed since Bush the Elder first attacked the nation of Iraq.

Just remembering that evening recalls the fear and foreboding those first US bombs brought with them.

No matter how you look at it, Washington is no closer to conquering Iraq than they were on January 16, 1991.

Yet, its armies march onward into a hell of their own making. And they are taking the rest of us with them, whether we acknowledge it or not.

Is Iraq a better place? Although the answer to this question depends on where one sits, I will only say that a country being torn apart by war is rarely better off than when it is at peace.

I hope that there will be others writing about the progress or the lack thereof in that shattered country fifteen years on, but that is not my purpose here. I won't delve into the meaning of the hundreds of thousands of Iraqi deaths since that January evening.

I don't live in Iraq. I live in the United States. So, I'm going to take a look at the US homeland fifteen years after the first wholesale invasion of Iraq by Washington's forces. How are the people living in this country faring?

Are we better off? Are we a freer people?

As I said before, the answers to this question depend on where one sits. Given that, let me say that I sit in the US South and I work for a living that pays less than \$10.00 an hour. My situation is not uncommon. In fact, it seems to be the standard. That said, let's take a look at this new world order and what it means for people in my economic situation.

“There’s Not A Lot You Can Do By Sending In More American Troops”

January 11, 2006 By Mark Sappenfield, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor

During the 1960s, Vietnam was perceived to be a vital bulwark against the menace of the day - the spread of communism.

With evident resolve President Johnson declared in 1965: "We will not be defeated. We will not grow tired. We will not withdraw, either openly or under the cloak of a meaningless agreement."

Yet the US did withdraw, communism did claim another country, and nothing happened to American security.

Anthony Cordesman of the Center for Strategic and International Studies cites Vietnam as an example of how "limited wars" must have limited objectives, and that America must be ready to step back if the price of winning becomes too high.

"If Iraq falls apart, that's a defeat," he says. "There's not a lot you can do by sending in more American troops."

<p>What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.</p>
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***Hugh Thompson And My Lai:* “He Broke Ranks; He Did the Right Thing” Colin Powel Begins Career As Lying Piece Of Shit**



Hugh Thompson (BBC Photo)

But when he saw Vietnamese survivors chased by soldiers, he landed his chopper between the villagers and troopers, and ordered his crew to fire at any American soldiers shooting at civilians. Then he got on the radio and begged U.S. gunships above him to rescue those villagers he could not cram into his own craft.

January 12, 2006 By CLANCY SIGAL, Counterpunch

There is an Ugly American, a Quiet American and then there's Hugh Thompson, the Army helicopter pilot who, with his two younger crew mates, was on a mission to draw enemy fire over the Vietnamese village of My Lai in March, 1968.

Hovering over a paddy field, they watched a platoon of American soldiers led by Lt. William Calley, deliberately shoot unarmed Vietnamese civilians, mainly women and children, cowering in muddy ditches. Thompson landed his craft and appealed to the soldiers, and to Calley, to stop the killings. Calley told Thompson to mind his own business.

Thompson took off but then one of his crew shouted that the shooting had begun again. According to his later testimony, Thompson was uncertain what to do. Americans murdering innocent bystanders was hard for him to process.

But when he saw Vietnamese survivors chased by soldiers, he landed his chopper between the villagers and troopers, and ordered his crew to fire at any American soldiers shooting at civilians. Then he got on the radio and begged U.S. gunships above him to rescue those villagers he could not cram into his own craft.

On returning to base, Thompson, almost incoherent with rage, immediately reported the massacre to superiors, who did nothing, until months later when the My Lai story leaked to the public. The eyewitness testimony of Thompson and his surviving crew member helped convict Calley at a court-martial.

But when he returned to his Stateside home in Stone Mountain, Georgia, Thompson received death threats and insults, while Calley was pardoned by President Nixon. Indeed, for a time, Thompson himself feared court-martial.

Reluctantly, the massacre was investigated by then-major Colin Powell, of the Americal Division, who reported relations between U.S. soldiers and Vietnamese civilians as "excellent"; Powell's whitewash was the foundation of his meteoric rise through the ranks.

Hugh Thompson died last week, age sixty two. Thirty years after My Lai, he, and his gunner Lawrence Colburn, had received the Soldiers Medal, as did the third crew member, Glenn Andreotta, who was killed in combat.

"Don't do the right thing looking for a reward, because it might not come," Thompson wryly observed at the ceremony.

Something stuck in my head when I learned of Thompson's death. "There was no thinking about it," he said before his death. "There was something that had to be done, and it had to be done fast."

Words similar to these are often used by combat heroes to describe incredible feats of courage under fire. With one possible difference. According to the record, Thompson did have time to think about it as he took off from My Lai, hovered and tried to wrap his mind around the horror below. Then he made a conscious decision to save lives. Some of the Vietnamese he rescued, children then, are alive today.

Ex-chief warrant officer Thompson is a member of a small, elite corps of Americans who have broken ranks and refused to run with the herd.

They include Army specialist Joseph Darby, of the 372d Military Police Company, who reported on his fellow soldiers who were torturing prisoners at Abu Ghraib prison. His family has received threats to their personal safety in their Maryland hometown.

And Captain Ian Fishback, the 82d Airborne West Pointer, who served combat tours in Iraq and Afghanistan, and tried vainly for seventeen months to persuade superiors that detainee torture was a systematic, and not a 'few bad apples', problem inside the U.S. military. In frustration, he wrote to Senator McCain, which led directly to McCain's anti-torture amendment. I wouldn't want to bet on the longevity of Captain Fishback's military career.

Thompson's death also reminded me of Captain Lawrence Rockwood, of the 10th Mountain Division. Ten years ago, Rockwood was deployed to Haiti where, against orders, he personally investigated detainee abuse at the National Penitentiary in the heart of Port au Prince.

He was court-martialed for criticizing the U.S. military's refusal to intervene, and kicked out of the Army. While still on duty, he kept a photograph on his desk of a man he greatly admired. It was of Captain Hugh Thompson.

Some of my friends get so angry at the Bush White House, and so despairing, that they slip into a mindset where Americans, the great 'Them' out there, are lumped into a solid bloc of malign ignoramuses.

They forget that this country is also made up of people like Hugh Thompson, Joe Darby, Ian Fishback and Lawrence Rockwood, outside and inside the military.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Ex-Official Warned Against Testifying To Congress About Bush Spying On U.S. Citizens

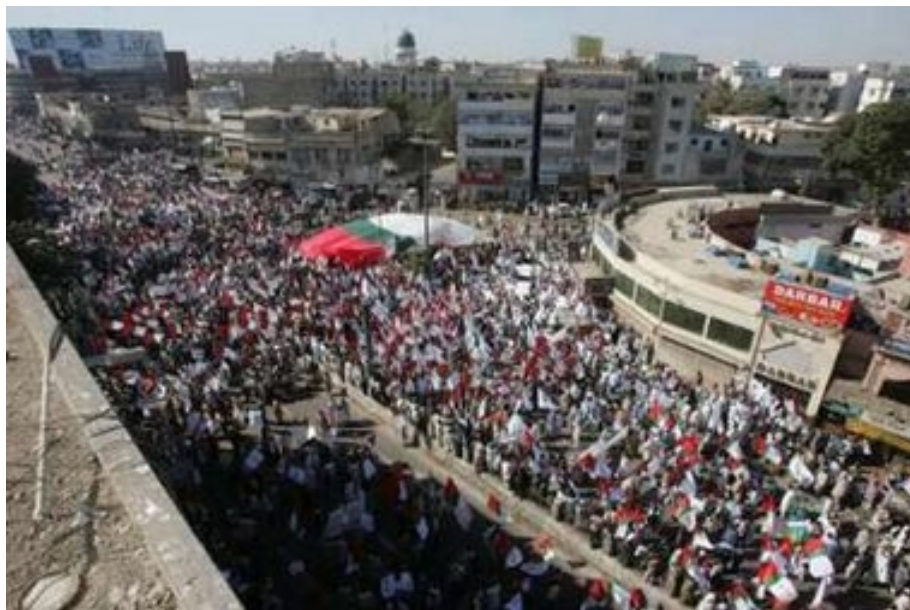
1.12.05 Washington Times

The National Security Agency has warned a former intelligence officer that he should not testify to Congress about accusations of illegal activity at NSA because of the secrecy of the programs involved.

A letter to the officer, Russ Tice, said that he had "every right" to testify but that members and staff of the House and Senate intelligence committees did not have the proper security clearances for the secret intelligence.

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Winning Hearts And Minds In Pakistan



Pakistanis hold a protest rally in Karachi January 15, 2006. Thousands of people rallied to protest against a U.S. airstrike in a tribal region that killed at least 18 people but missed its apparent target, al Qaeda's number two, Ayman al Zawahri. REUTERS/Zahid Hussein. REUTERS/Asim Tanveer

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

All GI Special issues achieved at website <http://www.militaryproject.org/> .

The following have also posted issues; there may be others:

<http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>, <http://www.notinourname.net/qi-special/>,
www.williambowles.info/qispecial, http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/,
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