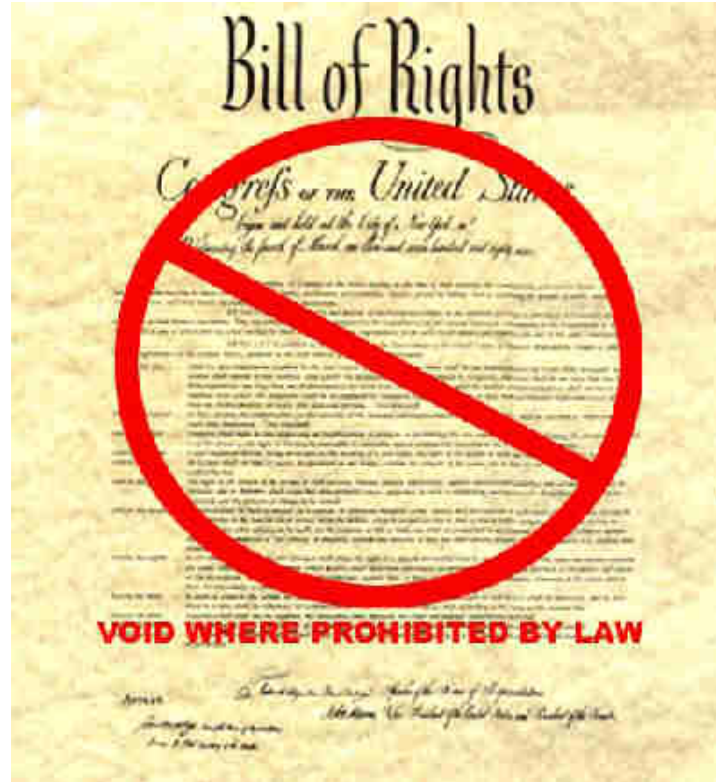


## GI SPECIAL 4C4:



[[www.firebasenetwork.net](http://www.firebasenetwork.net)]

# General Says Striking Timor Soldiers Made The President Cry

11-13 February 2006 Daily Media Review, Unmiset.org

## **East Timor F-FDTL strike considered a revolt**

The F-FDTL demonstration held in front of the Presidential Office last Wednesday is considered a revolt against the institution of the F-FDTL and the state, according to F-FDTL Commander Brigadier General Taur Matan Ruak.

**He said that one of the consequences of the action of the soldiers is that the people will consider them rebels or mutineers, and another consequence is that their action caused the President to cry.**

**Speaking to journalists last Friday, Ruak explained that in his opinion they had no right to cause the President to cry, because the President is the father of this nation.**

He stated that from the East to the West, and the North to the South of this country, there is no family that did not suffer from the war.

**He added that even though the demonstration by the more than 400 soldiers has presented a significant problem for the country, it is possible for the problem to be resolved, as seen by the 174 soldiers who have already returned to their barracks as of last Thursday. He added that an investigation into the concerns would begin soon.**

**MORE:**

## **“Hundreds Of Soldiers From The East Timorese Army Have Left Their Posts”**

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

27 February, 2006 Reporter: Karen Percy, ABC Australia

**ELEANOR HALL: The Federal Labor Party says it fears there's a security risk right on our doorstep, with reports that hundreds of soldiers from the East Timorese army have left their posts.**

**In recent weeks the soldiers have been protesting against working conditions and promotion rules within the newly formed army.**

But the Defence Minister Brendan Nelson says there's no risk to Australians in East Timor, and no threat to Australia either, as Karen Percy reports.

**KAREN PERCY: Over the past several weeks, tensions have been rising within the 1,500 strong East Timor Army: so much so that 400 soldiers have left the main base of Metinaro, west of Dili.**

The Federal Defence Minister Brendan Nelson.

**BRENDAN NELSON: It's a kind of a strike, as we understand it, that relates to grievances about conditions of service and the nature of promotion selections, and a little bit of tension, as we understand it, between those who come from the west and then of course the east of the country.**

The security situation, I understand, is peaceful and stable, and the East Timorese Government has set up a commission of inquiry.

KAREN PERCY: The Federal Opposition says with such a large percentage of the army off the job, there's a risk that law and order will break down.

Labor's Defence Spokesman, Robert McClelland.

ROBERT MCCLELLAND: Increasingly the issue of failing states, and we've all got to work to make sure that doesn't happen in Timor Leste, is a very, very significant security issue, both from the point of view of any narcotics trades that can develop in countries where there's poor security, or at worst case scenario, potential terrorist bases.

**KAREN PERCY: Labor says this is particularly embarrassing for Australia, because many of the soldiers who were former freedom fighters were trained by the Australian Defence Force.**

Robert McClelland says the ADF needs to do more to ensure that the proper processes are in place for the smooth running of the military.

ROBERT MCCLELLAND: That's clearly an imperative, just in terms of the management structures, the payment structures, and indeed the general systems, the appeal review structures within the military.

**I mean, we've seen military justice here being a controversial issue, but we're not a developing country. Obviously it's far more profound in its impact if the system's not right in the developing country.**

KAREN PERCY: But the Government says it will only intervene if it's asked.

Defence Minister Brendan Nelson.

BRENDAN NELSON: At the moment I'm advised that things are peaceful.

**The discontent amongst some elements of the East Timorese soldiery has been expressed in a peaceful and lawful manner, and the East Timorese Government has established its commission of inquiry to investigate the grievances that the soldiers may have, and as far as we're concerned, we will only provide any assistance if we are asked to do so.**

KAREN PERCY: Is it embarrassing though, for the ADF program that some of their trainees, as such, have gone off in this way?

BRENDAN NELSON: Well, I certainly wouldn't describe the East Timorese Army as, if you like, trainees of the Australian Defence Force. I think the East Timorese Government itself would be quite rightly offended by that.

We need to understand that many of those who have joined the East Timorese Army fought over a long period of time to secure the independence of their country. There are

cultural differences, between one side of East Timor from that of the other, and not surprisingly, some of those issues permeate to the development of its new army.

And we would expect, with sensible management of these issues, that in the medium to long term they'll be successfully managed.

KAREN PERCY: A spokesman for the Department of Defence says the nine ADF personnel based at Metinaro were temporarily moved from the site, but have since returned to the base.

**MORE:**

## **“More Soldiers Join Strike Over Military Conditions”**

March 3, 2006 Associated Press in Dili, The Guardian

**Around 200 more soldiers from East Timor's 1,500-strong army have joined a strike over poor conditions and selective promotions, officials said yesterday.**

**The troops walked out of their barracks to join the 400 who have been on strike since February 8, said Gastao Salsinha, a strike coordinator. The soldiers have refused to return to duty and are demanding an independent investigation into their complaints.**

**They delivered a petition to the president, Xanana Gusmao, who promised a government inquiry. A military spokesman said he could not confirm that the strike was spreading.**

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Sgt. Dies Of Wounds Sustained At Habbaniyah Nov. 21, 2005**

March 3, 2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS  
RELEASE Number: No. 189-06

**Sgt. Joshua V. Youmans, 26, of Flushing, Mich., died at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas, on March 1, from injuries sustained in Habbaniyah, Iraq on Nov. 21, when an improvised explosive device detonated near his HMMWV during combat operations. Youmans was assigned to the Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 125th Infantry Regiment, Saginaw, Mich.**

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## **An Attack In Iraq Hits Hard In N.E. “One Of The Bloodiest Days Of The War”**

3.3.06 Boston Globe, March 3, 2006

**An insurgent attack on an Iraqi police station in Ramadi killed one soldier from Vermont and wounded two from New Hampshire, one of the bloodiest days of the war for National Guard units from New England.**

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## **Texas Soldier Dead At Taji**

March 3, 2006 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS  
RELEASE Number: No. 188-06

**Pfc. Tina M. Priest, 20, of Austin, Texas, died in Taji, Iraq on March 1, from non-combat related injury. Priest was assigned to the 4th Support Battalion, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Divison, Fort Hood, Texas.**

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## **Marine Dies In Humvee Explosion**



Cpl. Matthew Conley, killed Sunday, was scheduled to leave Iraq on March 6.

February 21, 2006 The Advertiser, GREENHILL

A Lauderdale County native was killed in Iraq after a device exploded near the Humvee he was riding in over the weekend, exactly one week before his 22nd birthday, family members said.

Tommy and Debbie Conley said members of the U.S. Marine Corps. came to their Greenhill home early Sunday to tell them about the death of their son, Cpl. Matthew Conley.

"When I saw who was there, they didn't have to say a word, I knew what was going on," Tommy Conley told the Florence TimesDaily.

Conley, 21, graduated from Rogers High School in 2002, where he was quarterback of the football team. He was a squad leader for the 37th Weaponry Division of the U.S. Marine Corps, stationed at 29 Palms, Calif., and had been in Iraq since September 2005. He and other members of his squad were killed Sunday while on security patrol in the province of Al-Anbar.

**Conley was a passenger in the Humvee, training the soldier who was to take his place when he returned home. He was killed when the vehicle hit an improvised explosive device.**

**Tommy Conley said his son was scheduled to leave Iraq on March 6 and was to be home March 22.**

**Family and friends were planning a belated celebration for his Feb. 26 birthday and were going to have a baby shower for him and his wife, Nicole, who is expecting their first child in March.**

"It's like this really isn't happening. It's like a nightmare," Debbie Conley said as she wiped away tears.

Conley's leadership ability was apparent on the football field, said Mike Curtis, who was part of the crew that produced radio broadcast of Rogers High School football games when Conley played there.

"He wasn't the best passer or runner, but he could lead that team," Curtis said. "It just totally shocked our family to hear the news today. You hear about these soldiers getting killed and it's tragic in itself but this makes it hit home and you realize it's a war over there."

Tommy Conley said being a Marine was something his son never regretted. "He was proud to serve his country and me and his mother were proud of him, and always will be," his father said.

Conley's body is scheduled to be flown back to the United States later this week.

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# “This Could Be You In The Next Couple Of Months: Just A Picture”

Feb. 23, 2006 By CHUCK CRUMBO, Staff Writer, The State

The Citadel mourned one of its own Wednesday after learning Marine Lt. Almar Fitzgerald died of wounds suffered in the Iraq war.

“It certainly is a sad day for the college,” said Col. Joe Trez, director of the president's support office. “It's like the loss of a family member.”

Fitzgerald, a Lexington native, died Tuesday in a military hospital in Germany where he had been treated for injuries suffered in a bomb blast about a week ago.

Fitzgerald was one of two Marines from South Carolina whose deaths were announced Wednesday.

Staff Sgt. Jay Collado, 31, of Columbia, was killed Monday when the vehicle he was driving was struck by a bomb, the Defense Department said.

**The deaths of Fitzgerald and Collado raised the number of troops with S.C. ties to die in the war to 39.**

The 24-year-old Fitzgerald, who graduated in 2004, was the 11th Citadel alum to die in the Iraq war, but the first who was a native of South Carolina.

Fitzgerald was an infantry officer based at Camp Pendleton, Calif., friends said. He had been in Iraq about six months and was scheduled to return home in March, Meuser said.

Like all troops, Fitzgerald knew there was a chance he would not return alive.

**In a documentary titled “Making of a Marine Officer,” Fitzgerald talked about a table outside the officer school chow hall, covered with pictures of fallen Marines.**

**“The purpose of that is to be basically a reality check,” Fitzgerald told the interviewer. “This could be you in the next couple of months: just a picture.”**

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## Fort Drum Soldier Killed; Funeral Expected In Alabama

3/3/2006 MOBILE, Ala. (AP)

Army Staff Sgt. Dwayne Peter Lewis was killed while on patrol with his unit in Baghdad, his wife said.

Sgt. April Foster Lewis of Mobile said her husband, a native of Grenada who grew up in Brooklyn, N.Y., was killed Monday.

He was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division, based at Fort Drum, N.Y.

**April Foster Lewis, also an Iraq war veteran, said two soldiers came to her parents' home at about 11 a.m. Tuesday to report his death.**

Lewis, 23, said her husband was born on the Caribbean island of Grenada but moved to Brooklyn with his mother when he was a small child. She said he later became a naturalized U.S. citizen.

After their marriage on Jan. 5, 2003, she said, "he started calling Mobile his 'home'" because he was no longer in contact with his own family, instead visiting her family in Mobile.

His wife, who had returned to her base at Fort Bragg, N.C., to make funeral arrangements, told the Mobile Register that the funeral will be in Mobile but that arrangements are incomplete.

She said her husband had been in Iraq since August.

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## **REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



British soldiers take up position after they were attacked in Amara February 28, 2006. Two British soldiers were killed and a third was wounded in an attack on their patrol. REUTERS/Salah Thani

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## AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

# “Everyone Loves Bush's War Against Afghanistan, Even Though It Was Based On Just As Many Lies As His Assault On Iraq”

March 2, 2006 Ted Rall, CommonDreams [Excerpts]

Public disgust for the Iraq War, news coverage of which has been dominated by soaring body counts, torture scandals and the outbreak of civil war, has become bipartisan; only 30 percent of Americans tell the February 27 CBS News poll that they still support it.

**The popularity of the occupation of Afghanistan, on the other hand, is a given. The U.S. military backing of Afghan president Hamid Karzai is so widely accepted that pollsters no longer ask voters about it. Opposition? There isn't any.**

Liberal magazines like The Nation and The Progressive, the Air America radio network and the leftie blogosphere are packed with ferocious insults and attacks on the Bush Administration about the Iraq War, from how they conned us into it to their lack of postwar strategic planning to the profiteering and looting that ensued.

**But when Afghanistan makes one of its rare appearances in the leftie media, it's invariably held up as the war Bush ought to be fighting, the good war that got sidetracked when we went into Iraq.**

**Everyone loves Bush's war against Afghanistan, even though it was based on just as many lies as his assault on Iraq:**

Osama bin Laden probably wasn't in Afghanistan on 9/11 and was certainly not there by the time bombs began falling. People approve even though, as in Iraq, Bush didn't send enough troops, 8,000 where 500,000 were required, to provide basic security.

Even though Afghans didn't greet us as liberators. Even though, as in Iraq, he installed a government composed of corrupt, violent and vengeful minorities, guaranteeing sectarian bloodshed and civil war.

And even though the news from U.S. occupied Afghanistan, if you can find any, is as relentlessly bleak as that from Iraq. Afghanistan suffers its own litany of roadside bombs, suicide bombs, massacres of foreign aid workers, citizens terrorized by kidnapers and rapists. It even has its own Abu Ghraib.

U.S. troops are jailing, torturing and occasionally murdering about 500 uncharged (and therefore legally innocent) inmates at a top-secret makeshift concentration camp at a disused Soviet-era machine shop at Bagram, about 40 miles south of Kabul.

"Some of the detainees," reports the New York Times, "have already been held at Bagram for as long as two or three years." The paper says that the Bagram camp is "in many ways rougher and more bleak" than the notorious U.S. gulag at Guantanamo. "Men are held by the dozen in large wire cages...sleeping on the floor on foam mats and, until about a year ago, often using plastic buckets for latrines."

And if Abu Ghraib serves as a guide, check out what Army interrogator and self-admitted prisoner abuser Anthony Lagouranis says about those "terrorists": "90 percent of them were probably innocent."

**Both wars, in Iraq and Afghanistan, are equally unjustifiable, illegal, corrupt and unwinnable.**

**Both make us less humane and less safe.**

**Anti-Iraq War liberals who have given the Administration a free pass on Afghanistan have merely encouraged more abuse.**

**"For some reason," a senior Bush official marvels to the Times, "people did not have a problem with Bagram. It was in Afghanistan."**

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## **TROOP NEWS**

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



The funeral of Marine Lance Cpl. Christopher Dyer at the Tri-County Baptist Church Aug. 17, 2005, in West Chester, Ohio. Dyer was killed in action in Western Iraq on Aug. 3. (AP Photo/David Kohl)

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# **“These ‘Generals’ And Higher Ups In The Chain Of Command, Think They Are Above The Law And Are Untouchable” I DON'T THINK SO!!!**

[From posting at: [www.soldiersrights.com](http://www.soldiersrights.com)]

**The reason I have put this website together is because my husband, an army soldier, has realized how his rights as a soldier have been denied and because of this, our family has gone through more than most people should ever have to.**

I know we aren't the only ones, but we are one of the few who are speaking up and saying something.

**No family, and no soldier should ever be treated like an animal, or not worth anything.**

Unfortunately, that's exactly how the army is treating my husband and our family, all because we stood up for our God given rights.

Here's a timeline on what has happened thus far, and mind you, this is NOT everything:

**[For the timeline and details of this case, go to: [www.soldiersrights.com](http://www.soldiersrights.com)]**

\*\*\*\*\*

It's sad that soldiers who are supposedly protecting our freedoms, are NOT given those same freedoms they protect.

There are too many power hungry people at the top who don't care about the people who are actually the ones doing ALL the work.

**It must be nice getting paid the big bucks, to sit in nice, plush, air conditioned offices and order soldiers to commit horrendous acts.**

**Worse yet, soldiers are ordered to travel down the same road, at the same time everyday so the enemy can plan and plot because of the predictable pattern. The**

enemy is able to set up IEDs or attacks the convoys which injures and kills soldiers.

It makes it worse knowing that these "generals" and higher ups in the chain of command, think they are above the law and are untouchable.

I DON'T THINK SO!!!

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.

# The New Issue Of Traveling Soldier Is Out!

This issue features:

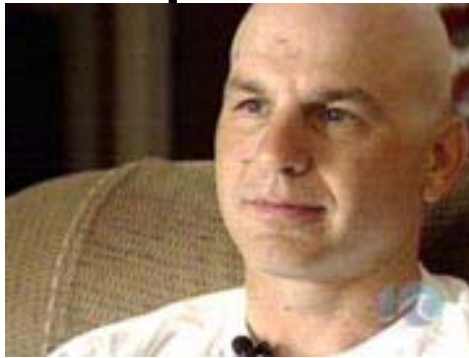
1. "We definitely needed something more, more armor than just plywood and sandbags because that wasn't really going to stop much" says Iraq vet Joseph Woods in the first installment of a three part interview with Traveling Soldier's T Barton.  
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.06.woods.php>
2. "I have not heard a worthwhile nor just reason for staying the course" says Iraq veteran Captain Justin Gordon.  
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.06.gordon.php>
3. "The government had a plan, but it did not include the poor black people of the south" An active duty soldier speaks out about the war on Iraq and the abandonment of Katrina victims.  
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.06.soldiermedic.php>
4. Media Chatter Ignored Soldiers for Cindy Sheehan  
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.06.sheehan.php>
5. How the Soldiers Stopped the Vietnam War: a book review of the newly republished classic, *Soldiers in Revolt*.  
<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/2.06.cortright.php>

6. Download the new Traveling Soldier to pass it out at your school, workplace, or at nearby base.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/TS12.pdf>

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## **“I Turned To Tell The Sergeant Major, ‘We Don’t Need To Be Here.’ And Its Like The Whole Inside Of The Truck Exploded”**



**“You don’t have to agree with why we’re there you don’t have to agree with us being there. Should never take it out on the soldiers though. They’re just doing they’re job.”**

03/03/06 WAVY

The images of Iraq are clear to many Americans, including those fighting to rebuild the country.

A Hampton soldier is home right now, after staring death in the face.

During Junior Lee Schriener's third tour in Iraq, he fought off an enemy that is difficult to see. The IED's.

**“I turned to tell the Sergeant Major, ‘we don’t need to be here.’ And its like the whole inside of the truck exploded,”** Schriener remembers.

His helmet bared the brunt of the roadside bomb, but you can see the scars on his face pieces of shrapnel left behind. His helmet is cracked all the way through.

The gunner in the humvee was killed instantly, and the others were injured.

"You look around to see how everybody is doing, and just the way he was laying in the floor of the humvee there was no doubt I knew Sergeant Major was hurt."

Schriener was blinded in his right eye and bleeding, but his army training kicked in.

"I drove a 1000 meters to the gates of Rustamaya in a banged up humvee? The two passenger side tires were blown off. There was a round imbedded in the engine block, the oil pan blown off the truck, and my door wouldn't close."

Schriner's actions earned him a Purple Heart. It is the same medal his father earned more than 30 years ago as a Marine in Vietnam. His father never made it home.

**Judith Estilow is relishing in having her son at home for the next two weeks. Schriner is her only son. She was pregnant when his father was killed in Vietnam.**

Once back in Iraq, Schriner will return to the road in support of American forces who are training Iraqi soldiers.

He hopes his next visit home will be for good.

**"You don't have to agree with why we're there you don't have to agree with us being there. Should never take it out on the soldiers though. They're just doing they're job."**

Schriner's actions saved many more lives that day. He did not know it at the time, but there was another bomb about 160 feet away which was designed to kill any troops that may have gotten out of the humvee alive.

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## **Soldier Gets Publicity: Soldier Gets Killed**

March 03, 2006 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times staff writer [Excerpts]

Pfc. Donald E. Compton was shot during a marksmanship exercise on Range 9. An ambulance took him to Irwin Army Community Hospital, where he was pronounced dead. He was assigned to Fort Riley one year ago as an infantryman.

Spc. James K. Tillery of Springfield, Mo., has been charged with involuntary manslaughter, dereliction of duty and negligent discharge of a firearm under UCMJ. Staff Sgt. Jeremy L. Muntz of Keosauqua, Wis., has been charged with dereliction of duty.

All three soldiers served with A Company, 1st Battalion, 16th Infantry Division.

**Compton was featured in a 1st Infantry publication after being in a squad named "best in the company" during a training exercise at Range 9 two days before he died.**

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# Spec Ops Beset By Command Chaos: “A Fictitious Billet” “The Military Will Be Breaking The Law, According To A Senate Source”

“Nobody understands, other than the SecDef, what the hell Kearney is supposed to do,” the Pentagon source said.

March 03, 2006 By Sean D. Naylor, Army Times staff writer [Excerpts]

Confusion reigns among the Defense Department, the Senate and U.S. Special Operations Command over the leadership and chain of command of the nation’s most elite special operations units.

**As a result, Army Lt. Gen. Stan McChrystal, one of the nation’s most seasoned special operations generals, now occupies what a special ops officer at Fort Bragg, N.C., described as “a fictitious billet,” while Delta Force, SEAL Team 6 and other elite units appear to have a “confusing” chain of command, according to a Senate source.**

At the same time, a memo from Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has some Army special operators concerned that he intends to consolidate U.S. Army Special Operations Command with some of its smaller headquarters, perhaps reducing the number of generals assigned to them.

The first controversy centers on the recent promotion of McChrystal to a third star and position of commander, Joint Special Operations Command, U.S. Central Command Forward. Senate sources say the position to which the Pentagon asked the Senate to confirm McChrystal is not the one that Special Operations Command says he now occupies, Joint Special Operations Command at Pope Air Force Base, N.C.

JSOC commands and controls the military’s three special mission units; the Army’s 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment Delta, known as Delta Force; the Navy’s SEAL Team 6; a joint unit designed for clandestine operations; and several other units.

**If McChrystal continues to fill the JSOC billet, rather than the different one to which the Senate confirmed him, the military will be breaking the law, according to a Senate source.**

The picture regarding the promotion and assignment is no clearer in the corridors of the Pentagon.

“The story that we’ve been hearing is that this is a temporary deal, and that it was as much to award Stan McChrystal a deserved third star, and then the dodge, if you will, was to create this temporary war-fighting position,” a Pentagon source said.

**“Nobody understands, other than the SecDef, what the hell Kearney is supposed to do,” the Pentagon source said.**

“Is he supposed to be the future JSOC commander, or is the intent to continue JSOC as a three-star billet? Only the SecDef, as far as I know, knows. There’s been absolutely no explanation.”

McChrystal is one of about 50 current flag officers whose promotions and assignments have been made under these “national emergency” conditions, according to one of the Senate sources.

**In this regard, some special operations officers are viewing a Feb. 7 memo from Rumsfeld to Army Secretary Francis Harvey with deep concern.**

**The memo, a copy of which was obtained by Army Times, focused on what Rumsfeld perceived as the “high” number of generals assigned to what he described as “the Fort Bragg/Pope complex.”**

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## **Cheated Reservists Win \$1 Billion In Back Pay!**

March 03, 2006 By Gordon Trowbridge, Army Times staff writer [Excerpts]

Federal workers who served as reservists are more likely to get repayment for leave days they were improperly charged, under a Feb. 27 ruling.

The ruling by the federal Merit Systems Protection Board, involving a reservist employed by the State Department, clears the way for many reserve or National Guard members who worked for the government between 1980 and 1994 to seek compensation for leave days that should not have been counted against them, said Mathew Tully, a New York attorney who has filed hundreds of such cases.

The decision “couldn’t have been any better for military veterans,” Tully said.

**Tully estimates that thousands of reservists may be owed more than \$1 billion in compensation. His firm is offering free representation to workers who may be affected, earning its compensation through legal fees its clients are entitled to if they win.**

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# **The Enemies Domestic Launch Another Attack On Vets Health Care Benefits: Sen. Lindsey Graham, Backstabbing Rat, Says “Your Need To Serve The Nation Never Stops”**

**[This is the face of the enemy. There is no enemy in Iraq. Iraqis and U.S. troops have a common enemy: these Imperial rat politicians. They brought on the war. They stay up nights devising new ways to fuck over veterans. They kill troops in their stupid, hopeless Imperial war, while stuffing their own pockets with campaign “contributions” from war profiteers. They vote laws that give them the best healthcare money can buy, and they don’t pay a penny for it. They are the scum of the earth, traitors every one. T]**

February 27, 2006 Army Times Editorial [Excerpts]

There is no question that rising health care costs are a serious and growing problem for both the Pentagon and Department of Veterans Affairs.

But the Bush administration’s approach to fixing those problems, and the recent comments of key lawmakers in support of the proposals, should stir the ire of every military veteran and retiree.

**The administration’s proposals would sharply raise Tricare enrollment fees and copays for military retirees under age 65, and create new enrollment fees and higher co-pays for veterans with at least modest incomes and no service-connected medical conditions.**

**Those plans put the onus for fixing the problem squarely on the backs of people who have already given much for their country.**

**And judging from early statements from two key Republican lawmakers, retirees and veterans may have fewer powerful friends in this fight than they thought.**

Consider Sen. Larry Craig, R-Idaho, chairman of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee. At a Feb. 16 hearing, he offered an ominous warning when he said that if “the president’s proposals are not accepted, then we are forced to discuss options.”

Just what those other options might be, Craig did not say. But his tone seemed weighted with threatening portent.

Then, Sen. Lindsey Graham, R-S.C., a veterans’ committee member and also the chairman of the Senate Armed Services military personnel subcommittee, weighed in.

**“The nation owes you a lot,” Graham told assembled retirees and veterans at the hearing.**

**“But I would argue that your need to serve the nation never stops.”**

**The position of White House and congressional leaders boils down to this: Rising military health care costs need to be reined in, and retirees and veterans must be the initial sacrificial lambs.**

**In Graham’s view, it is their duty to take it on the chin.**

Clearly, he and other policy-makers are deaf to the tone of that message.

This blunt-force approach will offend not only retirees and veterans, but also active-duty soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines. Broken promises to veterans of past conflicts will loom large to the men and women serving their nation in wartime today.

**Military retirees and veterans owe it not only to themselves but also to those active-duty troops to fight this challenge with vigor.**

Some have already jumped into the breach. The cover of the March issue of Military Officer, the magazine of the Military Officers Association of America, declares: “Your health benefits are under attack: Act now!” Attached are four tear-off postcards protesting the changes, ready for mailing to recipients’ congressional members.

But one need not belong to an association to get in this fight. Any member of Congress can be contacted by going online to the House Web site or the Senate Web site.

**Retirees and veterans must mobilize now.**

**If they don’t protect themselves this time, they will invite further attacks on their benefits in the future.**

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Assorted Resistance Action**

03/03/06 AFP & AP

**An Iraqi soldier was killed Friday in the northern city of Kirkuk, while two policemen from Kirkuk itself were found dead after being kidnapped Thursday, security officials said.**

**A series of mortar shells slammed into the Nahrawan power station, police Lt. Bilal Ali Majed said. Half an hour later, dozens of gunmen arrived and set fire to the generating facility.**

Security guards returned fire, and the Iraqi police and army sent in reinforcements, he said. At least nine people were killed and three injured in the gunbattle, police Lt. Mohammed Kheyoun said. He identified the victims as guards and technicians at the facility but did not know if any attackers were killed or wounded.

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

## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

### **Got That Right**

March 2, 2006 By Tom Engelhardt, Tomdispatch.com [Excerpt]

**Those who believe deeply in the preponderant global power of the last superpower simply cannot get it through their heads that the United States is, in Iraq, not part of the solution but part of the problem; that American forces do not stand between Iraq and civil war, but are a major factor encouraging that possibility.**

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## **“Somebody Is Trying To Provoke A Civil War In Iraq”**

02/03/2006 Robert Fisk & Tony Jones, Australian Broadcasting Corporation, TV PROGRAM TRANSCRIPT [Excerpts]

Reporter: Tony Jones

**Robert Fisk: Someone wants a civil war. Some form of militias and death squads want a civil war.**

**There never has been a civil war in Iraq. The real question I ask myself is: who are these people who are trying to provoke the civil war?**

**Now the Americans will say it's Al Qaeda, it's the Sunni insurgents. It is the death squads. Many of the death squads work for the Ministry of Interior. Who runs the Ministry of Interior in Baghdad? Who pays the Ministry of the Interior? Who pays the militia men who make up the death squads?**

**We do, the occupation authorities.**

I'd like to know what the Americans are doing to get at the people who are trying to provoke the civil war. It seems to me not very much. We don't hear of any suicide bombers being stopped before they blow themselves up. We don't hear of anybody stopping a mosque getting blown up. Something is going very, very wrong in Baghdad.

**What is going on in Iraq at the moment is extremely mysterious. I go to Iraq and I can't crack this story at the moment. Some of my colleagues are still trying to, but can't do it. It's not as simple as it looks. I don't believe we've got all these raving lunatics wandering around blowing up mosques.**

It's not as simple as we're making it out to be. What is this thing when Bush says we have to choose between chaos and unity? Who wants to choose chaos?

**Is it really the case that all of these Iraqis that fought together for eight years against the Iranians, Shiites and Sunnies together in the long massive murderous Somme-like war between the Iranians and Iraqis suddenly all want to kill each other?**

Why, because that's something wrong with Iraqis? I don't think so. They are intelligent, educated people. Something is going seriously wrong in Baghdad.

*TONY JONES: But, Robert Fisk, what's is happening now, by all accounts and, indeed, the accounts of these Washington Post reporters who've been into the morgue and report hundreds of bodies of Sunnies who evidently have been garroted or suffocated or shot, are all saying that Moqtada al-Sadr's thugs have actually taken these people away and murdered them. That was in revenge for the Golden Shrine bombing.*

**ROBERT FISK: Yeah, look, in August, I went into the same mortuary and found out that 1,000 people had died in one month in July. And most of those people who had died were split 50/50 between the Sunnies and the Shiites, but most of them, including women who'd been blindfolded and hands tied behind their backs; I saw the corpses - were both Sunnies and Shiites.**

I'm sure there are massacres going on by Shiites, but I think they are going on by militias on both sides.

**What I'd like to know is who is running the Interior Ministry? Who is paying the Interior Ministry? Who is paying the gunmen who work for the Interior Ministry? I go into the Interior Ministry in Baghdad and I see lots and lots of armed men wearing black leather. Who is paying these guys?**

**Well, we are, of course. The money isn't falling out of the sky. It's coming from the occupation powers and Iraqi's Government, which we effectively run because, as we know, they can't even create a constitution without the American and British ambassadors being present.**

**We need to look at this story in a different light. That narrative that we're getting, that there are death squads and that the Iraqis are all going to kill each other, the**

**idea that the whole society is going to commit mass suicide, is not possible, it's not logical.**

There is something else going on in Iraq. Don't ask me to...

**Iraqis are not suicidal people. They don't go around blowing up mosques every day. It's not a natural thing for them to do. It's never happened before.**

**I can't say to you, "Well, ok, here is the person who killed this person, or here's the person who left this explosive truck." All I am saying to you is that it is time we said, "Hang on a minute, this is not how it looks."**

*TONY JONES: What if you put Iran into this equation, because, as we all know, Iran is under tremendous pressure from the West and particularly from the United States at the moment. It has links to these Shia militias and, possibly, links too, to these people you are talking about in the Interior Ministry.*

ROBERT FISK: No, no, no, that's wrong.

**The Iranians link is with the Iraqi Government. The main parties in the government of Iraq which have been elected, who are there now dealing with the Americans, these are the representatives of Iran.**

Moqtada al-Sadr is irrelevant to Iran. Iranians are already effectively controlling Iraq because the two major power blocks, the two major parties who were elected and who Bush has just been talking to, these are effectively the representatives of Tehran.

**That's the point. Iran doesn't need to get involved in violence in Iraq.**

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## **“Bush Almost Certainly Would Prefer To See Sunnis Fighting Shias Than To See Both Fighting Americans And Collaborators”**

03 March 2006 By David Swanson, Truthout Statement [Excerpts]

Fox News titled a recent segment "All-Out Civil War in Iraq: Could It Be a Good Thing?"

Presumably, it could from the point of view of the Bush-Cheney gang, if it gets in the way of all-out resistance to the occupation. That is, Bush almost certainly would prefer to see Sunnis fighting Shias than to see both fighting Americans and collaborators.

**In any case, the war cannot be resolved without the US soldiers leaving.**

**Only leaving provides the chance for a peaceful solution.**

Financial aid for reconstruction, combined with assistance from the United Nations, can increase the likelihood of a democratic and peaceful Iraq. There are no guarantees, except that the present course will make things worse.

**The idea that the US occupation must continue because things would get worse if it ended is clearly not what the White House actually cares about behind closed doors.**

**But, taking the claim on its own terms, it quickly falls apart.**

**Things in Iraq have been getting steadily worse during the occupation, and the escalating violence is driven largely by anger at the occupation.**

**I saw an editorial in Le Monde that said the US should get out, but do so in such a way that the "jihadists" don't think they've won.**

**But what could be more advantageous for unifying the Iraqi people than a collective victory? It seemed to work wonders for our 13 colonies.**

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

## **What An Odd Notion**

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

1 March 2006 By Hugh Muir, The Guardian

The order requiring [London Mayor] Ken Livingstone to step down from office for likening a Jewish reporter to a concentration camp guard was halted by a high court judge yesterday, hours before it would have taken effect. The stay of execution represents a partial victory at the beginning of what is likely to be a lengthy battle by the mayor of London to overturn the disciplinary punishment.

**Mr Livingstone said he would fight through the courts despite potentially huge legal costs. "The fundamental issue is not whether or not I was 'insensitive'. It is the principle that those whom the people elect should only be removed by the people or because they have broken the law."**

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## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

# Silliest Quote Of 2006, So Far

March 6, 2006 By Babak Dehghanpisheh, Michael Hastings and Michael Hirsh, Newsweek

**"Iraqi security forces have control over all parts of the country," said a senior Bush administration official, who did not want to be named because of the sensitivity of the subject. [London, March 6, 1777. "His Majesty's security forces have control over all parts of the colonies," said a senior Royal administration official, who did not want to be named because he knew how stupid his comment really was.]**

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

## How It Is

Mar. 02, 2006 By Dogen Hannah, Knight Ridder Newspapers

Even when the Iraqi supply chain delivers, commanders can't count on the quality, because of incompetence, corruption or bureaucratic inefficiency.

**Amin's unit recently received defective ammunition. "We fire a few rounds, and then it just explodes on us," Amin said.**

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## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

# U.S. Government Claims It Has The Right To Torture Guantanamo Prisoners

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

March 3, 2006 By Josh White and Carol D. Leonnig, Washington Post Staff Writers

**Bush administration lawyers, fighting a claim of torture by a Guantanamo Bay detainee, yesterday argued that the new law that bans cruel, inhuman or**

**degrading treatment of detainees in U.S. custody does not apply to people held at the military prison.**

**In federal court yesterday and in legal filings, Justice Department lawyers contended that a detainee at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, cannot use legislation drafted by Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) to challenge treatment that the detainee's lawyers described as "systematic torture."**

Government lawyers have argued that another portion of that same law, the Detainee Treatment Act of 2005, removes general access to U.S. courts for all Guantanamo Bay captives.

**Therefore, they said, Mohammed Bawazir, a Yemeni national held since May 2002, cannot claim protection under the anti-torture provisions.**

U.S. District Judge Gladys Kessler said in a hearing yesterday that she found allegations of aggressive U.S. military tactics used to break the detainee hunger strike "extremely disturbing" and possibly against U.S. and international law.

**But Justice Department lawyers argued that even if the tactics were considered in violation of McCain's language, detainees at Guantanamo would have no recourse to challenge them in court.**

"These allegations . . . describe disgusting treatment, that if proven, is treatment that is cruel, profoundly disturbing and violative of" U.S. and foreign treaties banning torture, Kessler told the government's lawyers.

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## ***This Is Not A Parody:* Idiot Attorney General Thinks News Stories Will Remind "Terrorists" Of Spying On Their Phone Calls**

March 2, 2006 Robert Parry, Opednews.com [Excerpt]

The administration's claim about the need for extraordinary secrecy surrounding the wiretap program is also largely a charade. Al-Qaeda and other enemy groups have long been aware that the United States has the capability of electronic eavesdropping and have structured their operations accordingly.

In the Feb. 6 hearing, Gonzales acknowledged as much under questioning from Sen. Joe Biden, D-Delaware.

**Biden asked, "How has this revelation damaged the program" since the administration's attack on the disclosure "seems to presuppose that these very sophisticated al-Qaeda folks didn't think we were intercepting their phone calls?"**

Gonzales responded, "I think, based on my experience, it is true; you would assume that the enemy is presuming that we are engaged in some kind of surveillance.

**"But if they're not reminded about it all the time in the newspapers and in stories, they sometimes forget," a response that drew laughter from the citizens in the hearing room.**

"You're amazed at some of the communications that exist," Gonzales continued. "So when you keep sticking it in their face that we're involved in some kind of surveillance, even if it's unclear in these stories, it can't help but make a difference, I think."

**In other words, Gonzales argued that the reason for the extraordinary secrecy around the wiretap program is not that the disclosure of its existence would alert al-Qaeda to a previously unknown U.S. spying capability, but that newspaper stories might remind them to be a little more cautious while chatting on the telephone.**

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## ***This Is Not A Parody:* Deranged Scumbags At "Homeland "Security" Order People Investigated As Possible Terrorists For Paying Too Much On Their Credit Cards**

**The Soehnges were apparently found not to be promoting global terrorism under the guise of paying a credit-card bill.**

28-FEB-06 By BOB KERR, The Providence Journal, PROVIDENCE, R.I.

Walter Soehnge is a retired Texas schoolteacher who traveled north with his wife, Deana, saw summer change to fall in Rhode Island and decided this was a place to stay for a while.

So the Soehnges live in Scituate now and Walter sometimes has breakfast at the Gentleman Farmer in Scituate Village, where he has passed the test and become a regular despite an accent that is definitely not local.

And it was there, at his usual table last week, that he told me that he was "madder than a panther with kerosene on his tail."

He says things like that. Texas does leave its mark on a man.

What got him so upset might seem trivial to some people who have learned to accept small infringements on their freedom as just part of the way things are in this age of terror-fed paranoia. It's that "everything changed after 9/11" thing.

But not Walter.

"We're a product of the '60s," he said. "We believe government should be way away from us in that regard."

He was referring to the recent decision by him and his wife to be responsible, to do the kind of thing that just about anyone would say makes good, solid financial sense.

**They paid down some debt. The balance on their JCPenney Platinum MasterCard had gotten to an unhealthy level. So they sent in a large payment, a check for \$6,522.**

**And an alarm went off. A red flag went up. The Soehnges' behavior was found questionable.**

**And all they did was pay down their debt. They didn't call a suspected terrorist on their cell phone. They didn't try to sneak a machine gun through customs.**

**They just paid a hefty chunk of their credit card balance. And they learned how frighteningly wide the net of suspicion has been cast.**

**After sending in the check, they checked online to see if their account had been duly credited. They learned that the check had arrived, but the amount available for credit on their account hadn't changed.**

So Deana Soehnge called the credit card company. Then Walter called.

"When you mess with my money, I want to know why," he said.

They both learned the same astounding piece of information about the little things that can set the threat sensors to beeping and blinking.

**They were told, as they moved up the managerial ladder at the call center, that the amount they had sent in was much larger than their normal monthly payment. And if the increase hits a certain percentage higher than that normal payment, Homeland Security has to be notified. And the money doesn't move until the threat alert is lifted.**

Walter called television stations, the American Civil Liberties Union and me. And he went on the Internet to see what he could learn. He learned about changes in something called the Bank Privacy Act.

**"The more I'm on, the scarier it gets," he said. "It's scary how easily someone in Homeland Security can get permission to spy."**

Eventually, his and his wife's money was freed up.

The Soehnges were apparently found not to be promoting global terrorism under the guise of paying a credit-card bill. They never did learn how a large credit card payment can pose a security threat.

But the experience has been a reminder that a small piece of privacy has been surrendered.

Walter Soehnge, who says he holds solid, middle-of-the-road American beliefs, worries about rights being lost.

"If it can happen to me, it can happen to others," he said.



[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

## CLASS WAR REPORTS

## GET THE MESSAGE?



Protest against the visit of U.S. President George W. Bush in New Delhi March 2, 2006.  
REUTERS/Desmond Boylan



Rally against U.S. President George W. Bush in New Delhi Wednesday, March 1, 2006.  
(AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)

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# “Killer In Town”

MARCH 2, 2006 By Amelia Gentleman International Herald Tribune

Tens of thousands of demonstrators chanting anti-Bush slogans rallied here Wednesday to protest the arrival of President George W. Bush for talks aimed at securing a strategic partnership between India and the United States.....shouting "Death to Bush" and waving posters with slogans reading: "Bully Bush, Go Home." Elsewhere, leftist organizations held demonstrations against the visit with banners stating "Killer in town."

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## Received:

### “72% Of American Troops In Iraq Think The U.S. Should Exit The Country Within The Next Year”

From: JF  
To: GI Special  
Sent: Friday, March 03, 2006

Thanks for digging out the news:

‘A first-ever survey of U.S. troops on the ground fighting a war overseas has revealed surprising findings, not the least of which is that an overwhelming majority of 72% of American troops in Iraq think the U.S. should exit the country within the next year.

‘Further, a new Le Moyne College/Zogby International survey shows that more than one in four (29%) thought the U.S. should pull its troops immediately.’

#### **GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out**

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