

GI SPECIAL 4F9:

Haditha: Kilo Company My Lai: Charlie Company Same Old Same Old



[Vietnam GI, June 1970]

MY LAI

“C” Company the Goat ?

Vietnam GI

Because when you come right down to it, the wrong people are on trial for atrocities.

Nixon, Westmoreland, Abrams and Mendal Rivers, the very bullshitters who are most eager to see Charlie Co. brought to justice, are finally the men most responsible for My Lai. They were the ones telling us that Ky and Thieu's corrupt government is worth dying for. They are the ones who taught us to kill, who put us over here in this mind-fucking shit hole and told us to go to it. In short, they started the war and they know you never have a war without atrocities.

[Vietnam GI, June 1970]

Laughin', Cryin',
Livin', Dyin'
Hee Haw
Who's the jackass now?

Charlie Co. is the jackass. From Nixon and Abrams on down to all sorts of deluded fat ass liters and selfrighteous civi-pigs there is a feeling that Charlie Co. really blew it. They didn't give candy bars to the kids of My Lai. They didn't pass out soap to the women. Instead they blew off the village.

So the men of Charlie Co. fucked up. They didn't act like your friendly neighborhood Peace Corpsman. They acted instead like the ordinary sons of ordinary people.

They acted like an outfit of short-timers and Purple Heart winners who'd been in the shit, who'd lived it and breathed it for a long time. They acted like men who

were taught to believe in and respect officers like Lt. Calley, who awarded himself an extra 7 days leave while his platoon was being chopped to shit in a minefield. They acted like men who were given the bullshit line about getting their GED's and going to an Army school and then were dumped into the infantry.

The men of Charlie Co. conducted themselves like men whose personal knowledge of the Vietnamese people came from encounters with whores, pimps, begging kids, black market operators, thieves, and of course the VC. They acted like men, a tight group of men, who for two months had seen their brothers getting mangled in mine fields and ripped off by snipers and who'd rarely seen anybody to shoot back at.

Sound familiar so far?

Then pay attention.

Charlie Co. is ordered by Lt. Col. Barker to hit My Lai 4. He tells Medina there's a crack VC battalion in the village. They are supposed to destroy it, then burn out the village.

Next day they move in. No VC. But a few of the villagers panic and run. The men, fucked over, psyched up, looking for revenge, open fire.

A lot of people fall.

The rest of them are too scared to move.

Next we see Snot Calley ordering his men to herd the people into ditches and to start cutting them down. Some do and dig it. Some get pissed off and sickened by the whole thing.

Calley and Medina make a bullshit body count, find a few imaginary weapons, and pull out. A few days later Westmoreland commends Medina for doing a good job. The real story gets hushed up for the obvious reasons that nobody in the Army wanted the publicity

But after 20 months word does get out. And as the story gets pieced together by the CID, the press takes it up. The Establishment is surprised, shocked and outraged... both because there was a massacre ("How could our boys have done such a thing?"), and because the Army covered it up.

After showing that their hearts were in the right place, they gave up the stage to the Brass with parting remarks to the effect of "well, if you are just men, you will not sweep this under the rug... you will see to it that the guilty are punished."

Enter the Brass, anxious to prove that they are indeed, just men.

How do they do it?

They tell the ex-GIs of Charlie Co. that they want them to come to Washington, all expenses paid, to tell their version of the massacre so they can get the goods on Calley.

Half of the company gets sucked in. Now that the Brass has the whole story of My Lai, what do they do?

The two-faced bastards turn around and announce their intention to prosecute the whole company. But you say most of the guys are civilians now, so they are out of the reach of military "justice"? Well, not exactly... the latest is that the JAG is trying to find a way to extradite them to SVN for trial.

The Brass is really pissed at Charlie Co. But it's not because they give a fuck about the killing of innocent people.

If that were true they'd be a little more careful where they ordered air and artillery strikes. They'd also find it a little harder to just shrug when they hit our own men and say, "Well, accidents happen you know."

What they are pissed about is that news of the massacre has made them and their war look worse than they ever have before. So they know what they have to do. Put the screws to Charlie Co., to make it look to people back home and around the world that they believe in-fighting a good clean war.

At the same time they are making the GI's of Charlie look like bloodthirsty freaks. While everyone is talking about what a terrible thing it is they completely forget who is really responsible.

Because when you come right down to it, the wrong people are on trial for atrocities.

Nixon, Westmoreland, Abrams and Mendal Rivers, the very bullshitters who are most eager to see Charlie Co. brought to justice, are finally the men most responsible for My Lai. They were the ones telling us that Ky and Thieu's corrupt government is worth dying for. They are the ones who taught us to kill, who put us over here in this mind-fucking shit hole and told us to go to it. In short, they started the war and they know you never have a war without atrocities.

If you put men in the shit long enough, you're going to have My Lai's.

It's as simple as that.

If they were really concerned about putting a stop to massacres like My Lai they'd stop the war.

But right now their concerns are very clear; easy promotions, soft civilian jobs for retired Brass, and money for the owners of the arms industry. If by making the men of Charlie Co. into the scapegoat they can keep the ball rolling a bit longer you can bet your ass they'll do it.

Comment: T

If you're looking for people to blame for the endless evil shit that happens in Iraq in this dishonorable Imperial war, blame the politicians that put the troops downrange, in an impossible situation.

Everything flows from the act of invasion and conquest ordered up by the greedy Imperial liars and traitors in Washington DC. They are the enemy.

MORE:

**“Atrocities Were As Common To
The Vietnamese Battlefields As
Shell Craters And Barbed Wire”
“The Thing We Had Done Was A
Result Of What The War Had Done To
Us”**

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

June 9, 2006 By Jason Motlagh, UPI Correspondent [Excerpts]

Allegations that 24 Iraqi civilians were gunned down in cold blood by Marines on a rampage in the town of Haditha have unlocked the demons of Vietnam's My Lai massacre, and other nameless atrocities that exist only in the darkest corners of the minds of former combatants.

Philip Caputo's "A Rumor of War" is a disarmingly honest account of his experiences as a Marine unraveled by violence. Arriving in Vietnam March 1965 with the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade, the first U.S. combat unit in Indochina, Lt. Caputo returned home after 16 months spent knee-deep in a brutal war that drove him from reasonable to the unthinkable, earning a court-martial that nearly ended in a murder conviction.

Unlike many war veterans who lapsed into drink and dissolution, Caputo went back to Vietnam in 1975 as a Chicago Tribune correspondent and covered the fall of Saigon. His motive in writing the book was to show that evil is not inherent in certain men as some people are quick to conclude, "except in the sense that the devil dwells in us all."

Rather than describe the ill deeds of others, Caputo lays bare his own descent into murderousness.

Mentally and physically depleted after 10 months in the bush, mired in hostile territory, he orders some of his men to go to a nearby village to seize a pair of suspected VC and kill them if they resist.

Half-mad, the GIs execute the pair without provocation, and Caputo finds himself laughing at the sight of one of the victims' head's blown out, only to realize their innocence in a case of mistaken identity, and his own bottomless guilt. His cavalier emphasis to "kill," in effect, was the green-light that sealed their deaths.

Caputo's story is, in the most fundamental sense, cut from the same cloth as My Lai and Haditha: Death tolls may vary, along with the equipment and expertise of the fighting men involved, but the constant is that "war, by its nature, can arouse a psychopathic violence in men of seemingly normal impulses."

"At times, the comradeship that was the war's only redeeming quality caused some of its worst crimes -- acts of retribution for friends who had been killed," Caputo continues.

"Some men could not withstand the stress of guerilla fighting: the hair-trigger alertness constantly demanded of them, the feeling that the enemy was everywhere, the inability to distinguish civilians from combatants created emotional pressures which built to such a point that a trivial provocation could make these men explode with the blind destructiveness of a mortar shell."

Caputo testifies in his memoir that "atrocities were as common to the Vietnamese battlefields as shell craters and barbed wire."

If a raft of such incidents has already surfaced in Iraq, it is not a stretch to imagine that others remain buried.

"I could not conceive of the act as one of premeditated murder," he writes. "It had not been committed in a vacuum. It was a direct result of the war. The thing we had done was a result of what the war had done to us."

Ishikawa and Kuroshima would understand: insert troops into a hell on earth and there's no way to prevent atrocities. Yet the real fiends in their capital suites are never spattered with a single drop of blood. Solidarity, Z

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to contact@militaryproject.org . Name, I.D., address withheld unless publication requested. Replies confidential.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Bomb Kills U.S. Soldier West Of Kirkuk

Jun 10 The Associated Press

A roadside bomb killed a U.S. soldier and wounded another in northern Iraq, the U.S. military said Saturday.

The soldiers with the 101st Sustainment Brigade were hit about 12:55 a.m. Friday while conducting a combat logistics patrol west of Kirkuk, 180 miles north of Baghdad, according to a statement.

The wounded soldier was taken to a coalition forces medical treatment facility. The names of the soldiers were withheld pending the notification of next of kin.

Valley Soldier Injured In Iraq

May 24, 2006 Mobile Video Tapes

EL PASO: A Valley soldier is recovering from injuries suffered while serving in Iraq.

Sergeant Elano Chavez was providing security as part of the 812 Quartermaster Unit deployed to Iraq. He was hurt in a roadside bomb attack two weeks ago.

Doctors say Chavez has a broken left leg, fractured femur and tissue damage. We're told he is at a military hospital in El Paso. He will be transferred to San Antonio soon to be closer to home.

Marine From Dothan Injured

5/19/2006 (AP) DOTHAN, Ala.

A Marine from Dothan was seriously injured when the Humvee he was driving in Iraq struck an explosive device, killing three other Marines.

Lance Cpl. Adam McDuffie sustained a severe arm injury during the combat operations in the Al Anbar province in northern Iraq on Sunday. The extent of his other injuries are unknown, The Dothan Eagle reported Friday.

McDuffie, a 2003 graduate of Northview High School, might have been saved by his protective gear, according to information provided by the U.S. Marine Corps. He was reportedly wearing a newly issued Kevlar helmet, flak jacket with front and side protective plates, ballistic goggles, special gloves and throat and groin protector.

McDuffie was transported to Al Asad Surgical in Iraq, then was apparently transferred to Germany for more surgery.

McDuffie played football for four years at Northview on the offensive and defensive line. He was voted "Most School Spirit" by his classmates.

Jay Bruner, who coached McDuffie on the freshman team, describes him as being "very dedicated and very committed, always determined to do his best."

"You could tell early on he was going to be something," Bruner said.

REAL BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



5.29.06 A US soldiers at an area where a car loaded with rockets exploded near the Iraqi interior ministry in central Baghdad. (AFP/Ali Al Saadi)

TROOP NEWS

**“The Unwillingness Of
Increasing Numbers Of Soldiers
To Fight A War They Had
Started To Believe Was Wrong”**



David Zeiger, writer and director of the documentary "Sir! No Sir!," carries the megaphone at a 1971 Armed "Farces" Day demonstration by 1,500 GIs from Fort Hood, Texas

June 9, 2006 BY ROGER EBERT, The Chicago Sun Times [Excerpts]

Quick question: When Jane Fonda was on her "FTA" concert tour during the Vietnam era, who was in her audience? The quick answer from most people would probably be, "anti-war hippies, left-wingers and draft-dodgers." The correct answer would be: American troops on active duty, many of them in uniform.

"Sir! No Sir!" is a documentary that about an almost-forgotten fact of the Vietnam era: Anti-war sentiment among U.S. troops grew into a problem for the Pentagon.

[B]ombing was used toward the end of the war because the military leadership wondered, frankly, if some of their ground troops would obey orders to attack. It's also said there were a few Air Force B-52 crews that refused to bomb North Vietnam. And in San Diego, sailors on an aircraft carrier tried to promote a local vote on whether their ship should be allowed to sail for Vietnam.

After the turning point of the Tet offensive in 1968, troop morale ebbed lower, the war seemed lost, and a protest movement encompassed active duty troops, coffeehouses near bases in America, underground GI newspapers, and a modern "underground railway" that helped soldiers desert and move to Canada. According to Pentagon figures, there were some 500,000 desertions during the Vietnam years.

The film has been written and directed by David Zeiger, who worked in an anti-war coffee-house near Fort Hood, Texas. In a narration spoken by Troy Garity, the son of Fonda and Tom Hayden, his film says, "The memory has been changed." The GI anti-war movement has disappeared from common knowledge, and a famous factoid from the period claims returning wounded veterans were spit on by "hippies" as they landed

at American airports. According to the film, that is an urban legend, publicized in the film "Rambo II: First Blood."

The story persists, and true or false is part of a general eagerness to blame our loss in Vietnam to domestic protesters, while ignoring the substantial anti-war sentiment among troops in the field.

Parallels with the war in Iraq are obvious. One big difference is that the Vietnam-era forces were largely supplied by the draft, while our Iraq troops are either career soldiers or National Guard troops, some of them on their second or third tours of duty. The Vietnam-era draft not only generated anti-war sentiment among those of draft age, but supplied the army with soldiers who did not go very cheerfully into uniform.

The willingness of today's National Guardsmen to continue in combat is courageous and admirable, but cannot be expected to last indefinitely, and the political cost of returning to the draft system would be incalculable.

A group of recent documentaries has highlighted a conflict between information and "disinformation," that Orwellian term for attempts to rewrite history.

The archetype of "Hanoi Jane" has been used to obscure the fact that Fonda appeared before about 60,000 GIs who apparently agreed with her.

What cannot be denied is the newsreel footage of uniformed troops in anti-war protests, of Fonda's uniformed audiences at "FTA" concerts, of headlines citing Pentagon concern about troop morale, the "fragging" of officers, the breakdown of discipline, and the unwillingness of increasing numbers of soldiers to fight a war they had started to believe was wrong.



Sir! No Sir!:
At A Theatre Near You!
To find it: <http://www.sirnosir.com/>

**“There Are Too Many Computers In The
Army”**

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
June 12, 2006

If there is not enough money to give us a pay raise (“White House denounces House plan for pay hike,” May 22), the solution may be in computers.

There are too many computers in the Army.

I’m not talking about those computers used directly in weaponry, but the use of laptops and office personal computers.

In every office you will see three or four computers. Aviation units that have ULLSA or Skip 6 have at least one computer for each helicopter.

It seems that almost every squad leader has to have a computer to type up nice PowerPoint slides or counseling statements.

The time that leadership spends sending e-mails and setting up meetings with Proxima projectors can be better spent mentoring soldiers.

And don’t forget the time spent trying to fix computers.

America fought and won several wars without the use of computers.

I say we spend half as much money on fancy laptops and buy more beans and bullets; we definitely can’t win wars without them.

If there is some money left over, then give us the raise that we deserve.

Sgt. Bruce A. Adams
Fort Hood, Texas

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

Forgotten History



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: June 10, 2006
Subject: Forgotten History

America loves their veterans, as long as they keep their mouth shut.

The minute they start telling the truth, It's Love It Or Leave It.

**The tomb of the Unknown Soldier should read: Here Rests In Emotional Silence,
An American Soldier Known But To God.**

**There was an old Hoover
who lived in a shoe.
He had so many veterans
he didn't know what to do.
So he gassed them and tanked them,
and burned up their beds.
And then told the people
the vets were all Reds.**

**September 17, 1932
SUPPORT THE TROOPS**

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran**

June 10, 2006

Photo from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

Vietnam: The Soldier's Revolt

**“As One Infantry Officer
Reported, ‘You Can’t Give
Orders And Expect Them To Be
Obeyed’”**

The murder of American officers by their troops was an openly proclaimed goal in Vietnam. As one GI newspaper demanded, "Don't desert. Go to Vietnam, and kill your commanding officer."

And they did.

August-September 2000 By Joel Geier, International Socialist Review Issue 9

Conclusion: Numbers at end of sentences refer to footnotes below.

Mutiny!

“If an officer attempted to impose disciplinary punishment upon a soldier, the power did not exist to get it executed. In that you have one of the sure signs of a genuine popular revolution. With the falling away of their disciplinary power, the political bankruptcy of the staff of officers was laid bare.” Leon Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution 39

The refusal of an order to advance into combat is an act of mutiny. In time of war, it is the gravest crime in the military code, punishable by death.

In Vietnam, mutiny was rampant, the power to punish withered and discipline collapsed as search and destroy was revoked from below.

Until 1967, open defiance of orders was rare and harshly repressed, with sentences of two to ten years for minor infractions.

Hostility to search-and-destroy missions took the form of covert combat avoidance, called "sandbagging" by the grunts. A platoon sent out to "hump the boonies" might look for a safe cover from which to file fabricated reports of imaginary activity. 40

But after Tet, there was a massive shift from combat avoidance to mutiny.

One Pentagon official reflected that "mutiny became so common that the army was forced to disguise its frequency by talking instead of 'combat refusal.'" Combat refusal, one commentator observed, "resembled a strike and occurred when GIs refused, disobeyed, or negotiated an order into combat." 41

Acts of mutiny took place on a scale previously only encountered in revolutions.

The first mutinies in 1968 were unit and platoon-level rejections of the order to fight. The army recorded 68 such mutinies that year. By 1970, in the 1st Air Cavalry Division alone, there were 35 acts of combat refusal. 42 One military study concluded that combat refusal was "unlike mutinous outbreaks of the past, which were usually sporadic, short-lived events. The progressive unwillingness of American soldiers to fight to the point of open disobedience took place over a four-year period between 1968-71."43

The 1968 combat refusals of individual units expanded to involve whole companies by the next year.

The first reported mass mutiny was in the 196th Light Brigade in August 1969. Company A of the 3rd Battalion, down to 60 men from its original 150, had been pushing through Songchang Valley under heavy fire for five days when it refused an order to advance down a perilous mountain slope. Word of the mutiny spread rapidly. The New York Daily News ran a banner headline, "Sir, My Men Refuse To Go." 44 The GI paper, The Bond, accurately noted, "It was an organized strike...A shaken brass relieved the company commander...but they did not charge the guys with anything. The Brass surrendered to the strength of the organized men." 45

This precedent--no court-martial for refusing to obey the order to fight, but the line officer relieved of his command--was the pattern for the rest of the war.

Mass insubordination was not punished by an officer corps that lived in fear of its own men.

Even the threat of punishment often backfired. In one famous incident, B Company of the 1st Battalion of the 12th Infantry refused an order to proceed into NLF-held territory. When they were threatened with court-martials, other platoons rallied to their support and refused orders to advance until the army backed down. 46

As the fear of punishment faded, mutinies mushroomed.

There were at least ten reported major mutinies, and hundreds of smaller ones. Hanoi's Vietnam Courier documented 15 important GI rebellions in 1969.⁴⁷

At Cu Chi, troops from the 2nd Battalion of the 27th Infantry refused battle orders. The "CBS Evening News" broadcast live a patrol from the 7th Cavalry telling their captain that his order for direct advance against the NLF was nonsense, that it would threaten casualties, and that they would not obey it.

Another CBS broadcast televised the mutiny of a rifle company of the 1st Air Cavalry Division. ⁴⁸

When Cambodia was invaded in 1970, soldiers from Fire Base Washington conducted a sit-in. They told Up Against the Bulkhead, "We have no business there...we just sat down. Then they promised us we wouldn't have to go to Cambodia."

Within a week, there were two additional mutinies, as men from the 4th and 8th Infantry refused to board helicopters to Cambodia. ⁴⁹

In the invasion of Laos in March 1971, two platoons refused to advance. To prevent the mutiny from spreading, the entire squadron was pulled out of the Laos operation. The captain was relieved of his command, but there was no discipline against the men. When a lieutenant from the 501st Infantry refused his battalion commander's order to advance his troops, he merely received a suspended sentence. ⁵⁰

The decision not to punish men defying the most sacrosanct article of the military code, the disobedience of the order for combat, indicated how much the deterioration of discipline had eroded the power of the officers.

The only punishment for most mutinies was to relieve the commanding officer of his duties. Consequently, many commanders would not report that they had lost control of their men. They swept news of mutiny, which would jeopardize their careers, under the rug.

As they became quietly complicit, the officer corps lost any remaining moral authority to impose discipline.

For every defiance in combat, there were hundreds of minor acts of insubordination in rear base camps.

As one infantry officer reported, "You can't give orders and expect them to be obeyed." ⁵¹

This democratic upsurge from below was so extensive that discipline was replaced by a new command technique called "working it out."

Working it out was a form of collective bargaining in which negotiations went on between officers and men to determine orders. Working it out destroyed the authority of the officer corps and gutted the ability of the army to carry out search-and-destroy missions.

But the army had no alternative strategy for a guerrilla war against a national liberation movement. ⁵²

The political impact of the mutiny was felt far beyond Vietnam. As H.R. Haldeman, Nixon's chief of staff, reflected, "If troops are going to mutiny, you can't pursue an aggressive policy." The soldiers' revolt tied down the global reach of U.S. imperialism. 53

Fragging

"The moral condition of the army was hopeless. You might describe it by saying the army as an army no longer existed. Defeats, retreats, and the rottenness of the ruling group had utterly undermined the troops." Leon Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution 54

The murder of American officers by their troops was an openly proclaimed goal in Vietnam. As one GI newspaper demanded, "Don't desert. Go to Vietnam, and kill your commanding officer." 55

And they did.

A new slang term arose to celebrate the execution of officers: fragging. The word came from the fragmentation grenade, which was the weapon of choice because the evidence was destroyed in the act. 56

In every war, troops kill officers whose incompetence or recklessness threatens the lives of their men. But only in Vietnam did this become pervasive in combat situations and widespread in rear base camps.

It was the most well-known aspect of the class struggle inside the army, directed not just at intolerable officers, but at "lifers" as a class. In the soldiers' revolt, it became accepted practice to paint political slogans on helmets.

A popular helmet slogan summed up this mood: "Kill a non-com for Christ."

Fragging was the ransom the ground troops extracted for being used as live bait. 57

No one knows how many officers were fragged, but after Tet it became epidemic. At least 800 to 1,000 fragging attempts using explosive devices were made. The army reported 126 fraggings in 1969, 271 in 1970 and 333 in 1971, when they stopped keeping count.

But in that year, just in the American Division (of My Lai fame), one fragging per week took place. Some military estimates are that fraggings occurred at five times the official rate, while officers of the Judge Advocate General Corps believed that only 10 percent of fraggings were reported.

These figures do not include officers who were shot in the back by their men and listed as wounded or killed in action. 58

Most fraggings resulted in injuries, although "word of the deaths of officers will bring cheers at troop movies or in bivouacs of certain units." 59

The army admitted that it could not account for how 1,400 officers and noncommissioned officers died. This number, plus the official list of fragging deaths, has been accepted as the unacknowledged army estimate for officers killed by their men.

It suggests that 20 to 25 percent--if not more--of all officers killed during the war were killed by enlisted men, not the "enemy." This figure has no precedent in the history of war. 60

Soldiers put bounties on officers targeted for fragging. The money, usually between \$100 and \$1,000, was collected by subscription from among the enlisted men. It was a reward for the soldier who executed the collective decision. The highest bounty for an officer was \$10,000, publicly offered by GI Says, a mimeographed bulletin put out in the 101st Airborne Division, for Col. W. Honeycutt, who had ordered the May 1969 attack on Hill 937. The hill had no strategic significance and was immediately abandoned when the battle ended. It became enshrined in GI folklore as Hamburger Hill, because of the 56 men killed and 420 wounded taking it. Despite several fragging attempts, Honeycutt escaped uninjured. 61

As Vietnam GI argued after Hamburger Hill, "Brass are calling this a tremendous victory. We call it a goddam butcher shop...If you want to die so some lifer can get a promotion, go right ahead. But if you think your life is worth something, you better get yourselves together. If you don't take care of the lifers, they might damn well take care of you." 62

Fraggings were occasionally called off. One lieutenant refused to obey an order to storm a hill during an operation in the Mekong Delta. "His first sergeant later told him that when his men heard him refuse that order, they removed a \$350 bounty earlier placed on his head because they thought he was a 'hard-liner.'" 63

The motive for most fraggings was not revenge, but to change battle conduct.

For this reason, officers were usually warned prior to fraggings. First, a smoke grenade would be left near their beds. Those who did not respond would find a tear-gas grenade or a grenade pin on their bed as a gentle reminder. Finally, the lethal grenade was tossed into the bed of sleeping, inflexible officers. Officers understood the warnings and usually complied, becoming captive to the demands of their men.

It was the most practical means of cracking army discipline. The units whose officers responded opted out of search-and-destroy missions. 64

An Army judge who presided over fragging trials called fragging "the troops' way of controlling officers," and added that it was "deadly effective." He explained, "Captain Steinberg argues that once an officer is intimidated by even the threat of fragging he is useless to the military because he can no longer carry out orders essential to the functioning of the Army. Through intimidation by threats--verbal and written...virtually all officers and NCOs have to take into account the possibility of fragging before giving an order to the men under them." The fear of fragging affected officers and NCOs far beyond those who were actually involved in fragging incidents. 65

Officers who survived fragging attempts could not tell which of their men had tried to murder them, or when the men might strike again. They lived in constant fear of future attempts at fragging by unknown soldiers. In Vietnam it was a truism that "everyone was the enemy": for the lifers, every enlisted man was the enemy. "In parts of Vietnam (fragging) stirs more fear among officers and NCOs than does the war with 'Charlie.'"

Counter-fragging by retaliating officers contributed to a war within the war. While 80 percent of fraggings were of officers and NCOs, 20 percent were of enlisted men, as officers sought to kill potential troublemakers or those whom they suspected of planning to frag them. In this civil war within the army, the military police were used to reinstate order. In October 1971, military police air assaulted the Praline mountain signal site to protect an officer who had been the target of repeated fragging attempts. The base was occupied for a week before command was restored. 66

Fragging undermined the ability of the Green Machine to function as a fighting force. By 1970, "many commanders no longer trusted Blacks or radical whites with weapons except on guard duty or in combat."

In the American Division, fragmentation grenades were not given to troops.

In the 440 Signal Battalion, the colonel refused to distribute all arms. 67

As a soldier at Cu Chi told the New York Times, "The American garrisons on the larger bases are virtually disarmed. The lifers have taken the weapons from us and put them under lock and key." 68

The U.S. army was slowly disarming its own men to prevent the weapons from being aimed at the main enemy: the lifers. It is hard to think of another army so afraid of its own soldiers. 69

Peace From Below--Search And Avoid

"The army was incurably sick...so far as making war was concerned, it did not exist. Nobody believed in the success of the war, the officers as little as the soldiers. Nobody wanted to fight any more, neither the army nor the people."
Leon Trotsky, History of the Russian Revolution 70

Mutiny and fraggings expressed the anger and bitterness that combat soldiers felt at being used as bait to kill Communists. It forced the troops to reassess who was the real enemy. Many began to conclude that the enemy was the lifers or the rulers in the U.S.--that it was the capitalist class and not, as they had once believed, the NLF.

In a remarkable letter, 40 combat officers wrote to President Nixon in July 1970 to advise him that "the military, the leadership of this country--are perceived by many soldiers to be almost as much our enemy as the VC [Viet Cong] and the NVA [North Vietnamese Army]."71

Extraordinary as this officer admission was, it was too little, too late.

Fort Ord's Right-On-Post proclaimed that GIs had to free themselves and all exploited people from the oppression of the military, that "we recognize our true enemy...It is the capitalists who see only profit...They control the military which sends us off to die. They control the police who occupy the black and brown ghettos." 72 For others, the enemy was more immediate. As the GI paper, the Ft. Lewis-McChord Free Press, stated, "In Vietnam, the Lifers, the Brass, are the true Enemy, not the enemy." 73

From there it was a short leap to the idea that "the other war, the war with Charlie," had to be ended. After the 1970 invasion of Cambodia enlarged the war, fury and the demoralizing realization that nothing could stop the warmongers swept both the antiwar movement and the troops. 74

The most popular helmet logo became "UUUU," which meant "the unwilling, led by the unqualified, doing the unnecessary, for the ungrateful." Peace, if it were to come, would have to be made by the troops themselves, instituted by an unofficial troop withdrawal ending search-and-destroy missions. 75

The form this peace from below took came to be called "search and avoid," or "search and evade."

It became so extensive that "search and evade (meaning tacit avoidance of combat by units in the field) is now virtually a principle of war, vividly expressed by the GI phrase, 'CYA' (cover your ass) and get home!" It was not just a replay of early combat avoidance, of individual units hiding from the war--it was more open, more political, and more clearly focused as a strategy to bring peace. 76

In search and avoid, patrols sent out into the field deliberately eluded potential clashes with the NLF. Night patrols, the most dangerous, would halt and take up positions a few yards beyond the defense perimeter, where the NLF would never come. By skirting potential conflicts, they hoped to make it clear to the NLF that their unit had established its own peace treaty.

Another frequent search-and-avoid tactic was to leave base camp, secure a safe area in the jungle and set up a perimeter-defense system in which to hole up for the time allotted for the mission. "Some units even took enemy weapons with them when they went out on such search-and-avoid missions so that upon return they could report a firefight and demonstrate evidence of enemy casualties for the body-count figures required by higher headquarters." 77

The army was forced to accommodate what began to be called "the grunts' cease-fire."

An American soldier from Cu Chi, quoted in the New York Times, said, "They have set up separate companies for men who refuse to go out into the field. It is no big thing to refuse to go. If a man is ordered to go to such and such a place, he no longer goes through the hassle of refusing; he just packs his shirt and goes to visit some buddies at another base camp." 78

An observer at Pace, near the Cambodian front where a unilateral truce was widely enforced, reported, "The men agreed and passed the word to other

platoons: nobody fires unless fired upon. As of about 1100 hours on October 10,1971, the men of Bravo Company, 11/12 First Cav Division, declared their own private cease-fire with the North Vietnamese." 79

The NLF responded to the new situation.

People's Press, a GI paper, in its June 1971 issue claimed that NLF and NVA units were ordered not to open hostilities against U.S. troops wearing red bandanas or peace signs, unless first fired upon. 80

Two months later, the first Vietnam veteran to visit Hanoi was given a copy of "an order to North Vietnamese troops not to shoot U.S. soldiers wearing antiwar symbols or carrying their rifles pointed down." He reports its impact on "convincing me that I was on the side of the Vietnamese now." 81

Colonel Heintz reported this:

"That 'search-and-evade' has not gone unnoticed by the enemy is underscored by the Viet Cong delegation's recent statement at the Paris Peace Talks that Communist units in Indochina have been ordered not to engage American units which do not molest them. The same statement boasted--not without foundation in fact--that American defectors are in the VC ranks." 82

Some officers joined, or led their men, in the unofficial cease-fire from below. A U.S. army colonel claimed:

"I had influence over an entire province. I put my men to work helping with the harvest. They put up buildings. Once the NVA understood what I was doing, they eased up. I'm talking to you about a de facto truce, you understand. The war stopped in most of the province. It's the kind of history that doesn't get recorded. Few people even know it happened, and no one will ever admit that it happened." 83

Search and avoid, mutiny and fraggings were a brilliant success. Two years into the soldiers' upsurge, in 1970, the number of U.S. combat deaths were down by more than 70 percent (to 3,946) from the 1968 high of more than 14,000.

The revolt of the soldiers in order to survive and not to allow themselves to be victims could only succeed by a struggle prepared to use any means necessary to achieve peace from below. 84

The revolt was not just against body bags, it was the "Revolt of the Body Bags," of men who refused to allow themselves to be shoved into body bags, to become American capitalism's road kill. The soldiers' revolt won the internal war within the army. Ground troops were removed from Vietnam. The armed forces are still afraid to use them elsewhere.

Revolution And The Army

"It is a manifest fact that the disorganization of armies and a total relaxation of discipline has been both precondition and consequence of all successful revolutions hitherto." Engels to Marx, September 26, 1851

It is a maxim of revolutionary politics that for revolution to be successful, some part of the army must go over to the revolutionary forces. For that to occur, the revolutionary movement must be strong enough to give confidence to soldiers that it can protect them from the consequences of breaking military discipline.

The army revolted in Vietnam, but it lacked revolutionary organization. There was no revolution for it to go over to. The revolt was successful in ending the use of ground troops, but left intact the structures of the army, which allowed imperialism to slowly rebuild out of the wreckage.

The army revolt had all of the strengths and weaknesses of the 1960s radicalization of which it was a part. It was a courageous mass struggle from below, creatively improvising the necessary tactical means to accomplish its goals as it went along. It relied upon no one but itself to win its battles. It was revolutionary in temper and tactics, but it lacked the prerequisites for revolutionary success: organization, program, cadre and leadership. It is possible to name dozens of heroic acts of the soldiers' revolt in Vietnam, but impossible to record any organization or leader. They are nameless.

It was brilliant but brief. The only organizing tools were the underground GI newspapers. A newspaper, as any revolutionary can tell you, is an organizer, the scaffolding for the building of organization. But newspapers became a substitute for organization. There was scaffolding, but no building. Had revolutionary organization coordinated, centralized, politicized, made conscious and generalized the striving of the soldiers' revolt, the potential for change would have been enormously greater, and the outcome unimaginable.

A contradiction of modern imperialist armies is that they serve ruling-class wars of conquest, while they rely on working-class troops, who--whatever their initial ideological confusion--have no material interest in conquest.

This contradiction has the potential to destroy armies. In the 20th century, it did so to the Russian and German armies at the end of the First World War, the Portuguese army in the African colonial wars in the 1970s and the American army in Vietnam. But armies have also been used for counterrevolution, of which the defeat of the Chilean revolution is a still living reminder.

The hidden history of the 1960s proves that the American army can be split and won to the revolutionary movement.

But that requires the long, slow patient work of explanation, of propaganda, of education, of organization, and of agitation and action. The Vietnam revolt shows how rank-and-file soldiers can rise to the task. The unfinished job is for revolutionary organization to also rise to that level.

When it does, the troops of the American army can become the troops of the American revolution.

- 39 Leon Trotsky, *The History of the Russian Revolution* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan, 1957), Vol. 1, p. 256.
- 40 Appy, p. 244-45.
- 41 Cincinnatus, p. 156 and Richard Moser, *The New Winter Soldiers: GI and Veteran Dissent During the Vietnam Era (Perspectives in the Sixties)* (New Brunswick: Rutgers, 1996), p. 44.
- 42 Matthew Rinaldi, "The Olive-Drab Rebels: Military Organizing during the Vietnam Era," *Radical America*, Vol.8 No. 3, May-June 1974, p. 29.
- 43 Gabriel and Savage, quoted in Appy, p. 254.
- 44 Cortright, p. 35-36.
- 45 *The Bond*, September 22, 1969.
- 46 Cortright, p. 38.
- 47 Moser, p. 45.
- 48 Cortright, p. 36 and Heintz, p. 329.
- 49 Moser, p. 47 and Cortright, p. 37.
- 50 Rees, p. 152 and Cortright, p. 37-38.
- 51 Tom Wells, *The War Within: America's Battle Over Vietnam* (New York: Henry Holt, 1994), p. 474.
- 52 Moser, p. 133 and Cortright, p. 35.
- 53 Wells, p. 475.
- 54 Trotsky, Vol.1, p. 260.
- 55 Quoted in Heintz, p. 330.
- 56 Eugene Linden, "Fragging and Other Withdrawal Symptoms," *Saturday Review*, January 8, 1972, p. 12.
- 57 Cincinnatus, pp. 51-52.
- 58 Moser, p. 48 and Appy, p. 246.
- 59 Heintz, p. 328.
- 60 Terry Anderson, "The GI Movement and the Response from the Brass," in Melvin Small and William Hoover, eds., *Give Peace A Chance* (Syracuse: Syracuse University, 1992), p. 105.
- 61 Andy Stapp, *Up Against The Brass* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), p. 182 and Heintz, p. 328-29 and Appy, p. 230-31.
- 62 *Vietnam GI*, June 1969.
- 63 Linden, p. 14.
- 64 Wells, p. 474.
- 65 Linden, p. 12-13.
- 66 Cortright, p. 44 and Moser, p. 50.
- 67 Cortright, p. 47 and Moser, p. 50.
- 68 Quoted in Heintz, p. 328.
- 69 Linden, p. 15.
- 70 Trotsky, Vol. 1, p. 261.
- 71 Cortright, p. 28.
- 72 Quoted in Moser, p. 98.
- 73 Quoted in Heintz, p. 330.
- 74 Secretary of the Army, Stanley Resor, recalled "a grave heroin epidemic...surfaced right after the Cambodian invasion." Interviewed in Wells, p. 456. Heroin addiction thereafter affected between 10-30 percent of the troops.
- 75 Appy, p. 43 and Cincinnatus, p. 27.
- 76 Heintz, p. 329.
- 77 Cincinnatus, p. 155.
- 78 Quoted in Heintz, p. 328.

79 Richard Boyle, *GI Revolts: The Breakdown of the U.S. Army in Vietnam* (San Francisco: United Front Press, 1972) p. 28.
80 Moser, p. 132.
81 Wells, p. 526.
82 Heintz, p. 329.
83 Moser, p. 132.
84 Cincinnatus, p. 161.
85 Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Collected Works* (New York: International Publishers, 1982) Vol. 38, pp. 469-70.

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.

OCCUPATION REPORT

Zarqawi: “Who Do They Have To Kill To Stop The Ministry Of Interior Death Squads, And Trigger Happy Foreign Troops?”

"They don't need him anymore," our elderly neighbor waved the news away like he was shooing flies, "They have fifty Zarqawis in government."

June 10, 2006 By Riverbend, Baghdad Burning

So 'Zarqawi' is finally dead. It was an interesting piece of news that greeted us yesterday morning (or was it the day before? I've lost track of time...). I didn't bother with the pictures and film they showed of him because I, personally, have been saturated with images of broken, bleeding bodies.

The reactions have been different. There's a general consensus amongst family and friends that he won't be missed, whoever he is.

There is also doubt- who was he really? Did he even exist? Was he truly the huge terror the Americans made him out to be? When did he actually die? People swear he was dead back in 2003...

The timing is extremely suspicious: just when people were getting really fed up with the useless Iraqi government, Zarqawi is killed and Maliki is hailed the victorious leader of the occupied world! (And no- Iraqis aren't celebrating in the streets- worries over electricity, water, death squads, tests, corpses and extremists in high places prevail right now.)

I've been listening to reactions- mostly from pro-war politicians and the naïveté they reveal is astounding.

Maliki (the current Iraqi PM) was almost giddy as he made the news public (he had even gone the extra mile and shaved!).

Do they really believe it will end the resistance against occupation?

As long as foreign troops are in Iraq, resistance or 'insurgency' will continue- why is that SO difficult to understand? How is that concept a foreign one?

"A new day for Iraqis" is the current theme of the Iraqi puppet government and the Americans.

Like it was "A New Day for Iraqis" on April 9, 2003 . And it was "A New Day for Iraqis" when they killed Oday and Qusay. Another "New Day for Iraqis" when they caught Saddam.

More "New Day" when they drafted the constitution... I'm beginning to think it's like one of those questions they give you on IQ tests: If 'New' is equal to 'More' and 'Day' is equal to 'Suffering', what does "New Day for Iraqis" mean?

How do I feel? To hell with Zarqawi (or Zayrkawi as Bush calls him). He was an American creation- he came along with them- they don't need him anymore, apparently.

His influence was greatly exaggerated but he was the justification for every single family they killed through military strikes and troops. It was WMD at first, then it was Saddam, then it was Zarqawi.

Who will it be now?

Who will be the new excuse for killing and detaining Iraqis?

Or is it that an excuse is no longer needed- they have freedom to do what they want. The slaughter in Haditha months ago proved that.

"They don't need him anymore," our elderly neighbor waved the news away like he was shooing flies, "They have fifty Zarqawis in government."

So now that Zarqawi is dead, and because according to Bush and our Iraqi puppets he was behind so much of Iraq's misery- things should get better, right?

The car bombs should lessen, the ethnic cleansing will come to a halt, military strikes and sieges will die down... That's what we were promised, wasn't it? That sounds good to me.

Now- who do they have to kill to stop the Ministry of Interior death squads, and trigger-happy foreign troops?

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

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

**“I Saw My Father Dying In My Arms
And The Bodies Of My Brother And
Sisters Dispersed Everywhere”**



Hadil weeping by her father's dead body. Shredded parts of body blocked out.
(Photo: AFP)

"I hope Allah will have mercy on them and avenge their death. In a moment we became nothing, with no taste for life. We were by the beach and we tried to find a little happiness and rest and this doesn't happen to us a lot, and until we had the chance to live in this atmosphere; everything was blown away because of the Israelis who don't let us breathe and live. There is no point in living."

6/9/2006 Ma'an News & 06.10.06 Ali Waked, Yedioth Internet

Gaza: Eyewitnesses have confirmed that dozens of Palestinian citizens have been killed or injured when Israeli war jets attacked the beach of Gaza on Friday afternoon.

Wiham Ralia, 20, and his two sisters, Latifa, 11, and Hadil, 8, stayed alive after the rest of their family vanished in Friday's shelling strike on a Gaza beach.

Wiham Ralia lost his father, a stepmother, 3 sisters and a brother in IDF artillery strike on Gaza beach; in interview with Ynet he and his sister speak of their ordeal from a Gaza hospital

"Soon after the explosions cries were heard and there was a terrible smell of death. My father died in my arms," Ralia said.

Photos of his sister Hadil weeping by her father's body touched of condemnation worldwide. "When the shells landed, everyone cried and ran away," Hadil told Ynet.

Ali Ralia, 48, his wife Raisa, 30, her one-and-a-half-year-old daughter Hanadi and her 5-month-old toddler Haitham, and his daughters from a second wife Alia, 24, Elham, 15, and Sabrin, 4, died in the strike.

Ali took his two wives and his children to the beach Friday afternoon. Ali's second wife Hamdiya, 42, was severely injured in the attack and was taken to the Shifa hospital in Gaza.

Hadil threw herself on the sand near her dead father and cried: "Dad, Dad." A Kuwaiti family who saw images of Hadil weeping in a live news broadcast offered to adopt her.

Hadil was hospitalized in a Beit Lahiya hospital, where doctors allowed this Ynet report to interview her.

Doctors told reporters not to tell her about the fate of her family because she seemed to have forgotten the traumatic incident.

"There was a big boom and screams when the shells landed and I started running. I remember my father lying nearby, and now he is waiting for me. I saw everyone running away and I ran away too. I searched my family and I ran to find mum and dad. Then they took me to hospital. They told me I am a little ill. But I want to return to my family. My parents and my brothers are home waiting for me. I want to return to them," she told Ynet.

Baby trams, tables, and ripped umbrellas stained with blood, were evidence of the horror that took place on the beach.

"All the people started running away as they looked in all directions for their relatives. It was an upsetting scene. Screams and bodies were everywhere. I wanted to reach my father, who was badly injured. I tried to get close to him to tell what we Muslims say in a moment of death. I tried to tell him, 'There is no God but Allah, Muhammad is his prophet,' but he couldn't breathe or open his mouth," Wiham said.

"I saw my father dying in my arms and the bodies of my brother and sisters dispersed everywhere.

"They took me to hospital, thank God, I am lightly injured, but I lost everything. My family was around me but no one was alive. Four sisters and a brother, my father and a stepmother, but no one was alive.

"The Israelis ruined my life and my future. I have nothing to say and I have no energy to speak. They said they didn't fire. I don't know what to say. They kill and lie."

Wiham sat in the family's mourning tent in Beit Lahiya when he spoke to Ynet.

"I hope Allah will have mercy on them and avenge their death. In a moment we became nothing, with no taste for life. We were by the beach and we tried to find a little happiness and rest and this doesn't happen to us a lot, and until we had the chance to live in this atmosphere; everything was blown away because of the Israelis who don't let us breathe and live. There is no point in living."

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

U.S.-Born Israeli Soldier Kills Himself In Mosque: "Reyman Had Complained Of Personal Problems"

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

6 June 2006 Associated Press

JERUSALEM: An Israeli soldier who recently emigrated from the United States was found dead in a West Bank mosque Tuesday, where he apparently committed suicide after shooting at the walls of the empty building with his M-16 assault rifle.

The army identified the soldier as Israel Reyman, 28, and said he immigrated to Israel about two months ago.

A spokeswoman said the fact that his weapon was found beside him indicated he may have killed himself, but "all options are being examined." She would not give any other details, including his hometown, saying the incident was under investigation.

Residents of the northern West Bank village of Akabeh said they heard several shots from the mosque early Tuesday, and soldiers found the man's body inside shortly

afterward. One witness said the shots damaged the mosque's pulpit, and Israeli forces imposed a curfew on the site while they carried out repairs.

Israeli TV reports said Reyman had complained of personal problems during training and had no known links with any Israeli political group, apparently ruling out a nationalist motive for the mosque shooting.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Welcome To Occupied America: San Antonio Police Will "Remove" People Before They Commit Crimes

[Thanks to David Honish, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in. He writes: What a brilliant idea. Arrest the bad guys BEFORE they commit crimes? Hey, if the Bush regime can ignore the Fourth and Fourteenth Amendments, why not SAPD?]

Jun 9 KSAT

San Antonio Police Chief Bill McManus has unveiled a new specialized police unit that aims to prevent crime before it happens.

The unit is a multi-agency tactical response force that McManus calls a crime response unit.

It is made up of 65 SAPD officers, and it will also work with other local, state and federal law enforcement agencies to identify hot spots around the city.

Once those areas are identified, the unit will move in and remove any criminal elements.

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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

The following have posted issues; there may be others:

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

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

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/;

<http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>; <http://www.albasrah.net/maqalat/english/qi-special.htm>

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