

Hand
Stick
Knife
Gun

Close Quarter Combat

*Tactics and Strategies for Military,
Law Enforcement, Corrections and Citizens*

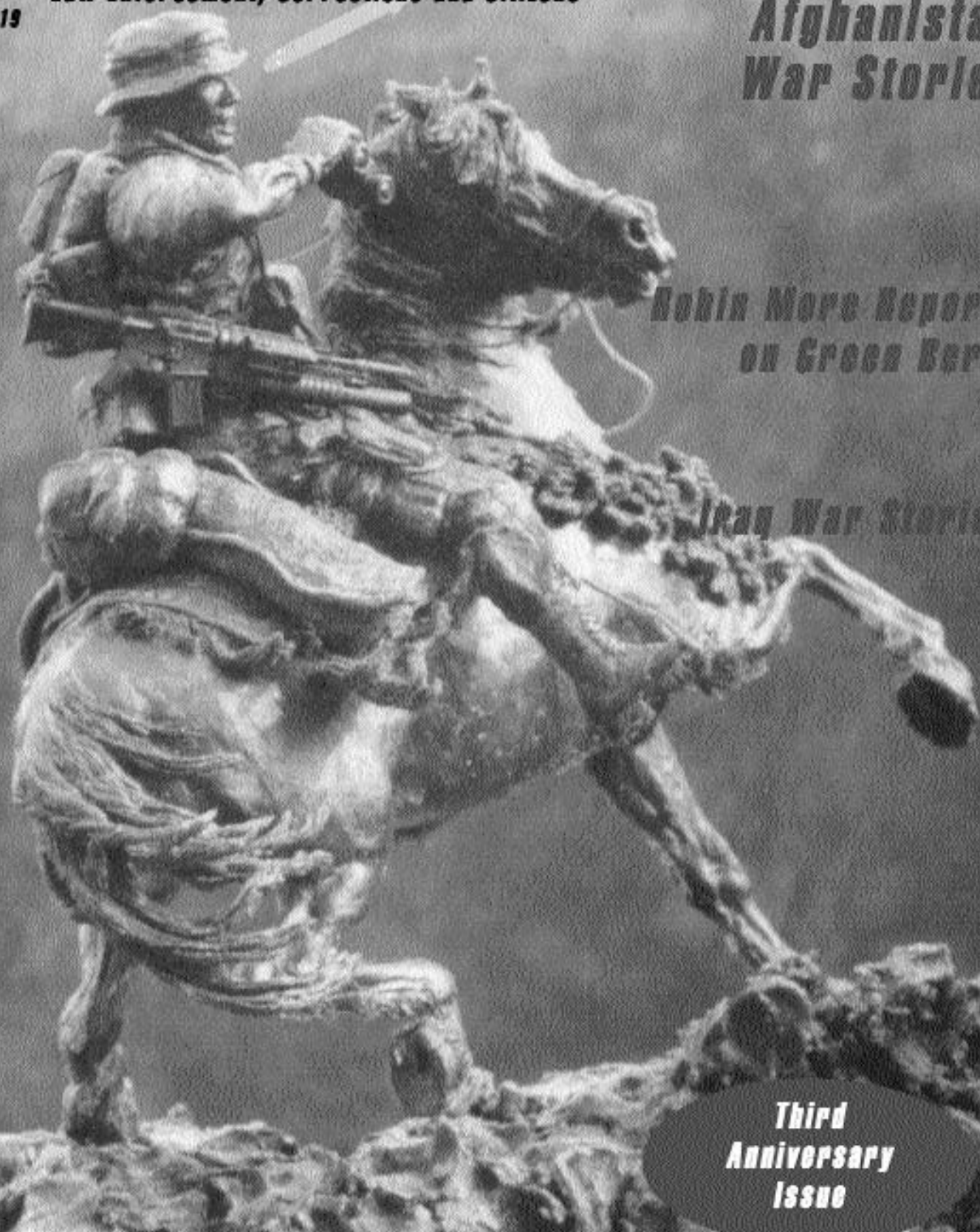
Issue 19

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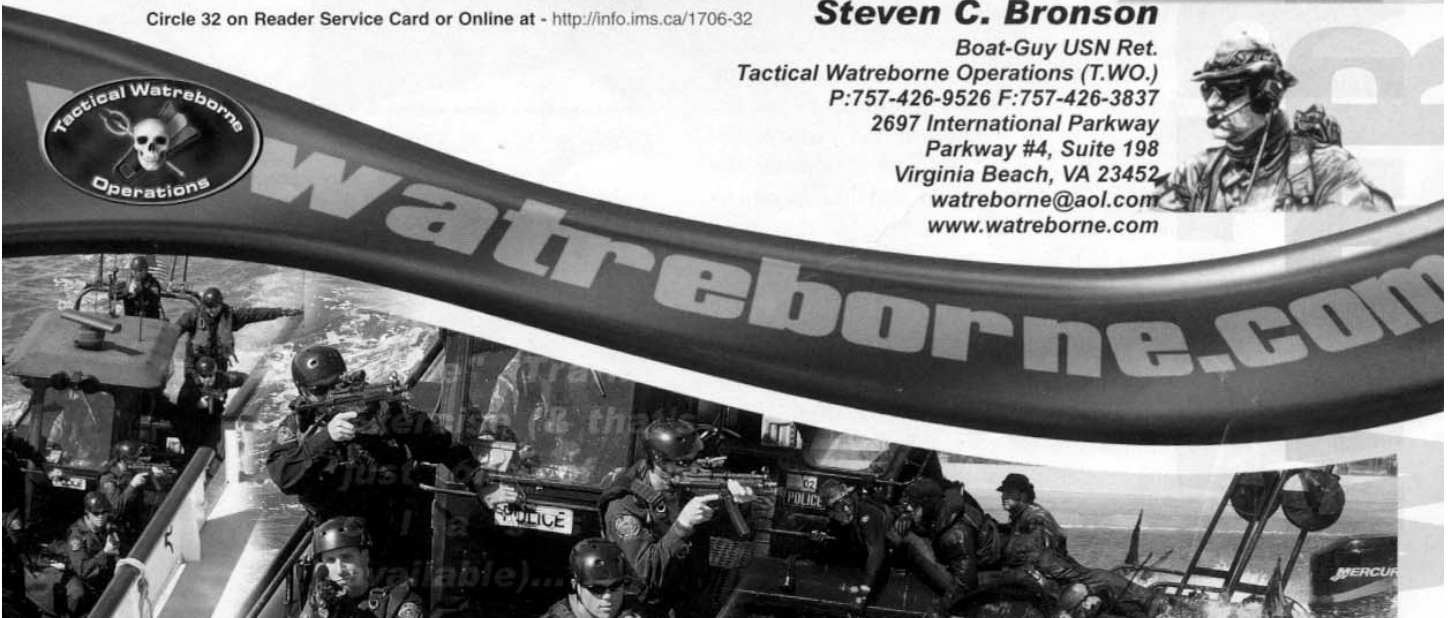
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About the Cover: De Opresso Liber! "Liberate the Oppressed" (Motto of U.S. Special Forces. Last winter, U.S. Special Forces soldiers fought through the desolate mountains of Afghanistan...on horsback...and nobody knew. Cover artwork provided courtesy of Douwe Blumberg Studios, Los Angeles, Louisville To purchase, contact douwestudios.com



By W. Hock Hochheim

HEADQUARTERS DOCTRINE

THE SMOKE OF THE ENEMY'S FIRES

“In years six hundred, no Spartan woman has beheld the smoke of the enemy’s fires.”

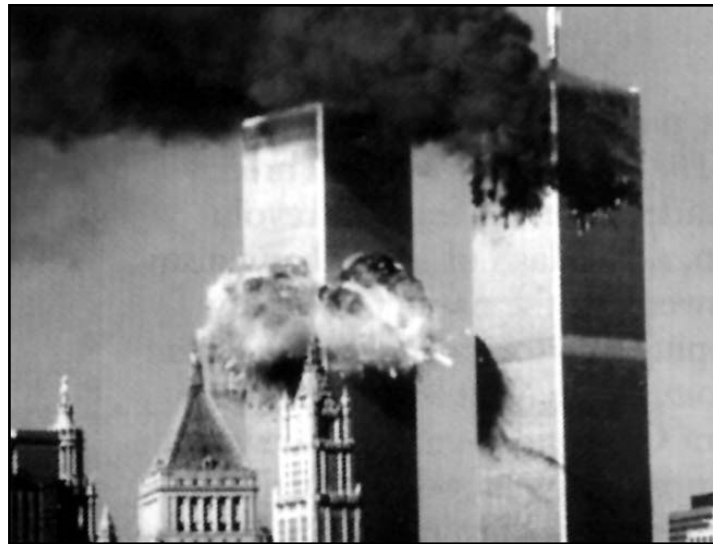
...old Spartan adage

Six hundred years! How confident they must have felt, how unsullied and untouched they remained for centuries while the ravages of invasion and conquest raged all around them. Of course history reveals to us that Greece, like Rome, like the British Empire, the Soviet Union and so many other superpowers saw a reign of centuries, then fell by war, or the slow erosion. To this day, the Spartans are renowned as perhaps the hardest-core warrior culture and STILL they fell from invading Persians! The lesson? In the big picture of mankind, ALL empires come and go, rise and fall. This change is one true thing we do know to be self-evident-that and weakness is a vacuum for evil.

Groups of all races, creeds and colors since antiquity, have congregated both officially and unofficially in “fighting classes” of one kind or another. Martial historians know well how these eternal “work-out” groups have practiced. Aside from full-time military training, in places like Greece, Rome, in Medieval Europe or on the plains of Africa to name a few, citizen/soldiers have gathered much like the Army Reserves of National Guards of today, to practice defending their lands. Their sessions often ended in picnics and festivals. Despite their efforts, the professional, full-time soldier has almost always defeated the part-timer. While some peoples practiced their martial arts in regular classes, in enemy-occupied lands, natives hid from local governments while instructing their systems like silat and karate, because their fighting arts were

considered forbidden tools for revolution and resistance. STILL they gathered! Openly or covertly, still the knowledge of combat was passed on from generation to generation.

The American military had a saying similar to that of the Spartan campfire theme, that “the only way a foreign soldier would drink from the Ohio River, or camp in the Smokies, was by invitation!” In this same vein, I was struck decades ago while stationed in South Korea and talking with a ROK Marine sergeant while we were on a foot patrol. “Nobody ever invade United States!” he said in his broken English. “Everybody got guns. Everybody can get guns!” Not if gun-hating liberals have their way!



Now, as we sit perched atop our little decadent sugar cupcake we call the United States, the forces of famine, unrest, violence and evil rages around us. Narco-terrorism in Columbia. Coups in Equator. The CIA declares that Russia is “virtually a full-fledged kleptocracy.” The Chinese loom over the Panama Canal and thirst for Taiwan. Ethnic cleansing in Europe and Africa. Turmoil in Indonesia. Middle eastern, religious jihads. Biological warfare. Terrorists sneak in through Canadian borders....need I go on? South Africa suffers a criminal chaos likened to a science fiction movie. (Normal citizens have flame throwers installed on the sides of their cars to

thwart car-jackers) History is a book written by what Professor Jared Diamond calls “Guns, Germs, and Steel.” What makes us believe that the tides of almighty, unfair and fickle time won’t surprise us with bullets from guns, biological warfare from germs and the steel from the end of a knife? Yet the small-minded push their tunnel-istic view and the ignorant sit back and let our liberal laws strip us of guns and whittle our military down to a confused, understaffed police force.

The few civilian fighting schools we have today are sadly pre-occupied with fair play and sport fighting, and cluttered with children, from which only the most abstract of real-world fighting skills can be developed. I have a saying when conducting my Close Quarter Combat (CQC) seminars, “The techniques we teach are geared for two opponents-the enemy soldier and the criminal. Sometimes we take them prisoner. Sometimes we kill them.”

Indeed it might be uncomfortable for many to imagine using some of the CQC tactics that are shown in this magazine or that I teach, but once educated in history you learn that these “dark and violent” things may be needed at any time, and must be kept alive. Must-as they have been for centuries- be passed on as before from generation to generation. When you educate yourself in the ways of hand, stick, knife and gun combat-when you learn how to really fight for your life- you are touching upon this ancient and natural lineage.

While you may not use these violent means yourself, that is not the complete point! Your great grandson may have to use them to kill a “commie” on the steps of the Capitol! Stranger things have happened in our real world! Just ask the raped Spartan women, found staring lifelessly at the smoke of the enemy’s campfire.

The Hunt for Bin Laden

By Robin Moore

Lieutenant General William P. Yarborough made the Green Beret headgear an official part of the Special Forces uniform when he wore it to meet President John F. Kennedy, who gave his approval on the spot.

General Yarborough once described a Special Forces soldier as “a man who could be dropped by himself into the wilderness with nothing but a knife and his own devices, and emerge some-time later, leading a fully-trained and equipped fighting force.”

Most people think it took 5,000 to 40,000 U.S. troops to free Kabul, Afghanistan. They are vastly mistaken—fewer than 100 American soldiers were on the ground when Kabul fell. Not since Kublai Khan’s Mangudai and the 300 Spartans had so few men fought so many.

Flaring out above the desert sands, the long, fat chopper reduced the power to its rear rotor blades and brought its nose slightly up. Thick coarse sand blacked out the windshield’s view as the Green Berets on board checked the magazines on their weapons, made sure a round was chambered, and took off their safeties. The first two ran off the tailgate and took up security positions in the sand as the others threw off their rucksacks and bags of equipment. A fine-tuned killing machine had just been inserted into northern Afghanistan, and the prey would be Osama bin Laden and his terrorists.

Once the twelve Green Berets touched down, Captain Mark Nutsch, the team leader, had his team sergeant, Paul Evans, split the A-Team in half once again. Six of the twelve-man team separated into two three man close air support teams. Close air support, also known as CAS, or “calling air strikes,” would be one of the key components in fewer than four hundred Green Berets

winning the war in Afghanistan in just under six months.

Two Air Force personnel were assigned to each of the Special Forces’ twelve-man A-Teams, after Green Berets were already on the ground. The Air Force combat controllers were experts at calling in air strikes and performing air traffic control functions.

They wore long checked scarves and round brownish-tan or gray wool pakols, also known as “Massoud” caps, named after Ahmad Shah Massoud, the assassinated legend and former leader of the Northern Alliance. Their attire allowed the Green Berets to blend in with the locals from a distance.

“Scanning for targets,” announced Air Force Staff Sergeant Matt Leinhard over his satellite radio. Evans stared through the lens of the spotting scope, scanning from left to right across the face of the barren, rocky ridgelines that lay ahead. Evans abruptly stopped his scan. “I’ve got eyes on a target!” he explained.

Staff Sergeant Elmore, the team’s weapons sergeant, began punching data into the Panasonic “Toughbook” laptop computer lying open in front of him.

“Good to go! [Special Operation Forces Laser Marker] (SOFLAM) ready,” the towering six-foot-plus Elmore replied.

The Taliban and al-Qaida forces would never quite understand the concept of smart bombs or the lasers that targeted them, and in the weeks ahead a rumor began wildly circulating among them that the Special Forces possessed a “Death Ray” that would destroy anything they aimed it at. The Death Ray was about to unleash a healthy dose of American vengeance.

Sergeant Elmore aimed the laser marker at the front of a Taliban bunker built into the face of the hillside half a kilometer away. Inside the firing ports of the enemy bunker he could see



the muzzle flashes of automatic weapons. Bullets cracked overhead as the Berets began taking enemy fire. Sergeant Leinhard picked up the satellite radio and began speaking into it. The snapping of automatic rifle fire raked the shelter just above their heads and made it difficult to hear. The three special operators ducked down behind the berm as the enemy bullets showered dirt onto their backs.

“Target is marked,” Sergeant Elmore replied, squeezing the trigger that shot the invisible, infrared laser beam into the front opening of the enemy bunker.

A pair of Navy F/A-18 fighters streaked across the sky 20,000 feet in the air above the scene, so high they were virtually invisible to the naked eye. One of the planes banked sharply and swooped down, letting loose a 1,000-lb. laser-guided bomb. As the smart bomb whistled through the air, its internal computer homed in on the laser signature. The bomb’s tail fins directed it on its collision course with the enemy bunker. The three special operators braced themselves, keeping their mouths open so the force of the blast wouldn’t rupture their eardrums.

About half a minute passed, then BOOM!

The earth shook as the bomb detonated directly over the top of the bunker, throwing a giant brown cloud of dirt, fire, and black smoke high into the sky.

“Target destroyed!” Evans shouted to his partners as he peered

through the spotting scope, a wide grin on his stubbly face.

For a long moment there was silence once again, then the entire hillside erupted into a fierce volley of fire. Now, through the spotting scope, Evans could see the muzzle flash of machine-gun fire coming from another bunker on the Taliban-controlled hillside.

“I’ve got eyes on another bunker!” Evans cried out, tapping his partner’s shoulder and pointing toward it.

Something streaking through the air caught their attention. It looked like the Taliban were shooting roman candles into the sky above their heads. The smoke trails from the objects began

to fall toward the earth in front of the Americans position.

“RPGs!” Elmore exclaimed. The Taliban were shooting rocket propelled grenades toward them, but instead of aiming them directly at the Americans’ position, they were lobbing them skyward like mortar rounds, hoping to land one behind the mound of dirt in the crater that was protecting the American advisors to the Northern Alliance.

The pair of Green Berets manning the spotting scope and the laser marker slid backward on their bellies, seeking as much overhead cover as they could find. The RPGs exploded on the ground in front of their position, showering them with rocks and rubble, and filling the air with black smoke and the smell of cordite.

About a hundred men crouched below them, hidden among the rough boulders. From a distance, they looked the same as the three special operators, but they were in fact Northern Alliance freedom fighters, called mujahadeen, most of them clutching a variety of old AK-47 assault rifles. They looked up

at the two Green Berets and their Air Force sergeant with a mixture of fear and nervousness.

“It looks like these guys want to leave.” Elmore said to his partners chuckling.

The mujahadeen wanted to get out before the Taliban can launch a counterattack,”

Leinhard shouted over the gunfire. The mujahadeen were scared, but not of

the Taliban. General Dostum had warned his soldiers that he would personally kill every one of them and their families if an American were so much as superficially wounded.

Ignoring the danger, the three soldiers low-crawled up to the top of the berm yet again. The hailstorm of gunfire continued, peppering the ground in front of them and cracking through the air overhead.

The glint of metal caught the three soldiers’ eyes as they saw something large rolling out from behind a hidden position on the Talibanheld ridgeline. For a second they thought it was a Russian T-55 tank, but in the place of a main gun there were



Left to right: Captain Mark Nutsch, Staff Sergeant Mike Elmore, Master Sergeant Paul Evans, Staff Sergeant Pete Walther, Sergeant First Class Vince Makela, Robin Moore, Chief Warrant Officer 2 Bob Pennington, Staff Sergeant Will Summers, Sergeant First Class Andy Marchal, Staff Sergeant Chad Jackett, Staff Sergeant Matt Leinhard, Sergeant First Class Bill Bennett, and Sergeant First Class Steve Beligh. Not pictures: Steve Kofron (Reprinted w/permission Random House)

four smaller barrels. It was a ZSU-23-4, a Russian anti-aircraft gun left over from the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Through the spotting scope, Evans could see the operator's head sticking up out of the turret, and as the enemy soldier swung the turret toward them, the four 23mm barrels bristling out of the turret's center began flashing rapidly, throwing out clouds of smoke.

"I've got two more F/A-18s on deck!" Leinhard shouted.

By this time, the ZSU, or "Zeus," as the Afghans call it, began throwing a volley of rounds in their direction. To them it sounded like the chugging of a steam locomotive and the rounds blasted rocks and dirt into the air all around them.

Sergeant Elmore aimed the laser marker at the ZSU's turret.

Boom! Another thousand-lb. bomb exploded, throwing a mushroom cloud of dust and thick black smoke high into the sky.

"I can't tell, but I think we neutralized the ZSU," Sergeant Leinhard called out on his radio.

The 23mm cannon fire from the Zeus had just been eliminated, but the Taliban rifle and RPG fire were increasing. It was a constant barrage, and down the hill on the friendly side, the Northern Alliance soldiers began to grow even more nervous and weary.

The Green Berets were carrying the M-4, a special version of the M-16 assault rifle, shortened, with a collapsible stock and outfitted with a scope, laser designator, and an improved 5.56mm boat-tailed 70-grain bullet. It was a twenty-first-century version of the old XM177E2 in (Studies and Observation Group (SOG) recon teams had carried in Vietnam.

A stream of charging Taliban began running down the enemy hillside toward them. The two Green Berets returned fire, picking off Taliban fighters, who tumbled down the slope like rag dolls after being hit by the special operators' bullets. Ten minutes seemed to stretch into an eternity as the wave of charging Taliban grew closer. The terrorists were closing the gap, now running up the front of the friendly hillside, less than two football fields away from the Americans position.

The Green Berets looked to their rear, and saw the muj behind them starting to beat a hasty retreat back toward the east, to their original position. The Northern Alliance commander waved for the Americans to follow and grabbed some of the Green Berets' equipment, throwing it on his horse and galloping away. It appeared now as though the muj were scared of both Dostum and the Taliban, and with good reason.

At that instant, the B-52 bomber checked in, and Evans smiled skyward and gave a thumbs-up. He mouthed the phrase "Bombs away!" and dove for cover. The two other special operators hastily followed his example.

The earlier set of explosions was puny compared with the devastation that was unleashed as the rolling thunder of 12 500-lb. bombs carpeted the hillside with a cascade of brilliant fire-

balls. The shock wave bounced the three special operators up off the ground, and covered them in dust and debris. For the first time in what seemed like forever, the enemy fire began to subside. As the dust settled, they scrambled back up the berm at the crater's edge to assess what had happened.

Having assumed the banzai charge of the frenzied Taliban would be stopped completely by the B-52 strike, they were amazed to see a large number of enemy soldiers still advancing up the hill. They were so close now the Americans could see their faces: some Arab, some Chechen, some Pakistani, but all fighting under the banner of Osama bin Laden's Taliban and al-Qaida network.

The close air support team fired a few more shots with their M-4s before deciding to follow their partisans down the hill to the east. Glancing backward as they ran, they saw the first of the Taliban and al-Qaida fighters were already cresting the hill, standing on the position the Americans had just abandoned. Elmore, Evans, and Leinhard ducked behind a boulder, and Leinhard got on the radio once again. A Navy F-14 Tomcat checked in with the team, and the Air Force sergeant quickly explained the situation to the pilot.

"We're about to be fucking overrun...I need ordnance quick!" Leinhard shouted into the radio.

The F-14 pilot responded by saying he could see plenty of enemy troops out in the open, advancing on their position. He could also see several trucks, and tracked enemy vehicles coming out of hiding in covered positions, starting to roll down the ridgeline toward them. The pilot announced to the team that he would do a "gun run" for them.

The Tomcat swooped down out of the sky in a roar, destroying everything in sight with a volley of automatic cannon fire. After three more high speed passes from the F-14, every single one of the enemy vehicles was reduced to a smoking hulk of twisted metal.

With the Taliban offensive momentarily halted, the three special operators took the opportunity to run down the hill and into the riverbed taking temporary shelter behind a rocky outcropping.

A short whistle drew their attention to the rocks on their left. A Northern Alliance soldier was hiding behind an adjacent boulder, holding the tethers to three Afghan horses. He waved the trio over and they jumped on the horses, following the stay-behind muj down a ravine and up an incline toward a ridgeline adjacent to the one that had just been overrun by the Taliban. The two Green Berets and their Air Force sergeant smiled at him and then went back to business. They again set up their spotting scope and laser marker, staring out at their previous and hastily abandoned observation post (OP). The place they had just evacuated was now swarming with Taliban fighters.

Sergeant Elmore called out to his partners, "Holy shit, we were just on that ridgeline. We must still have the GPS coordinates of where we just were on the computer." Evans punched a

Two hundred and fifty American soldiers are killed every year in peacetime training accidents. "A Humvee flips over, or a helicopter just decides to drop out of the sky," says military analyst Patrick Garret. "When the military says they have a dangerous livelihood, it's not just when the war starts. It's all the time." - USA Today

Airborne in Control After Street Fight By Matthew Cox

few buttons on the GPS and cried out triumphantly, "Got it!"

Matt Leinhard opened a channel on his radio and was informed that the B-52 Stratofortress was still in the area.

As they waited for the necessary two minutes it took the bomb to impact, they watched the Taliban and for the first time realized just how many there were, scurrying about like ants trying to dig bodies of their fallen comrades out of the rubble with their rifle butts.

The three special operators watched as the 2,000 lb. satellite guided bomb detonated exactly 50 feet over the heads of the Taliban.

"Holy shit! Un-fucking-believable!" one of the Americans screamed. He couldn't believe his eyes; it was amazing. They witnessed a tremendous explosion in the air and the bodies of maybe a hundred Taliban and AQ troops drawn from the ground upward, arms and legs kicking for a fraction of a second before disappearing into a pink haze without a trace of solid matter left of their bodies or clothing. American's enemies had literally been obliterated.

That single bomb killed everybody on the hill, as well as the Taliban fighters behind it. Not one enemy soldier was left alive. Most of the bodies were completely vaporized by the intensity of the explosion.

The Northern Alliance soldiers stormed back up over the ridgeline, retaking the smoky, ruined hilltop and cheering in victory. With only three special ops personnel, they had just won their first key battle over the Taliban without sustaining any major casualties. They had never seen anything like it. The mujahideen congregated around the three Americans patting their backs and praising them.

In January 1964, Robin Moore went to Vietnam. He had attended Jump School at Fort Benning with the special approval of President John F. Kennedy and was the first and only civilian ever allowed to go through the grueling Special Forces qualification course at Fort Bragg. The result was The Green Berets, a bestselling book and a unique and remarkable group of fighting men. Robin Moore then went on to write three more books about the war in Vietnam.

He has also written several novels, including The French Connection; a book about terrorists in South Africa; and an expose of the smuggling of nuclear arms from Russia after the communist era.

Karbala, Iraq- While others wonder whether they will have to battle in the streets of Baghdad, soldiers of the 101st Airborne Division fought block by block here Saturday.

By Sunday, soldiers patrolled the streets with almost no opposition. At nightfall, soldiers encamped in a walled school compound were surrounded by crowds of clapping and cheering Iraqi civilians.

One teenage Iraqi girl smiled and described her feelings in broken English: "Yes. Good. Help us. We love you."

At a little after noon Saturday 2nd Lt. Joe Thomas began pushing his search teams into a water treatment plant.

In the next eight hours, soldiers from his Bravo Company, along with the 1st Armored Divisions Charlie Company, 1st Battalion, 41st Infantry Regiment, fought Iraqis for control of a few square blocks of the city, Karbala, a city of 400,000, is about 60 miles southwest of Baghdad.

"Hey, watch that building over there. I got a team ready to enter," shouted the 31-year-old Colorado Springs native.

The two-mile walk from nearby landing zone in 98-degree heat already was taking its toll on the soldiers of the 3rd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment. Water was low.

Explosions rocked the ground.

"Be advised, we have incoming mortars into this compound. You need to pick up the pace when you move across open areas," Thomas barked into his handset.

The three buildings of the treatment plant were cleared, but Bravo Company's fight to control the streets continued. The 3rd Infantry Division (Mechanized) has enjoyed success in its lightning drive to the outskirts of Baghdad. And it captured worldwide attention when it ran a column of tanks through downtown Baghdad.

But the mechanized division has been moving so fast that its soldiers had little time to clear militia such as the Saddam Fedayeen from cities in its wake.

By day's end, the Fedayeen had destroyed one of the 41st's 10 Bradley fighting vehicles with a volley of rocket-propelled grenades. In the past, Iraqis have fired single rounds of rocket fire at the armored vehicles, only to face withering return fire. Now they fire in volleys, increasing their odds of substantial damage.

Three hours into the fight, Alpha and Bravo companies moved about 700 yards to the north of the water treatment plant to a neighborhood strewn with the traces of war - shattered glass windows, a fly covered dead horse. The soldiers had been taking heavy machine gun and rocket grenade fire from the neighborhood.

As Bravo Company moved down the streets, machine gun fire from a rooftop pinned them down.

"We have made contact and we're receiving fire!" a radio operator shouted. He listened to his radio for a moment and then shouted back: "Negative, we cannot move one block farther because we are receiving fire from the rear."

Soldiers took out the machine gun position with a blast from an AT-4 shoulder fired rocket. Soon, about 300 terrified residents poured out of their homes in search of help. Fathers in T-shirts and sweat pants and mothers in their billowing black abayas clutching their screaming children. Soldiers waved the panicked civilians to a safe area.

The scene had a clear impact on many soldiers. "That's the bad part. A lot of these people don't have anything to do with this," said Sgt. 1st Class Enrique Barragan, 35, of Artesia, Calif.

Cox is a correspondent for the Army Times, an independent newspaper owned by Gannett (Reprinted w/permission)

"Getting shot at wasn't really that bad. It was the getting shot part that sucked." - Jamie Villafane, a U.S. Army staff sergeant shot in Iraq.



(Reprinted w/permission from Newsweek)

I Was Sure I Was Dead

By Scott Johnson

It wasn't until Friday that the Third Marine

Expeditionary Brigade set out from a checkpoint west of Route 80, the primary artery between Iraq and Kuwait City.

The trucks and armored cars moved slowly on the dirt tracks at 12 mph. "What the hell are we doing here?" said Lance Cpl. Sydney Woods, dusting off his pants and letting a thick gob of spit dribble out of his mouth. Few in the unit had showered in more than two weeks; all of them had been eating nothing but MREs. Pfc. Joel Adams, 21, was so lost in reverie

about his home in Albany, GA, that he didn't even realize that he was by then in Iraq, the second foreign country he had ever visited (Kuwait had been the first). "I don't even count the days anymore," he said. "I don't even know what today is."

A Newsweek photographer and I had been hiding out in the desert frontier. We had crossed the border on our own. Now here we were with a group of Marines. As "unilaterals," journalists who are not embedded with U.S. forces, we were not all that welcome. But they let us join their convoy in our Pajeros (basically gas-guzzling SUVs). We drove down a road with mines on either side. At night, the Marines told us that we had to go back south.

Despite the dangers, we chose not to follow their orders. After a night sleeping in our cars, we decided we would cut west into the desert to the town of An Nasiriya, west of Basra, and meet up with Army's Third Infantry Division, which we knew was going north to Baghdad. We headed across the desert, off-road, at about 7:30 in the morning on Saturday. Following tracks in the sand, we used walkie-talkies and GPS devices that gave us our longitude and latitude.

It was a nerve-racking drive. There were no landmarks, just long convoys, snakelike things that shimmered across the desert. Sometimes, in the distance, we saw shepherds. Sometimes, a massive bombing campaign. Three were mines and lots of unexploded ordnance, so we had to stay in the tracks others had made. We ran into a lot of U.S. military. Some were hostile about our not being embedded: unilaterals are a distraction and a potential problem. But none of the troops knew what was going on—they're all self-contained, moving around with directions given by commanders in helicopters—and they begged us for the latest news of the war.

Finally, we made it to a main road, a six-lane highway, outside An Nasiriya. There were hundreds of coalition tanks, Humvees – massive convoys of U.S. Military equipment, all lining up to cross a bridge that had come under Iraqi fire. Cutting in and out of the convoy, we raced to the head. When we crossed the bridge, the terrain changed from flat and inhospitable into fertile farmland. There was evidence of bombing in some villages, and smoldering trucks.

The atmosphere was tense. The U.S. strategy had been to bypass towns, engaging only major targets. That left pockets of Iraqi soldiers and militiamen scattered all along the American "wall of steel" that marched steadily northward.

Meanwhile, hundreds of civilians stood silently in the mud lining the sides of the road; some were giving troops the thumbs up. The troops had been briefed that in this part of the world that was the same as giving

somebody the finger. They wondered aloud if that was true.

The photographer and I got to the head of the convoy and accelerated past. I saw a post with a soldier standing on an island in the middle of the road. I saw he had a gun—but I thought he was American.

I was wrong. As I passed, I realized he was Iraqi. I looked to my right; there were more than half-dozen men with guns racing toward my car. Just then the photographer came on the walkie-talkie and said in French, "Weapons! Weapons!"

At that moment I heard the Iraqis pepper my car with bullets, hitting it all over. It made an eerie patter, like somebody tapping a finger on glass. I ducked down and put my foot on the gas and sped as fast as I could. It was instinctive. I popped my head up and saw I was fishtailing and going in the wrong direction; trying to compensate, I made it worse. I slammed into the island in the middle of the road, about 150 feet from where the Iraqi had been standing. My car flipped and slammed into a light post.

I opened my eyes. I had ended up in the passenger's seat and was looking at the ground in front of my windshield. The Iraqis were still firing at the car. I was sure I was dead. I was sure they were going to pull me out of the car and execute me on the spot. Or blow the thing up. They were only 100 or 200 feet away. I thought, "This is it."

I began kicking the windshield because I didn't want to expose myself by climbing through the upturned door. After 15 kicks, it cracked and I squeezed out. I crawled away from the car, thinking it would explode. I was still hearing the whir of bullets overhead and the sound of them nicking the dust near me. Keeping the car between the soldiers and me, I crawled about 75 feet from the flipped vehicle. I lay there. There was more gunfire and shouting in Arabic. Then I heard the sound of the oncoming convoy. The Iraqis stopped firing. The convoy went by and I put my hand up to every single truck that passed, trying to tell the advancing Americans where the Iraqis were hiding out. Trying to get them to

stop and pick me up.

They wouldn't. Five more minutes. At least 15 tanks, Bradleys and Humvees rolled by me where I lay in the dust. Finally I got up; otherwise, I realized, they would pass, and the firing would start again. I started running after the convoy. A soldier named Jesse—a platoon leader in the Third Infantry Division, leading a medical unit—motioned me to his Humvee. I said, breathlessly, "My car flipped and they were shooting at me and I need help." I was hyperventilating from running, and from fear.

Jessee got on the radio and the convoy stopped. Troops went to investigate. They went back with some Bradleys and armored cars, and they found seven Iraqis with AK-47s and two RPGs; they had been lying in wait for the convoy. The soldiers rounded up the men who'd shot at me, and the last I saw they were sitting around the checkpoint with their heads bowed, guarded by U.S. troops.

When I went back to the car there was a huge hole that went in one side and blew out a two-inch wide hole in the other. I had no idea where the photographer was. He had blown through the checkpoint. (I later learned he was rescued by the Americans, too.)

Dusk was falling. There were Bradleys everywhere, and they had discovered a group of Iraqis coming toward them with small arms. They engaged. There wasn't any return fire against the massive fire from the tanks. One American soldier was yelling, "kill the mother-f—ers!" This is not a stroll into Baghdad. All along this road they've been encountering similar attacks by militia loyal to Saddam who are taking it upon themselves to fight. Bands of Iraqis are resisting, and there are casualties. My car is shrapnel and I'm basically embedded now. I don't have much chance of going independent again and, to be honest, I don't know if I want to.

Scott Johnson is a freelance writer.

Since the Spanish-American War, almost 1000 U.S. servicewomen have been killed in action. The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

The Truth About Casualties *By John Leo*

Even if civilian casualties in Iraq are light, expect a great deal of attention to the subject in the days ahead. In a number-obsessed society, focusing relentlessly on deaths of innocent—and inflating the numbers, if necessary—is a conventional way of undermining support for war. This helps explain why dozens of civilian-casualty articles sprouted in the news media within hours of the first shots in Iraq, even before coalition ground forces swung into action.

The news agencies of our chief non-allies—France, Russia, China, and Germany—were quick off the mark. Agence France Presse may have established the modern world record for fastest print coverage of dead bystanders with “U.S. Strikes Leave Civilian Casualties in Baghdad: Official” (3.42 a.m. Thurs, Eastern time). The Iraqi regime, of course is eager for high numbers. A *New York Post* report Friday later said civilians trying to flee Basra were blocked by Iraqi troops, who, according to Kuwaitis, were hoping to increase civilian casualties.

We have been through this before. On Fox News during the war in Afghanistan, Brit Hume wondered if reporting about civilian deaths was getting out of hand. These casualties, he said, “are historically, by definition, a part of war, really.” Mara Liasson of National Public Radio chimed in: “War is about killing people. Civilian casualties are unavoidable.”

All civilian casualties are tragic. But Hume was asking why these casualties had emerged as a major story line in coverage of the war. This emphasis may have reflected the usual press resentments toward U.S. forces in wartime (lack of candor, lack of access). But it also reflected the antiwar movement’s success in convincing the mainstream press that civilian deaths were a big story.

Who’s counting? A *New York Times* article (“Flaws in U.S. Air War

Left Hundreds of Civilians Dead”) relied heavily on the findings of workers with Global Exchange, which the Times identified as “an American organization that has sent survey teams into Afghan villages.” In fact, Global Exchange is a hard-left, antiwar, pro-Castro group whose numbers on war victims should never be taken at face value. Many groups on the left repeatedly insisted that civilian deaths were scandalously high. But that’s what they say during every war. Typically hardlines included “Civilian Casualties Mount in Afghanistan” (the World Society Web Site) and “U.S. Raids Draw Fire for Civilian Casualties” (Common Dreams News Center).

The most publicized analysis came from Marc Herold, a professor of economics and women’s studies at the University of New Hampshire who claims that between 3,700 and 4,000 Afghan civilians died in the war. Herold, an antiwar leftist, says the U.S. military is mostly white and willing to drop bombs on populous areas, thus “sacrificing the darker-skinned Afghans.” Admirers credited Herold with meticulous and original analysis of many sources, during 12- to 14-hour days on the Internet. Some people loved Herold’s numbers because they were said to show that the United States killed more innocent people in Afghanistan than Osama bin Laden killed in New York. But several analysts accused Herold of questionable and ideological treatment of the numbers: double counting, confusing combatants with non-combatants, and, in the words of one commentator, “blind acceptance of deliberately inflated Taliban accounts.”

Other less publicized estimates of civilian deaths in Afghanistan are far lower than Herold’s. The *Los Angeles Times* put the number at 1,067 to 1,300. Reuters estimated 1,000 dead.

A similar numbers game developed after the Gulf War—large esti-

mate scaled down by calmer analysis. The radical group Greenpeace claimed as many as 15,000 Iraqi civilians died, Saddam Hussein’s government said 20,000 to 50,00 and the American Friends Service Committee/Red Crescent went way overboard and claimed 300,000 civilians died. Accepted estimates are far lower. Human Rights Watch estimated 2,500 to 3,000. A long analysis in *Foreign Policy* magazine put the number of Iraqi civilian dead at 1,000.

Now the numbers game will resume. The Iraq Body Count Project (“the worldwide update of civilian casualties in the war on Iraq”) will be counting deaths for us in what the project calls “the onslaught o Iraq.” It is endorsed by Marc Herold and says it will be using his methods. Don’t say you haven’t been warned.
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When Kids Are in the Cross Hairs

By Alex Perry

KARBALA

The Image of the children is impossible to forget. When the fire fight in Karbala first broke out, all they could think of was their first casualty, Brown - his side open, his eyes lulling - being carried out past them. But Specialist Larry Brown was a man of 20, and he was a professional infantryman. The kids, boys, were maybe 7 or 8 and had no place there. Bravo Company wasted them. Had to. Right when the firefight was at its hottest, when maybe 100 guys were popping up across the rooftops firing AK-47's and rocket-propelled grenades, the boys bounced into the courtyard below the building where Bravo was spread out and attempted to retrieve and RPG dropped by a dead Iraqi. "It sounds terrible when you hear about this cold, away from the fight," says Lieut. Colonel Chris Holden. "We shot and killed children. But I accept full responsibility for that. That's the kind of fight it was."

It was the kind of ugly, house to house bloodbath the U.S. had feared most, especially in Baghdad. But it happened first in Karbala, which before Baghdad collapsed, loomed as a potential stranglehold on the supply route leading to the capital. History had already stamped Karbala in blood. In 680 A.D., Muhammad's grandson Hussein and a small group of supporters fought to the death here over the right to lead the Muslim faith. Now scouts reported that 500 to 700 Fedayeen Saddam were digging in to make a stand.

For Bravo Company, part of the 502nd Brigade of the 101st Airborne, the battle for Karbala started ahead of schedule on the morning of April 5. Bravo was still two blocks south of its first objective, a water-treatment plant, when it began taking fire. "We were two minutes in, and we were in full contact," said Sergeant Mark de la Garza.

Taking cover behind his Bradley fighting vehicle, called Red 2, Sergeant David C. Brown radioed Sergeant Patrick Jarchow in Red 3, and devised a plan that would define the day. Starting from the water plant, Jarchow's men would jump from roof to roof, with Brown matching

them on the ground, kicking in doors and clearing houses, identifying targets. Killing them.

The two squads moved steadily north-east through the city. When they reached an intersection, with both squads on the ground, Sergeant Brown pivoted left and saw a man hiding two RPGs. "I popped two rounds at him, and I see the impact in his chest and gut. He reached down, grabbed an RPG, and it goes off and blows his foot off. It ricochets off and comes straight at us. We cross over the intersection, and that's when I saw Larry Brown get hit." Behind Sergeant Brown, Specialist Brown had reached the junction and was met with a short burst of waist-high fire. "He fell against the wall on his left. I yelled, 'Get Brown! Cover! He's hit!'"

Through the haze of smoke grenades, Sergeants Brown and Jarchow saw a

Quote by Colin Powell:

When in England at a fairly large conference, Colin Powell was asked by the Archbishop of Canterbury if our plans for Iraq were just an example of empire-building by George Bush. He answered by saying the following:

"Over the years, the United States has sent many of its fine young men and women into great peril to fight for freedom beyond our borders. The only amount of land we have EVER asked for in return is enough to bury those that did not return."

... It became very quiet in the room.

father and daughter approach the fallen RPG gunner. Jarchow shot at the gunner again. In Sergeant Brown's words, "The girl helps him up, and they're walking sway and I popped him again, and he's down. He moves again, and I empty my magazine into him."

As the wounded Specialist Brown was helped into the back of a Bradley, the RPG gunner, to the squads utter amazement, started to move again. "We emptied

50 rounds into him," said Sergeant Brown, "and then we shot him with a 7.62 from the Bradley. He's still talking when we leave." Not many Iraqis are. Hour by hour, enemy corpses are piling up below Bravo's rooftop perch.

Two boys are about to be added to that pile. The 3rd Platoon had been on a roof for 25 minutes when two small figures came spinning out of the courtyard, almost as if they had been pushed, and began inching toward an RPG lying in the street. "They've been testing us - getting closer to us and walking away," said Staff Sergeant James Dyer. "And the guys are all saying, 'Don't pick it up, don't touch that!' Maybe 20 or 30 guys, shouting, 'Don't do it!'" A warning shot kicked up the dust at the first boy's feet. He stopped and looked up: M-4's, M-16's, and heavier squad automatic weapons and Bravo 240's, and entire arsenal, was leveled at him.

Then, fixing the Americans with his clear, brown eyes, the boy walked forward - slowly, deliberately, defiantly - and picked up the round. "The moment he touched it, you could see the lead slam into those kids," says Dyer. "It dropped the first kid immediately. The second one was hit a second later - you could see him tumble as he was running."

Eventually, after an unrelenting hour of fire and running, one squad made its way back to the water plant. The 18 wounded U.S. soldiers were evacuated by Black Hawk that took off around 6p.m., a full four hours after Specialist Brown had been hit. It was too late: he died soon after.

Holden said his dead opponents - 279 Iraqi Fedayeen and up to 100 foreign mujahedin, mostly Syrians - had been the most formidable yet. "I respect them," Holden said. "They had a rehearsed plan, and they knew what they were doing." And as Karbala's ancient river of blood, the men of Bravo Company will find *some honor in this timeless soldiers' code of warriors well met. But as weeks fade into months, and months to years, the remembered gaze of a clear-eyed Iraqi boy is certain to linger.*

(Reprinted w/permission **Time Magazine**)

Best of the War Blogs

Online diarists are flooding the Web with battle news, analysis and debate
By Anita Hamilton
TIME, April 7, 2003

He calls himself Salam Pax - peace in Arabic Latin, respectively. He claims to be an Iraqi living in Baghdad, and he posts poignant first-person reports on the Web. "The images we saw on TV last night...were terrible," begins one. "The whole city looked as if it were on fire. As one of the buildings I really love went up in a huge explosion, I was close to tears."

Pax's missives (at dear_raed.blogspot.com) offer Web watchers a rare look at how one Iraqi views the war. Although no one has been able to verify his identity, Pax appears to be the real thing, and his reports on the bombings, power outages and dwindling food supplies became- until he lost Internet access early last week - must reading for war buffs of all political stripes.

War-related weblogs - war blogs, for short - have soared in popularity since the hostilities began. Their chief attraction is that they offer perspectives overlooked in most U.S. news reports - from war photos too grisly to print to viewpoints too far outside the political mainstream. And because their diary-like formats are so

The war in Iraq produced fewer American combat deaths per day than any conflict since the Revolutionary War. Since March 20, the U.S. has suffered an average of 3 combat deaths per day, in the seven and a half years of the Vietnam War, the death rate was 18 soldiers per day. In World War II, the rate was 221 soldiers per day. --USA Today

informal, they tend to invite reader participation, discussion and fiery debate.

Some war blogs are first-hand accounts from soldiers stationed in the Middle East. The anonymous author at It-smash.us says he is a reservist in the U.S. military stationed in the Persian Gulf. In one entry, he writes about a recent encounter with some locals: "They were glued to their satellite TV set, switching between al-Jazeera, Fox News, BBC, the local station and Iraqi TV. They especially enjoyed the female anchor on Fox, with her short skirt." At sgtstryker.com, the mother of a female Marine posts excerpts from her daughter's e-mails. And at chin-pokomon.com, Naval Lieut. Commander Kevin Mickey, stationed at Camp Patriot, Kuwait, posts droll photos and strong opinions about what should be done to Iraqis who execute U.S. POWs.

Plenty of war blogs are also posted by stateside armchair pundits. Sean-Paul Kelley, who runs [The Agonist](http://The Agonist (at agoinst.org)) (at agoinst.org), says traffic to his site has increased more than tenfold, to over 60,000 visitors a day since the war began. From his home in San Antonio, Texas, the self-employed asset manager posts 10 to 20 news updates a day, culled from dozens of websites and media reports from such far-flung outlets as the Sydney (Australia) Morning Herald and The Army Times. Each posting gets about 100 replies, which are also posted online.

Other pundit sites worth checking out include andrewsullivan.com (from the former editor of the *New Republic* and contributor to *Time*), dailykos.com, instapundit.com, littlegreenfootballs.com/weblog, warblogging.com and warincontext.org. For military analysis, stop by [Intel Dump](http://Intel Dump at philcarter.blogspot.com) at philcarter.blogspot.com, Blogsofwar.com and command-post.org have good news updates.

Want to find some war blogs on your own? There is no central index, but one site that usually leads to others, cyberjournalist.net has loads of links to reports from writers embedded with the troops (at cyberjournalist.net/features/iraqcoverage.html). And at daypop.com, a blog specific search engine, a search on Iraq

The Department of Home Security isn't sure how many employees it has. The White House originally said 170,000, then Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge amended the count to 190,000, but one of his top aides recently said the total was actually 210,000. *Washington Post*

More than a dozen individuals and businesses have sought to trademark the phrase "shock and awe," according to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. One day after the Iraq war began, Sony trademarked the slogan for the title of a video game. Other applicants hope to use the phrase for fireworks, pesticides, lingerie, shampoo, and baby toys. *Associated Press*

American forces in the Persian Gulf must supply their own toilet paper. The Pentagon is not responsible for personal items so troops must wait in line for hours at the PX to buy toilet paper, shaving cream, and toothpaste, or else ask for care packages from home. "Twice a month as soon as I get his paycheck, I have to spend \$60 on toilet paper and wet wipes to send to him," said the wife of Army Cpl. Anthony Hopwood. *South Florida Sun-Sentinel*

U.S. Marine battalions are going into battle in Iraq carrying live pigeons to warn of chemical attacks. "I got sensors that cost \$12,000 and birds that cost \$60 each," said Staff Sgt. Dan Wallace, and I place just as much trust in the bird as the sensor." *Associated Press*

Airborne 101st Airborne soldiers face gantlet of attacks in Mosul Saddam's birthday or reported death were reasons for gatherings

By Robert Curtis



In Mosul, Iraq, U.S. soldiers here repelled a series of assaults April 28 in firefights that were waged against the bizarre backdrop of flares and tracers streaking over the city, while citizens celebrated either Saddam Hussein's birthday or his reported death.

The attackers hit several Army sites on the west side of the Tigris River, which separates this city.

Army leaders said they doubt the attacks indicate a reconstitution of Iraqi opposition forces. "Saddam's loyalists haven't been openly aggressive toward U.S. forces, so we think individuals saw targets of opportunity in passing. U.S. vehicles and at nearby facilities," said Maj. Mike Hamlet, operations officer for the 2nd Brigade Combat Team of the 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault).

Hamlet said that although U.S. forces killed at least six attackers, there were no reports of friendly casualties while defending against assaults at four separate locations.

The brigade's 1st Battalion bore two of the attacks.

One was launched against its command post at a grain-storage facility, the other against a fire station the battalion was guarding.

A possible third attack was avoided

when an OH-58D Kiowa Warrior helicopter scared off eight armed men in an orange-and-white sport utility vehicle that stopped about two blocks from the battalion command post. The men fled on foot after the helicopter arrived, Hamlet said.

Capt. Peter Jerzak witnessed the attack at the command post as five men on two rooftops about 200 meters away opened fire on soldiers and Humvees at the front gate. "I looked up and saw fire coming from those rooftops and thought, 'Oh, how did they get so close without us noticing?'" he said.

As Jerzak returned fire over the top of a wall outside the compound, he saw a white car approach from the north. AT about 100 meters, a soldier on a truck fired two 5-round warning bursts with a .50-caliber machine gun. The car sped up and was destroyed by bursts from the machine gun and rifle fire from other soldiers. The car slammed into a brick wall, and the driver, the only apparent occupant, was found dead, Jerzak said.

Minutes later, another white car made the same run at the command post. Soldiers of the 1st Battalion destroyed that car when the driver failed to stop after warning shots were fired. Three people bailed out of the car and fled the area.

The attacks at the command post followed earlier assaults about a mile away at the fire station, Jerzak said. Eleven armed men attacked soldiers there four times in 30 minutes. When the fighting was over, five of the attackers were dead, Jerzak said.

Sometime between the attacks on the command post and fire station, guerrillas ambushed a convoy of Humvees from the 1st Battalion, 66th Armor Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, according to radio traffic confirmed by Army leaders.

While en route to a regional information center, a civil-affairs office where local nationals exchange infor-

mation with U.S. forces, the convoy began taking fire from rooftops along Highway 1. The 1-66 convoy, doing stability and support work with the 2nd Battalion, 502nd Infantry Regiment of the 101st Airborne Division, sped up, only to run into dozens of people and cars blocking their path.

As the trucks turned around to go back to headquarters, the crowd threw rocks and armed men opened fire.

The assaults appeared over by 11 p.m., but flares and tracer fire from celebrating Iraqis continued to light up the night as locals spend hours shooting thousands of rounds skyward. Soldiers said the locals were celebrating either the death of Saddam, as reported on local radio, or his birthday.

Leaders here reported that the assaults came after a smooth period of establishing order.

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Scottish Snipers Take Aim *By Ian Bruce*



Near Basra, Iraq The sniper takes two deep breaths, squinting down the sights of his custom rifle. Just over 750 yards away, a gunman climbs into the rear of a pickup.

Through the cross hairs, Lance Cpl. Vincent Polus of Inverness, Scotland, can see the Kalashnikov assault weapon and ammunition pouches strapped to the enemy soldier's belt.

Holding the second breath, Polus takes up trigger pressure, aiming slightly ahead of his target's chest as the pickup begins to move. He squeezes off a round. The 7.62mm bullet, traveling 3,000 feet a second, hurls the Iraqi backward, a fatal blow.

Black Watch

It is Polus' third confirmed kill in a week that has seen Scotland's Black Watch sniper section pick off 18 armed guerrillas in Az Zubayr, the nerve center of behind-the-lines resistance in the British sector of southern Iraq. British forces are carrying the action to the paramilitary Fedayeen Saddam in their own backyard. Armed with weapons that can deliver a fatal head shot at 1,000 yards, the battle for the back streets is turning British snipers' favor through patience and keen observation.

"Our job can be frustrating," Polus said. "You can lie up for hours or days in an observation post. You can see targets beyond your range. You can see targets which are off-limits because they're in someone else's patch or because they are too close to innocent civilians.

"When we manage to slot guys we know have been targeting our men, there's a certain satisfaction to the job. You don't think of them as people. They are just armed enemy militia who have to be taken out."

The Black Watch snipers are doing their work as part of a British operation that has engaged Iraqi paramilitary soldiers loyal to Saddam Hussein outside of Basra, Iraq's second-largest city, for several days. The city is the heart of the country's southern oil facilities, and its population of 1.5 million is mostly Shiite Muslim. Many oppose Saddam's Sunni Muslim regime, but the city remains under control of his ruling Baath Party militia.

Six days ago, four other Black Watch snipers carried out an operation likely to earn at least two of them decorations for gallantry. As they traveled into town, someone in a nearby tank reported seeing four militiamen carrying rifles and rocket-propelled grenades. The sniper teams, consisting of a shooter and a spotter with a powerful scope, located their targets 800 yards away. Lance Cpl. Scott Robertson's first shot dropped one of the four. The other three dragged the body into nearby bushes and sprinted for houses a few yards away.

The sniper teams equipped only with bold-action rifles meant for long-range work and a single automatic weapon, also headed for the house. Cpl. "Pedro" Laing kicked in the door to find himself confronted by an elderly man just as one of the fugitives hurled a grenade over his head. It exploded outside, peppering Robertson with shrapnel. The enemy soldier fired automatic weapons and a rocket propelled grenade that detonated on a bank outside.

Cpl. Mark Harvey jumped from the grenade with a backward somersault, crushing one of his vertebrae. Despite the agony, he got to his feet and shot the Iraqi militiaman. Laing and Robertson then threw four grenades into the room.

Four soldiers from the Black Watch mortar platoon arrived, entered the building and finished off the remaining enemy. Sgt. Mark Cameron said: "It's like the movie *Black Hawk Down* in Az Zubayr. But the fact that we are fighting in an urban environment allows our guys to do what they are trained for. In a purely desert war, we would have been struggling."

Qualifying to Become Special Forces "SF"

To qualify for Special Forces candidacy, soldiers already in the Army must be an enlisted male U.S. citizen volunteer and:

- Qualify for security clearance.
- Be airborne qualified, which must be complete before attending the Special Forces Qualification Course.
- Have a minimum general technical score of 110, waiverable to 100.
- Be a high school graduate or GED equivalent.
- Specialist (E-4) through sergeant first class (E-7) or a promotable first lieutenant or captain.
- Pass the Special Forces physical
- Pass a 50-meter swim test wearing BDUs and boots
- Pass the Army physical fitness test with a minimum score of 229.
- Complete Primary Leadership Development Course before the qualification course (enlisted only).

Initial Accessions Program volunteers must meet all of the above, plus:

- Score 110 or greater on the general technical component of the ASVAB, not waiverable
- Be a high school graduate
- Pass the Defense Language Aptitude

Battery exam

Here is a look at the Special Forces training pipeline schedule:

- Phase one: Special Forces Assessment and Selection (26 days).
- Phase two: Special Forces Qualification Course (46 days).
- Phase three: Military Occupational Speciality specific training (duration varies).
- Phase four: Robin Sage Field Training Exercises (38 days).
- Phase five: Language training (18 to 24 weeks, depending on language).
- Phase six: Survival, evasion, resistance and escape (19 days).

On the Way to Bagdad *By Sean Naylor*

An estimated 200 Iraqi fighters dug in a hundred yards back on each side of the road, lit up the night with small arms and machine gun fire.

Red tracers arched back and forth as the enemy traded fire with the U.S. troops, Iraqi mortar rounds fell on two U.S. trucks.

A rocket-propelled grenade tore into a Humvee engine block. The force of the explosion flipped the Humvee, setting it ablaze. Remarkably, all soldiers in the three vehicles escaped injury.

The squadron commander, Lt. Col. Terry Ferrell, called on his six Paladin 155mm propelled howitzers to fire one round each at the Iraqi positions. The radio crackled with taut voices barking grid references, and then six orange fireballs blossomed over the Iraqi positions.

The thunderclap of the impact reached the U.S. troops' ears a split second later. Even as enemy fire started to slacken, Ferrell summoned the Air Force.

A pair of A-10 Warthog, jets arrived within minutes, dropping bombs and strafing the enemy.

The convoy moved on about 9:30 p.m. leaving three smoking wrecks – the trucks and the Humvee – in its wake.

But for the 3/7 Cav, that was just the start.

A second ambush

Just before midnight on the streets on the edge of Al Faysaliyah, just west of the Euphrates, the Iraqis sprung again.

Dozens of Iraqi militiamen hit the convoy with rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns. The convoy dispersed up side streets but troops leading that squadron headed for a bridge that seemed to offer an avenue of escape.

The bridge looked like it could handle the cavalry's heavy armor. It did, for a few minutes. But then it collapsed under the 70-ton weight of an Abrams tank, the sixth vehicle in the convoy. The tank plunged into an 8-foot-deep gulch. The crew escaped uninjured.

Ferrell had no choice but to turn the convoy around and take another path.

In the darkness and confusion inevitable with 500 vehicles try to turn around in the dark on narrow roads, while taking sporadic fire, two more tanks rolled into ditches along with a fuel truck.

Nonetheless, the squadron's luck held; the only soldier injured broke his hand.

But getting the tanks and the fuel truck out of the ditch and back on the road gave Ferrell another problem. The commander managed to pull the tank that fell through the bridge from the gully. He also rescued one of the tanks in the ditch. But he had to abandon one tank and the fuel truck. Then the squadron retraced its way through the town, knocking out rocket-propelled grenade gunners and soldiers

along the way.

In the hours before dawn

Out of town, the convoy continued pushing north toward Baghdad.

For the next couple of hours, it faced intermittent fire until shortly before dawn. Then, in open country, troops leading the advance spotted enemy soldiers 1,000 yards off on both sides off the road. They had mortars and rocket-propelled grenades.

As the gray light of dawn spread across the sky, red tracers criss-crossed the road.

The fight was on again.

Troops blasted a small wooden boat that was ferrying Iraqi troops from the far bank of the Euphrates to their mortar positions on the near bank.

Elements farther back in the convoy reported more contact. With his convoy still strung out for many miles behind him, and all his troops having been in combat almost continuously for 10 hours, Ferrell called in air strikes. His senior tactical air controller, Air Force Tech. Sgt. Michael Keehan, went to work.

Within minutes, two more A-10s came roaring overhead.

They dropped eight 500-pound bombs and raked the two tree lines with cannon fire. The bombs exploded and cast a pall of black smoke that dissipated quickly. Both tree lines now burned fiercely. It

Saddam's Martyrs. Armed with self-detonating explosive vests, members of the paramilitary Fedayeen Saddam parade through downtown Baghdad shortly before the war.



looks like “Apocalypse Now,” Keehan said to nearby soldiers.

As the skies became lighter, the troops could see several buildings among the trees where the bombs and cannon fire had been falling.

An injured family

A man came running from one of the houses waving a white cloth, screaming that his family had been hurt and needed help.

He was told to bring his family to the road. There, the 3/7 Cav’s medical team patched up a 4-year-old boy, a pregnant woman and two men, one in his late teens, the other in his 30s. All had shrapnel in their legs.

Maj. Todd Albright, a physician, predicted a full recover for all but one man, who would probably lose a foot. The family was driven away in an Iraqi ambulance.

Sgt. Todd Grant, a military intelligence non-commissioned officer, said the people he had questioned in the area claimed there were no enemy forces in the neighborhood and thus there was no need for the 3/7 to shoot.

“But that’s wrong because we were being shot at,” Grant said.

Ferrell, the squadron commander, gave his troops two hours to rest. He estimated that his squadron had killed 150 Iraqi militia troops, not including those killed by the close air support.

So far, he had suffered no casualties of his own.

Among his soldiers, there was little time to enjoy their victory. Another day’s march beckoned. And more ambushes lay ahead.

A running firefight

The squadron crossed the Euphrates River and worked its way up the eastern bank. The three Bradleys and two tanks that had made it across the bridge before it collapsed rejoined the convoy.

A yellow-gray fog filled with fine grit settled over a landscape of marshes and bogs and empty factories. And then the enemy reappeared. The morning and afternoon became a running firefight as

the convoy ran a gauntlet of small arms fire and rocket-propelled grenades. Of the four vehicles in the tactical command post – two Bradleys and two Humvees – only pushing toward Baghdad.

No one ended the day unscarred by bullets.

At one point, the fire was so intense that the squadron commander’s driver, Pfc. Randall Duke Newcomb, steered his Humvee with one hand and his knees – while emptying two magazines of M-16 rounds and two 40 mm grenades out the window.

The squadron pulled to a halt near a bridge and saw a destroyed Iraqi missile launcher with body parts scattered about it.

The U.S. troops also captured three Iraqi soldiers who had been delivering ammunition to the destroyed launcher.

A dubious distinction

As dusk settled Tuesday, U.S. military history – of sorts – was made.

The troops aren’t clear exactly how it happened. They think the attack came from an Iraqi truck mounted anti-tank gun. But something blasted the back of two Abrams tanks, setting them ablaze.

As ammunition exploded in the fires,

crewmembers of Troop B scrambled to safety.

One tank driver was trapped in his Abrams for several minutes while .50-caliber machine gun rounds cooked off before he could

crawl free.

According to its maker and military records, those two are the first Abrams tanks to be destroyed by enemy fire. In the 1991 Gulf War, none were damaged by mines but were repaired.

The Abrams did keep one crucial streak going: No crewmember has ever died in an Abrams.

Something – they think it was the same anti-tank gun – blew up a Bradley as well. Again, all four crewmembers escaped uninjured.

As troops in the squadron settled in for the night, they knew they had been lucky. Three tanks, a Bradley and several trucks, all destroyed – either by enemy fire or from difficult terrain. Yet no one was seriously injured. But 80 miles ahead lay Baghdad. And the Army soldiers knew that between them and the capital, they would encounter the best troops Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein could muster – from his elite Republican Guard.

Sean Naylor is a correspondent from Army Times, an independent newspaper owned by Gannet.

Contributing: Blake Morrison in Washington, D.C. (Reprinted w/permission Army Times)

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Homeland Insecurity

Budget woes force states to pull cops off the street

By Nadine Joseph and Rebecca Sinderbrand

Remote and tranquil, the little Oregon town of Enterprise is an idyllic place to escape the hassles of life. Residents are just hoping outlaws don't feel the same way. With severe cuts in funding for Oregon state troopers, Enterprise now has no police protection for four hours a night. "Hopefully," says Wes Kilgore, the town police chief, a bit warily, "the bad guys won't figure out when nobody's on duty."

A budget crisis in Oregon has forced the state police to abandon 24-hour patrols.

Some rural highways in the state won't be covered at all. Even before the recent cuts—the layoffs of 129 officers out of a force of 349—state-patrol ranks were down to their lowest level in four decades.

The police-staffing woes

in Oregon mirror law-enforcement-personnel problems across the United States. The result of a sour economy, the cuts are being imposed even as local departments are being asked to muscle up for antiterror security. Further worsening the crisis: some cops are military reservists now being called to active duty. At one point, the police and fire departments in Niagara Falls, NY were without squad chief—both had been called to active duty.

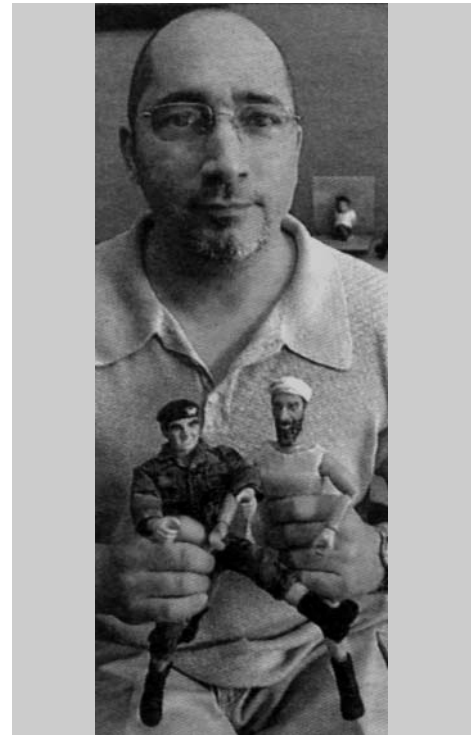
One in four police departments nationally are now facing cuts—a "real threat to hometown America," says John DeStefano Jr., the president of the National League of Cities and mayor of New Haven, CT. Besides coping with shrinking tax receipts, cities have spent

about \$3 billion on antiterror efforts since 9-11, much of it for overtime pay for police officers working at airports, DeStefano said. For cities and police departments, the financial reckoning is painful. In Buffalo, where police ranks have shrunk by 100 officers in the past year, the city has dropped patrols that focus solely on catching drunken drivers. (Just this week, the city announced it would trim the force by 200 more officers over the next three years.) "We're going back to the bare basics of policing," says Buffalo, NY Mayor Anthony M. Masiello.

In Santa Clara County, CA, the anticipated, layoffs of 81 officers – out of a force of 550 – may force cancellation of program tracking sexual predators. And if Indianapolis doesn't find extra funding in the next few weeks, it'll disband its public housing police by this sum-

mer.

Nowhere are the cuts more draconian than in Oregon. Voters in January rejected an emergency tax measure as a stopgap, and now police services are bearing the brunt. The forensic operation run by the state police has been decimated. Many regional crime labs have shut down. "We're in a new world now," says Kevin Campbell, the president of the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police. "These are murders we're talking about that won't get solved." In little places line Enterprise, now unprotected by long stretches in the darkness, residents can only hope they won't need the forensics experts.



Associated Press: Emil Vicale demonstrates action figures of Iraq Information Minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf and Osama bin Laden. Vicale's company, HeroBuilders.com, makes action figures of notables in the Iraq war and the war on terrorism.

A part-time instructor at Citrus College in Glendora, CA told students they could earn extra credit by writing to President Bush about the Iraq war, but only if they opposed it. Letters to support the war were not acceptable, said Rosalyn Kahn, Freshman Chris Stevens wrote a letter but asked Kahn not to mail it, because it didn't express his true feelings. "She refused," said Stevens. "So I didn't turn it in and couldn't get credit.

Military trains to take POWs Fake white flag cost U.S. lives *By Amer Madhani*

Champion Main, Kuwait—Fifty yards away from the U.S. paratroopers who were role-playing as surrendering Iraqi soldiers, Staff Sgt. Arthur Jones screamed and gestured at them to get down on their knees.

He made it clear that he and his squad of artillery paratroopers with the 82nd Airborne Division weren't going to come anywhere near the soldiers waving the white flag until they were lying down on the ground in a position where they couldn't do harm.

"When we were here for the first Persian Gulf war, I remember these [Iraqi soldiers] were running out of the bunkers with their hands over their heads to surrender, yelling, "Food, food, food," recalled Jones, 34, of Richmond, VA. "This time it sounds like it could be totally different.

Two days after nine Marines were killed near Nasiriyah by Iraqi forces who reportedly deceived American forces into believing that they were surrendering and then attacked, this enemy prisoner of war exercise has taken on new importance.

Before the ambush, paratroopers aid, they viewed the acceptance of prisoners as more of a logistical problem than a matter of life or death. Not anymore.



Soldiers with A-3-7, 3rd Infantry Division, approach an injured Iraqi woman who caught in the crossfire with Iraqi forces on a bridge over the Euphrates river March 31.

Jones and several other paratroopers aggressively searched, handcuffed and tied together the five soldiers playing Iraqis during the exercise Tuesday. Meanwhile, other members of their squad covered their backs, poised to fire their M-4 rifles if the captives made any false move.

This time the surrender went smoothly.

"I don't think it is totally unexpected that some of these guys might fake it," said Staff Sgt. Frederick Beckman, 27, of Greenfield, IA, who played the role of

commander of the surrendering squad. "Last time, we came to liberate Kuwait. This time we're trying to get rid of the Iraqi military power. The circumstances have changed and we're aware of it."

In this practice case, the 82nd paratroopers outnumbered the surrendering soldiers by about 5-1. But in a situation they might face once they moved forward, surrendering soldiers could outnumbered the paratroopers, said Capt. Ryker Horn, 30, of Fayetteville, NC.

Horn said that taking in surrendering soldiers could be further complicated if some of the enemy soldiers capitulate while others within the group look to use the opportunity to ambush US forces.

Horn said the Defense Department has told company commanders it's their duty to separate the wheat from the chaff in these cases.

But what rests most heavily in Horn's head is making sure an ambush like the one that happened to the Marines doesn't happen to his men.

"What we saw with the marines is affecting how we look at this," he said. "We have to make sure we look at the surrendering as hostile until we can absolutely prove that they are not."



Marines briefly detain Iraqi looter by the throat during operation to restore order in Baghdad streets.

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This de-classified footage was shot in 1942 with OSS personnel (in masks to conceal their identities) as they trained in guerrilla warfare in their secret camp. Many OSS volunteers operated behind enemy lines during WW II. This video details some of the training these men learned, such as pistol techniques for fast offensive action, and other firing techniques. Shows classrooms where students take courses in enemy propaganda, principles of demolition, photography, and fundamentals of cross-country reconnaissance. Often with help of slow motion sequences, using Judo to disarm assailant holding weapon. Demos of methods of disarming; students simulate assignments and combat situations. WE HAVE A LIMITED SUPPLY OF THIS RARE VIDEO! When we are out, we are out!

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Eye Poke



Staff Sgt. Matthew St. Pierre, 28, from Vallejo, CA, confronted an Iraqi fighter whose eyeglasses and face reminded him of one of his Marines, Lance Cpl. Lance Carmouche, a 21-year-old machine gunner from Beaumont, TX. The sergeant took two shots at the Iraqi when he jumped up from behind a low wall nearby. He didn't know until he saw the body later that he'd hit the man.

"Every time I see Lance Cpl. Carmouche," says Sgt. St. Pierre, "I think of him." In the fight moments later, Sgt. St. Pierre discovered four Iraqi men crouching in a small-enclosed area. Three lay dead. One wounded man reached for his weapon. Pierce shot him between the shoulder blades. The Iraqi again reached for his rifle, more slowly. The staff sergeant shot him in the back of the head.

When the gunfire quieted, the staff sergeant "eye-thumped" the Iraqi's body to make sure he was really dead. The process involved poking the man in the eye with a rifle muzzle; supposedly no man can avoid scrunching his face in response to such a provocation.

It felt eerie," the staff sergeant recalled, "like I just did what the Lord in the Bible says not to do." But he added, "we did nothing wrong. They made no attempt to surrender, and we put them down."



An Iraqi fedayeen fighter uses a machine gun in an attempt to hold back invading U.S. Marines.

War Press Release

Iraqi forces started shooting at Americans at the outskirts of Baghdad. A rocket-propelled grenade punched a 2-inch deep hole in the armor of a Bradley, but it rolled on, undeterred. Tanks shot military vehicles wherever they encountered them setting them afire. Meanwhile, Iraqi fighters wearing civilian clothes and checkered scarves stormed the tanks with Kalashnikov rifles.

"There's a guy on the left, I think he's got a RPG?," Sgt. Robert Compton of Oklahoma City shouted into the intercom of the commanding officer's Bradley, looking through a periscope at what he believed was a rocket-propelled grenade.

"Where? Where?" asked Staff Sgt. Bryce Ivings, the Bradley's gunner.

"Scan left," barked Carter, the commanding officer. "Open fire!" The 25mm cannon shook the Bradley, and filled the passenger compartment with the smell of gunpowder. The company didn't stop to see if the man was injured or dead.

U.S. troops soon gained control of central Baghdad and the western bridgehead. But Iraqi forces to the east of the river continued to fire on infantrymen as they acquired positions on rooftops and behind sandbagged bunkers set up by Iraqis in an attempt to defend their city.

Inside the battle of Baghdad

On the same day a B-1 bomber targeted Saddam Hussein himself, J.S. troops seized the Iraqi dictator's seat of power with a bold multi-pronged assault that was witnessed by an array of American reporters.

A daring plan

The idea to seize two of Saddam Hussein's presidential palaces in downtown Baghdad had been hatched in a command field tent.

Unlike most battle plans in the war on Iraq, this one was not devised by the high command. Col. David Perkins and his staff at the 2nd Brigade of the Army's 3rd Infantry Division created the plan Sunday morning during bull sessions in the shadow of a highway overpass.

It was risky.

Tanks and armor would be asked to sprint past thousands of Special Republican Guard troops straight into downtown Baghdad; seize the palaces, the Information Ministry, and several key intersections; and hold them. "The concept was to go in like a pit bull and get

your jaws locked around a target, and then just don't ever let go," said the brigade's intense executive officer, 41-year-old Lt. Col. Eric Wesley.

The boldness fit with the rapid, high fire-power American tactics of the previous two weeks. If the plan worked, there would be no doubt about the ability of American armor to do whatever it wanted in Baghdad.

Perkins passed the idea up the chain of command and got back the approval he wanted. By late Sunday afternoon, he was briefing his staff in a fly-infested room inside an abandoned Iraqi military post on the city's southern outskirts.

"This is the last big battle tomorrow, gentlemen," Perkins said. "They said it would take five divisions to win this war.

...But there's no question now that we can really do it ourselves. Tomorrow."

Maj. Joffery Watson, 36, a slight, studious intelligence officer, showed the staff "amber" and "red" zones on a satellite map. Amber zones were areas already secured. Red zones included broad swaths of central Baghdad, where the

city's wealthy elite and Bath Party officials were protected by Special Republican Guard troops.

The Iraqi unit was down to about 10,000 men, from 30,000 to 60,000 before the war, but planners had to assume that, as Hussein's elite vanguard, the loyalists would fight to the death. Their armor was largely destroyed, but they still had recoilless rifles, artillery, mortars, rocket-propelled grenades, and suicide bombers. If 90 percent of them mass in one spot, Watson said, "we are in serious, serious trouble."

A key to the attack plan was eliminating the regular troops and limit men who had taken positions on highway overpasses. When a 3rd Infantry armored column rampaged through Baghdad on Saturday, the Iraqis had rained grenades on the U.S. troops damaging every one of the 29 tanks and 14 Bradley fighting vehicles. The overpass mission fell to Lt. Col. Kenneth Gantt. The plan called for Gantt's two batteries of six 155-mm artillery pieces to hit eight overpasses with "air burst" shells that explode in the



Drop the tank, and put your hands up!

air, killing fighters but sparing infrastructure.

“Basically,” Gantt said Sunday evening, “we’re going to force all those guys to keep their heads down till our guys get past those overpasses.”

Another important element was close air support, to be provided by F-15Es, F/A-18s, and A-10 Warthog tank-killers. The American force would split up inside the city, with separate columns fighting their way to separate targets.

As he addressed his men Sunday night, Perkins expressed irritation at Iraqi TV broadcasts, mentioning a town south of Baghdad that his brigade had taken a few days earlier. “The government said it would be the mother of all battles, that we’d be stuck there for months. It took us—what—like, minutes?”

The commanders laughed. They had been wearing anxious looks, bent over their briefing books, and the colonel’s crack broke the tension. There’s no truth being told there,” Perkins continued, “so we’re going to the back of the room where they give the news conferences and ask a couple questions—and ask for validation for parking for 100 tanks.”

His most important decision next day, Perkins said, would be whether they had secured enough control to risk spending the night in Baghdad. He wanted badly to stay. He feared the column might take heavy casualties if it tried to fight its way back south, after the Iraqis had time to regroup.

“This is not going to be an easy mission,” he said. “This is [Hussein’s] last pocket of organized resistance. We get all that out of there, it’s all political maneuvering from here on out.

“Tomorrow is our last big fight,” he said. “Good luck, gentlemen.”

From the room came a shout: “Huah!”—the soldiers’ all-purpose greeting and response—David Zucchino, the Los Angeles Times

The firefight

The U.S. push the next day was violent and costly, encountering clusters of die-hard Iraqi fighters who responded with a hail of small-arms fire, rocket-propelled grenades, and mortars. Iraqi street units killed at least two soldiers from the 3rd Division’s 2nd Brigade. Two other sol-

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Only in America

The town of Moab, Utah, has asked the Pentagon to change the name of its new 21,500 lb. bomb, the Massive Ordnance Air Burst. MOAB is the largest non-nuclear explosive ever built. Moab is a community of 5,000, famous for hiking, rafting and other outdoor sports. "People here are very unhappy about MOAB, said Moab Mayor David Sakrison. "We have spent years striving toward promoting a positive image for our town."

diers and two European journalists were killed when an Iraqi rocket destroyed the 2nd Brigade’s tactical operations center on the southern outskirts of Baghdad. On the capital’s eastern fringe, two Marines were killed and three others wounded when an Iraqi artillery shell punched into their amphibious assault vehicle. The scars of a ferocious ground battle were everywhere. The Baghdad clock tower was destroyed. A police car was turned into a charred shell. Light poles were bent-over palm trees covered in dust.

Some of the destruction was calculated: Among the items smashed was a 40-foot bronze statue of Hussein riding a horse.—Anthony Shadid and Rajiv Chandrasekaran, *The Washington Post*.

Taking the bridge

During a protracted battle east of the city for the bridge over the Diyala River, American Marines and Iraqi troops fired at each other from opposite banks, no more than 100 yards apart. The Iraqis had tried to blow up the bridge, and dam-

aged it severely, but the Americans stopped them and repaired it. Tanks and troop carriers began rolling across the bridge by mid-morning. By nightfall, the scene west of the bridge was one of utter desolation, the ground littered with smoldering Iraqi bodies. Burning vehicles send plumes of black smoke billowing into the sky. The air stank from the smell of so much afire. Only the stray dogs, nosing around the flesh and fumes, seemed alive. “It’s a little sobering,” said Capt. Sal Aguilar, standing in a field with dead Iraqis all around him. “When you’re training for this, you joke about it, you can’t wait for the real thing. Then when you see it, when you see the real thing, you never want to see it again.”—Dexter Filkins, *The New York Times* **Shoot and Shoot Again**

In World War II, it could require 3,000 air sorties to eliminate a single target; in the gulf war, it took only 10. Now one plane can take out 10 targets.

Shoot and Shoot Again

After seizing the Oil Ministry as part of a Marine force, Cpl. Lis climbed the roof to gaze across downtown Baghdad. As he looked down, a bullet whizzed by his face narrowly missing him and hitting a metal guardrail nearby. A gunfight ensued.

At one point Cpl. Lis threw a hand grenade at an enemy fighter, only to have the Iraqi throw it back at Cpl. Juan Nielsen, a 26-year-old from Los Angeles. The grenade exploded, sending small pieces of metal shrapnel into Cpl. Nielsen's outer left ear. The injury hurt, but did not deter the fight.

Later a pineapple-shaped Iraqi grenade landed less than eight feet in front of him, says Lis and two others-Sgt. Timothy Wolkow, 26, from Huntington Beach, CA and Cpl. Dustin Soudan, 21, from Girard, PA. Cpl. Lis yelled for the men to get down, and they dropped and covered their heads as it exploded. All survived uninjured.

Lis says one moment in particular haunts him. He saw the young Iraqi wearing a white shirt lying face up on the

ground, his arm stretched toward a rifle on his right side. Another rifle lay close by on the left. When the man moved his right arm toward the rifle, Sgt. Wolkow shot him. The man moved again, and both Marines opened fire and hit him in the head. Cpl. Lis fired twice.

Then Cpl. Lis performed the eye
"Every time I close my eyes I see that guy's brains pop out of that guy's head,"

thump ritual on the man. "It's the sickest feeling I've ever had in my life." He said at the therapy session.

Sgt. Wolkow had a more fleeting reaction. "As much as I love the Marine Corps and want to kill people, for a few seconds there it was a kind of eerie feeling," after the first time he shot the man, he said, "It went away, and I shot the guy some more."

Baghdad, Iraq Marine Cpl. James Lis, 21 year old, is worried that for the rest of his life he'll be haunted by the image: A clean-shaven, twenty something Iraqi in a white shirt lying wounded in an alleyway and reaching for his rifle-just as Cpl. Lis

pumped two shots into his head.

"Every time I close my eyes I see that guy's brains pop out of that guy's head," Cpl. Lis, from Shreveport, LA told his platoon mates later as they sat in a circle in the ruins of the Iraqi Oil Ministry's employee cafeteria. That's a picture in my head that I will never be able to get rid of."

For Marine infantrymen now occupying the eastern half of the Iraqi capital, the worst fighting is probably over. But they're just beginning to cope with the psychological aftershocks of having faced death and inflicted it.

One lesson the military learned from painful experience with post-traumatic stress disorder after Vietnam is that troops may come home more mentally intact if, as soon as possible, they talk to each other about what they've gone through. In infantry school, Marine officers are taught to encourage their troops to talk about their experiences after battles. So, platoon-by-platoon, many Marines in Iraq are starting to hold informal group-therapy sessions-"critical incident debriefings" in military parlance-in which they share their feelings about what they've seen and what they've done.

A Full Deck

Now that victory has been declared in Gulf War II, consumers are racing to snap up their personal souvenir of the conflict: the



Iraqi most-wanted playing cards used by U.S. soldiers to help identify

Saddam's top brass. AT \$5.95 a deck, more than a million decks have already sold worldwide. Even the French are buying. The surprising popularity has prompted the cards' distributor, GreatUSAflags.com, to reissue other decks created for the military in earlier wars. On sale now are: World War II "spotter

decks," which enabled troops to distinguish between Allied and enemy aircraft. Coming soon: the ace of spades decks used as psychological warfare during the Vietnam War.

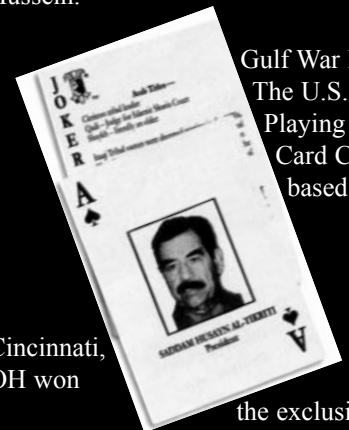
World War II - U.S. planes were spades and Germany's were diamonds. Other decks contained trick cards that American POWs could



available-yet

Vietnam - Decks containing only the ace of spades were passed out to U.S. Troops. They would display a

card on their helmets to scare away the Viet Cong, who were thought to be superstitious about the card because fortune tellers considered it a harbinger of suffering and death. In this year's Iraqi deck, the ace of spades is-who else? Saddam Hussein.



Gulf War II - The U.S. Playing Card Co., based in

Cincinnati, OH won

the exclusive rights to manufacture the authentic decks when the Pentagon inadvertently included the company's trademarked red-and-yellow Hoyle joker.

America WAKE UP! *By Dan Ouimette*

Editor's Note: On February 19, 2003, U.S. Navy Captain Dan **Ouimette** gave the following speech at the Civitan Club. It provides a wonderfully accurate account of why we as a nation and as individuals are in trouble today

That's what we think we heard on the 11th of September 2001 and maybe it was, but I think it should have been "Get Out of Bed!" In fact, I think the alarm clock has been buzzing since 1979 and we have continued to hit the snooze button and roll over for a few more minutes of peaceful sleep since then.

It was a cool fall day in November 1979 in a country going through a religious and political upheaval when a

group of Iranian students attacked and seized the American Embassy in Tehran. This seizure was an outright attack on American soil; it was an attack that held the world's most powerful country hostage and paralyzed a

Presidency. The attack on this sovereign U.S. embassy set the stage for the events to follow for the next 23 years.

America was still reeling from the aftermath of the Viet Nam experience and had a serious threat from the Soviet Union when then, President Carter, had to do something. He chose to conduct a clandestine raid in the desert. The ill-fated mission ended in ruin, but stood as a sym-

bol of America's inability to deal with terrorism. America's military had been decimated and downsized / right sized since the end of the Viet Nam war. A poorly trained, poorly equipped and poorly organized military was called on to execute a complex mission that was doomed from the start.

Shortly after the Tehran experience, Americans began to be kidnapped and killed throughout the Middle East. America could do little to protect her citizens living and working abroad. The attacks against US soil continued.

In April of 1983 a large vehicle packed with high explosives was driven into the US Embassy compound in Beirut. When it explodes, it kills 63 people.

another truck loaded with explosives is driven into the US Embassy in Kuwait, and America continues her slumber.

The following year, in September 1984, another van was driven into the gates of the US Embassy in Beirut and America slept.

Soon the terrorism spreads to Europe. In April 1985 a bomb explodes in a restaurant frequented by US soldiers in Madrid. Then in August a Volkswagen loaded with explosives is driven into the main gate of the US Air Force Base at Rhein-Main, 22 are killed and the Snooze Alarm is buzzing louder and louder as US soil is continually attacked.

Fifty-nine days later a cruise ship, the Achilles Lauro is hijacked and we



This car bombing occurred Sept, 5 in Kabul outside the Ministry of Culture. However, Afgan terrorists say they see no difference between Karzai government targets and American targets. Al-Qaeda continues to train terrorists in Afghanistan. The camps are smaller and more transient, but the goals remain the same.

watched as an American in a wheelchair is singled out of the passenger list and executed.

The terrorists then shift their tactics to bombing civilian airliners when they bomb TWA Flight 840 in April of 1986 that killed

The alarm went off again and America hit the Snooze Button once more.

Then just six short months later a large truck heavily laden down with over 2500 pounds of TNT smashed through the main gate of the US Marine Corps headquarters in Beirut. 241 US servicemen are killed. America mourns her dead and hit the Snooze Button once more.

Two months later in December 1983,

4 and the most tragic bombing, Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland in 1988, killing 259.

America wants to treat these terrorist acts as crimes; in fact we are still trying to

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bring these people to trial. These are acts of war ... the Wake Up alarm is louder and louder.

The terrorists decide to bring the fight to America. In January 1993, two CIA agents are shot and killed as they enter CIA headquarters in Langley, Virginia. The following month, February 1993, a group of terrorists are arrested after a rented van packed with explosives is driven into the underground parking garage of the World Trade Center in New York City. Six people are killed and over 1000 are injured.

Still this is a crime and not an act of war? The Snooze alarm is depressed again.

Then in November 1995 a car bomb explodes at a US military complex in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia killing seven service men and women. A few months later in June of 1996, another truck bomb explodes only 35 yards from the US military compound in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia. It destroys the Khobar Towers, a US Air Force barracks, killing 19 and injuring

over 500.

The terrorists are getting braver and smarter as they see that America does not respond decisively. They move to coordinate their attacks in a simultaneous attack on two US embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. These attacks were planned with precision, they kill 224. America responds with cruise missile attacks and goes back to sleep.

The USS Cole was docked in the port of Aden, Yemen for refueling on 12 October 2000, when a small craft pulled along side the ship and exploded killing 17 US Navy Sailors. Attacking a US War Ship is an act of war, but we sent the FBI to investigate the crime and went back to sleep.

And of course you know the events of 11 September 2001. Most Americans think this was the first attack against US soil or in America. How wrong they are. America has been under a constant attack since 1979 and we chose to hit the snooze alarm and roll over and go back to sleep.

In the news lately we have seen lots of

finger pointing from every high official in government over what they knew and what they didn't know. But if you've read the papers and paid a little attention I think you can see exactly what they knew. You don't have to be in the FBI or CIA or on the National Security Council to see the pattern that has been developing since 1979. The President is right on when he says we are engaged in a war.

I think we have been in a war for the past 23 years and it will continue until we as a people decide enough is enough.

America has to "Get out of Bed" and act decisively now. America has changed forever. We have to be ready to pay the price and make the sacrifice to ensure our way of life continues. We cannot afford to hit the Snooze Button again and roll over and go back to sleep. We have to make the terrorists know that in the words of Admiral Yamamoto after the attack on Pearl Harbor, "that all they have done is to awaken a sleeping giant."

U.S. Navy Capt. Dan Ouimette is the executive officer of NAS, Pensacola, FL

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Marines kill dozens in contested city

Some civilians among the dead

By Patrick Peterson



Bodies and body parts littered the roads.

In Nasiriyah, Iraq U.S. Marines, moving through this still contested city, opened fire aggressively Tuesday, leaving dozens of dead in their wake, at least some of them civilians.

Helicopter gunships circled overhead, unleashing Hellfire missiles into the squat mudbrick homes and firing their machine guns, raining spent cartridge cases into neighborhoods. Occasionally a tank blasted a hole in a house. Several bodies fell in alleys.

It was impossible to know which casualties were civilians and which had been members of Iraqi loyalist militias. The militias have ambushed Marine convoys here for days as the Marines tried to cross the Euphrates on a rapid march north to Al Kut, where they are expected to engage elements of Iraq's Republican Guard.

Signs of battle were everywhere. Burned-out shells of Russian-made tanks lay along the road. U.S. aircraft clearly had taken out other tanks facing a bridge.

Official versions of the battles were unavailable. U.S. casualties appeared light, but it was likely that many civilians

had been killed. US troops searching houses found one woman with her husband, who was wounded, and her two sons, who were dead. Stray bullets had hit all.

The shooting came as U.S. forces, targeted in recent days by Iraqis dressed in civilian clothes, became increasingly aggressive in dealing with resistance. A group waving a white flag had ambushed marines that were told a tracked amphibious vehicle, and the plan for moving the 3rd Platoon of the 4th Amphibious Assault Battalion of the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force was aggressive, calling for "suppressive fire" throughout the area to keep insurgents at bay.

It was early in the morning, and each of the platoon's dozen 27-ton amphibious assault vehicles carried 18 infantrymen. The vehicles formed a herringbone pattern along the street, and the marines opened fire as they advanced.

"I started feeling comfortable, like I knew what I was doing," said Cpl. David Barringer, 25, a reservist who, in civilian life, is a firefighter from Gulfport, MI "I never really felt scared," he said, saying he had shot one militiaman and

maybe three. "Everything we were taught, it all comes back to you."

A few hundred yards past the bridge, the marines came upon the grisly scene of a failed ambush by the Iraqis. U.S. Infantrymen reported that a group of 40 Iraqi soldiers on buses apparently had attacked an artillery unit. About 20 Iraqis were killed when the Americans returned fire; the rest were captured. The buses were burned out hulks.

"I saw a lot of bloodshed," said Sgt. Ken Woechan, 23, a reservist from Ocean Springs, MS.

Woechan said at Nasiriyah he saw what he believed were militiamen hiding behind women and children. "A family would run across and there would be a guy behind them," he said.

The crossing of the Marines' 4th Amphibious Assault Battalion was one of the few detailed accounts that emerged from Tuesday's fighting. Reports of combat elsewhere were sketchy, in part because a fierce sandstorm disrupted communications between units. The Marine forward headquarters at the Tillil airfield near this city was forced to transfer command back to Kuwait because it lost communications and power.

The Army's 141st Mechanized Infantry killed two men and captured 11 others trying to pierce security near the airfield, and Army officers also reported an unsuccessful ambush of U.S. troops within a mile of the airfield. Army officers said they had repeated run-ins with Iraqis within 2 miles of the command post, seizing three trucks, one fuel truck, one taxi and one bus, all loaded with weapons and ammunition.

Marines said they seized 500 young men thought to be members of a pro-Hussein militia aboard several buses at a checkpoint near Nasiriyah. A Marine raid on a hospital in Nasiriyah reportedly turned up several weapons, chemical protection suits and some U.S. military uniforms. It was unclear whether the uniforms were taken off some of the American POWs captured there on Sunday or were part of Hussein's alleged

plans to infiltrate his troops behind American lines using U.S. uniforms.

The Marines also claimed to have captured the headquarters of the 23rd Brigade of the Iraqi army's 11th Division northeast of Nasiriyah, but there were no details on the fighting.

But soon after arriving, Iraqi guerrillas launched a devastating attack on their position. A foot-long projectile spun through the air and detonated against an above-ground fuel tank. The explosion lit up the gathering dusk.

In the next few minutes, the Iraqis used rocket-propelled grenades to destroy four 7-ton trucks and a like number of Humvees. Hale scrambled to get his men over a compound wall to safety.

Fighting

As enemy rounds flew like a swarm of lethal insects.

In desperation, the Marines called in an artillery strike on their own position. It was the only thing they could do to pin the enemy down as they got out of the area.

On Thursday, Hale was one of several dozen Marines brought to a combat medical facility here after being wounded in, or around, the strategic crossroads of Nasiriyah. No Marines had been killed in Hale's battle.

The Marines entered the southern Iraqi town Sunday to seize a pair of bridges needed to ferry troops and supplies north toward Baghdad. Since then, they have been fighting pitched battles with Iraqi guerrillas who wear no uniforms and respect no laws of war.

U.S. officers didn't expect the enemy to collapse completely when the war began. But they certainly didn't foresee fighting as intense, and unpredictable, as the Marines have encountered in Nasiriyah.

Soldiers wounded in the city and its environs describe a surreal battle. Iraqi tanks dug into defensive positions in the middle of city streets. Guerrilla fighters push women and children into the streets to screen their advance. Phony surrenders that last only as long as it takes to reach a prepared firing position, stocked with loaded automatic weapons and mortars.

But even in the safety of the recovery tent, surrounded by his buddies, Hale was

still shaken from the attack he and his men had lived through. "It was unreal. It was something you don't ever want to go through," said Hale, a veteran of the first Gulf War.

When Hale's unit arrived at the scene, they discovered two houses stocked with ammunition including rocket-propelled grenades, and Iraqi uniforms. As they waited for engineers to rig explosives and blow up the house, Hale and his men stood, just "shooting the breeze," in a walled compound around a gas station.

Then the attack began and the Marines called in the strike.

The U.S. rounds fell – "boom, boom, boom" – as the Marines evacuated the area. "The rounds were landing right in front of us," Hale said. "I broke my leg. That's the last thing I remember."

"You don't know where to go. Five feet to the left isn't any better than five feet to the right," said Corp Bret Woolhether, 20, of Fond Du Lac, WI, who had shrapnel wound in the hand.

By Thursday morning, 63 of about 120 Marines who had been part of the relief detail had arrived at this aid station for treatment. Hale thinks it's a miracle no one was killed.

Pretty much sitting ducks

Marine Sgt Bruce Cole was also injured in a battle around Nasiriyah this week. As Cole's unit advanced northwest out of the town, which sits along the Euphrates River, rain-sodden turf forced its tanks and wheeled vehicles to stick to the paved surfaces of Highway 1. "We were running with our flanks wide open," Cole said.

At one point, the native Texan's unit halted to allow tanks and armored vehicles to probe farther ahead. As he and several fellow Marines clambered out of their vehicles, they found themselves sandwiched between firefights to their south and north. "We were pretty much sitting ducks," he said.

The bullet ripped through his lower arm, midway between the wrist and the elbow, tearing a hole through the triceps as it left his body. The force of the shot, fired by a shadow enemy, knocked an M-16 from Cole's hands.

"We had multiple skirmishes along the road," Cole, 39, said looking up from

his cot at the medical facility.

"It was a difficult battle to discern good guys from bad guys. I saw nobody in uniform."

"They're not capitulating as quickly and as frequently as I think a lot of people may have anticipated," he said.

Body parts in road.

A few cots away. Sgt. Chris Merkle, 31, was sitting up for the first time this day. The Marine reservist, a FedEx deliveryman in peacetime, was a survivor of a crash along another highway leaving Nasiriyah.

Merkle was riding in a 7-ton truck, part of a convoy fleeing an area of frequent shooting, when his vehicle swerved and plummeted off a bridge. Ejected from his perch behind the cab, Merkle said he landed on his head "like a lawn dart."

The San Clement, CA resident escaped the crash with a sprained neck and back and is eager to rejoin the fight. But he hasn't forgotten the detritus of battle littering the road he drove down.

North of Nasiriyah, he saw three buses, like those used to ferry Iraqi irregulars into battle, charred and smoking by the roadside. Body parts of men who presumably had been Iraqi fighters stained the pavement.

The wounded have helped fill the 80 beds here. Sandstorms and Iraqi attacks have hampered the aid station's supply convoys, so there aren't yet enough tents. Doctors are sleeping under the stars to make sure patients have somewhere to sleep, said Navy Cmdr. Scott Flint, 41, of Surgical Company Charlie.

This is a war that many in the United States expected would be all but painless. That hasn't been the case. "Nasiriyah was supposed to be a six-hour fight. It's already been five days," Marine Gunnery Sgt. Hale said.

"Five days of 24 hours a day, non-stop shooting." (Reprinted w/permission ***Knight Ridder Newspapers***)

By nightfall, the scene west of the bridge was one of utter desolation, the ground littered with smoldering Iraqi bodies. Burning vehicles sent plumes of black smoke billowing into the sky. The air stank from the smell of so much fire.

Torture: The appeal of the greater good

If there ever was a case for torture, this excuse for a human being, Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, is it," said Patrick J. Buchanan in World Net Daily.com. The al Qaida mastermind of Sept. 11, recently captured in Pakistan, has been handed over to Americans and taken to an undisclosed location- probably Afghanistan - for interrogation. If he could be forced to talk, the information could save thousands. Fuzzyheaded liberals are already wringing their hands on Mohammed's behalf, but common sense dictates that the greater good now trumps any "rights" this mass murderer may have. If it's moral to go to war to prevent acts of terror why can't we inflict pain on one man to prevent another Sept. 11? A "higher law" allows it in these extraordinary circumstances.

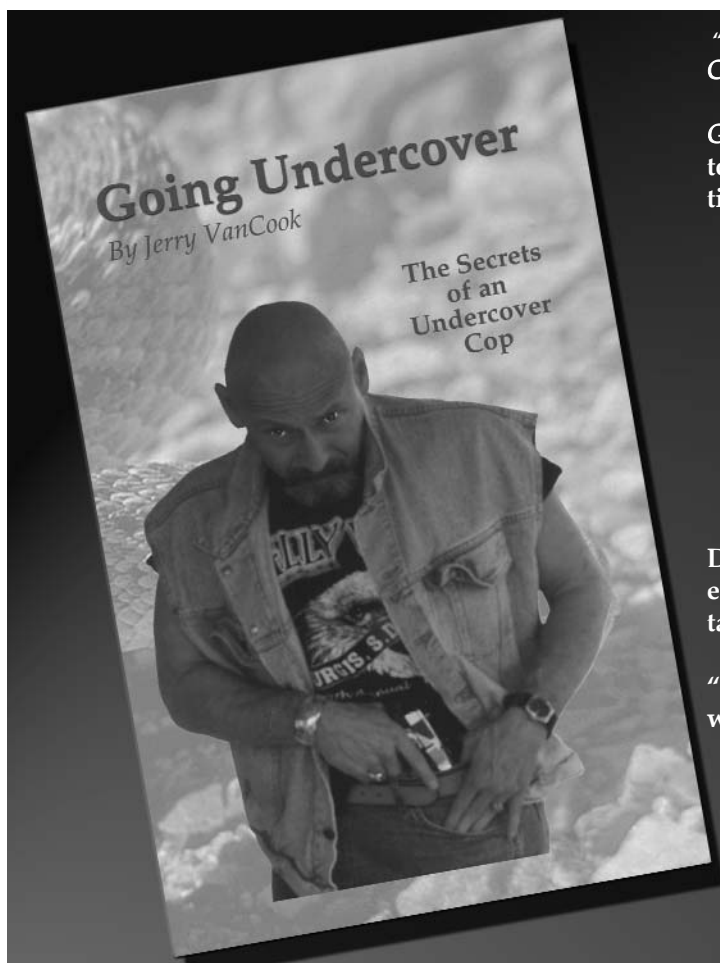
That's precisely the rationalization torturers always use, said Richard Cohen in The Washington Post. But once we

cross that line, we join an ugly club of "despotic and desperate" regimes: Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, and Argentine junta. People in the "get real" crowd ranging from Buchanan to Harvard civil libertarian Alan Dershowitz, argue that "we are in a new kind of war and need new kinds of rules." Well, perhaps. But mankind has long experience with torture, and whenever it is used, the values of that society crumble and fall. "Civilization it threatened not only by terrorists, but also by the means we use to fight them."

Then what are we to make of "torture lite"? asked Peter Maass in The New York Times. In squeezing information from al Qaida prisoners, the U.S. has openly admitted using "stress and duress techniques": withholding food and water, sleep and light deprivation, prolonged isolation, temperature changes, and a host of intense mind games designed to wear people down. Sometimes - though not always - these tactics can work. After

months of pressure, al Qaida leaders Omar al Faruq and Abu Zubaydah have both crumbled, supplying names of al Qaida soldiers and details of various plots. And what happens when "torture lite" doesn't work? Asked law professor Jonathan Turley in the Los Angeles Times. Apparently, we resort to the real thing. Two prisoners at the U.S. base in Bagram, Afghanistan, recently turned up dead, their bodies marked with signs of "blunt-force trauma." A U.S. military coroner has listed the deaths as homicides. If it turns out these men were killed by brutal interrogations, history will mark their deaths as the beginning of the end of the American ideal.

PETA - People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals recently wrote Arafat to request that he keep animals out of the conflict after a donkey was reportedly killed. They made no request to keep humans out of the conflict.



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Making the perfect soldier

Which soldiers have the right stuff? Not the misanthropic Rambo type, military studies have found. Soldiers who make the grade as elite commandos, the military says, generally have above-average intelligence, good social skills, an ability to work in teams, and low anxiety levels. "Self-styled supermen" don't make the cut, says Lt. Col. Morgan Banks of U.S. Army Special Forces. "The cockiest guys at the beginning of training weren't there at the end." The best Special Forces soldiers, he says, are "serious, intense, hunker-down types." In a new study, psychiatrists at Yale University have found that elite soldiers may also have hormonal advantages. After 250 elite fighters went through survival-training courses, the soldiers were found to have extremely high levels of the stress hormone cortisol in their blood. But they also had higher levels of another hormone, neuropeptide Y, or NPY, thought to be a natural relaxant. Dr. Andy Morgan believes this hormone keeps commandos' minds alert when stress levels are sky-high - when most people would just shut down. Under severe stress, Morgan says, "These are guys whose bodies remain challenged and engaged."

U.S. pilot hopes to bomb Iraq - with candy

The Candy Bomber, who airdropped chocolate and gum to the children of Berlin in 1948, want to do the same thing in Baghdad. "I've had the experience of the reaction of the kids on the ground. It's just incredible." When the Soviets blockaded Berlin after World War II, Air Force Col. Gail Halvorsen and other U.S. pilots airlifted food, medicine and supplies to the city. Halvorsen began to drop little parachutes of candy to the children. Eventually, he and his colleagues dropped 23 tons of candy. In 1994, he flew a C-130 cargo plane over Bosnia and dropped candy-bar parachutes. Halvorsen, 82, said he plans to ask the Air Force if he can make a candy drop over Baghdad once the war is over. "It would be a ray of hope, a symbol that somebody in America cares," he said.

Aboard the USNS Comfort

"I said, 'Here's your foot'"

By Joellen Perry

"I got blown up three times in one day," says Jayson Keogh. Eyes wide behind gold-rimmed glasses, the 26-year-old Marine private rubs his shaved head as he recalls the battle that landed him on the sunny deck of this Navy hospital ship in the northern Persian Gulf. He's hooked to an IV, his thigh wrapped in a bloody skin-graft bandage, calf and ankle encased in an orthopedic contraption that looks like a Tinker toy project gone awry. He took shrapnel in the leg during a firefight in Nasiriyah and is trading his story for a few cigarettes.

Rolling north in an amphibious assault vehicle the marines call an "Amtrack," Keoghs convoy came under small arms fire. Turret gunners fired back, but an explosion rocked the Amtrack. Ordnance inside detonated, killing several marines immediately. Keogh found a foot in his lap and handed it back to its owner. "It was funny, because it was kind of nonchalant. I said... 'Here's your foot.' He said, 'OK.'"

Corpsmen hoisted Keogh out of the burning vehicle and lifted him into another. Doctors inside bandaged his leg, but enemy mortars hit that track, too. Unable to walk, Keogh scrambled out the back hatch, and promptly fell on his face. He grabbed an M-16 and started to firing. Then he found a grenade stash, and fired one. "It dropped right in front of me. I figured I'd better not do that again." He corrected his aim and kept firing until the rest of the marines got out of the ruined Amtrack

At dusk, a column of American tanks rolled up, and the Iraqis retreated. A former United Parcel Service worker who joined the Marines after the September 11 terrorist attacks, Keogh recalls the moment, sipping Gatorade from a squeeze-top bottle. A nurse comes over concerned that he's getting sunburned. "It feels good," he says, gazing out at the water. But he slips on his pajama shirt, just in case.

Marines Battle Republican Guard

At Kut, a military town on the Tigris River southeast of Baghdad, the 3rd Battalion, 4th Marines, battled Iraqis building to building April 3.

Marines came to battle Republican Guard and Baath Party fighters.

A small group of Iraqis charged against a tank.

"At the end, they charged in a human wave - 10 to 15 guys with AKs that we mowed down," said Lt. Col. B.P. McCoy. All told, he said, 30 Iraqis were killed.

A Sea Knight helicopter evacuated three injured Marines; two suffered minor gunshot and shrapnel wounds, but the third died in the helicopter.

Another died when the truck he was driving slammed into another, injuring at least 10 others.

Many in Kut waved white flags and welcomed the U.S. Marines.

Representatives of Saddam Hussein's regime, they said, were going door to door and giving their young men a sinister choice: Fight, or die.



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Five Minutes to War

At 3:41 p.m., Ferrell's command vehicles pulled onto Highway 1, and within five minutes his troops were in combat, firing at Iraqi foot soldiers who could be seen jumping out of civilian vehicles and trying to fire at the U.S. armored vehicles as they roared past.

Capt. Bill Brown, scanning for targets out of the rear hatch of a Bradley, shoved a reporter down into the hull before shooting at the Iraqi troops with measured bursts from his M-16. Suddenly the turret swiveled.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!"

Ferrell fired the 25 mm main gun at his newfound enemy, about 800 yards away.

Minutes later, Brown's eyes lit on a civilian vehicle driving past the convoy, then driving back, before letting out several young men.

"They're getting out! Dismounts!"

Again the chain guns, coaxes and M-16's barked. Again the convoy barreled on without stop, heading northwest having chalked up another few dozen enemy kills.

And so it went for another two hours, climaxing with the almost suicidal assault by the two jeeps once Ferrell's command group had stopped for the night.

As Ferrell, Brown and the dozen other soldiers in the advanced command post settled in, machine gun and artillery fire echoed all around them. A fierce battle raged for control of the airport. It was going to be another long night in Iraq.

As elements of the 3rd ID swept into what had been Saddam International Airport on late April 3, Ferrell's 3-7 troops dug in for a fearsome night of fighting.

A Troop, known as Apache, fought a running battle with light infantry militia and suicide bombers through the night and into the morning. Cav soldiers shot and killed the drivers of cars and buses that charged their position at high speed, refusing to stop.

Uniformed soldiers carrying large sums of cash manned most of the vehicles. But there were also some unpleasant surprises.

Lying beside one destroyed car were the corpses of a mother and her child. Ferrell said it was a tragedy that two innocent civilians were killed, but that he could not risk not firing at a vehicle approaching at high speed.

3rd Infantry Division had already lost four soldiers to a suicide bomber. Ferrell wasn't about to lose another.

Morning brought some of the fiercest tank-on-tank fighting of the war. The unit faced off against a Republican Guard battalion on April 4.

Apache destroyed nine tanks and killed about 3560 dismounted infantry in the morning, members of what Ferrell said were probably elements of the Hammurabi Division shifting south into positions west of the airport.

Apache Troop commander Capt H. Clay Lyle had moved his tanks and Bradleys toward a position that the Air Force said the Iraqis were occupying on the north side of a freeway. After jets and artillery had worked over the position, Lyle's force drove up to get a closer look. But as they drove down the freeway, they

spotted more than a dozen armored vehicles dug in behind revetments on the south of the road. The cave opened fire with their Abrams 120 mm main guns at ranges of 800 to 1,000 meters.

From less than a kilometer away the fight appeared to be almost completely one-sided. Orange fireballs quickly followed the yellow flashes from Lyle's tanks, as the high explosive rounds hit home.

"There's a lot of shit back there," Lyle reported over the radio. "We've taken a little bit of fire, but most of them are just dying."

The Iraqi tanks tried to offer resistance, and one T-72 main gun round exploded 25 meters from Lyle's position, rattling the tank and crew. The Iraqis fired rocket-propelled grenades and artillery shells at the U.S. vehicles, but again, amazingly, without inflicting any casualties.

As dusk approached, Lyle pulled back to allow U.S. artillery and close air support jets to attack the Iraqi positions.

Bradley main gunfire accounted for five of the nine destroyed Iraqi tanks, which were driving down the freeway when Apache troop attacked, Lyle said. The other vehicles destroyed included one MT-LB armored personnel carrier and 43 civilian style trucks and cars that were being used to transport fighters to the battle.

By evening, Apache had destroyed 12 tanks, three anti-aircraft guns and a towed howitzer.

Another day was done. Around them the highway stretched out, littered with the burning hulks of T-72 tank and an MT-LB,



While the fear of chemical and biological weapons is real, it is not new. This art by Frank Murch was featured on Popular Science in the 60's.

as well as trucks and other wrecks. Spent casings of 25 mm, .50 caliber and 7.62 coaxial machine gun ammo was scattered over the pavement.

And Baghdad, the road signs said, was now just a few miles away. (By Staff Writer, Condensed from **Army Times** reprinted w/permission)

EU's 1st military mission is peacekeeping in Macedonia

The European union Launched its first military operation, taking over NATO's peacekeeping mission in Macedonia. A French general will be in charge of the force of 400 lightly armed peacekeepers from 26 countries. The EU force will take over for the NATO-led force that has kept the peace in the Balkan nation since a rebel insurgency ended in 2001.



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The symbolism of draping Saddam's statue in the Iraqi flag may be good for Iraqi spirits, but it does not erase the fact that many citizens died..

**Southern Iraq-
Lance Cpl.
Joseph Willems**
was approaching one of many bunkers dug into Iraq's desert when he saw the muzzle fire.

"I looked down and saw shots being fired, and I just went, 'Ooooooh,' and jumped back," said the 19-year-old Marine from Kenosha, Wis. "Saw a guy in a blue sweatshirt and took a hip shot with my saw."

With his "saw" - machine gun - Willems killed the Iraqi

soldier in the first action by Echo Company's 1st Platoon of the 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit after it entered Iraq from northern Kuwait on Friday.

"The only time I freaked was when I saw his eyes, and my weapon jammed. I kept backing up and it kept jamming," Willems said.

The Marines were clearing an area of bunkers in southern Iraq, near the port of Umm Qasr, after scores of Iraqi soldiers surrendered, many walking toward the Americans in strict military formation under white flag.

But there were a few holdouts. The Marines, covering each other, stopped, scrambled and then stopped and scrambled their way to each bunker. There were bursts of gunfire, often rapid machine-gun fire, and the heavy thud of hand grenades.

"But then somebody shouts, 'There's two in the hole!'" said Lt. William Todd Jacobs, 24, of Cincinnati, who led the 1st Platoon.

The Marines reacted immediately and shot both, then threw a grenade that blew a plume of sand and black smoke out of the bunker.

"I didn't want to get shot, so I shot him first," Cpl. Juan B. Elenes, 21, of Portland, Ore., said about two of the Iraqis who refused to give up.

"I saw the top part of his head, so I shot at him. And then we shot another in the bunker." Death also came to the Marines, when one of them was shot and killed during the actions. An investigation is pending into how he died.

On Saturday, investigators collected his gear from the squad that found him dead and carried it down the defense lines - his gas mask and helmet, both marked with his name, as well as his day pack and weapons.

'I didn't want to get shot'

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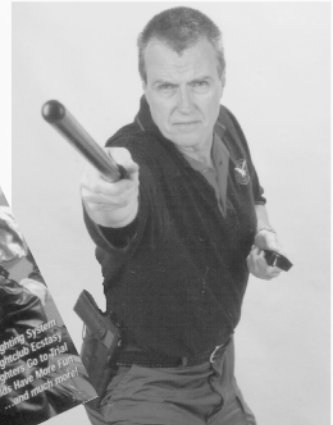
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BUFFALO NICKELS COLUMN

Liberating the Stupid

Iraq and Afghanistan! You know we have a special forces motto, “De Opresso Liber!” –or for you dope-smoking, draft dodgers it means – “Liberate the Oppressed.” Retired, I have a new patch, “De Stupido Liber!” Liberate the stupid. This is hard. It is much easier just to shoot people. But, one funny guy tried the *liber* when he recently sneaked into an anti-war parade with a big sign last month that read,

“War never solved anything, except fascism, nazi-ism, genocide and torture.”

Hundreds of stupid protestors just didn’t get it. He lasted the whole parade. Smiling and waving. I think that’s funny, don’t you?

Saving Private Hollywood

How can we liberate the stupid and the numbskull Hollywood? I would parade Hollywood’s dimwits through Saddam’s torture chambers, smack in the middle of the women and child raping sections. Let them watch a few dissenters get chunked into an industrial wood chipper. That’s the part of the tour the Iraq tourist bureau forgot to show Sean Penn. The only thing Sean Penn liberated was Madonna, who still calls him an asshole.

But, we also can’t forget that, thanks alone to Hollywood’s movie *Saving Private Ryan* in the 1990’s, we had a grand outburst of respect for the military that evident still today. Spielberg and Hanks made millions of flag wavers, proving that Hollywood can also liberate the stupid. But, many dunderheads still turn to the United Nitwits for help.

The United Nitwits

Here is a photo of French-German missiles sold lately to Iraq, in violation to the UN sanctions. Many of the night sights on Iraqi RPGs were made in France and the Nissan pick up trucks they used were made in Pastry Land also. Crème-Puff-Land also issued travel visas to escaped Iraq officials via Syria. Once in Crossiantville, these war criminal bastards can roam freely throughout the European Union. Meanwhile the UN has allowed murdering African warlords and Cuba-who recently killed and imprisoned scores of writers and other dissenters-to sit on their Human Rights Council. WHAT?



We need to listen to THIS bi-polar, schizophrenic Frankenstein for advice? Sorry, we have some fucking terrorists to kill. We need to kick ass where and when as needed, and then let the UN cater the event later. In fact, we need a name change. United Caterers. The UC.

Oh Canada!

Some political dame in Canada called us bastards – “*I hate those bastards*”– was the quote and another one called Bush an idiot. They booed the U.S. national anthem at a sports game. Well, “excuse-um WA!” You know, Miss Dame Canada, but nuke fall-out and bugaboo germs blow north too. We kinda’ share this same island? And, that little guy over there in North Korea? The guy in that Dr. No/gas station attendant jacket, with the bad, Johnny Cash hairdo? He thinks your juicy, western ass is hanging real close to his missile tips.

The reason you people up north get to waste excess money in your semi-social experiment is you don’t have a defense budget! The U.S. is your defense budget. You know we’ll defend you if anything happens. The Canadian Army has 55,000 troops. That wouldn’t fill up a college football stadium down here. We have more than 55,000 Army JANITORS! Think about that the next time you have a headache and can’t get in to see a Canadian doctor for 10 months, and you have to fly down to one of our nice idiot, bastard doctors in Minnesota.

I Love a Parade!

Free to parade at last! Shiites were joyously parading the other day in Iraq. They were so happy they beat themselves with metal whips and cut themselves with knives and swords! Now that’s happy! The happier they got? The more they whipped and cut on

themselves. Kids too!

"Abeeb! How happy are ya? Oh, THAT happy! Oh no, a knife will never do. Here, have a sword. Yeah! Now that's happy!"

Have a nice sing-along in the parade....

"If you're happy and you know it - cut your arm.

If you're happy and you know it - slice your leg.

If you're happy and you know it and you really want to show it, if you're happy and you know it slice your wrist!"

I think ol' Saddam missed his chance. Gas? Who needs gas, he should have issued more parade permits.

Distrust

You think this is all about oil, hippy boy? Think it's all about spreading democracy, patriot boy? Well, It is about BOTH and to some neither, and to some even more. Look now, I distrust all politicians and generals. Ok...ok, colonels, captains and lieutenants too... but in something like this many ulterior motives and strange bedfellows come together, just enough to confuse everyone and cause debate. In the end it will be a good thing.

I'd also like to liberate the people *called* stupid but aren't! All republican presidents are supposed to be stupid according to the democrats. Yeah...Regan was stupid. Now Bush is stupid. Stupid! Somehow, a stupid guy becomes a president. I also think its funny that people call Bush a cowboy? You bet he's a cowboy. It's been High Noon around these parts for a while partner. What's wrong with a cowboy anyway? Most Americans who have achieved anything in life acted like cowboys.

I have not yet met a retired or active-duty Special Forces operator that doesn't love this cowboy. The world's got a scary problem. That train full of bad guys is in and there's more coming. I know. I know. Every country has its problems. I mean, Hell man, how many years has Japan tried to get rid of Godzilla? Fucker keeps coming back...and back.

Fox News Tony Snow said recently, "War is not the absence of peace. War is when the good guys win." Hang on to your saddle horns, Bucko! The U.S. has somebody with simple, clear-cut principles and ACTS on them. Bush maybe a cowboy, but he's my goddamn cowboy.

YEE-HAAA!

Oh, and don't forget to tip your French waiters and waitresses. They've been working real hard servicing enemies for decades.

Bye-Bye!

Buffalo Nickels is a retired U.S. Army special forces operator who does occasional consultant work and wishes to remain anonymous so he may put in his five cents worth on life, liberty and the pursuit of whatever he sees fit.

Points to Ponder

American forces in the Persian Gulf must supply their own toilet paper. The Pentagon is not responsible for personal items, so troops must wait on line for hours at the PX to buy toilet paper, shaving cream, and toothpaste, or else ask for care packages from home. "Twice a month, as soon as I get his paycheck, I have to spend \$60 on toilet paper and wet wipes to send to him," said the wife of Army Cpl. Anthony Hopwood. - South Florida Sun Sentinel

U.S. Marine Battalions are going into battle in Iraq carrying live pigeons to warn them of chemical attacks. "I got sensors that cost \$12,000 and birds that cost \$60 each," said Staff Sgt. Dan Wallace, "and I place just as much trust in the bird as the sensor." - Associated Press.



It wasn't all bad -The name of Pfc. Lori Ann Piestewa, a Hopi Indian who was the first woman to be killed in the Iraq war, will live on in her native Arizona. Last week, the State Board on Geographic and Historic Names voted to rename Squaw Peak, a 2608-foot mountain in Phoenix, after her. The move was welcomed by activists who had campaigned against the original name, which they said was derogatory to Native Americans. "It was the right thing to do," said geography professor Martin Pasqualetti, who serves on the board. "This woman was singular in her sacrifice."

Only in America -A part-time instructor at Citrus College in Glendora, CA told students they could earn extra credit by writing to President Bush about the Iraq war - but only if they opposed it. Letters in support of the war were not acceptable, said Rosalyn Kahn. Freshman Chris Stevens wrote a letter but asked Kahn not to mail it, because it didn't express his true feelings. "She refused," said Stevens. "So I didn't turn it in and couldn't get credit."

With the collapse of Saddam Hussein's regime, the prices of firearms have tripled in Baghdad. Weapons of choice like AK-47 assault rifles and Uzi submachine guns typically fetch \$150 to \$200. The presence of U.S. troops has done little to dissuade vendors. "When the Army comes in, we hide the weapons in our pockets," said arms merchant Ahmed Hussein. He estimates that 70 percent of Iraqis are armed. - *Chicago Tribune*.

Latrine Duty -There's no shortage of weaponry floating around Iraq these days, but senior officials thought danger would come from Iraqi, not coalition, arms caches. Not so. "We cannot afford to lose our manpower through dumb-s___ actions like this," says one senior coalition officer, referring to an accidental ammo discharge last week that wounded a soldier and damaged a helicopter. To curtail misfires, coalition forces in the 101st Airborne Division have been told to pack up their grenades and antitank missiles - in the original boxes. The glitch: Many soldiers had already turned the wooden crates into makeshift latrines.

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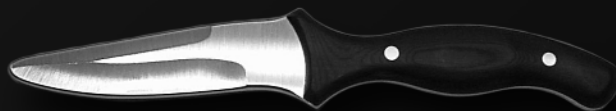
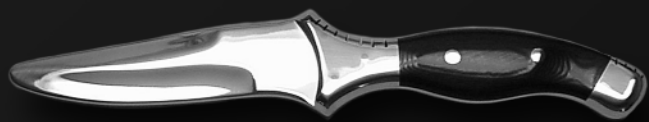


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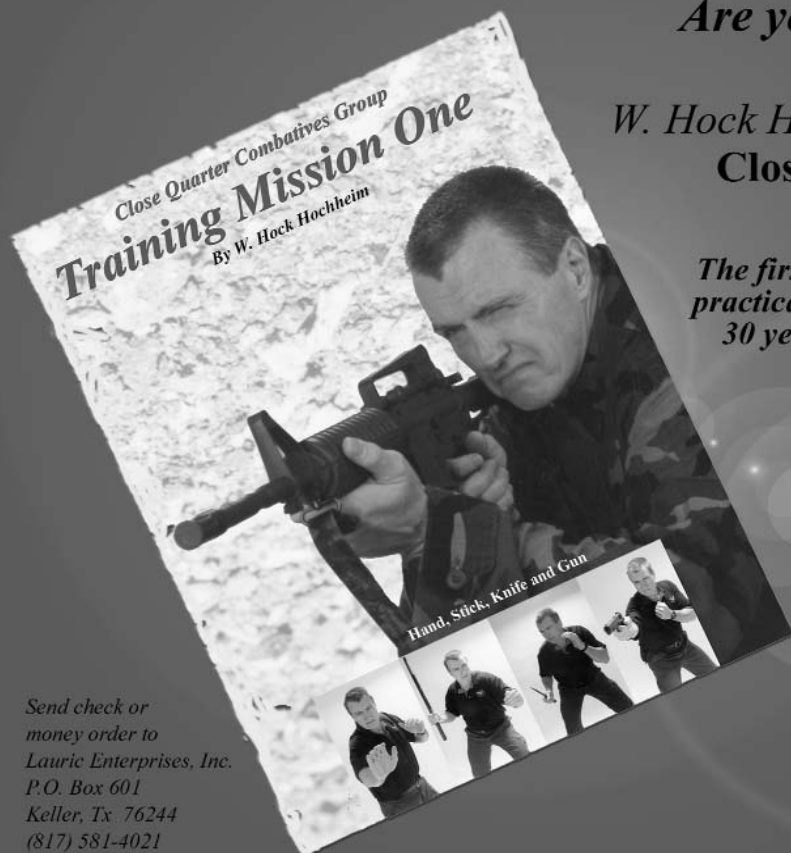
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