

Soldiers want to come home!

Casualties of war (3/19/03 - 7/31/03), and still counting ...

- **U.S. soldiers : 249**
- **Iraqis : more than 7,000**
- **U.S. Cost : 52 Billion (~\$500 per household) up to now**
- **U.S. Job lost : 236,000 since Jan. 2003**

Fighting in Iraq Is Continuing, But at Home, Grief Just Begins

by Sarah Kershaw, *The New York Times*, July 27, 2003

His family wanted a "showboat funeral " for Cpl. Travis J. Bradach-Nall, a 21-year-old marine who was killed in Iraq clearing mines on July 1... At the head of the procession, of course, was Corporal Bradach-Nall's mother, Lynn Bradach, 51,...She was always a liberal Democrat, she said, and had signed various petitions circulating in Portland against the war, even as she found herself in the awkward position of trying to support the military, her son's employer. Now she plans to join the international campaign to ban land mines and do whatever she can to get a Democrat elected president in 2004, she said.

"I don't ever do anything that would hurt the Marines," she said. "However, I want everything to come out about why decisions were made. And I don't want to hear, 'Well, you know what, it's over now, the decision was made.' You know what? **If you make a wrong decision, you have to pay for that.** I want to make sure that changes are made or people are held accountable for what happened."

3 G.I. Are Killed Guarding North of Baghdad

by Richard A. Oppel Jr., *The New York Times*, July 27, 2003

The attacks continue to deeply frustrate soldiers. "What a lot of people don't understand is that the war is far from over," said Pfc. Adam Gable, of suburban Washington, D.C., who stood guard outside the hospital tonight. Another private first class, Higinio Nunez, from Fresno, Calif., said, "All we want is for people to see that we are here to protect them." But he said Iraqis "**call us Ali Babas,**" a common reference to thieves.

One patient allowed to leave the hospital this afternoon, who would say only that he was from the town of Khan Bani Saad, said that residents were tired of the American presence, and that frustration might have been behind the attack. "People don't like to see Americans here," he said.

Bush, Republicans Losing Support of Retired Veterans

by Steven Thomma, *Knight-Ridder*, July 27, 2003

President Bush and his Republican Party are facing a political backlash from an unlikely group - retired veterans. Registered Republican James Cook, who retired to Fort Walton Beach, Fla., after 24 years in the Air Force, said he is abandoning a party that he said abandoned him. "Bush is a liar," he said. "The Republicans in Congress, with very few exceptions, are gutless party lapdogs who listen to what puts money in their own pockets or what will get them re-elected."

Veterans have two gripes.

One is a longstanding complaint that some disabled vets, in effect, have to pay their own disability benefits out of their retirement pay through a law they call the Disabled Veterans Tax.

Since 1891, anyone retiring after a full military career has had their retirement pay reduced dollar for dollar for any Veterans Administration checks they get for a permanent service-related disability. However, a veteran who served a two-or-four-year tour does not have a similar reduction in Social Security or private pension.

A majority of members of Congress, from both parties, wants to change the law. A House proposal by Rep. Jim Marshall, D-Ga., has 345 co-sponsors.

But it would cost as much as \$5 billion a year to expand payments to 670,000 disabled veterans, and Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld earlier this month told lawmakers that the president would veto any bill including the change.

The proposal is stuck in committee. A recent effort to bring it to the full House of Representatives failed, in part because only one Republican signed the petition.

(over ↘)

The second complaint is over medical care. After decades of promising free medical care for life to anyone who served for 20 years, the government in the 1990s abandoned the promise in favor of a new system called Tricare. The Tricare system provides medical care, but requires veterans to pay a deductible and does not cover dental, hearing or vision care.

A group of military retirees challenged the government in a class-action lawsuit, won a first round, then were seriously disappointed when Bush allowed the government to appeal. Government won the next legal round.

Administration Lies Hurt Democracy, Cost Soldiers' Lives

by Crispin Sartwell, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, July 28, 2003

By the time Bill Clinton was impeached, it was obvious that he had the sexual mores of a tomcat and had lied about it. But he should never have been impeached: His actions were disgusting, but they were not fundamental attacks on democracy or the legitimacy of the American state. If, on the other hand, it turns out that George W. Bush, Dick Cheney, Condoleezza Rice, Donald Rumsfeld, and Colin Powell started us killing Iraqis and Iraqis killing us by a systematic distortion of intelligence, they have instituted government by lies, and many, many people have paid with their lives. That is an abrogation of democracy, a fundamental violation of their responsibility to the people of this nation.

The Bush administration then resolved to repeat every rumor - no matter how baldly ridiculous - that justified the attack and to repress all information that went the other way. They pressured everyone - intelligence agencies, weapons inspectors, Iraqi dissidents - to exaggerate the threat. The buildup to the war involved military maneuvering, but above all, it involved a long, drawn-out disinformation campaign designed to secure allies and public opinion. It is not the war itself that is proving to be the domestic crisis but the disinformation that brought us to it. And that is the right result.

If you can control what people believe, you can control what they do. The Bush administration managed to manufacture a consensus for war by distorting the context of public opinion, so that the American people did not precisely understand what they were being asked to kill and die for.

It has happened before, when President Lyndon Johnson manufactured an incident in the Gulf of Tonkin to justify greater war powers in Vietnam and then prosecuted that conflict in a poisonous atmosphere of lies. The war ended Johnson's presidency.

Lying about matters of state to manipulate the citizenry makes democracy impossible. You don't know what you're voting for, or against. **If the matter is war, lying is murder.**

Pentagon may punish GIs who spoke out on TV

by Robert Collier, *The San Francisco Chronicle*, July 18th, 2003

On Wednesday morning, when the ABC news show reported from Fallujah, where the division is based, the troops gave the reporters an earful. One soldier said he felt like he'd been "kicked in the guts, slapped in the face." Another demanded that Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld quit.

The retaliation from Washington was swift. **CAREERS OVER FOR SOME**

"It was the end of the world," said one officer Thursday. "It went all the way up to President Bush and back down again on top of us. At least six of us here will lose our careers."

In Baghdad, average soldiers from other Army brigades are eager to spill similar complaints.

"I'm not sure people in Washington really know what it's like here," said Corp. Todd Burchard as he stood on a street corner, sweating profusely and looking bored. "We'll keep doing our jobs as best as anyone can, but we shouldn't have to still be here in the first place."

Nearby, Pfc. Jason Ring stood next to his Humvee. "We liberated Iraq. Now the people here don't want us here, and guess what? We don't want to be here either," he said. "So why are we still here? Why don't they bring us home?"

Unveiling Bush's Mass Deceptions

by John Nichols, *Capital Times* (Madison, WI), July 29, 2003

Appearing before the House Intelligence Committee last Thursday, former CIA director John Deutch delivered a sobering assessment of the questions that have arisen regarding President Bush's prewar claims about Iraqi threats: "If no weapons of mass destruction or only a residual capacity (is) found, the principal justification enunciated by the U.S. government for launching this war will have proven not to be credible," Deutch said.

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