

## **GI SPECIAL #57**



Soldiers stand near a truck hit by a rocket propelled grenade after a convoy of military vehicles was attacked in the central al-Mansour area of Baghdad July 14, 2003. Attackers also fired machine guns at U.S. soldiers in Baghdad, killing one and wounding six. (Faleh Kheiber/Reuters)

***“Get my son home”***

# **MILITARY FAMILIES TURNING AGAINST THE WAR; A LETTER FROM IRAQ**

By SUZANNE SATALINE, St. Petersburg Times, July 13, 2003

"I'll get my son back - I pray to God," said Deborah Britto of Hollywood, Fla., a Vietnam-era veteran, who opposed the war in Iraq from the start. "But it won't be the son I sent."

**President Bush's decision to invade Iraq has created doubters in the gung-ho world of the military.** Some soldiers' families were fervent believers in Bush's plan to root out Saddam Hussein's hidden trove of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons until the mission turned up dry. Others immediately dismissed that rationale, but trusted that America was helping people under a repressive, vindictive regime.

**The war's toll in recent weeks has altered those views. Parents and relatives wonder whether Iraq ever wanted America's help. They find themselves fretting that the United States has embroiled itself in a tendentious and endless conflict.**

Ron Shell worries about what's being asked of his son. Here's a young man, he said, who has been living in the desert, then in combat and then is asked to flip a switch and become a peacekeeper.

**"You've got to consider after 10 months there's got to be emotional fatigue, physical fatigue," Ron Shell said.**

**"You feel they've been abandoned," Donna Shell said.**

**"Abandoned's not the right word," her husband cut in.**

**"Used," she offered.**

**"Abused," he decided.**

"He hasn't had to shoot anybody and he hasn't been shot at," said Dan Withers of Dade City. His enlisted son Josh, 22, is working in transport support with the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Force.

His wife, Emma, admits she feels snookered by the whole international venture.

"I gave (Bush) the benefit of the doubt," she said. "Because I felt they might have intelligence information that was not available to me. I guess I hoped if they were going to make the leap, they would base it on something I didn't have knowledge of. I'm not sure of that anymore.

**"You just don't want to think you're being led down the garden path by the president and Colin Powell. ... I think I'm tired of being lied to."**

**It's hard for her to admit, because she's a registered Republican. Dan Withers voted for Bush in 2000 "to my regret."**

Britto, of Hollywood, has a 23-year-old son, Ashley, who is with the 82nd Airborne. "He jumps out of perfectly good airplanes," she likes to crack. Ashley liked to reassure his mom that jumping at night wasn't that dangerous. "The bombs will light up the sky for us."

But in recent weeks she's detected a change in the tone of his letters. He seemed sensitive to the opinions the American public had of their work.

"We don't want to come back like in Vietnam and be told we're baby killers," she remembers him writing.

In another letter he mentioned he was living in a house without doors or windows and the sand clogged their throats in the 105-degree heat. He told her a lot of the guys were getting discouraged because they had been told they would be shipped home, only to be told later those plans were on hold.

The main idea now is keeping our sanity. ... I'm here taking it one day at a time. I can't wait to get home.

Your baby is doing good. I love you, Mom.

Love, Ashley

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What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to the E-mail address up top.

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

### **Spouses, Kids Endure Own Agonies Of War**

*(USA Today, July 11, 2003)*

For the 10,000 families left behind at Fort Campbell, Ky, home of the 101st Airborne Division, the specter of bad news never lifts. Ten soldiers of the 101st have died in Iraq since the war began. **Wives "at their wit's end" call counseling hotlines at all hours**, says Chaplain Maj. David Giammona, director of family counseling there.

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## **“ALL WE ARE HERE...IS SITTING DUCKS”**

By William Rivers Pitt, Truthout 11 July 2003

**There was a picture on the front page of the New York Times on Tuesday, July 8. It showed several American soldiers in Iraq sitting in utter dejection as they were informed by their battalion commander that none of them were going home anytime soon**, and no one knew exactly when they were going home at all. PFC Harrison Grimes sat in the center of this photo with his chin in his hand, staring at ground that was thousands of miles from his family and friends. A soldier caught in the picture just over PFC Grimes' shoulder had a look on his face that could break rocks.

**Last Sunday, CNN's Judy Woodruff showed a clip of a Sergeant Charles Pollard, who said, "All we are here is potential people to be killed and sitting ducks."**

212 of PFC Grimes' fellow soldiers have died in Iraq, and 1,044 more have been wounded.

A significant portion of the dead and wounded came after Bush stuck his beady chin out on national television and said, "Bring 'em on!"

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

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS:**

# **3<sup>RD</sup> ID HAMMERED AGAIN**

By Borzou Daragahi, *Associated Press*, July 14, 2003

**On Monday, the military said a soldier was killed and four were wounded in fighting in Baghdad. The soldiers were with the 3rd Infantry Division,** which is charged with patrolling the capital, Baghdad, said Spc. Giovanni Llorente, a military spokesman.

The spokesman gave no details about the attack,

However, there were several explosions along the al-Khadra Highway in western Baghdad early Monday, and an Associated Press photographer on the scene said witnesses reported U.S. casualties. It was not clear if it was the same incident referred to by the military.

Also Sunday, Iraqi police and coalition forces exchanged fire at a military checkpoint in Baghdad, witnesses said. **They said a police vehicle drove up to a coalition checkpoint and started shooting, and soldiers returned fire.** It was not clear if there were casualties, and the U.S. military had no immediate comment.

Four suspected anti-American militants were killed when they opened fire on Army scouts near Baqouba, military officials said.

In Saturday's night raids, AC-130 gunships flew over the sites, as Apache and Kiowa helicopters hovered. Tanks established security cordons, and Humvees and Bradley fighting vehicles carrying infantrymen stormed houses and walled compounds.

In the village of Mutlaq Nayif, just north of Taji along Highway 1, loudspeakers ordered residents to get out of their homes. After searching the tall grass surrounding the homes, soldiers walked out with armfuls of assault rifles, machine guns, stocks of ammunition,

camouflage military uniforms and the black robes used by Fedayeen warriors. Col. Frederick Rudesheim, commander of the 4th Infantry Division 3rd Brigade, said 35 people were detained.

In the Tigris River town of Hassan bin Mahmud, which Rudesheim described as “the village that time forgot,” a monument to Saddam remained standing in the town square. **Locals cursed arriving American soldiers, said Rudesheim, whose men blew up the statue of the ousted Iraqi leader.**

In Muqtaria, north of Baquba, a group of armed men fled into fields as the Americans approached. Soldiers searched the area, ultimately detaining 10 men. “It was a cat and mouse game all night,” Hogg said.

**Near Balad, servicemen found two anti-aircraft guns which they destroyed. Near Baqouba, soldiers raided two houses producing anti-American propaganda.** They captured a former general in Saddam’s Fedayeen militia, a former air force general and the former number two in the Diala province Baathist party. All are suspected of organizing anti-U.S. violence.

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## U.S. Soldier Killed in Ambush

BAGHDAD (Reuters) - By Andrew Gray, July 14, 2003

The United States lost its 32nd soldier in postwar combat in Iraq Monday.

In the latest incident, assailants targeted a convoy of military vehicles in the central al-Mansour area of Baghdad at around six a.m., a military spokesman said. Casualties were taken to a military hospital.

Attackers fired rocket-propelled grenades and machine guns at U.S. soldiers in Baghdad on Monday, killing one and wounding six, the U.S. military said.

Witnesses said one vehicle was hit by a rocket-propelled grenade and another by machinegun fire. Bloodstains on an armored Humvee vehicle and the crumpled cab of an army truck bore testament to the attack.

Dozens of U.S. troops searched the area as helicopters hovered above. Soldiers searching an abandoned house in the area found a light machinegun probably used in the attack.

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## More Troops Die

Posted 7/10/2003 USA Today

The U.S. military announced several new attacks.

An American soldier was shot and killed near the city of Mahmudiyah, 15 miles south of Baghdad, on Wednesday evening.

Another soldier was killed and one wounded Wednesday in a rocket-propelled grenade assault on a five-vehicle convoy near Baqouba, 45 miles northeast of Baghdad, said Lt. Col. Bill MacDonald of the Army's 4th Infantry Division.

In the city of Ramadi, 60 miles west of the capital, three separate overnight mortar attacks targeted U.S. servicemen, but there were no reports of casualties, the military said.

The military also said a soldier died Wednesday in Balad from what it described as a non-hostile gunshot incident. There were no further details. Another American soldier stationed near Balad, 55 miles north of the capital, died of a non-hostile gunshot wound Monday; soldiers at a nearby air base said he took his own life.

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## Pentagon Finally Admits # Of Wounded: *Over 1,000*

CNN, 10 July 2003

**WASHINGTON (CNN) -- For the first time since the start of the war in Iraq, Pentagon officials have released the number of U.S. troops wounded from the beginning of the war through Wednesday.**

**Responding to a request by CNN, the Pentagon said more than 1,000 U.S. troops have been wounded or injured in Iraq since March 20, when a U.S.-led airstrike started the war.**

The Defense Department provided these figures:

791 troops were wounded or injured during combat

253 troops were wounded or injured in action not related to combat operations, such as traffic accidents or accidental gunshot wounds

The Pentagon did not disclose the type of wounds or injuries sustained. But the numbers shed more light on the overall toll the fighting has taken on U.S. troops during the war and subsequent occupation of the country.

**Wednesday, a U.S. military base in the central Iraqi town of Fallujah came under attack as a rocket-propelled grenade hit its perimeter, military sources said. There were no reports of injuries.**

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## **Aid Groups In Iraq Also Under Attack**

*(Christian Science Monitor, July 11, 2003)*

American troops are bearing the brunt of the daily attacks in central Iraq, with two more soldiers killed. But international aid groups are also being targeted—undercutting their humanitarian efforts and causing them to question the close working relationship many have developed with U.S. forces.

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## **TROOP NEWS**

# **3<sup>rd</sup> I.D. TOTALLY FUCKED AGAIN; RETURN HOME CANCELLED; “Now There Is No Timeframe”**

July 14, 2003, Associated Press

**SAVANNAH, Ga. — The Army said Monday that thousands of 3rd Infantry Division soldiers based at Fort Stewart have had their deployment in Iraq extended, dashing hopes that the troops would be home by September.**

Maj. Gen. Buford C. Blount III, the division’s commander, said last week he hoped the division’s 1st and 2nd Brigade Combat Teams of roughly 9,000 soldiers could return within the next six weeks.

**Homecomings for those soldiers, as well as the division’s 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment, have now been postponed indefinitely,** Fort Stewart spokesman Richard Olson said Monday.

**“Now, that timeframe has basically gone away, and there is no timeframe,” Olson said.**

The 3rd Infantry Division, which deployed 16,500 troops to Iraq, has suffered 36 deaths — more than any other unit in the war.

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## **6,000 Ground Troops Have Come Home; 145,000 Still Stuck In Iraq**

By Thom Shanker, The New York Times, 10 July 2003

Mr. Rumsfeld said 142,000 military personnel had returned to their home bases, although most of those serve in the Air Force and Navy, leaving the burden in Iraq to American ground forces. The current ground force figure, 145,000, is down from its peak of 151,000.

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

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### The Baghdad Blues Troops Are Edgy And Angry As Ambushes, Casualties Rise

*(New York Daily News, July 11, 2003)*

U.S. troops in Iraq are struggling to maintain morale, but the growing number of snipings, bombings and attacks by rocket-propelled grenades are making them nervous and angry. **"I'm more scared now than when we went to war," said 1st Sgt. Benjamin Moore of the Army's workhorse 3rd Infantry Division that led the assault on Baghdad. "At least then you had your lines drawn, you knew where you stood, where the enemy was."**

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### Rumsfeld Fights To Kill Troops Health Benefits

*(Philadelphia Inquirer, July 11, 2003)*

Providing inactive National Guard members and reservists the same health care benefits as active-duty soldiers could force cuts in other areas of the military, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld told lawmakers in a letter this week. **He said he would recommend that President Bush veto the defense authorization bill if it included a Senate plan to expand TRICARE, the military health program.** He estimated the change could cost \$5 billion per year, but Democrats disputed that figure.

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### General Blamed In Scandal At Academy Demoted By One Star As He Retires

*(Denver Post, July 11, 2003)*

The general in charge of the Air Force Academy when a sexual-assault scandal erupted there is being demoted as he retires because Air Force leaders say he failed to detect and stop the attacks. Lt. Gen. John Dallager, former superintendent of the school, is to retire Aug. 31 after 34 years. He will do so, said Air Force secretary James Roche, with one less star, as a two-star major general.

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### India Refuses To Send Troops To Iraq

July 14, 2003, **By Jennifer C. Kerr, Associated Press**

Rumsfeld has been talking about getting Indian troops to help relieve U.S. troops in Iraq. **"On Monday, the Indian government rejected a U.S. request for Indian peacekeeping troops in Iraq, saying such a deployment would be considered only under a U.N. mandate."**

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## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

### **Dead Troops A “Sign of Success” Bremer Says**

July 11, 2003, The Guardian, Jonathan Steele in Baghdad and Michael Howard in Sulaimaniya

US officials still talk in bullish tones. "The voice of freedom is upon the land," Paul Bremer, Iraq's US administrator, declared recently. **Although he admitted the number of attacks on US troops was growing, he saw this as a sign of success.** "

When attacks on Americans occur, people in the crowds which quickly gather rarely tell reporters they feel sorry for the dead young soldiers. More often they join in a postmortem celebration of the resistance fighters' deeds.

**In a typical case in central Baghdad last week when a gunman fired a grenade at an American Humvee before vanishing into the teeming backstreets, adults and children stomped on the roof of the crippled vehicle in delight before setting it on fire. (Maybe Bremer should come out of hiding and join the celebration. Another “sign of success”, no?)**

Even in Kurdish-controlled northern Iraq the economy has been hit hard. Lucrative revenues from cross-border trade have dried up and the region's 13% slice of national oil revenues under the oil for food programme is under threat. Civil servants and other workers have gone unpaid and unemployment is rising fast.

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### **The Eternal War; Rumsfeld Says No End In Sight; Agrees With Bremer Dead Troops Mean Success**

Julian Borger in Washington, July 14, 2003, The Guardian

The US defense secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, said yesterday that he expected more attacks on US troops in Iraq this month but **that the 150,000-strong force was likely to stay for the "foreseeable future"**.

**Mr Rumsfeld cautioned yesterday that "we're still at war"**, and it would not be possible to reduce the American military presence any time soon.

***He portrayed the attacks as a paradoxical consequence of the invasion's success.***

**He said there was evidence that some attacks, particularly in the north, were coordinated**, but denied that the coalition was "bogged down".

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## Troops May Be In Iraq 4 Years

*(Philadelphia Inquirer, July 11, 2003 )*

Gen. Tommy Franks told Congress that American troops may have to remain in Iraq up to four years, as the Senate, in a unanimous vote, called on President Bush to seek help from NATO to reduce the U.S. military presence there. Franks, who commanded American troops during the Iraq war, said he expected the U.S. troop strength of about 148,000 service members to remain unchanged until next year.

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*Bremer Plan For Recruiting Iraqis To Kill U.S. Troops:*

## Concentration Camps in Baghdad; Families Live in Fear of Midnight Call by US Patrols

by Daniel McGrory, The Times Online, 9 July 2003.

**NEVER again did families in Baghdad imagine that they need fear the midnight knock at the door. But in recent weeks there have been increasing reports of Iraqi men, women and even children being dragged from their homes at night by American patrols, or snatched off the streets and taken, hooded and manacled, to prison camps around the capital.**

**Children as young as 11 are claimed to be among those locked up for 24 hours a day in rooms with no light, or held in overcrowded tents in temperatures approaching 122F.**

On the edge of Baghdad International Airport, US military commanders have built a tent city that human rights groups are comparing to the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay.

Remarkably, the Americans have also set up another detention camp in the grounds of the notorious Abu Ghraib prison, west of Baghdad. Many thousands of Iraqis were taken there during the Saddam years and never seen again.

Every day, relatives scuff their way along the dirt track to reach the razor wire barricades surrounding Abu Ghraib, where they plead in vain for information about the whereabouts of the missing.

**The response from impassive American sentries is to point to a sign, scrawled in red felt-tip pen on a piece of cardboard hanging on the barbed wire, which says: "No visits are allowed, no information will be given and you must leave."**

Some, like Ghania Hassan, sink to their knees in despair. She holds a photograph of her eldest son, Mohammed Yasim Mohammed, a 22-year-old student. She said that he was walking through al-Shaab market with friends when passing troops saw him eating biscuits from an American military ration pack and accused him of being a looter. Allegedly he was pushed face down on the street while his friends tried to explain how a

soldier a couple of streets away had given them the biscuits.

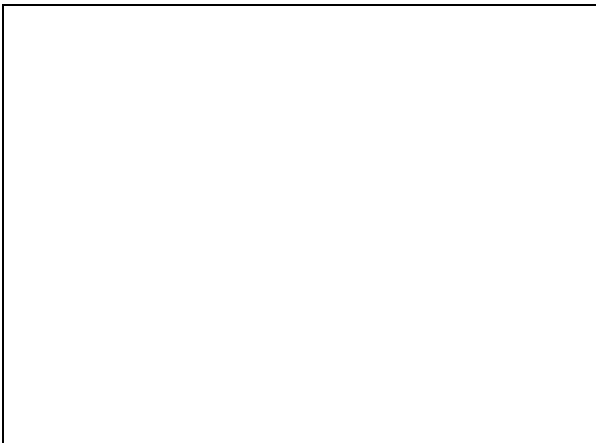
A month later nothing has been heard of the young man. His mother showed a fistful of letters and petitions that she has collected from US officials, local magistrates and a Muslim cleric, but she and the rest of the complainants were told at gunpoint to move away from the prison gates.

**Such behavior merely fuels the growing hostility between local people and the soldiers they had welcomed barely three months ago.**

Families will naturally protest the innocence of their relatives, but the accounts, such as that of Aliah Khadoum, who describes how her son went out to buy cigarettes on June 1 and was arrested for breaking curfew, are rarely allowed to be tested by the local magistrates, who have begun daily court hearings in the capital.

Elizabeth Hodgkin, of Amnesty International, who has a bulging case file of arrests, said: "I cannot believe the Americans are so stupid and insensitive as to behave like this after all the trouble they have had over Guantanamo Bay. They must treat their detainees humanely and let them have visits from family and lawyers."

**Amnesty claims that 80 minors have been detained, accused of petty offences including writing anti-American graffiti or, in the case of two teenage boys, climbing on the back of a US troop carrier to hitch a lift through a main street in Baghdad.**



**Winning Hearts And Minds:** US soldiers restrain an Iraqi prisoner who allegedly stirred trouble. (AP Photo/Murad Sezer, File)

**One of the most disturbing incidents concerns Sufiyan Abd al-Ghani, 11,** who was with his uncle in a car that was stopped near his home in Hay al-Jihad at just after 10 pm on May 27. The boy's father heard a commotion and rushed outside to see him sprawled face down on the road with a rifle muzzle pressed against his neck and US officers shouting that someone in the car had shot at them.

Sufiyan was made to stay on the ground for three hours, while more than 100 soldiers poured into the neighborhood, searching houses and cars. Eventually he was taken away with his hands trussed behind his back and a hood draped over his head. No

weapon had been found. The boy said that soldiers dug rifle butts into his neck and back and that the first night he was handcuffed and left alone in a tiny room open to the sky.

The following day he was moved to the airport, where he said for eight days he shared a tent with 22 adults, sleeping on the dirt, with no water to wash or change his clothes. Sufiyan said that he was pulled from the tent one morning, hooded and manacled again, and driven to Sarhiyeh prison, to be kept in a room with 20 other youths aged 15 or 16 - regarded as minors by the Geneva Convention.

A woman inmate took his name and details and when she was released she alerted Sufiyan's family. On June 21, the family obtained an injunction from a judge ordering the boy's release, but they were told at the prison that the signature of an Iraqi judge no longer had legal authority. **Even when an American military lawyer demanded his freedom, US troops refused to release him until the lawyer appeared at the prison. Privately US military lawyers say that they are appalled at how some of the arrests are being carried out.**

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## Officials Admit Troops Can't Protect Oil Fields From Resistance Attacks

RUMAILA, Iraq, July 9, **By Rob Reynolds, CNBC News**

American and Iraqi officials agree that the lack of security remains the biggest obstacle to restoring the oil industry.

**“Our installations spread on a vast area stretching from al Faw to K3 in the north — that’s about 720-750 kilometers,”** said Jabbar. **“It’s very hard now to cover all this area with security.”**

**South Oil Company is throwing together a skeleton security force to guard its facilities. But for now, it’s up to American and British troops, thinly spread across the vast desert landscape, to guard Iraq’s oil facilities, upon which the country’s future depends.**

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## **Iraq Cost Could Mount To \$100 Billion; Impact on Other Programs Feared As Money Pissed Away Down Rat Hole**

*[Washington Post, July 13, 2003,]*

Analysts say the war and occupation of Iraq could reach \$100 billion through next year, substantially more than originally thought.

## **Pissed Away Part 2: \$1 Billion A Week, And That’s On The Low Side. So Much for a ‘Self-sustaining’ Reconstruction.**

*[Newsweek, July 21, 2003,]*

Sen. Richard Lugar, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, said American forces will be in Iraq for a long time. **The “burn rate” for funding the U.S. military presence in Iraq is running about \$1 billion per week. And that doesn’t include what it costs to run Iraq’s government and rebuild infrastructure.**

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## British Troops Accused of Iraq Beatings

SUNDAY TIMES, 13 Jul 2003, Jon Swain, Majar al-Kabir

BRITISH soldiers hunting the killers of six members of the Royal Military Police in southern Iraq have been accused of beating up and abusing 13 Iraqis they were questioning inside a police station.

Sheikh Mohammed al-Ebadi, a prominent community figure and intermediary with the British forces, described the beatings as an "unprovoked, brutal and humiliating attack".

He complained that several of the injured required hospital treatment for bruising to the head, back and legs and that one man suffered a fractured leg. Al-Ebadi said the incident had increased resentment against the British forces and nearly caused another bout of bloodshed in the town.

The incident occurred on the evening of June 30 during a mixed patrol by soldiers of the 1st Battalion the Parachute Regiment and members of the Royal Military Police (RMP).

**When the patrol entered the police station they found a group of Iraqi volunteer policemen inside.**

At first, the Iraqis said, the British soldiers were friendly; then without warning they turned hostile. **They forced the Iraqis to lie face-down in a line on the concrete floor and, said two of the men, Ahmed Fadael and Abdul Hussein Basim, an officer stomped on them in his army boots, kicked them and threatened to shoot them.**

Fadael, 32, said he was ordered to stand up and was pushed into a room where a British officer and his Iraqi translator were waiting.

The interpreter demanded to know the killers' names. Fadael replied that he had not been in Majar on the day of the killings and had no idea. Even if he had known, he said, he would not have told the British. The interpreter is said to have replied: "Okay. I have nothing more to do with you now. I will leave the British officer to punish you."

Fadael said: "**The British officer** took a red scarf and wrapped it around my neck from behind and pulled it hard. He pushed me on the ground and dragged me around by the scarf. He hit my head against the sofa and against the wooden desk. I said I was a diabetic. **The translator told the officer I was sick and he said, 'It is better to kill a sick man than a well man'.**"

According to Fadael, **the officer went on: "I have an order from my government to shoot you. They will never object to it. If you do not tell us the names of the killers I will kill you like you killed our men."**

**Fadael was jailed for nine years as a dissident under Saddam Hussein. He was subjected to electric shock torture and had his toenails pulled out. He claimed the British were "doing the same" as Saddam and the officer had said: "Maybe Saddam was too kind with you. We will not be like that."**

Basim said: "They put us on the ground and walked over us." Another man, Salman Kassim, said: "They started to punch us and hit us with their rifles." Abbas Mahdi, another police volunteer, said he had been hit on the head.

Whatever the paras intended to do next was pre-empted by a group of locals who gathered outside the police station, allegedly because they had heard yells of pain. One got inside, saw what was happening and ran to al-Ebadi's house.



AP U.S. troops stand in front of the Fallujah mayor's office as local policemen protest the troops' actions. By John Moore,

**The sheikh says he was having a meeting with British officers about ways to reduce tension. With Said Saddaq, the senior district official, he rushed to the station where, he said, people were so angry "they were threatening to go home, get their weapons and kill the British".**

**The crowd seized the interpreter, ripped off the scarf masking his face and smashed his spectacles. They identified him as a former member of Saddam's regime who had worked in the passport section of the dictator's security apparatus in Amara, witnesses said.**

Al-Ebadi tried to calm the situation but it remained tense. A British soldier who spoke broken Arabic and an officer are said to have fired shots in the air and into the ground. One soldier threw a stun grenade. A helicopter hovered overhead.

**According to the Iraqis, the incident ended with a swift British withdrawal. The soldiers grabbed their translator and scrambled aboard a military vehicle which had reversed through the entrance to pick them up, demolishing part of a brick wall in the process.**

**In Majar last week people were still seething with anger. They said the incident had proved the British could not be trusted, despite assurances that there would be no revenge.**

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**

# Poll: U.S. Losing Control in Iraq

NEW YORK, July 10, 2003, (CBS)

**With U.S. troops continuing to take casualties in Iraq, less than half of Americans now believe the U.S. is in control of the situation there -- a dramatic decline from April, when 71 percent thought it was.**

**Less than half now say Iraq was a threat that required immediate action.** And while 54 percent still believe that removing Saddam Hussein from power was worth the costs of war, that figure, too, has declined from 65 percent in May.

A majority still believes the U.S. will eventually turn up weapons of mass destruction, but fewer are confident of this today than they were last month, and the public divides on whether the war will have been worth it if no weapons of mass destruction are found. For the first time a majority now says the Bush administration overestimated the extent of the Iraqis' weapons.

**Americans continue to look homeward, and they rate the economy -- not Iraq -- as the nation's most important problem. There is even more concern about the state of the economy -- just one in four thinks it is improving.**

**Americans' belief that the U.S. is in control of the situation in Iraq has plummeted to 45 percent, down from 71 percent in late April.**

***However long Americans foresee U.S. troops staying in Iraq, 45 percent of those who have a time frame in mind say it will be too long.*** That feeling is particularly high for those who believe the U.S. will be there more than five years: almost two-thirds of them think that will be too long.

Americans are now evenly split over whether the war will have been worth it if no weapons are ever found. This is down from May, when a majority thought the war would be worth it even if no weapons turned up.

**For the first time since the war began, less than half say Iraq really was a threat that required military action --** and a majority says it could have been contained or was no threat at all. In April, 58 percent thought so. Before the war, Americans express similar opinions, changing only when American troops went into battle.

## IT'S THE ECONOMY

**To many Americans, it is the economy and jobs that matters, more than the continuing hostilities in Iraq and more even than the terrorist threat. And the public continues to give the economy -- and the President's handling of it -- decidedly mixed reviews.**

**Now, almost four in ten -- 39 percent - cite the economy and jobs as the number one problem facing the country today. Terrorism and the war in Iraq are each far behind.**

More than half of Americans say the national economy is worse today than it was two years ago, during the first year of Bush's presidency. 30 percent say it is about the same, but just 13 percent think the economy is better today than it was two years ago.

As has been the case for the past few months, the public gives the president mixed marks on his handling of the economy. 41% approve of his handling of the economy and 46% disapprove. These numbers are down from last summer when more than half of Americans approved of the job Bush was doing on the economy.

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## **DEMOCRATS AND REPUBLICANS WANT BIGGER ARMY SO TROOPS CAN STAY IN IRAQ**

By Thom Shanker, The New York Times, 10 July 2003

**Senators from both parties - James M. Inhofe, Republican of Oklahoma, and Jack Reed, Democrat of Rhode Island - pressed Mr. Rumsfeld on whether the Pentagon should consider increasing the number of people in uniform to handle global missions.**

"It seems to me that we have to be prepared to increase our Army, the number of brigades in our Army, or to activate National Guard divisions, and we have to make that decision soon," Mr. Reed said.

And on Capitol Hill, **Rep. Ike Skelton, D-Mo., the senior Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee**, said he had a fear "we may find ourselves in the throes of guerrilla warfare for years."

**"We cannot leave Iraq," Skelton said at a committee hearing with retired Gen. Tommy Franks, the U.S. commander in the war. "This must be a success."**

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### **Blair Aides Are Said To Doubt Finding Weapons**

*(New York Times, July 11, 2003)*

Senior officials in British Prime Minister Tony Blair's government say privately that they no longer believe that unconventional weapons will be uncovered in Iraq, British news organizations reported.

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### **US Plans To Seize Suspects At Will**

*(London Times, July 11, 2003)*

The United States appeared to be at loggerheads with Britain and other allies after it declared that it had the authority to intercept any ships or aircraft suspected of carrying weapons of mass destruction in international waters and airspace. Under present laws it is only legal for nations to stop and search suspect vessels within their 12-mile territorial limits.

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## **Complete Idiocy Prize For The Month Goes To...**

*[Washington Times, July 14, 2003]*

Moscow protested suggestions by the U.S. ambassador, **who said Russia is not cooperating in the hunt for Saddam Hussein.**

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## **AFGHANISTAN: THE FORGOTTEN WAR**

### **1,300 US And Italian Assault Troops End Offensive, Accomplish Nothing**

BAGRAM AIR BASE, Afghanistan, July 9 (AFP) - US and Italian troops have concluded a four-day operation against Taliban remnants and al-Qaeda fighters in southeast Afghanistan, a US military spokesman said Wednesday.

Lefforge said the coalition forces dismantled one illegal border checkpoint and confiscated a small cache of weapons.

The operation, backed by 25 aircraft, was the biggest since the massive US-led Operation Anaconda offensive against Taliban and al-Qaeda holdouts in the mountains of neighboring Paktia province in March 2002.

He said some 250 vehicles were inspected and 400 people interviewed, but no one was detained during the operation.

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### **National Guard Unit Belatedly Bound for Afghanistan; After Commander Relieved For Running Around Naked**

Fayetteville, North Carolina Observer, July 10, 2003, By Kevin Maurer

A North Carolina National Guard aviation regiment has had a long wait from mobilization to deployment but will soon be on its way to Afghanistan.

Aviators from Fort Bragg will be glad to see the Guard unit.

The National Guardsmen from the 1st Battalion of the 130th Aviation Regiment are making final preparations to relieve the 3rd Battalion of the 229th Aviation Regiment from Fort Bragg.

Some of the soldiers from the 229th have been in Afghanistan for more than 300 days.

The wait for relief has reportedly been frustrating to the 229th. For the past couple of months, sources told the Fayetteville Observer, some soldiers from the 229th have been sending letters to Congress complaining about the time it has taken to get a replacement for their unit.

A letter from an unidentified soldier obtained by the Observer accuses the 130th of taking an excessive amount of time to get ready. The letter notes that the commander of the unit at the time it was mobilized was relieved of command after allegations that he ran naked outside the barracks at Fort Bragg.

The new commander of the 1st Battalion of the 130th, Lt. Col. Ronny Coats, said the complaints about his unit are based on misinformation and rumor.

**"I am doing everything I can with my battalion to relieve those guys in place," Coats said. "It is almost a forgotten war, and there is nothing that would make me happier than to get over there and relieve them."**

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### **Afghan Blast Likely Was A Rocket Attack**

*[Chicago Tribune, July 13, 2003]*

A suspected rocket attack near the perimeter of Bagram air base, the staging post for U.S.-led forces in Afghanistan, caused no casualties or damage.

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### **Briton, 18, Arrested For US Nuclear Computer Breach**

*(London Times, July 11, 2003)*

A British teenager has been arrested for allegedly hacking into computers at the department responsible for the safety of America's nuclear arsenal. The security breach emerged after music and video files were placed on 17 computers in Batavia, Ill., at laboratories run by the Department of Energy. The 18-year-old from Woodford Green, Essex, allegedly enabled other internet users to access the department's computer system to download the files.

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**MAILBAG: THANKS TO B WHO E-MAILED THIS IN 7.9: B WRITES:**

Rumsfeld Says New Evidence Did Not Spur War With Iraq

U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld said today the United States did not go to war with Iraq because it had discovered new evidence that Iraq was producing banned weapons but because it regarded existing evidence differently than it had before September 2001. **(never one to miss an opportunity) B**

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