

SIT-REP

Situation Normal: All Fraq'd Up

A Publication of Iraq Veterans Against the War - IVAW.ORG

*Servicemembers
have the right to
keep one copy of
this or any
publication in their
possession.
(DoD directive
1325.6)*

BLACK WATER, RED WATER

by John-Paul Hornbeck

One flows with thick viscosity
Inside of pipelines
While the other quickly
Spills out of veins

Grizzly hunters looking for prey
Shoot to kill, can't have it another way
Only a child going to school
With few classmates left to brave
The treacherous road

Marching behind Old Glory
Claiming patriotic in cause
Yet answering to the highest bidder
All-American when commissioned
Just a company doing its job
When held with accountability

Not wearing a flag or uniform
Marching to the beat
Of a different drum
A new tribe of headhunters,
Game wardens, trigger-happy rednecks,
Should-be retired cops & Marines
whose response time isn't what it used to be
Or all too well-knowing, yet unjustified.

Mercenaries masquerading as soldiers
Yet not held to their actions
Quickly whisked out of country
Should fatal mistakes occur
Leaving real soldiers to deal
With the aftermath of
Hellfire, retaliations, mobs, and
Angry civilians wanting retribution
For fallen innocent lives.

Inso-mania

by Jon Turner

I havent slept in 3 days.
I am tired.

Closing my eyes does nothing for me.
It gives me fear.
Fear gives me rage.
Rage makes my mind race.
My racing mind keeps me awake.
Staying awake drains my body.
My drained body still produces energy.
My energy makes me pace.
Pacing tires my legs.
My tired legs make me sit.
Sitting makes my back sore.
My sore back makes me lie down.
Lying down makes me tired.
Being tired helps me close my eyes.
Closing my eyes does nothing for me.

ISSUE #2 NOVEMBER, 2007

The contents of this newsletter are written by
and for veterans of the Global War on Terror.

The goal of this publication is to provide an
outlet for 21st Century warriors to express
their thoughts and opinions in an uncensored
environment.

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Yippie-Ki-Yay Motherfraquer!

by Jared Hood

At this point all that Blackwater is missing in Iraq is a barefooted Bruce Willis jumping from rooftop to rooftop and a quick one-liner for every innocent civilian whom they kill. These contractors roam the villages and countryside of Iraq just waiting for their next opportunity to “waste some Hajis.” As most Iraq Veterans know, these men and women aren’t there to bring peace or provide protection, they’re there to exploit no-bid contracts and reenact their own rendition of a cheesy 80s action movie.

On September 16th of 2007, a Blackwater private security detail was escorting a convoy of U.S. State Dept. vehicles en route to a meeting in Western Baghdad. When the convoy drew close to Nissor Square, a car driving very slowly on the wrong side of the road, ignoring a police officer’s whistles to clear a path for the convoy, prompted the security contractors to open fire. In the confusion, and mistaking their stun grenades for explosions, Iraqi soldiers began firing on the Blackwater team. Iraqi Brigadier-General Abdul-Karim Khalaf stated that a mortar round landed close to the convoy and the security detail fired upon civilians at random. The incident was captured on film and the Iraqi Government responded by revoking the firm’s license to operate in Iraq.

This incident is just one of many like it that have occurred since Blackwater entered Iraq in 2003. Falling in

that blank space between no Military jurisdiction, no judicial oversight by the Department of State, and not having to answer to the Iraqi Government; they have been able to exploit the occupation of Iraq for financial gain through no-bid contracts. Most of us have either worked with them directly, or witnessed their disregard in person. GIs sometimes get trigger happy too, especially when serving in a combat zone like Iraq with no clear mission and no frontline enemy at whom to point our weapons; but at the very least we have a chain of command to report to. We know that at some point, word will travel high enough and we’ll have some General preparing a court martial in response to our rash actions. Blackwater thugs, on the other hand, knowing damn well that there is no authority monitoring their behavior and no audit monitoring their spending, carry on with their “Die Hard” antics unchecked.

By September of 2007, the Iraqi people had had enough. They stood up to the continuous back-handed and disastrous actions in which Blackwater takes part. They were also sending a message to the Bush administration, that they will no longer allow these “Rambos” to roam the countryside. After all, it is their country, isn’t it? Aren’t we (the United States) there to bring them peace and democracy and freedom and all of those other great bumper-sticker ideologies?

In the grand tradition of the Bush administration, they soon showed the Iraqi people just how important they really are. While the ongoing oversight committee hearings take place, the corporation has been awarded an indefinite contract worth \$92 million by the Pentagon for operations in countries such as Iraq and Afghanistan. As if that weren’t already bordering on the illegal, the State Department’s initial report detailing the September 16 incident, (which failed to mention the Iraqi civilian casualties,) was written by a Blackwater employee; one begins to wonder if Blackwater really is above the law.

The point of all of this, simply put, is that the Bush administration does not care. They don’t care about what the Iraqi people want. They don’t care about freedom and democracy and all of those other words that have been misused so often, we have forgotten their true meaning. They don’t care about the American taxpayer, working to pay for illegal occupations and to line the pockets of war profiteers. They don’t care about the American soldier when they award 92 million dollars to a private company while we, the troops, can’t get adequate equipment or medical care. And finally, they show time and again how they don’t care that Americans, Iraqis, and U.S. troops alike all want an end to this ongoing disaster in Iraq.

The New Private Warriors

by Martin Smith

Book Review:

Blackwater The Rise of the World's Most Powerful Mercenary Army

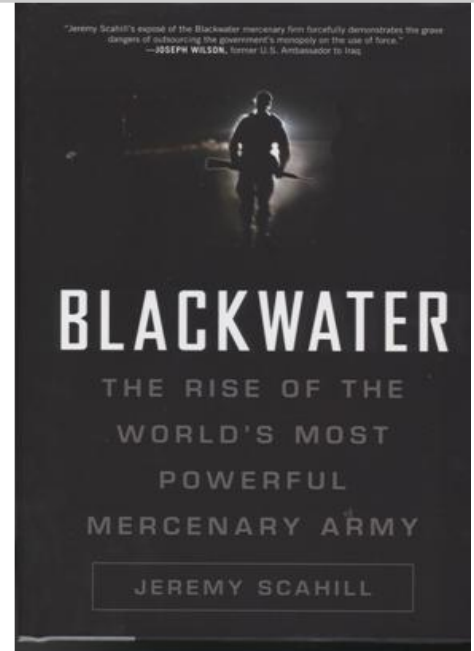
Jeremy Scahill's book is a tour de force of investigative journalism and a work that should be read throughout the anti-war and GI resistance movements. Currently, the 180 "private contractor" companies operating in Iraq, who supply everything from logistical support to security services, have more employees than there are U.S. combat troops. While American forces have relied on mercenaries in prior wars, the current campaign to privatize the war effort is distinctly new and has grave implications.

Scahill points out that the current push towards "guns for hire" is neither an accident nor the flawed strategy of an errant president. Rather, the use of private contractors dates back to the early 1990s with the downsizing and restructuring of the armed forces. Both Republican and Democratic administrations have taken part in this process. The military began a massive privatization drive under then-Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney during the administration of Bush Sr. According to Scahill, "The idea was to free up the troops to do the fighting while private contractors handled the back-end logistics... More contractors

meant fewer troops, and a much more politically palatable troop count." By August of 1992, Halliburton, soon to be headed by Cheney himself, began to lead the support work for the military for the next five years, while Bill Clinton was President. Clinton continued the privatization agenda, and Halliburton received lucrative contracts for services during the conflicts in the Balkans and Kosovo. The Clinton years paved the way for the Rumsfeld Doctrine, which promoted using the private sector for all aspects of war, including combat.

Erik Prince, a former Navy SEAL from a wealthy establishment family, saw the financial opportunity in these developments and formed Blackwater USA in 1997. While privatization schemes for the military crosses party lines, Prince and the crew at Blackwater are decidedly partisan. Prince himself donates to and participates in fundamentalist religious and right-wing causes, while the upper echelons of Blackwater's staff reads like a who's who of the extremist theocratic Right, including Paul Behrends and Joseph Schmitz.

What began as a training facility for law enforcement personnel and special ops forces in North Carolina has become a corporation providing the world's most powerful mercenary army, what Scahill terms the "Praetorian Guard" for the Global War on Terror. Blackwater USA currently has



personnel working in at least nine countries, including over 2,300 mercenaries. Moreover, private contractor companies are now hiring the most notorious thugs from around the world, including Chilean commandos who served under General Augusto Pinochet and white apartheid-era South African Special Forces.

Blackwater's success, Scahill writes, has grown from two key factors. One, through Prince's connections with Christian-Republican causes, he has garnered a powerful lobbying arm made up of well-connected former federal officials and military brass. Through these ties, Blackwater has been able to win key government contracts and shift its services to meet the cutting-edge needs of a growing security-industrial complex. Two, Blackwater has benefited from the post-9/11 geo-political climate. Scahill explains how the "war on terror" has been a

boon for Blackwater and a “key ideological underpinning of legitimating private contractors and security.”

In addition to this, the instability in Iraq has benefited the mercenary industry as a whole, diverting expenditures away from reconstruction. On March 31st of 2004, four Blackwater contractors were killed and their bodies were mutilated by an angry mob in Fallujah. The firm has thus far evaded prosecution for negligence in how they sent employees out on a mission ill-equipped and unprepared. Yet, rather than calling into question the role and mission of private contractors, the incident played into the propaganda machine by providing a pretext with which to launch a series of devastating attacks against the people of Fallujah. A week after the ambush, Prince met with key members of the

Senate Armed Services Committee. “The mercenary gold rush was on,” as Scahill put it. With the reality of a resistance on the rise in Iraq, “Blackwater was thrust into the fortunate position of a drug rep offering a new painkiller to a patient at the moment the worst pain was just kicking in.”

In June of 2004, Paul Bremer passed the infamous Order 17, which granted sweeping immunity for the actions of contractors in Iraq. That is, mercenaries were now no longer held accountable for their actions under any national or military laws or codes of conduct. Contractors had free reign to potentially commit war crimes with impunity. Scahill points out that at the time, the United States began to move towards the option of utilizing death squads to foment sectarian divisions in Iraq. Facing no criminal prosecution,

mercenaries were free to potentially use assassinations, repression, and torture as methods aimed to stoke divisions in Iraq and pacify the resistance.

Scahill does not shy away from asking the larger questions. What are the consequences for democracy when military services are outsourced to corporate entities with no accountability? What are the implications of a government that relies upon paramilitary organizations who flout U.S. law and potentially the Constitutional rights of its citizens?

Scahill’s Blackwater is a clarion call to the Anti-war Movement to redouble its efforts by demanding not only that coalition soldiers be pulled out of the Middle East; but that all occupying foreign forces, including those of Blackwater, withdraw immediately as well.



Detainee #337 by *Eric Estenzo*

I served with the United States Marine Corps, 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion from 1999 to 2005. In July of 2003, In Camp Dogwood, twenty-five miles south of Baghdad, Detainee #337 was processed along with several other detainees during my watch. They were lined up in the sitting position, hands tied at the wrists, blindfolded, while facing the concrete wall.

I wanted to somehow record what I saw, so I seized the opportunity, grabbed the sketchbook tucked inside my Interceptor vest pocket, and started to sketch #337. Two months later, 4th LAR headed back to Camp Pendleton, CA, where I finished the #337 sketch in charcoal and graphite. As I look at the charcoal piece today, it brings a whole new meaning to our current status as "liberators" in Iraq. I know what this picture means to me. What does it mean to you?

Toxic Munitions Report

by Casey Elder

In the past 10 years, the United States has purchased more than 16 million depleted uranium shells and bullets from Alliant TechSystems alone. In the past 16 years, US troops have fired as much as 3,000 tons of bullets and shells made of uranium in conflict areas from the Balkans to Iraq. Yet all too many soldiers know nothing about uranium, exposure to this danger, or how it can impact their life. Depleted uranium (DU) exposure can cause an accelerated aging of the cells involved, causing them to be unable to properly perform their given functions. This can lead to a variety of diseases, ranging from chronic fatigue to cancer. Exposure to DU is a source of ill health for many Gulf War and Iraq war veterans.

Depleted uranium is created when natural uranium is enriched for use in nuclear reactors and nuclear weapons; only the uranium isotope U-235 can be used in these nuclear processes. The remaining uranium product is comprised of U-238 and smaller amounts of U-235 and U-234, this "leftover" uranium is known as depleted uranium. Not surprisingly then, uranium, in its natural (or "depleted") state, is radioactive and chemically toxic. Contact with DU can cause overall health problems, cancers, birth defects, and inherited genetic damages.

Uranium is pyrophoric, meaning that it burns easily. A uranium projectile, traveling at 2 km per second, will burn at

3,000 to 6,000 degrees Celsius when it strikes armor; burning a hole in the armor, vaporizing the vehicle's inhabitants and (according to Pentagon studies) vaporizing up to 70% of the uranium projectile into particles that can be as small as a nanometer. These tiny particles are invisible and can remain in the air indefinitely; they can also pass through any filter and through the lung-blood and blood-brain barriers at the cellular level, causing physical harm.

There are three primary ways in which DU enters and damages the body; inhalation, ingestion, and wounding. When a DU round hits the target, portions of the device essentially vaporize, becoming a very fine dust that can be easily inhaled or ingested. This dust also lingers for a long time at the site, still very dangerous; it can be kicked up and inhaled or ingested years later. Regardless of how DU enters the body, it has devastating and lasting affects. The US and UK are consistently trying to play down the health risks, as late as 2003 the UK was still denying any danger to soldiers from exposure; a stance that they have since changed as new research has come out. DU has been proven to turn healthy cells into cancerous cells. Additionally, DU exposure can actually damage the individual's chemical DNA makeup; this is what is passed on from one generation to the next, causing increased birth

defects in families that have been exposed. Exposure to DU can result in a depressed immune system, increased risks of leukemia, reproductive problems, birth defects, and lung cancer.

If you have been in an area of operations that may have exposed you to depleted uranium, you need to be tested. Within one year of exposure, a simple urine test can determine whether there are trace levels of DU in your system. After a year it may take a lung biopsy or bone marrow test to check for these trace elements. Contact your local VA Hospital to see what can be done. Depleted uranium exposure is a serious issue that is being overlooked by our military and government, don't let them stop you from getting the care you need and deserve.

WINTER SOLDIER

by Thomas Paine 12/23/1776

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman. Tyranny, like hell, is not easily conquered; yet we have this consolation with us, that the harder the conflict, the more glorious the triumph. What we obtain too cheap, we esteem too lightly: it is dearness only that gives every thing its value.

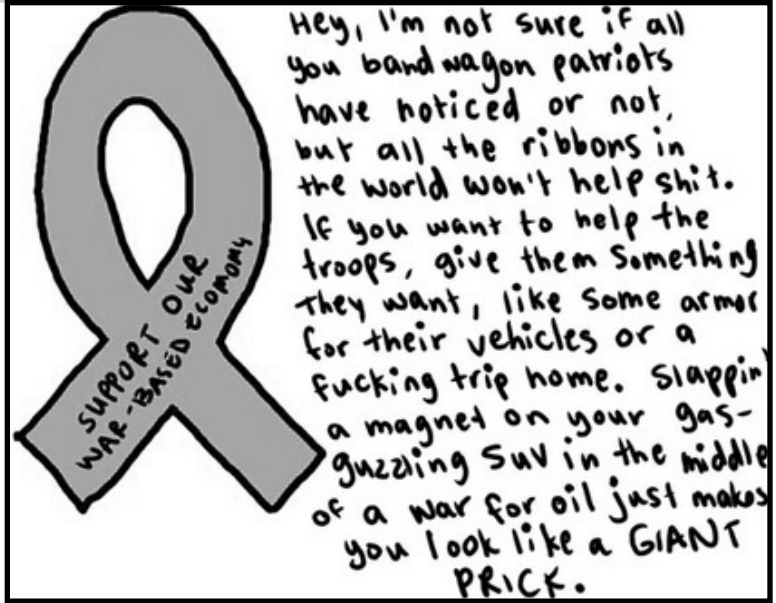
For more information, contact:
wintersoldier@ivaw.org

Magnet Madness

by Nate Lewis

There's a statement that's been thrown around a lot lately, like a football on a Sunday. This statement is shallow, yet people still try to hide behind it. "Support the Troops!" You may have heard this as an argument for the continued occupation of Iraq, or perhaps it has passed you going 90 mph on the highway in the form of a yellow magnet. What exactly does "Support the Troops" mean? I have no idea and I'm one of the "troops."

I can tell you what it doesn't mean. It doesn't mean you must continually support a horrible war thousands of miles away; it doesn't mean you must blindly follow a tactically-challenged commander-in-chief; and if there's one thing I'm sure of, it's that supporting the troops isn't slapping a little yellow magnet on your car. Sorry Bud, it's no longer cool to show off your love of the troops and the war they're stuck fighting with a meaningless magnet. When Private Fluffy is out fighting for his life, dodging IEDs or trying to sleep at night, it doesn't comfort him to know that back home there are literally millions of yellow ribbons zipping across this fine land we call America. When I was hauling around Baghdad I never looked over to my nervous friend and said, "Don't worry buddy, I hear back home they got little yellow ribbons on almost every car, we're going to be fine." Not once. So what does it mean to support the troops? To me, it means backing up the soldiers with a competent and truthful government. Support the troops means knowing what is going on in Iraq, and demanding accountability and debate. Support the troops is not banging your neighbor's wife while he is in Iraq. Support the troops is a coherent mission; not an endless war with shifting justifications. Supporting the troops is in the streets, demanding the immediate withdrawal from Iraq. Don't believe me? Ask a soldier facing a third or fourth deployment. Hey troop, magnets and madness or should we end this obvious war for money, power and oil and come home?



Scorpions, Cobras, and Vultures by John-Paul Hornbeck

Crawling through urban ruins
Scampering away from debris
Depleted uranium dust falls
Like ash settling on Pompeii.

Peering out beneath the sands
Bunkered in from mortar blasts
Gaping holes in concrete walls
Bricks and shingles litter roads.

Earth erupting in the sky
Disturbing lairs of creatures
Bomb shelters collapsing
Burying silent victims.

Slithering out from commotion
Side-winding through streets
Around charred corpses
Rodents and insects feast.

Landing on carrion flesh
Sifting through the remnants of humanity
Beaks grip and claws clench
Fighting over the spoils of war.

APPEAL FOR REDRESS FROM THE WAR IN IRAQ

Many active duty, reserve, and guard servicemembers are concerned about the war in Iraq and support the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

The Appeal for Redress provides a UCMJ authorized means through which individual servicemembers can urge their member of Congress to end to the U.S. military occupation. The appeal has already reached thousands of servicemembers who seek redress from the war. The initial appeal messages were delivered to members of Congress on January 16, 2007. The Appeal for Redress will continue to be delivered to Congress until all our brothers and sisters come home from Iraq. The wording of the appeal is short, simple, and to the point. It is patriotic and respectful in tone.

Clip and send to:

**Appeal for Redress
P.O. Box 53052
Washington, DC 20009**

Members of the military have a legal right to communicate with their member of Congress. Article 4.1 of DoD Directive 7050.6, the Military Whistleblower Protection Act, states that "Members of the Armed Forces shall be free to make a protected communication to a member of Congress." Attorneys and counselors experienced in military law are available to help servicemembers who need assistance in countering any attempts to suppress this communication.

<http://appealforredress.org>

(360) 241-1414

Appeal for Redress

As a patriotic American proud to serve my nation in uniform, I respectfully urge my political leaders in Congress to support the prompt withdrawal of all American military forces and bases from Iraq. Staying in Iraq will not work and is not worth the price. It is time for U.S. troops to come home now.

The information you submit will be sent to members of Congress and the Senate. The appeal's organizers will not release your information to any other individual or organization.

Please indicate your duty status: Active Duty___ Active Reserve or National Guard___ IRR___

First Name: _____ MI: ___ Last Name: _____

Secure non-military e-mail address: _____

Duty Station: _____ Home ZIP Code: _____

Have you served in the Iraq Theater? Yes___ No___

Branch of Service: _____ Rank: _____

GIs - KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

GIs have the legal right to:

Consult with a congressional office, civilian counselor or service, or a lawyer about a problem.

Appeal any court-martial conviction, discharge denial, or non-judicial punishment.

Say what they think and feel about the military, and participate in peaceful demonstrations when they're off-duty, out of uniform, off-post, and in the U.S.A. (DoD Directive 1325.6)

Request redress from their Commanding Officer for any grievance, and write a formal complaint against their CO if redress is not granted. (Article 138, UCMJ)

Call for information from a network of nonprofit, non-governmental organizations. The service is free. The call is confidential.

The GI Rights Hotline
800-394-9544

Overseas number:
215-563-4620

<http://girights.org>

girights@objector.org

Remember: Rights are not given, they are fought for and exercised.

NOVEMBER IVAW EVENTS

IVAW NorthEast

November 9th & 10th - House parties in Potsdam, NY - Contact lewisredleg@yahoo.com

November 10th - Combat Paper workshop at St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY
Contact drew@ivaw.org

IVAW Oklahoma

November 10th - Veterans Day concert at the Duvallz Club; 4 SW Lee Blvd in Lawton, OK

Minnesota Chapter

November 11th at 11am - Remember the fallen this Veterans Day at the State Capital grounds in St. Paul

Chicago Chapter

Thursdays at 6pm - Veterans Helping Veterans, a call-in show on Channel 21 CAN-TV

Friday nights - Veteran get-togethers at the office BYOB
November 2nd at 7pm - Dinner party for veterans
Contact chicago@ivaw.org

November 11th at 11am - Veterans Day observed at the Veterans Memorial, Wacker Dr. and Wabash

November 18th at 6pm - Veterans won't hide out - Local bands play fundraiser show at The HideOut, 1354 W Wabasania Ave

Madison Chapter

November 11th at 2pm - Tombstones will be installed to memorialize our fallen troops at Olbrich Park in Madison, WI

Boston Chapter

November 7th at 7pm - Film screening: *Why We Fight* - A look into the military-industrial complex and its influence on our foreign policy
33 Harrison Ave, 5th floor

November 15th at 7pm - Film screening: *Sir! No Sir!* - An inspiring and compelling history of the GI resistance movement during the Vietnam War
33 Harrison Ave, 5th floor

Providence Chapter

November 9th at 7pm - Chapter kick-off and Fundraiser party at Brown University
23 University Ave

Philly Chapter

November 11th at 8pm - Veterans Day benefit show featuring Ryan Harvey and Son of Nun at TriTone, 1508 South St.

**War is a racket.
A few profit
and the
many pay.**

*USMC Maj. Gen.
Smedley D. Butler*