

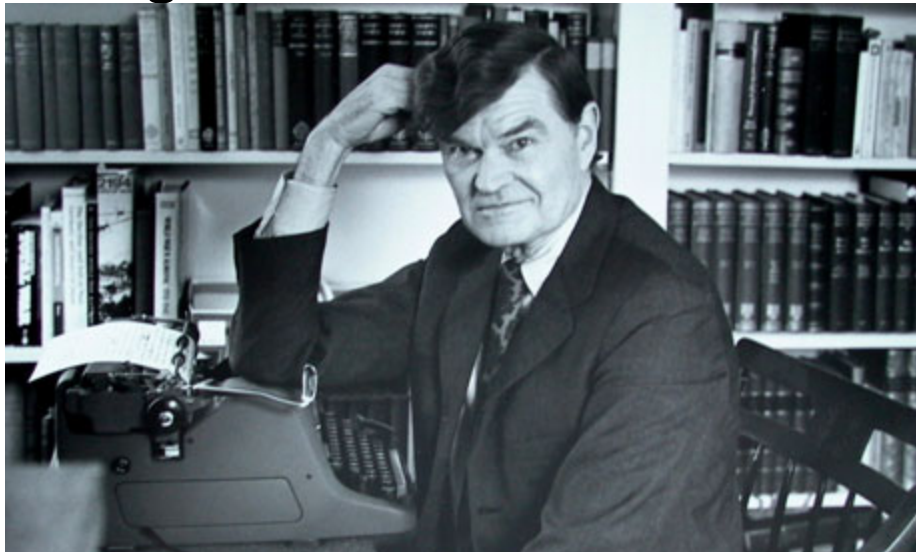
Military Resistance 10E15



**A Book For Memorial
Day:
Paul Fussell, The Critic Who
Fought The Hypocrisy Of
Military Sacrifice:
His Classic Study, “The Great War
And Modern Memory,” Was
Rooted In His Own Bitter
Experience Of Loss And Waste In
Combat:**

“The British Army – With Its Emphasis On Rank And Top-Down Orders – Becomes A Death Trap For Its Most Dutiful Soldiers”

“Fussell’s Postwar Military Experience (He Was Not Discharged Until 1946) Only Deepened His Hatred Of The Army And Large Institutions In General”



24 May 2012 By Nicolaus Mills, Guardian News and Media Limited [Excerpts]

[Thanks to Clancy Sigal, who sent this in. He writes: “I’d recommend The Boys’ Crusade and Doing Battle.”]

Paul Fussell, who died on Wednesday at the age of 88, was the classic public intellectual who wrote on everything from poetic meter to the role of class in American society.

But what made Fussell more than just a versatile and gifted academic (he had a long and distinguished teaching career at Rutgers and the University of Pennsylvania) was his writing on war.

His insight into the first world war, achieved in his breakthrough 1975 study, *The Great War and Modern Memory* – which received the National Book Award for Arts and Letters – was brought full circle by his own combat experience in the second world war.

He was wounded and awarded the Bronze Star and two Purple Hearts.

The Great War and Modern Memory made Fussell's critical reputation. At its emotional core is the British experience on the western front and Fussell's own anger at how the language of the first world war seduced so many young men into needlessly sacrificing their lives.

For Fussell, the murderous idealism of the Great War was summed up in a newspaper notice a young volunteer published two days before the declaration of war. "PAULINE", the notice read, "I will dash into the great venture with all that pride and spirit an ancient race has given me."

Fussell believed such idealism, naive as it may appear to us now, had to be taken seriously.

In his eyes, pronouncements like this summed up centuries of misplaced faith in the power of personal action and Christian sacrifice.

In *The Great War and Modern Memory*, the answer to such murderous idealism is countered by the reaction to the trench warfare felt by such British writers as Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen, and Robert Graves. Particularly revealing is Fussell's analysis of Graves's celebrated first world war memoir, *Goodbye to All That*.

Fussell treats Graves's book not as a gritty documentary (an English version of Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*) but as deliberate farce in which the British army – with its emphasis on rank and top-down orders – becomes a death trap for its most dutiful soldiers. Fussell admires Graves because he harkens back to the satirical tradition of Ben Johnson and looks forward to that of Joseph Heller in *Catch-22*.

Fussell's own second world war experience as a second lieutenant, who carried a leather-bound New Testament into battle because he thought it might slow down shell fragments, came very close to duplicating the experience of Graves. Fussell, too, was wounded in battle and, like Graves, he took no pride in the suffering he endured. On a night-time mission that should have never been undertaken, Fussell was struck by German fire that killed the two men next to him.

Fussell's response to his injuries and those he saw in the fighting leading up to Germany's surrender was not satirical, however. On hearing the news of his friends' deaths, Fussell was overcome by a "black fury" that, as he goes on to say, "has never entirely dissipated".

For Fussell, who was 20 at the time he entered the army, the result was a life-changing experience. He was, he knew, lucky not to have been killed. What his time with the infantry showed him was that as far as his commanders were concerned, he was expendable.

Fussell's postwar military experience (he was not discharged until 1946) only deepened his hatred of the army and large institutions in general. "I am entirely serious when I assert that if I have ever developed into a passable literary scholar, editor, and critic, the credit belongs to the United States Army," Fussell observes midway through his 1996 memoir *Doing Battle: The Making of a Skeptic*.

But Fussell's observation is not merely ironic. It also explains the passion that lies at the center of his best work. All too often, Fussell was described as sardonic when, in fact, he was a deeply caring critic who wanted the world he lived in after second world war to avoid the wartime chaos and violence he saw firsthand before he ever entered college.

In no place in his writing is the pleasure Fussell took in basic decency on greater display than in his much-overlooked 1982 essay, *The Boy Scout Handbook*. Fussell begins his essay by lamenting that the famed critics of his generation never turned their attention to *The Official Boy Scout Handbook*. They should have, he argues, and to demonstrate that he is perfectly serious, Fussell goes through the *Handbook*, with meticulous care before concluding that it is a "compendia of good sense".

At no point in *The Boy Scout Handbook* is there ever a hint by Fussell that ordinary life demands less attention than high poetry. Instead, he concludes his praise of the *Handbook* by reminding us: "The generously low price of \$3.50 is enticing, and so is the place on the back cover where you're invited to inscribe your name."

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Foreign Solider Killed In South Of Afghanistan; Nationality Not Announced

May 25, 2012 BNA

A foreign soldier was killed in the south of Afghanistan yesterday. The identity of this solider has not clear, but he was lost his live in explosive of mines. The announcement said nothing about identity and exact area of this event.

With killing of this solider, the killing of NATO soldier in current year in Afghanistan reached to 173.

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WAR**

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: ALL HOME NOW



U.S. Army soldiers from Alpha troop, 4-73 Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 82nd Airborne division are silhouetted as they walk during a mission in the Maiwand district of Kandahar province, April 10, 2012. REUTERS/Baz Ratner

MILITARY NEWS

U.S. Government Traitors Hiding Death By Toxic Burn Pits:

**“Government Agencies Have Told
The Public, Veterans And
Congress That They Couldn’t
Draw Any Connections Between**

“Burn Pits” Disposing Of Trash At The Military’s Biggest Bases And Veterans’ Respiratory Or Cardiopulmonary Problems”

**“A 2011 Army Memo Obtained By
Danger Room Flat-Out Stated That
The Burn Pit At One Of Afghanistan’s
Largest Bases Poses ‘Long-Term
Adverse Health Conditions’ To
Troops”**

**The Memo’s Findings Contradict Years
Of U.S. Military Assurances That The
Burn Pits Are No Big Deal**



A bulldozer dumps a load of trash into a burn pit just 300 yards from the runway at Bagram Airfield, January 2012. An Army memo from 2011 found the burn pit is associated with “long-term” health effects on soldiers at Bagram. Photo: U.S. Army

“The long term health risk” from breathing in Bagram’s particulate-rich air include “reduced lung function or exacerbated chronic bronchitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, atherosclerosis, or other cardiopulmonary diseases.” Service members may not necessarily “acquire adverse long term pulmonary or heart conditions,” but “the risk for such is increased.”

Airmen and soldiers joked with me about catching “Bagram Lung.”

But for at least a year, the U.S. military has known that “Bagram Lung” won’t stay at Bagram.

There’s a significant chance that it will plague a generation of Afghanistan veterans for the rest of their lives.

May 22, 2012 By Spencer Ackerman, Wired.com [Excerpts]

For years, U.S. government agencies have told the public, veterans and Congress that they couldn’t draw any connections between the so-called “burn pits” disposing of trash at the military’s biggest bases and veterans’ respiratory or cardiopulmonary problems.

But a 2011 Army memo obtained by Danger Room flat-out stated that the burn pit at one of Afghanistan’s largest bases poses “long-term adverse health conditions” to troops breathing the air there.

The unclassified memo, dated April 15, 2011, stated that high concentrations of dust and burned waste present at Bagram Airfield for most of the war are likely to impact veterans’ health for the rest of their lives.

“The long term health risk” from breathing in Bagram’s particulate-rich air include “reduced lung function or exacerbated chronic bronchitis, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), asthma, atherosclerosis, or other cardiopulmonary diseases.” Service members may not necessarily “acquire adverse long term pulmonary or heart conditions,” but “the risk for such is increased.”

The cause of the health hazards are given the anodyne names Particulate Matter 10 and Particulate Matter 2.5, a reference to the size in micrometers of the particles’ diameter.

Service personnel deployed to Bagram know them by more colloquial names: dust, trash and even feces — all of which are incinerated in “a burn pit” on the base, the memo says, as has been standard practice in Iraq and Afghanistan for a decade.

Accordingly, the health risks were not limited to troops serving at Bagram in 2011, the memo states.

The health hazards are an assessment of “air samples taken over approximately the last eight years” at the base.

The memo's findings contradict years of U.S. military assurances that the burn pits are no big deal.

An Army memo from 2008 about the burn pit at Iraq's giant Balad air base, titled, "Just The Facts," found "no significant short- or long-term health risks and no elevated cancer risks are likely among personnel".

A 2004 fact sheet from the Pentagon's deployment health library — and still available on its website — informed troops that the high particulate matter in the air at Bagram "should not cause any long-term health effects."

More recently, in October 2010, a Pentagon epidemiological study found "for nearly all health outcomes measured, the incidence for those health outcomes studied among personnel assigned to locations with documented burn pits and who had returned from deployment, was either lower than, or about the same as, those who had never deployed.

Over the years, thousands of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans have experienced respiratory and cardiopulmonary problems that they associate with their service. Some have sued military contractors for exposing them to unsafe conditions.

For months, Rep. Todd Akin (R-Mo.) has urged the military to create a database of vets suffering neurological or respiratory afflictions, a move that's winding through the legislative process.

But the military has argued it doesn't have sufficient evidence to associate environmental conditions on the battlefield with long-term health risks — and it argued that months after this memo is dated.

"As recently as April, in correspondence with the Defense Department and in discussions with my staff, the Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs both continued to maintain that research has not shown any long-term health consequences due to burn pits," Akin tells Danger Room.

"They also maintained that remaining burn pits in Afghanistan were away from military populations to reduce exposure. It is disturbing to discover that at least at Bagram the military concluded that burn pits posed a serious health risk."

The Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America (IAVA) has collected "hundreds" of anecdotes from vets complaining of health problems connected to serving near burn pits.

"It's good to see someone in the military is acknowledging there are going to be long-term problems with burn pits, but it's disturbing that this memo is more than a year old and it doesn't seem like the military has done anything about it," says Tom Tarantino, IAVA's deputy policy director, who deployed to Iraq in 2005 as an Army captain.

"I lived next to a burn pit for six months at Abu Ghraib. You can't tell me that was OK. That was pretty nasty. While I was there everyone was hacking up weird shit."

Any visitor to the sprawling Bagram airfield knows the burn pit — if not by sight, then by smell.

It's an acrid, smoldering barbecue of trash, from busted furniture to human waste, usually manned by Afghan employees who cover their noses and mouths with medical breathing masks.

Plumes of aerosolized refuse emerge from what troops refer to as "The Shit Pit," mingle with Parwan Province's already dust-heavy air, and sweep over the base.

At the time of the memo's issuance, it noted that the affected population on the base contemporaneously was "40,000 Service Members and contractors."

Hundreds of thousands have cycled through the giant base since the U.S. seized it in 2001.

Bagram is a major transit and logistics hub for the Afghanistan war, and one of the first bases the U.S. took and continuously operated during the war.

Millions more have served in Iraq and Afghanistan near similar burn pits.

According to the Environmental Protection Agency, studies conducted on the effects of breathing in Particulate Matter 10 and 2.5 have determined "a significant association between exposure to fine particles and premature mortality."

The Army memo reports that Bagram's air had twice the amount of Particulate Matter 10 than the federal National Ambient Air Quality Standard, and more than three times the amount of Particulate Matter 2.5 as the standard.

Burn pits remain in use across Afghanistan.

And although a study by the Institute of Medicine and sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs found last October that there is insufficient data to correlate those pits with health risks, troops' cardiovascular problems are clearly on the rise: There were 91,013 cases reported in 2010, up sharply from 65,520 in 2001.

A 2010 study found half of a small sample of soldiers who struggled to run two miles had undiagnosed bronchiolitis.

Hundreds of troops have sued the pits' contractor operators after experiencing chest pains, asthma and migraines.

For years, the U.S. government has pled ignorance about the causes of those veterans' ailments.

And unless the military formally acknowledges that the burn pits pose a long-term health risk, it will be difficult for veterans to receive long-term health care for associated respiratory and cardiopulmonary ailments from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

“The acknowledgement that air-sampling data is now indicating that burn pits may pose a risk of chronic illness to our servicemen and women validates the need for the national burn pit registry that I have proposed,” Akin says.

Tarantino backs him up: “We don’t want another Agent Orange scenario, where it takes 40 years for the military to admit the stuff was bad and then has to spend all this effort tracking down affected servicemembers.”

Even casual visitors to Bagram know that the air is a menace.

Within days of my most recent reporting trip there, in August 2010, I developed a disgusting, productive cough that kept me from sleeping comfortably.

Airmen and soldiers joked with me about catching “Bagram Lung.”

But for at least a year, the U.S. military has known that “Bagram Lung” won’t stay at Bagram.

There’s a significant chance that it will plague a generation of Afghanistan veterans for the rest of their lives.

MORE:

At Last, Scientific Study Finds That Combat ‘Burn Pits’ Damage Troops’ Immune Systems:

**“A New Study Has Confirmed That
Particulate Matter From The Pits
Causes Lung Damage And
Immune System Impairment”**

**“Army Officials Knew How
Dangerous The Pits Were”
Army Officials Continue Lying About It**



Thousands of soldiers have come home with symptoms and illnesses they suspect are linked to open-air “burn pits.” Now, a new study has confirmed that particulate matter from the pits causes lung damage and immune system impairment. Photo: U.S. Air Force

Another memo written by Lt. Col. Darrin Curtis in 2006 and obtained by Danger Room, warned of “an acute health hazard” to personnel stationed at Iraq’s Balad air base.

But as recently as yesterday Pentagon spokesperson George Little told reporters that “we do not have specific evidence that ties these kinds of disposal facilities to health issues.”

May 23, 2012 By Katie Drummond, Wired.com [Excerpts]

Thousands of soldiers have come home with symptoms and illnesses they suspect are linked to open-air “burn pits.”

Since returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan, an untold number of soldiers have come down with puzzling health problems.

Chronic bronchitis. Neurological defects. Even cancer. Many of them are pointing the finger at a single culprit: The open-air “burn pits” that incinerated trash — from human waste to computer parts — on military bases overseas.

Pentagon officials have consistently reassured personnel that there was no “specific evidence” connecting the two.

But now, only days after Danger Room uncovered a memo suggesting that Army officials knew how dangerous the pits were, an animal study is offering up new scientific evidence that links burn pits to depleted immune systems.

“The dust doesn’t only appear to cause lung inflammation,” says Dr. Anthony Szema, an assistant professor at Stony Brook School of Medicine who specializes in pulmonology and allergies, and the researcher who led this latest study.

“It also destroys the body’s own T-cells.”

Those cells are at the core of the body’s immune system, “like a bulletproof vest against illnesses,” Szema tells Danger Room. When they’re depleted, an individual is much more prone to myriad conditions.

For scientists, trying to establish a definitive connection between those diffuse health problems and the pits has been exceedingly difficult to do.

Most notably because the Department of Defense, as a report issued by the Institutes of Medicine noted last year, didn’t collect adequate evidence — like what the pits burned and which soldiers were exposed — for researchers to draw any meaningful conclusions about the impact of the open-air incinerators.

Szema’s study is only on 15 mice, so it’s by no means definitive. But it is an important first step.

Regardless, it’s becoming increasingly clear that Pentagon officials were aware of the risk posed by the pits.

Another memo written by Lt. Col. Darrin Curtis in 2006 and obtained by Danger Room, warned of “an acute health hazard” to personnel stationed at Iraq’s Balad air base. “It is amazing,” he noted, “that the burn pit has been able to operate ... without significant engineering controls being put in place.”

But as recently as yesterday, when asked about the leaked Army memo obtained by Danger Room (which cited a risk of “long-term adverse health conditions” from the pits), Pentagon spokesperson George Little told reporters that “we do not have specific evidence that ties these kinds of disposal facilities to health issues.”

A team, led by Dr. Szema at Stony Brook University, this week revealed to Danger Room the results of their ongoing investigations that are trying to directly link health problems to the air emitted by burn pits. And the results should cause those who served near the pits — which burned trash at most major bases in Iraq and Afghanistan during at least some period over the last decade — to be concerned.

Dr. Szema’s team used dust samples taken from around the burn pits at Camp Victory, Iraq (provided to them by the Army Corps of Engineers).

That environs, according to Army Officer Daniel Tijerina (who blames the pits for his own chronic health problems), was rife with the fumes of incinerated “animal carcasses, asbestos insulation ... lithium batteries, paints and paint strippers ...

copiers, printers, monitors, glues (and) styrofoam,” among other equipment, waste and chemical products.

The dust from Camp Victory was inserted into the airways of mice, and researchers tracked their subjects' responses using two metrics: A pathologist examined tissue samples from the lungs for signs of inflammation, and the team used flow cytometry to count the T-cells in each subject's spleen.

The researchers found that the mice exhibited lung inflammation and suppressed immune cell counts within a period of two hours after exposure.

More specifically, their T-cell counts dropped by one-third. Two weeks later, their T-cell counts had plummeted again, leaving the mice with 30 percent of the T-cells they'd had before the dust exposure.

All of the mice also exhibited inflammation in their airways, often alongside interstitial inflammation — swelling in the tissue network that extends throughout the lungs and facilitates the exchange of gas and air between the lungs and blood.

“I can't even imagine what this data shows when you think about someone coming back from Iraq,” Szema says.

“These guys weren't inhaling this air once. They were working in it, sleeping in it, exercising in it. For days and days on end.”

Although Dr. Szema's research relied on animal models, he says he's confident the results “are highly applicable when you consider a human case.”

They certainly seem to match the symptoms popping up among thousands of soldiers, many of whom have logged their ailments on a database at BurnPits360, a website dedicated to the topic.

And his findings regarding immune-system suppression might help explain why soldiers exposed to the same fumes are now afflicted with vastly different illnesses.

This study is also the first to examine current exposure and the onset of symptoms. Earlier research has been less comprehensive. The IOM study, for example, simply studied a host of air samples taken from Iraq. Other, epidemiological, investigations have evaluated the current health metrics of soldiers who'd served near the burn pits.

None have actually tested the air samples on living subjects and then tracked the results.

Certainly, the research adds more heft to that earlier work.

But even Dr. Szema, who is also conducting an analysis that uses the BurnPits360 database to compare soldier symptoms with their likely exposures, acknowledges that his results shouldn't exactly be surprising.

“Based on the patients I’ve seen, this is a no-brainer,” he says. “If anyone tries to say, ‘Oh, dust is just dust,’ I can tell them that’s simply not true.”

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?



U.S. soldier in Beijia village Iraq, Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the email address if you wish and we'll send it regularly with your best wishes. Whether in Afghanistan or at 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, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657.

While U.S. Troops Died:

Loathsome War Profiteer Can't Account For \$750 Million Worth Of Afghanistan Troop Food Supplies: "The Contractor Billed For Nonexistent Cargo And Overcharged

**\$124.3 Million For ‘Transportation
And Corrugated Packing Boxes’”
“It Is Outrageous That DLA Could Ever
Be In The Position Of Possibly
Overpaying Any Vendor By Three
Quarters Of A Billion Dollars —
Especially At A Time When Troop Levels
Are Being Scaled Back Because Funding
Is Tight”**



Marine Lance Cpl. Robert Dearborn guides a truck carrying boxes of food at Patrol Base Alcatraz, Afghanistan on Aug. 26, 2011. Photo: DVIDS

May 24, 2012 By Robert Beckhusen, Wired.com & AP [Excerpts]

In 2008, the Pentagon began investigating whether the main supplier of food to troops in Afghanistan overcharged taxpayers.

Since then, there have been audits, recriminations and the discovery that the supplier may have overbilled the military as much as \$756.9 million.

Now lawmakers are squeezing both the Pentagon and the contractor in an attempt to find out what happened.

The congressmen want documents and information within 10 days from both the Pentagon's Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) and the Switzerland-based company, Supreme Foodservice GmbH.

This might be difficult, because the Pentagon has alleged Supreme Foodservice — which has been paid \$5.5 billion since 2005 to supply food to more than 250 bases and outposts – did not maintain invoices and truck manifests while transporting food, water and other materiel; nor did the company provide data to investigators on fuel costs, price estimates and even correct flight plans.

"It is outrageous that DLA could ever be in the position of possibly overpaying any vendor by three quarters of a billion dollars — especially at a time when troop levels are being scaled back because funding is tight," said subcommittee chairman Rep. Jason Chaffetz in a statement.

Supreme, meanwhile, maintains the high costs reflect the difficulty of operating in Afghanistan. The contractor also claims it is owed more than \$1 billion by the Pentagon beyond the billions already paid, which when combined with the Pentagon's own claims, "raises serious concerns regarding DLA's contracting oversight," according to the congressmen.

It also calls into question the Pentagon's consideration of Supreme Foodservice for another contract in December, worth a massive \$10 to \$30 billion over the next five years.

"The American taxpayers refuse to accept a government contractor that bills more than \$750 million in unsubstantiated charges, and they refuse to accept the Pentagon's failure to manage this contract properly," Rep. John Tierney, the ranking member on the committee, said in a statement.

A majority of the unaccounted costs (\$455 million) involved airlifting fresh fruits and vegetables from the United Arab Emirates to Afghanistan and onto bases and isolated outposts — without oversight.

The Pentagon claims the contractor also billed for nonexistent cargo and overcharged \$124.3 million for "transportation and corrugated packing boxes," according to Bloomberg.

Supreme also grew too big, too fast. The original contract between Supreme and the Pentagon applied to only four Afghanistan bases. Within months, Supreme grew to supplying 64 bases. Today, the number of bases and outposts supplied by Supreme exceeds 250.

Audits by the Defense Contract Audit Agency in 2008 and 2011 found that Supreme couldn't provide basic information to prove it should get the fees it wanted. The 2011 audit said Supreme refused to provide or did not have information to support its claims. Truck manifests, the only documents that affirm

a trip was actually made, were missing and so were vendor invoices and flight plans, according to the audit.

ANNIVERSARIES

May 27, 1963: One For Our Side “Masters Of War Released”



The record album, “The Freewheelin’ Bob Dylan,” with the song “Masters Of War,” was released.

Masters of War
By Bob Dylan

Come you masters of war
You that build all the guns
You that build the death planes
You that build the big bombs
You that hide behind walls
You that hide behind desks
I just want you to know

I can see through your masks

You that never done nothin'
But build to destroy
You play with my world
Like it's your little toy
You put a gun in my hand
And you hide from my eyes
And you turn and run farther
When the fast bullets fly

Like Judas of old
You lie and deceive
A world war can be won
You want me to believe
But I see through your eyes
And I see through your brain
Like I see through the water
That runs down my drain

You fasten the triggers
For the others to fire
Then you set back and watch
When the death count gets higher
You hide in your mansion
As young people's blood
Flows out of their bodies
And is buried in the mud

You've thrown the worst fear
That can ever be hurled
Fear to bring children
Into the world
For threatening my baby
Unborn and unnamed
You ain't worth the blood
That runs in your veins

How much do I know
To talk out of turn
You might say that I'm young
You might say I'm unlearned
But there's one thing I know
Though I'm younger than you
Even Jesus would never
Forgive what you do

Let me ask you one question
Is your money that good
Will it buy you forgiveness
Do you think that it could

I think you will find
When your death takes its toll
All the money you made
Will never buy back your soul

And I hope that you die
And your death'll come soon
I will follow your casket
In the pale afternoon
And I'll watch while you're lowered
Down to your deathbed
And I'll stand o'er your grave
'Til I'm sure that you're dead

Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

“Every Day I Dream Of Returning Home”

“Following More Than Six Decades Of Displacement, Um Hasan Still Dreams Of Returning To Julis”

“I Hope That Not Only Myself, But All Who Live In The Refugee Camps Here In Gaza, Will One Day March Back To Palestine, To Our Ancestors' Land, No

Matter What The Reaction Of Israel Will Be”



Um Hasan and her family were forcibly displaced from their village in 1948. (Rami Almeghari / The Electronic Intifada)

24 May 2012 By Rami Almeghari, The Electronic Intifada

Maryam al-Hout (known as Um Hasan) is in her late eighties but she still welcomes customers to a furniture store run by her grandson Mohammad. Selling mattresses, cushions and carpets, the store is located in the southern Gaza Strip city of Rafah.

Um Hasan was forced to leave her home village of Julis during the Nakba (catastrophe), the systematic ethnic cleansing that led to Israel's foundation in 1948. Before then, she was living there with her husband Abu Hasan (since deceased) and her parents. Julis is located near Asqalan, which is now the city of Ashkelon in present-day Israel.

“The Israeli forces entered the nearby Beit Daras village, then we moved to Asqalan, where we stayed about six months,” Abu Hasan recalled.

“Afterwards, we heard horrible things about a town near Jerusalem known as Deir Yassin. We heard that men, women and children were slaughtered. As our fears got bigger, the men of Julis, including my husband, Abu Hasan, managed to get some rifles to defend us.

“We were told that in Asqalan and villages nearby, there were Arab and Egyptian armed forces who came over to Palestine to defend the country. By then, the whole village of Julis, including my extended family, my two sons, my husband and I, had left Julis. A few elderly people stayed put. We stayed in Asqalan until the war stopped. Of course, the Arab armies were defeated and we were forced to leave for the nearby Gaza Strip.

“We travelled by a rented camel until we reached Rafah. In Rafah, we stopped at the Tal Zorob hill, until UNRWA (the UN agency for Palestine refugees), came to distribute some blankets and food. We were hundreds of people. A few days later, UNRWA helped erect tents for us. That would have been towards the end of the summer of 1948.”

Julis had a population of 1,030 people in 1945, according to Walid Khalidi’s authoritative record of the Nakba, All that Remains. On the night of 27-28 May 1948, the Givati Brigade of the Haganah, the Zionist militia that was later renamed as the Israeli army, first occupied part of the village. Julis was totally occupied by 10-11 June.

Um Hasan had a happy childhood.

“When I was five years old, I used to join relatives during harvests of wheat, grapes and figs. Julis was like a paradise, my son.

“My father used to have two farms, one with figs and the other with grapes. We were farmers by heritage. Our home in Julis was made from mud and I used to get water for drinking from a well in our farmland. Thank God, we used to have heavy rains and we used to make bread out of barley or wheat, using a fire stove made of mud called a taboun.

“My parents, my grandmother and my five sisters and two brothers all used to live in the same three-room home. When I was a child, I used to bring some wood from a nearby small forest, along with my friends. During the trip to the forest we used to sing folk songs.”

“Jules had a maqad, something like a city hall, where the men used to sit and enjoy chatting and listening to some old folk music. Also, they used to discuss some local issues, like disputes or family problems.

“At festival times for Muslims, women used to make cakes the evening before the feast. Women used to make sweets, like white sweets and Syrian sweets. We used all to go to the beach, bringing sweets and dishes like maftoul (couscous), with us.”

Um Hasan recalls how her marriage to her husband Abu Hasan was arranged.

“One day a man came to visit my father and asked him if I could get married to his son. After I got engaged to Abu Hasan, we didn’t see each other for four months. Can you imagine? To get married to me, his family paid a dowry of 70 Palestinian pounds.

“I remember well that my wedding party was mainly for the men. My father and my brothers stayed some time celebrating with my father-in-law’s family, including my groom, Abu Hasan, may he rest in peace.”

Following more than six decades of displacement, Um Hasan still dreams of returning to Julis.

“I hope that not only myself, but all who live in the refugee camps here in Gaza, will one day march back to Palestine, to our ancestors’ land, no matter what the reaction of Israel will be.”

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



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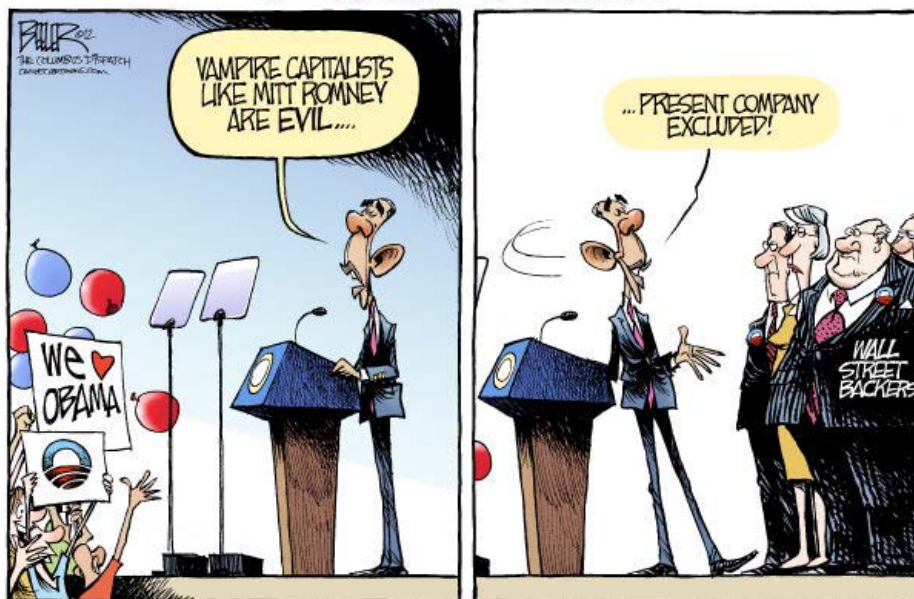
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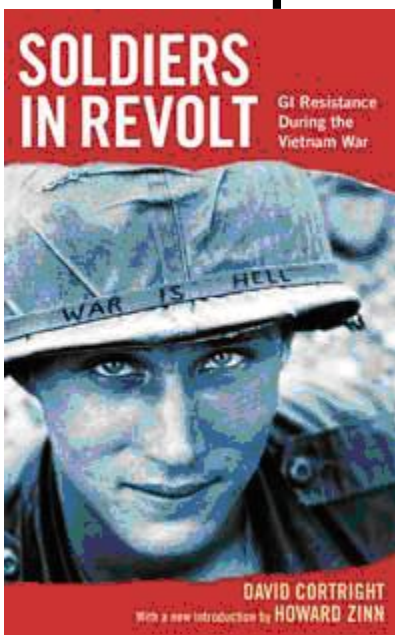
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