

Military Resistance 10E20



Next To U.S. Firing Range In Afghanistan, A Village Of Maimed Children:

**“Some Service Members
Describe A Lack Of Order On
The Range”**

**“The Bagram Tower Really Didn’t
Control The Range; Actually,
Nobody Controlled The Range”**

**“Generally, We Don’t Walk Around
And Inspect The Area Full Of
Ordnance,’ Hartman Said”
“The Americans Say It Would Be Too
Expensive To Build A Fence. Do They
Know How Much A Human Life Is
Worth?”**



The Washington Post

May 26 By Kevin Sieff, Washington Post. [Excerpts]

Special correspondents Javed Hamdard and Sayed Salahuddin contributed to this report.

BAGRAM, AFGHANISTAN — The American grenade that nearly killed 10-year-old Shah Mohammed landed on an unmarked firing range in a scrubby desert, in the shadow of the largest U.S. military base in the country.

Like hundreds of other U.S. explosives fired here, it was supposed to detonate on impact. Like hundreds of others, it didn't.

It remained unexploded until Mohammed stumbled upon the ordnance while looking for scrap metal this month.

He had nearly gathered enough shrapnel and bullet shells to trade for an ice cream cone. Then the 40mm grenade tore through the boy's 87-pound body, breaking through bone and tendon and nerve.

When Mohammed's father, Shahzad Gul, found his son, he thought to himself: "All of his blood is gone."

On the periphery of Bagram Airfield, farmers, scrap-metal collectors and sheep herders have been crippled, blinded and burned by U.S. military ammunition on an unfenced and poorly marked training ground.

Called the East River Range, the training ground is blanketed with unexploded U.S. ordnance that was dropped from helicopters and fired from vehicles as part of battlefield rehearsals.

There is no barrier between nearby villages and the range — it is unclear where the dusty townships end and the vast military training area begins.

The only apparent warnings are scrawled in faded, barely decipherable English lettering on concrete blocks: "Small Arms Range" and "Weapon Range."

There is no translation in Dari or Pashto, the two most common languages in Afghanistan.

U.S. officials say they are aware that civilians spend time on the range but that they have worked hard to secure the area and prevent civilian casualties.

"We do everything that we can think of to minimize that risk. We do have a legal office that's open once a week if there are any complaints or concerns," said Michael Hartman, the base's deputy garrison commander, who oversees the range.

None of the eight injured civilians interviewed for this article said they were aware of the legal office.

According to the U.S. Army's official range safety regulation, soldiers are instructed to "protect civilian and military populations who live and work near live-fire operational ranges."

Another list of Pentagon recommendations states that “physical controls, including fences, barriers, and signs should be constructed where necessary, and will require on-going maintenance.”

The U.S. military has declined to construct a barrier around the East River Range or to relocate the training ground away from civilians, despite pleading by a United Nations-funded de-mining agency.

In an e-mail to the Mine Action Coordination Center of Afghanistan (MACCA), a U.S. military official argued that constructing a fence around the area would be prohibitively expensive, calling the proposal unrealistic.

“This country was almost destroyed by Russian mines,” said Mohammad Akbar Oriakhil, MACCA’s director for central Afghanistan.

“Now we’re watching Americans re-contaminate it.”

The United States has attempted to distinguish itself from the Russian legacy, funding mine-removal efforts and claiming to properly discard its ammunition in secure locations.

But in recent months, MACCA reports that a growing number of boys have been maimed in Bagram — a new generation of Afghans injured by a new generation of explosives.

In the villages around Bagram Airfield — Qalai Ahmad Khan and Bini Warsak — residents with amputated legs and arms are a common sight.

Dozens of live U.S. 40mm grenades — designed to kill on impact — are scattered on the ground a few hundred yards from residents’ mud-brick homes, in an expanse busy with life and industry.

The same problem exists at several other firing ranges across the country, which also lack fencing.

But nowhere else is it as serious as Bagram, according to MACCA.

“Generally, We Don’t Walk Around And Inspect The Area Full Of Ordnance”

Shah Mohammed’s father rushed him to Kabul’s Emergency Surgical Center for War Victims last week. Once there, doctors plucked pieces of shrapnel from his head and body.

In the neighboring room, Abdul Rahman, an 18-year-old from the same village, recovered after an American grenade exploded while he grazed a herd of sheep near his home this month.

Part of his left arm was amputated. His face was speckled with shrapnel.

Four years earlier, Rahman lost part of his right arm much the same way — when a 40mm high-explosive dual-purpose American grenade exploded in his hand as he was collecting metal at the range.

Rahman held back tears when he spoke about the incident that took his remaining hand. Younger and unable to conceal his fear, Mohammed's chest heaved as he wept into his father's scarf.

The villagers near Bagram are some of Afghanistan's poorest residents.

Most are recently returned refugees from Pakistan who were given free housing by the Afghan government's Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation. Some are former nomads who have settled after years of crisscrossing the country by donkey.

Many have no source of income aside from collecting metal from the firing range and selling it as scrap, at a dollar for 15 pounds.

"The Americans haunt us even after their training exercises are over. Some of their weapons explode and some of them don't," said Mohammed's father. Before Mohammed was injured, the family had been saving money to move.

American officials say they attempt to prevent civilian casualties by placing firing ranges away from inhabited areas and maintaining an ongoing dialogue with local elders.

But in the past year, civilians have been maimed and killed on or near firing ranges in provinces of Ghazni, Paktia and Kabul, according to MACCA.

One of the agency's incident reports, obtained by The Washington Post, includes graphic photos of a de-miner taken seconds after an American 40mm grenade tore off his arm and leg while he was clearing Russian anti-personnel mines near a range in Kabul.

In bold letters, the report describes the ammunition: "Country of origin: United States."

De-miners are not permitted to clear or inspect ordnance on NATO sites, so officials have been unable to assess how much live ammunition remains on the coalition's firing ranges. As troops withdraw, there is mounting concern among de-mining advocates that the foreign troops will leave behind poorly marked sites full of unexploded ordnance.

U.S. officials said they were unaware that ammunition remained on the ground unexploded. "Generally, we don't walk around and inspect the area full of ordnance," Hartman said.

Within the firing range, a Washington Post reporter found seven unexploded 40mm grenades in a single 30-yard stretch. The grenades are designed to kill or injure anyone within a five-meter (5.5-yard) radius. But they often fail to detonate when they land on the soft sand of the range.

Because the Afghan government continues to place more former refugees in nearby housing projects, casualty figures near the range have steadily increased.

Although MACCA has counted 11 civilian casualties — most of them children — on the range over the past three years, officials say that is only a fraction of the total number of

residents who have been maimed. The Washington Post spoke with six injured residents who were not included on that list.

“This is our home. This is where we’ve been told to live. The Americans say it would be too expensive to build a fence. Do they know how much a human life is worth?” said Abdul Hadiq, who works in the community’s association of disabled residents.

The East River Range, which has been operational for the past decade, is one of the country’s largest firing ranges. Every few hours, helicopters fly overhead and fire rockets at the lunar landscape. A shock of dust leaps into the sky when the rockets make contact.

Several times a week, military vehicles pull up to the site and soldiers launch grenades and fire off shotguns and rifles. The site is also used to destroy confiscated Taliban weapons caches.

Many of the windows in the village have been shattered from the sound of the blasts.

“When we do schedule those exercises, we have tight standards and [adhere to] U.S. military standard operating procedure,” Hartman said.

But some service members describe a lack of order on the range.

“The Bagram tower really didn’t control the range; actually, nobody controlled the range. Whoever showed up first and had the biggest gun at the time owned the range,” wrote Chief Warrant Officer Daniel Flores, an Army reserve pilot, in his 2011 memoir “South of Heaven: My Year in Afghanistan.”

Despite efforts by the United States and other foreign powers to educate residents about the risks of unexploded ordnance, men, women and children continue to spend time on the range.

Some said they had no idea that it’s a range; migrants often pass through the area before they can be warned of the danger. Others, including Abdul Rahman and Shah Mohammed, have a sense of the risk.

But there is nowhere else to graze their animals or collect metal, they said.

Many fathers in the village instruct their sons to collect shrapnel and empty bullet shells in the morning, telling them to avoid live ammunition.

The money the children earn selling scrap metal is an important source of income for poor families here, residents say.

Children who collect enough metal can save up to buy an occasional ice cream cone.

But on the East River Range, avoiding live ammunition — including some aging Russian explosives — is nearly impossible.

Sometimes, the boys step on a grenade unintentionally.

Sometimes, they pick up one, thinking that it's an empty shell.

That's how Khaili Jan, 10, lost both of his legs last year.

His father had told him to stay away from the grenades and rockets, but the boy knew the shells of larger explosives were worth much more than small bits of shrapnel. When he saw a grenade that appeared to have detonated, he gave it a kick to get a better look, and the egg-size ordnance exploded.

Now, the boy has two plastic prosthetic legs and crutches that sink into the sand when he walks through the desert.

"What can he do now?" his father, Amir Jan, asked. "Nothing. He can just sit."

Each morning Khaili Jan's brothers head back to the range where their brother was nearly killed, accompanied by a herd of sheep or towing an empty bag to collect shrapnel.

The brothers and fathers of Rahman and Mohammed have already returned to the range, as well.

In response to a reporter's questions, NATO officials said that they will address concerns about civilian casualties with village elders.

But some remain skeptical that the military will take the necessary steps to protect residents.

"The Americans say they're here to promote civil society and peace," said Oriakhil, the de-mining official. "But what we see them doing here is causing problems. We see them injuring innocent people."

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

5th JBLM Soldier In 10 Days Killed In Afghanistan

05/29/12 ByCHRISTIAN HILL; Staff writer; The News Tribune

On the day the nation remembered those who have died in service to their country, the Pentagon identified the fifth Joint Base Lewis-McChord soldier to be killed in Afghanistan in 10 days.

Spc. Vilmar Galarza Hernandez, 21, of Salinas, Calif., died Saturday in Kandahar province of southern Afghanistan, when enemy forces attacked his unit with an improvised explosive device, according to information released Monday by the Pentagon.

Galarza was an infantryman assigned to the 4th Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment of the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division. Galarza enlisted in the Army four years ago and was on his second deployment, said his wife, Margarita Contreras, in a phone interview.

Galarza went to high school in Salinas, graduating in 2008. His parents and a sister still live there, Contreras said.

Contreras and Galarza married in a Pierce County courtroom on March 28, less than two weeks before he deployed to Afghanistan. Galarza's Facebook page shows a photo of the couple getting married – he in a dress uniform and she in a white dress.

Contreras said she met Galarza during a visit to Central California in June 2011. She said the two of them would jump in the car with one destination in mind and end up somewhere else.

"He was very spontaneous," she said.

Contreras returned to Muskegon, Mich., to be with family during his deployment. She received a knock at the door Saturday night.

"They told me he was out, and he stepped on a bomb," she said.

Galarza is the brigade's second fatality. Pfc. Cale Miller died on Thursday after insurgents attacked his vehicle with an improvised explosive device.

Carson Soldier Killed In Afghanistan IED Blast

May 29, 2012 The Associated Press

FORT CARSON, Colo. — A California soldier assigned to Fort Carson has been killed in Afghanistan.

The Defense Department said Tuesday 23-year-old Spc. Tofiga J. Tautolo of Wilmington, Calif., died May 27 from injuries he suffered when his vehicle hit an improvised bomb in Nangarhar province.

He was a member of the 4th Infantry Division's 4th Brigade Combat Team at Fort Carson.

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

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

**“These Bodies Get A Beating”
“After Multiple Deployments In Iraq And
Afghanistan, Some Of These Soldiers’
Bodies Are Nearing The Breaking Point”**



Capt. Rachel Odom treated Staff Sgt. Dick Plank in Paktia Province, Afghanistan in April. Kuni Takahashi for The New York Times

[Thanks to Clancy Sigal who sent this in. He writes “What's wrong with these sissies who need massage after only 4 or 5 deployments and getting knocked on the head multiple times by roadside bombs? Wusses.”]

May 28, 2012 By GRAHAM BOWLEY, The New York Times [Excerpts]

COMBAT OUTPOST RAHMAN KHEL, Afghanistan — Each week, Capt. Rachel Odom takes off in a helicopter to fly to yet another distant military outpost of this mountainous region of eastern Afghanistan to patch the troops in her care back together.

One recent morning, 13 soldiers came to visit her in the small wooden medical hut of a 100-man camp near the village of Rahman Khel, cradled by the snow-tipped mountains of Paktia Province near the Pakistani border.

One after another, the soldiers told her of their twisted knees, back pains or shoulder strains — the increasingly familiar-sounding toll of a long war.

After multiple deployments in Iraq and Afghanistan, some of these soldiers' bodies are nearing the breaking point. It is up to Captain Odom, 28, from Moselle, Miss. — the only physical therapist attached to the 3,500 men and women of the Fourth Brigade Combat Team of the 25th Infantry Division — to keep them together.

"These bodies get a beating," she said as she spent the next 12 hours stretching out legs, lifting arms or standing on a box to lean over and pummel pulled back muscles, accompanied by sighs, groans, thanks and the occasional curse.

"They walk up and down mountains carrying a lot of gear, just a lot of weight, and that can result in daily aches and pains, and also injuries," she said. "I am keeping them doing their job, living their lives with as little pain as possible."

The action these days is rarely about face-to-face combat. Instead, it is an effort to keep up with an elusive enemy that slips from the looming mountains this time of year and moves invisibly from village to village through the woods and fields, heading west for the fighting season.

For the Army company based at this outpost, among the 19 on Captain Odom's rounds, it involves long, bone-rattling journeys in armored vehicles protected against roadside bombs or suicide attacks. Or it is a five-hour slog encased in ever more elaborate body armor — designed to protect against a distant sniper shot or rocket. But it can add at least 35 pounds to a soldier's load, even without his helmet, pistol, ammunition, water, medical kit and rifle.

"When you carry all this stuff and then go climb one of those mountains, it definitely takes a toll on your body," said Sgt. James Daoust, a company medic.

Today's protection is the I.O.T.V., or improvised outer tactical vest, a bulky affair that involves heavy ceramic block plates, side plates, deltoid protectors and groin guards. Some soldiers even have Kevlar underwear. (At higher altitudes, soldiers are allowed to wear a slimmed down I.O.T.V., called a platecarrier, but it is still heavy.)

Around the bases in this region, sweating soldiers in shorts and sneakers run laps around the outer perimeter wearing the vests just to get used to them.

Captain Odom, who has broad rosy cheeks and a practical, considerate manner, represents a new kind of emphasis in the military on getting to these kind of injuries quickly, even mundane ones like twisted ankles or tweaked backs, before repeated strain can force soldiers out of the war altogether.

She was encouraged to go into the military by her uncle, a retired colonel, after she graduated from the University of Southern Mississippi. Now, she is five months from the end of her first tour of duty. She seems comfortable sprinting from a standing start in the

darkness to board a waiting Black Hawk, or flying over the Afghan mountains in the moonlight, bound for yet another camp in her 19,000-square-mile territory, carrying her medical bag and an M4 carbine.

Among her patients this day, one said he felt as if the pain was crushing his back, which had hurt since Iraq.

One of the biggest challenges for the therapists is dealing with an injury that has become all too common in a war defined by the Taliban's roadside bombs: blast concussions. Back at Captain Odom's brigade base, Forward Operating Base Salerno, over the mountains amid the sweet-smelling eucalyptus trees of Khost Province, there is a special center to treat them.

Three recovering soldiers were sitting on a black sofa and chair, silently watching "The Big Bang Theory" on television and looking tired and worse for wear.

One of them, Sgt. Junior Daniel, a tousle-haired 24-year-old from Mims, Fla., was on his third deployment. Two weeks earlier, while he was running from his armored truck toward a building occupied by insurgents in Gardez, his group came under gun and rocket fire.

He said something "blew up close to my head." He lost his hearing for a while, and still looked groggy.

One of the men with him in Gardez, Staff Sgt. Joseph Marcinko, 29, from Ohio, was also at the concussion center, with black bags under his eyes. He had stayed behind in the armored truck, but a rocket hit the door and knocked him unconscious for 10 seconds, he said.

The third soldier, Specialist Edward Herrera, 22, from Miami, on his first deployment, was a gunner in a truck when a truck in front was hit by a roadside bomb.

"I hit the turret with my head," he said. "The driver slammed his brakes, and I hit my head on the turret again, and then I was being shaken awake."

Sergeants Marcinko and Daniel insisted that they would be returning to work soon, and they did: about seven hours later, they were at the camp airport with rifles and packs, looking only a little more awake, trying to catch a night flight back to Gardez.

Worthless Shit From U.S. & Italy Dumped On "Afghan Airforce"

May 27, 2012 AFP [Excerpts]

Afghanistan's defence ministry has expressed concern over the slow pace of developing its airforce ahead of a scheduled withdrawal of troops and equipment, the government said Sunday.

More than a dozen transport aircraft provided to the Afghan airforce by the United States have been grounded because of age, a lack of spares and safety problems, President Hamid Karzai's office said in a statement.

Fifteen C-27 transport aircraft supposed to provide support to the Afghan army and deliver humanitarian aid had been grounded for two years, defence ministry spokesman Zahir Azimi told AFP.

"The planes were made in Italy, they are old and were out of the Italian fleet before they were given to Afghanistan," Azimi said.

WELCOME TO OBAMAWORLD. WHERE EVERY DEATH IN COMBAT ACCOMPLISHES NOTHING AT ALL



U.S. Army Captain Michael Kelvington, commander of the Battle company, 1-508 Parachute Infantry battalion, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division, leans on a wall after learning that an Afghan Local Police member was killed in the blast of an Improvised Explosive Device (IED) during their joint Tor Janda (Black Flag in Pashtu) operation in Zahri district of Kandahar province, southern Afghanistan May 25, 2012. REUTERS/Shamil Zhumatov

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Somali Rebels Ambush Presidential Convoy

May 29, 2012 Reuters

Somalia's al Shabaab rebels ambushed an armored convoy carrying the country's president during a rare overland trip outside the capital on Tuesday, a Reuters witness said.

President Sheikh Sharif Ahmed was unharmed in the attack which occurred on the outskirts of Elasha town, located between Mogadishu and the former rebel stronghold of Afgoye, about 30 km (18 miles) northwest of the city.

"The fighting split the convoy.

"Vehicles scattered in different directions," a Reuters photographer travelling with the convoy said.

Bullets struck several African Union (AU) peacekeeper vehicles but none were damaged.

The firefight lasted about 30 minutes and forced the AU to fire shells to subdue the attack, he said, adding that the armored vehicle carrying Ahmed sped off as fighting broke out.

African Union and Somali government troops captured Afgoye on Friday and then secured an aid corridor linking the town to Mogadishu over the weekend, wresting control of a strip of land believed to hold around 400,000 people displaced by conflict.

Al Shabaab said they had pulled out of the Afgoye corridor in a tactical retreat, but threatened on Monday to strike back.

"If the government controls the Afgoye corridor, then President Sharif should be able to pass there peacefully," Sheikh Abdiasis Abu Musab, al Shabaab's spokesman for military operations, told Reuters.

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MILITARY NEWS

**“We Veterans Petitioned The
Obama Administration To:
‘Allow United States Disabled
Military Veterans Access To
Medical Marijuana To Treat
Their PTSD’”**

**“To Be Told By The Commander In
Chief, That He Does Not Care
About Those He Has Sent To War
By Denying Medicine To The
Wounded Is Unconscionable”**

**“The President Could Do So Many
Things But Instead Seems To Be
Sacrificing Our Nations Veterans”**

**“Veterans For Medical Cannabis Access
Thought You Should Know Of This**

Shameful Mendacious Policy Of Ignorance”



First President Obama’s administration ejected medical marijuana patients from the workplace then he threw them out of public housing then took away their ability to buy a gun then closed down their dispensaries and now he has apparently set his sites on Veterans.

[Thanks to David McReynolds for posting.]

Veterans For Medical Cannabis Access Reply To The Disappointing Response From The Obama Administration

May 28, 2012 by Anthony Johnson, National Cannabis Coalition

Subject: White House replies to Veterans petition: <http://wh.gov/4xd>

Thousands of Veterans requested the Obama Administration to look into the reliable science now available showing exactly how cannabis works to alleviate suffering of Veterans pain and save the lives of Veterans with brain injuries such as PTSD and therefore make appropriate changes in policy.

According to Dr. Julie Holland, Editor of The Pot Book and a medical doctor, there have been more suicides than combat fatalities by a ratio of 25:1. This, given how effectively cannabis works to save lives, is an unacceptable loss.

Recent research has revealed two things of great importance – one is that suicide rates drop around the implementation of medical marijuana laws and the other is that new research indicates similar brain changes from athletic head injuries, military head trauma and brain changes from Alzheimer’s and multiple sclerosis.

New research available shows how a human body-wide set of control functions called the Endogenous Cannabinoid Receptor System may be activated by the ingestion of cannabis to cause both neural protection and neural regenerative properties to help relieve these difficult to treat medical conditions.

We Veterans petitioned the Obama Administration to: "Allow United States Disabled Military Veterans access to medical marijuana to treat their PTSD."

The White House response to our petition was very disappointing. We asked for a change in policy. To have our petition answered by the drug czar, an ex policeman, is most inappropriate given the drug czar is bound by law to ONLY discuss current law and has no power to discuss policy change with the public.

Even the lowest ranking staffer at the White House or anyone from the Veterans Health Authority would have been more appropriate.

Al Byrne, retired Naval Officer and co-founder of VMCA, was blunt in his assessment of the White House concern for injured Veterans:

"Vets have used cannabis for PTS since the Revolutionary War. We know what we need and to be told by our President, the Commander in Chief, that he does not care about those he has sent to war by denying medicine to the wounded is unconscionable."

The Department of Veterans Affairs is also now in direct conflict with the White House.

According to the Veterans Affairs, Undersecretary of Health in correspondence with our Executive Director, Michael Krawitz: "The provider (VA) will take the use of medical marijuana into account in all prescribing decisions, just as the provider would for any other medication." [1.]

The president, when asked why he doesn't do something positive about medical marijuana, is quoted in Rolling Stone magazine as saying "I can't nullify congressional law. I can't ask the Justice Department to say, 'Ignore completely a federal law that's on the books.'" [2.]

If that is truly the president's position it is either based upon ignorance of his power or he is playing politics.

The president can do many things – the DEA was created by an executive order!

The president could ask NIDA to stop blocking research or he could ask HHS to finally follow the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) or he could ask Congress to move forward on the issue or he could even properly reschedule cannabis as a medicine by executive order.

The president could do so many things but instead seems to be sacrificing our nations Veterans. [3.]

One irony of the drug czar's response to our petition is that his words seem to be lifted right from the IOM report of 1999 that was actually commissioned by the

drug czar of that day, General McCaffrey. The IOM report did indeed say that cannabis holds great promise in the future as a pharmaceutical but it then went on to say that we know enough about the plant material (in 1999) to give the whole plant material to those patients most in need right now (in 1999!).

Don't Veterans suffering and dying classify as patients in extreme need?

Veterans for Medical Cannabis Access thought you should know of this shameful mendacious policy of ignorance.

First President Obama's administration ejected medical marijuana patients from the workplace then he threw them out of public housing then took away their ability to buy a gun then closed down their dispensaries and now he has apparently set his sites on Veterans.

1. VHA letter of July 6, 2010, signed R. A. Petzel, MD, Department of Veterans Affairs, Under Secretary of Health.

<http://www.veteransformedicalmarijuana.org/files/Undersecretary-Jun6.pdf>

2. Ready for the Fight: Rolling Stone Interview with Barack Obama

<http://www.rollingstone.com/politics/news/ready-for-the-fight-rolling-stone-interview-with-barack-obama-20120425#ixzz1w6QGpmlw>

3. MARIJUANA AND MEDICINE — Assessing the Science Base Janet E. Joy, Stanley J. Watson, Jr., and John A. Benson, Jr., Editors Division of Neuroscience and Behavioral Health INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE NATIONAL ACADEMY PRESS Washington, D.C.

http://www.nap.edu/openbook.php?record_idc76

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DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN MILITARY SERVICE?

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly.

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 wars and economic injustice, inside the armed services and at home.

Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.

-- Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach"

“Strategy Was Torpedoed By A Massive Antiwar Movement Among The Sailors”

**“In San Diego On November 10, I
Found Five Aircraft Carriers Tied Up,
All Forced Out Of Combat In The Gulf
Of Tonkin By Their Crews, Each Of
Which Was Publishing An Antiwar —
And Increasingly Revolutionary—
Newspaper On Board”**

**“Not Since Pearl Harbor Had The U.S.
Navy Been So Crippled”**

Excerpts from *Vietnam And Other American Fantasies*; H. Bruce Franklin; University Of Massachusetts Press; Amherst, 2000

Meanwhile, the United States poured even more massive amounts of money and arms into South Vietnam, giving the Saigon government overwhelming superiority in numbers, firepower, and modern weapons, including the world's fourth-largest air force.

But in the spring of 1972, “Vietnamization” took a body blow when the DRV [North Vietnam] launched a major offensive that routed Saigon’s army, despite all its numerical and technological advantages, and captured large sections of South Vietnam. All that saved Saigon’s forces from total collapse was U.S. airpower.

But with no reliable army on the ground, U.S. strategy was forced to shift almost entirely to aerial technowar.

One main component was to be a flotilla of Seventh Fleet aircraft carriers (twice as many as in 1971) massed in the Gulf of Tonkin, bringing warplanes closer than the fighter-bombers based in Thailand and the B-52s on Guam to targets all along the narrow land of Vietnam.

This strategy was torpedoed by a massive antiwar movement among the sailors, who combined escalating protests and rebellions with a widespread campaign of sabotage.

The actions of these sailors cannot be written off the way some revisionist historians have tried to explain away the fraggings, sabotage, and mutinies of the ground troops as merely attempts at self-preservation.

The sailors could not be motivated by any desire to avoid wounds or death because their ships were not in any danger of enemy attack.

So what were their motives?

Many of them shared the same revulsion that had inspired those first antiwar actions by hundreds of merchant seamen in 1945, a revulsion now immeasurably intensified by the kind of war being waged by the United States against the people of Vietnam.

In 1970 and 1971 ships had been sporadically forced out of action by outbreaks and even sabotage by crew members.

Occasional inconspicuous newspaper articles allowed perceptive members of the general public to get inklings of what was happening to the fleet.

An early example was the destroyer Richard B. Anderson, which was kept from sailing to Vietnam for eight weeks when crew members deliberately wrecked an engine.

Toward the end of 1971, the sailors' antiwar activities coalesced into a coherent movement called SOS (Stop Our Ships/Support Our Sailors) that emerged on three of the gigantic aircraft carriers crucial to the Tonkin Gulf strategy: the USS Constellation, the USS Coral Sea, and the USS Kitty Hawk.

(One early act was a petition by 1,500 crew members of the Constellation demanding that Jane Fonda's antiwar show be allowed to perform on board.)

On these three ships alone that fall, thousands of crew members signed antiwar petitions, published onboard antiwar newspapers, and supported the dozens of crew members who refused to board for Vietnam duty.

In March 1972 the aircraft carrier USS Midway received orders to leave San Francisco Bay for Vietnam.

A wave of protests and sabotage swept the ship, hitting the press when dissident crewmen deliberately spilled three thousand gallons of oil into the bay.

In June the attack carrier USS Ranger was ordered to sail from San Diego to Vietnam.

The Naval Investigative Service reported a large-scale clandestine movement among the crew and at least twenty acts of physical sabotage, culminating in the destruction of the main reduction gear of an engine; repairs forced a four-and-a-half-month delay in the ship's sailing.

In July the aircraft carrier USS Forrestal was prevented from sailing by a major fire deliberately set by crewmen, which caused millions of dollars of damage to the captain's and admiral's quarters of the ship.

In September and October the crew of the Coral Sea, which had been publishing the antiwar newspaper *We Are Everywhere* for a year, staged renewed protests against the war, with over a thousand crewmen signing a petition to “Stop Our Ship.”

It was forced to return to San Francisco Bay, where crew members held a national press conference and helped organize support rallies and other demonstrations.

Almost a hundred crew members, including several officers, refused Vietnam service and jumped ship in California and Hawaii.

In September crew members of the aircraft carrier USS Ticonderoga organized their own “Stop It Now” movement, and navy intelligence tried unsuccessfully to break up the SOS movement on the showpiece carrier USS Enterprise, home of the antiwar paper *SOS Enterprise Ledger*.

A bloody September battle between groups of marines on the amphibious landing ship USS Sumter in the Gulf of Tonkin off Vietnam was not made public until the following January.

One of the most serious outbreaks took place in October on the Kitty Hawk, where organized antiwar activities (including publication of the antiwar paper *Kitty Litter*) had continued during its eight-month tour off Vietnam.

When the ship was ordered to return to Vietnam from Subic Bay instead of continuing its voyage home, African American members of the crew led a major rebellion, fought hand-to-hand battles with the marines sent to break up their meeting, and reduced the ship to a chaos of internal fighting for several hours.

Four days later, fighting spread to the Kitty Hawk’s oiler, the USS Hassayampa. The Kitty Hawk was forced to retire to San Diego, whence it sailed to San Francisco in early January, where it underwent a “six-month refitting job.”

The sailors’ movement had thus removed this major aircraft carrier from the war.

Especially damaging were the synergistic effects of the protests, sabotage, and rebellions on the aircraft carriers central to Pentagon strategy.

For example, when the House Armed Services Committee investigated the hundreds of reports of “successful acts of sabotage,” one conclusion reached in their report was that the rebellion on the Kitty Hawk had been precipitated by the orders to return to Vietnam, orders mandated because two other aircraft carriers had been disabled: “This rescheduling apparently was due to the incidents of sabotage aboard her sister ships U.S.S. Ranger and U.S.S. Forrestal”

In October and early November, incidents of sabotage and an open revolt brewing on the Constellation forced it to return to San Diego, where 130 sailors prevented the ship’s departure for two months by refusing to reboard and staging a militant demonstration onshore, resulting in their discharge from the crew.

The media called this a “racial outbreak,” but the picture in the San Francisco Chronicle, captioned “The dissident sailors raised their fists in the black power salute,” shows mainly white sailors with upraised arms and clenched fists.

When I went to speak in San Diego on November 10, I found five aircraft carriers tied up, all forced out of combat in the Gulf of Tonkin by their crews, each of which was publishing an antiwar — and increasingly revolutionary— newspaper on board.

That night I addressed hundreds of these crew members in San Diego antiwar movement centers, where men from the different aircraft carriers and their attendant vessels were getting together to build a fleet-wide organization.

In December the Ranger, all repaired now, finally made it to the Gulf of Tonkin, where it was immediately disabled by a deliberately set fire.

The navy admitted that this was the sixth major disaster on a Seventh Fleet carrier since October 1.

Meanwhile, the internally embattled Constellation was not even able to sail from San Diego for Vietnam until January 5, 1973, three weeks before the signing of the Paris Peace Accords; the rebellious crewmen had in effect permanently removed another major aircraft carrier from the war.

Not since Pearl Harbor had the U.S. Navy been so crippled, and then the damage had been done by an enemy defeated in combat.

“During The Work Stoppage There Were Cheers Whenever A B-52 Was Shot Down”

Individual pilots — one with more than two hundred previous combat missions — refused on moral grounds to participate in the bombing.

After the first nights of heavy losses, many of the B-52 crews voiced their opposition to the kinds of risks they were being asked to take in a conflict that had obviously been decided.

The most serious actions took place among air crews of the supersecret 6990th Air Force Security Service based on Okinawa, whose mission was eavesdropping on North Vietnamese air defense communications in order to give timely warnings to the B-52 crews.

Because they had firsthand knowledge of the DRV's [North Vietnam's] preparations for peace and were outraged by the nature of the bombing, they staged a work stoppage verging on open mutiny.

According to Seymour Hersh, who interviewed at least ten members of the unit in early 1973, during the work stoppage there were cheers whenever a B-52 was shot down.

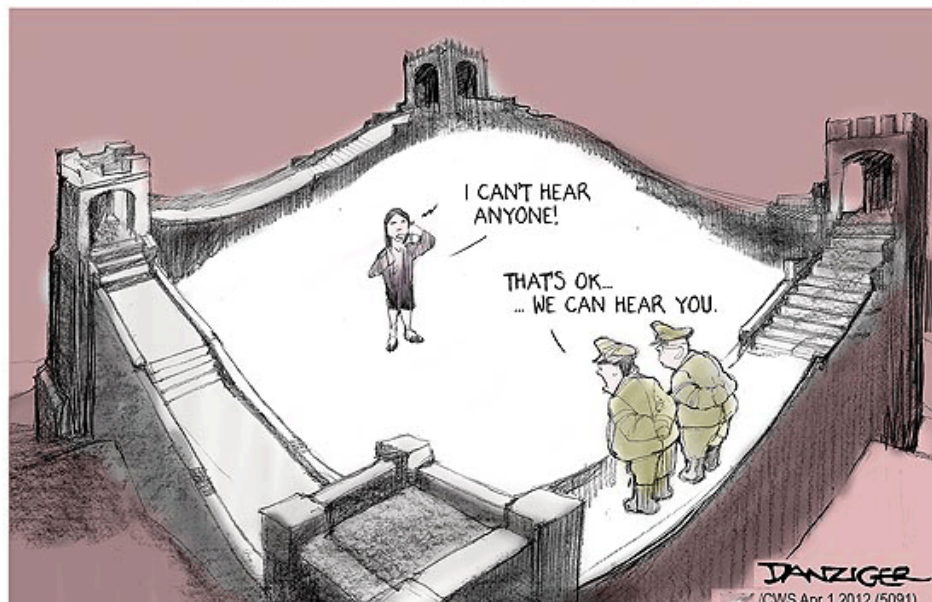
Some of the men were later court-martialed under stringent security.

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.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Chinese Government Cracks Down on Social Media



CLASS WAR REPORTS

**“As I Write These Words There
Are Demonstrations Going On**

**In Every Neighborhood Of
Montreal”**

**“Streets Swell With Hundreds,
Thousands. The Police Cannot
Keep Up”**

**“We Are Awake, Truly Awake For The
First Time In A Long Time. This Is
What Keeps The Powerful Awake At
Night”**

“We Will Not Go Back To Sleep”



It's time
to give
class
warfare
a chance.

May 27, 2012 By Ethan Cox, Common Dreams [Excerpts]

As I write these words there are demonstrations going on in every neighborhood of Montreal.

"Casseroles", where people leave their houses to bang pots in the street every night at 8PM, have led to marches everywhere.

The police cannot keep up.

Far flung suburbs like Vaudreuil and Île Perrot, the anglophone West Island and NDG, South Shore suburbs, Québec City, Sherbrooke, Gatineau, Rimouski, Trois Rivières and the list goes on.

Some of these places have never seen a demonstration, certainly not since the days of the quiet revolution.

Now their streets swell with hundreds, thousands.

Every day that it goes on, more of us meet in the street, build relationships and talk about what kind of a society we want.

This is what Charest is afraid of. This is what keeps the powerful awake at night.

Over at Translating the Printemps Éreable, a superb volunteer collective dedicated to translating French articles about the movement into English, the administrator recently posted an Open Letter to the Mainstream English Media. It is perhaps the best description of this incredible phenomenon I have yet seen.

They describe the nightly "casseroles" like this:

"If you do not live here, I wish I could properly convey to you what it feels like ... It is magic. It starts quietly, a suggestion here and there, and it builds. Everybody on the street begins to smile.

"I get there, and we all—young and old, children and students and couples and retirees and workers and weird misfits and dogs and, well, neighbours—we all grin the widest grins you have ever seen while dancing around and making as much noise as possible.

"We are almost ecstatic with the joy of letting loose like this, of voicing our resistance to a government that seeks to silence us, and of being together like this.

"I have lived in my neighbourhood for five years now, and this is the most I have ever felt a part of the community; the lasting impact that these protests will have on how people relate to each other in the city is deep and incredible."

What the critics and the pundits do not understand is that they are no longer in control.

People will no longer nod and agree with their paper, their TV. They can diminish it, can under-report our numbers and exaggerate our violence, but it doesn't matter.

People don't need the media to tell them what is happening outside their door. They can hear it. They can feel it.

The genie cannot go back in the bottle. We are awake, truly awake for the first time in a long time.

We will not go back to sleep.

This movement may yet fail. It may be co-opted, or lose track of its goals. It may fizzle or be beaten, as so many other movements have been.

But there can be no denying that something extraordinary is happening in Quebec.

If we, as a society, as a people, are to make a stand against the governments which cut taxes on the rich and corporations and then plead poverty as they dismantle our society, our communities, it will be here.

If a line in the sand will be drawn, it is here, in the streets of Quebec.

The battle for a better world starts in this city. This glorious, madcap city whose joie de vivre flows through the veins of each and every one of us like a river.

Join us, speak your solidarity from the rooftops, call out our name.

Because here in these streets, has started a revolution. A fire which burns for a better world. Call me an idealist, call me a dreamer, call me anything you like.

But this is a moment in time we will tell our children about.

Together, we can start something here that spreads like wildfire across this continent. What happens next is up to us.

How's This For Strike Action?



Cleaning staff workers toss pieces of papers during a protest at Barcelona's airport May 29, 2012. Cleaning staff working for a company who have a contract with the airport demonstrated against pay and benefits cuts made by their employer. REUTERS/Albert Gea

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