

Military Resistance 10E4 Special National Guard Issue



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Have To Force Soldiers, Marines
Or Other Members Of The Military
Out Of The Services”**

**“The Pentagon Plans To Cut 67,100
Soldiers From Active And Reserve
Army Units And The Army National
Guard”**

“I Don’t Think We Can Stand Here And Say There Won’t Be Any Involuntary Separation”

Feb 13, 2012 By Viola Gienger and Roxana Tiron, BLOOMBERG L.P. [Excerpts]

The Defense Department may have to force soldiers, Marines or other members of the military out of the services for the first time since the aftermath of the Cold War to achieve the spending reductions in its budget proposal.

The Pentagon plans to cut 67,100 soldiers from active and reserve Army units and the Army National Guard in the five years starting Oct. 1, as well as 15,200 from the active and reserve ranks of the Marine Corps as part of an effort to save \$487 billion over a decade, according to the budget sent to Congress today.

The cuts, spurred in part by plans to wind down the war in Afghanistan in the next three years, would mark the first time the U.S. military has forced personnel out of the services since the larger troop reduction after the end of the Cold War with the Soviet Union.

The military services, which decide how to achieve the cuts, may be able to tighten re-enlistment standards and offer incentives to leave, Defense Department Comptroller Robert Hale said.

“I don’t think we can stand here and say there won’t be any involuntary separation,” Hale told reporters at the Pentagon today.

“We have very high retention right now with the economy still fairly weak. If that changes, it will be easier. If it doesn’t, it will be harder.”

The reductions would start with 31,300 uniformed positions, or 1.4 percent, eliminated in the 12 months starting Oct. 1, cutting the force size to 2,238,400 from 2,269,700 this year, according to the proposal.

The cuts in uniformed personnel are in keeping with proposed steps such as eliminating eight Army brigades, five Marine infantry battalions and four of the Corps’s tactical air squadrons.

The Air Force would lose 303 aircraft and six fighter squadrons, while the Navy jettisons seven cruisers and 2 dock landing ships.

“Troops Coming Back From Iraq, Afghanistan Or Other

**Military Duties Complain Of
Being Denied Jobs Or
Otherwise Being Penalized By
Employers Because Of Their
Military Obligations”
Despite Federal Law Forbidding
Such Punishment Of Troops, “The
Biggest Offender: The Federal
Government”
“Major Offenders Include The
Department Of Homeland Security”
“Service Members Have Been Fired After
Absences”**

[Here it is again. Same old story. Used up, thrown away, and the politicians couldn't care less. To repeat for the 3,565th time, the enemy is not in Afghanistan. Afghan citizens and U.S. troops have a common enemy. That common enemy owns and operates the Imperial government in Washington DC for their own profit. That common enemy started these wars of conquest on a platform of lies, because they couldn't tell the truth: U.S. Imperial wars are about making money for them, and nothing else. Payback is overdue. T]

Matthai informed his civilian supervisors in April 2010 that he would be sent to Afghanistan in the fall for a year.

A few days later, he was fired for “poor performance” and for being absent without leave. “I was shocked,” Matthai recalled. “I told them, ‘At least let me resign so I can walk out of here with a clear name.’”

Instead, he was escorted out by a guard.

February 19 By Steve Vogel, The Washington Post [Excerpts]

Every year, more than a thousand National Guard, reserve and active-duty troops coming back from Iraq, Afghanistan or other military duties complain of being denied jobs or otherwise being penalized by employers because of their military obligations.

The biggest offender: the federal government.

It is against federal law for employers to penalize service members because of their military service.

And yet, in some cases, the U.S. government has withdrawn job offers to service members unable to get released from active duty fast enough; in others, service members have been fired after absences.

The federal government is the largest employer of citizen-soldiers. About 123,000 of the 855,000 men and women currently serving as Guard members and reservists, or about 14 percent, have civilian jobs with the federal government. Over a fourth of federal employees are veterans.

The Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), enacted in 1994 to ensure that members of the military do not face a disadvantage in their civilian careers because of their service, calls on the federal government to be “a model employer” for service members.

But critics contend that the federal government has been far from perfect, and they fear that with troops back home from Iraq and more on the way from Afghanistan, violations of the law could increase.

Advocates for veterans say the system set up for service members to challenge alleged USERRA violations is onerous, with no single agency having oversight.

And they note that the federal government doesn't have much incentive to improve. The federal government can be ordered to pay back wages for being in willful violation of the law, but it incurs no other penalties. A private company, by contrast, could be liable for double an employee's lost wages.

“There seems to be a feeling that the federal government can get away with what they're doing,” said Matthew Estes, a USERRA lawyer with the law firm Tully Rinckey.

The Defense Department, including the Army, Navy, Air Force and various defense agencies, had 75 USERRA cases filed with the Labor Department last year, while Veterans Affairs had the second most, with 46 complaints.

Other major offenders include the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. Postal Service.

Some employees penalized for their military service describe being forced to wend their way through a frustrating bureaucracy before they get recourse.

Sometimes, veterans and advocates say, they never get it.

In fiscal 2010, the Labor Department recommended that Justice officials pursue 43 alleged violations of USERRA. The Justice Department agreed to represent only three, but helped settle nine other cases. The department declined to represent 18 service members, despite Labor's conclusion that their cases had merit. Another dozen cases were still being considered by Justice at the end of the fiscal year.

Service members who have been refused reemployment or denied new jobs say the consequences often extend to their personal lives.

First Lt. Christopher Matthai, 31, enlisted in the Army at 18 after graduating from high school in Baltimore, and in 2006 he joined the Army Reserve. In May 2009, shortly before he married, Matthai was hired for a two-year internship by the Social Security Administration as an information technology specialist.

Soon after he started, however, the Army Reserve selected Matthai for a commission. After missing much of his first year at work for officer training, Matthai informed his civilian supervisors in April 2010 that he would be sent to Afghanistan in the fall for a year.

A few days later, he was fired for "poor performance" and for being absent without leave.

"I was shocked," Matthai recalled. "I told them, 'At least let me resign so I can walk out of here with a clear name.'"

Instead, he was escorted out by a guard.

Matthai filed a complaint with the Labor Department.

An investigation stretched on for months, and Matthai deployed to Afghanistan with the situation unresolved and his wife, Lindsay, pregnant with their first child.

Stress from the case "was destroying my marriage," he said. "I'm sitting overseas, banging my head against the wall."

The Labor Department's investigation, completed in March 2011, found that Matthai had been "wrongfully terminated" because of his military obligations and falsely accused of being absent without leave.

There was no evidence of poor performance.

Matthai was entitled to get his job back with lost wages and benefits and have his record cleared of any wrongdoing, according to the Labor Department.

Matthai, then midway through his tour in Afghanistan, only wanted the SSA to clear his record and pay his attorney fees.

But the Labor Department's findings carry no enforcement power. The SSA offered to pay only a small portion of his attorney fees and insisted that Matthai not seek reemployment with the SSA — a stipulation that would have been a red

flag for any other federal agency considering hiring him, according to Estes, his attorney.

“The whole complaint process is totally broken,” Matthai said. “I’m a federal employee and a reservist, and I felt completely unprotected and abandoned by the federal government.”

It was only after Matthai returned from Afghanistan, when his attorney began scheduling depositions to bring the case before the Merit Systems Protection Board and his congressman, Rep. C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-Md.), called the agency, that the SSA settled the case in November.

The agency dropped its demand that Matthai not seek employment with it again, paid him his full \$13,500 in attorney fees and cleared his record, but it made no admission that it had violated USERRA. The agency declined to comment.

“I still feel cheated,” Matthai said. “The law needs some muscle behind it to have it mean something.”

In January, Matthai left Maryland for a one-year assignment with the Army in Texas. His wife and their now 1-year-old son, Christopher Jr., will soon follow.

“I’ve got to find some kind of employment,” he said, “and it seems the only option is the military.”

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“Advocates Say Soldiers Are Being Abused In The Warrior Transition Battalion At Fort Bragg And Others Like It Across The Country”

“Some Are Wrongly Being Kicked Out Of The Army With Other-Than-Honorable Discharges”

“Thursday, More Soldiers And Veterans Called The Fayetteville Observer To Voice Complaints About Their Treatment In The Battalion”

“Dogs And Cats Get Better Care By Veterinarians Than Soldiers Do, Said Retired Navy Cmdr. Bill Manofsky”

02/17/2012 Greg Barnes, Staff writer, Fayetteville Observer

Independent inspections of Fort Bragg's Warrior Transition Battalion during the past 20 months show that best-practice standards are being met in many areas, Brig. Gen. Michael Garrett said Thursday.

Garrett held a news conference a day after Gen. Frank Helmick, commander of the 18th Airborne Corps and Fort Bragg, announced that he was ordering an investigation into the practices and procedures of the Warrior Transition Battalion.

Kevin Arata, spokesman for the 18th Airborne Corps, said Helmick signed the order to start the investigation Thursday afternoon.

Arata said 576 soldiers are now in the battalion for physically wounded and mentally impaired soldiers. The goal is to get the soldiers back to work or to help them in their return to civilian life.

But advocates say soldiers are being abused in the Warrior Transition Battalion at Fort Bragg and others like it across the country.

They say that some soldiers in the programs have developed suicidal tendencies because medications are routinely overprescribed.

They also say that many soldiers aren't getting the rehabilitative treatment they need.

Instead, they say, some are wrongly being kicked out of the Army with other-than-honorable discharges.

The advocates' allegations about the Warrior Transition Battalion led Helmick to call for the investigation.

Wednesday night, a loosely knit group of advocates organized a meeting of about a dozen soldiers, spouses and others who complained about care and treatment in the battalion.

As part of the investigation, Helmick assigned his inspector general, Col. Maggie Dunn, to attend the meeting to gather information that will be used to shape the investigation.

Thursday, more soldiers and veterans called The Fayetteville Observer to voice complaints about their treatment in the battalion.

Garrett reiterated Helmick's statement that wounded warriors are "a vital concern" to Fort Bragg, one that is taken "very, very seriously."

But advocates for wounded soldiers aren't buying it.

Dogs and cats get better care by veterinarians than soldiers do, said retired Navy Cmdr. Bill Manofsky of California.

Manofsky said he has been fighting for better military medical care since 2003. He said he helped expose abuse and mistreatment of wounded soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in 2004.

That abuse led to the formation of the Warrior Transition Battalion at Fort Bragg and 34 others around the country.

**“We Demand A Great Deal From
Our Soldiers”**

**“We Control Their Lives And, If Need
Be, Control Their Deaths”**

**“Spiritless Leaders, Too Fixated On
Their Own Evaluations, Have Taken The
Place Of Those Who Both Knew The
Right Thing To Do And Possessed The
Fortitude To Do It Despite The Possible
Consequences To Their Own Careers”**

Army Times

Letters To The Editor
February 13, 2012

The greatest threat the Army faces today is not from our nation's enemies.

It is the degradation of confidence in the chain of command.

The epidemic of disingenuous and self-serving "leadership" of all ranks, whose only true concerns are self-preservation and personal advancement, has far surpassed the level that we can be expected to tolerate and still remain effective as an organization.

The age of the leader has been lost to the age of the manager; a group of individuals more concerned with color-coded PowerPoint presentations than the sincere investment of time and energy into the well-being and development of their subordinates.

Spiritless leaders, too fixated on their own evaluations, have taken the place of those who both knew the right thing to do and possessed the fortitude to do it despite the possible consequences to their own careers.

We demand a great deal from our soldiers, and in return they look to us to be the very definition of Army values because when all is said and done, we control their lives and, if need be, control their deaths.

While we cannot guarantee their safety, we owe them absolutely nothing less than the comfort that the decisions we make are in the genuine best interest of something greater than ourselves.

Until we can say we have given them that, our job as leaders is not done.

Capt. Justin Moore
Savannah, Ga.

MORE:

“As For Our Retirement, Nothing Is Safe”

Army Times
FORUMS
February 13, 2012

The collapse already happened. Now that one of the wars has stopped, that should slow the bleeding.

Remember, we were — and still are, just less so — pumping money out of the economy into the war and not getting anything back from Iraq and Afghanistan, which likely had the largest effect on the collapse of the economy.

The more money we keep circulating in-house instead of someplace else, the less we have to worry.

As for our retirement, nothing is safe, but I think the brass in Washington will fight to either keep the military retirement system as it is with massive reductions in the force, or our retirement will be cut with massive reductions in force.

**Take your pick.
Gold_Reaper**



“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

**Hope for change doesn't cut it when you're still losing buddies.
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

Troops Invited:

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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.

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.”

Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

GOT AN OPINION?

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