

Military Resistance 10G13



[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

Friday The 13th

From: Dennis Serdel
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: Friday, July 13
Subject: Friday the 13th

Written by Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div.
11th Brigade; United Auto Workers GM Retiree

Friday the 13th

No, the Soldiers do not go to Heaven
they do not join their relatives,
they just die and are removed
from life and existence to be never
heard again and if they do not die
but grow old then they look at their
life up and down and give themselves
their Last Judgment, but if their young
die in battle then they are spared to
look at their short life before Death
either way all their is is just Death.
No, there is no Allah or Martyrs, that
is just an old belief system handed
down throughout the ages to explain
the Soldier's Death because all there
is is Death and nothing else Not
even a Messiah that they have
waited for who will come, but he never
does because all their is is Death.
No, the Soldier who is so brutal who
rapes kills and tortures will Not go
to Hell because there is no Hell, no
flames or circles that is just a way
to control the Soldier who acts
like an Animal in War and is soon
covered up with soil and is never
punished because there is No Hell
for him to go to, all there is is Death
For the Christian Soldier who waits
for Jesus who never comes again
and never will, take that cross and rip
it from around your neck unless you
too believe there is an Afterlife that was
stolen from the Egyptians and the word
Sun was changed to Son and all there
is is Death and nothing more.
No, Jewish Soldier, there is No Promised
Land, only land stolen and 100+ years old
olive trees are ripped from the ground and
the expansion of settlements are met
with stones and deeds, mean nothing
as you live with your bloody Superstitions
is just another word for Suppression
and all there is is just Death and
nothing more

Shock Poetry by Dennis Serdel for Military Resistance

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.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Foreign Occupation “Servicemember” Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan: Nationality Not Announced

July 13, 2012 Reuters

A foreign servicemember died following an improvised explosive device attack in southern Afghanistan today.

Columbia Man Killed In Afghanistan



Sterling Wyatt

July 11, 2012 By Andrew Denney, The Columbia Daily Tribune

An Army soldier from Columbia was killed in Afghanistan as the result of the detonation of an improvised explosive device, his family learned yesterday.

Sterling Wyatt, 21, was killed while on patrol and in transit between two bases in Afghanistan, his mother, Sherry Wyatt, said this morning.

She was preparing to depart Columbia for Dover Air Force Base near Dover, Del., where her son's remains were to be transferred.

She said Sterling Wyatt entered the military knowing full well that he could be deployed to a foreign theater. He was stationed in Kandahar, Afghanistan, and was assigned as a gun turret operator on armored vehicles.

"He went into it with open eyes and a willing heart," Sherry Wyatt said.

The U.S. Department of Defense confirmed the incident this afternoon in a news release, saying Wyatt died yesterday in Kandahar province when his vehicle was attacked with an enemy IED. Wyatt was assigned to the 5th Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., the DED release said.

Sterling had a penchant for community service, his mother said. As part of his efforts to obtain the rank of Eagle Scout — a goal he achieved — he constructed a walkway in a courtyard at Shepard Boulevard Elementary School leading to an outdoor classroom. The project was intended to make travel easier for students who use wheelchairs.

"I think he would have been a future leader of the community in some fashion," Sherry Wyatt said.

Jeff Guillory, who serves as scoutmaster for Sterling Wyatt's former Boy Scout troop, said he was surprised when Wyatt joined the Army. But, he said, the young man felt it was part of his "duty to God and country, as it says in the Scouts oath."

Guillory described Wyatt as "very loyal to his friends and family."

"He was always one of the people to get people who are down in the dumps to smile," Guillory said.

Former state Rep. Judy Baker said her family is friends with the Wyatts through their participation in First Baptist Church, where Baker's husband served as a pastor. She said she had known Wyatt since he was a young boy, and she described him as someone always at the ready to help someone in need. His military service was "just an extension of who he was a person," she said. "Losing Sterling is devastating to their family, their friends and the community as a whole," Baker said. She added: "He left Columbia a boy, and he's coming back a hero."

Wyatt was a 2009 graduate of Rock Bridge High School, and his mother said he held the rank of private first class at the time of his death. In addition to his mother, he is survived by his father, Randy Wyatt, and a brother.

Sherry Wyatt said that since news of her son's death spread yesterday, balloons, flowers and American flags have been left at the family's residence in tribute to Sterling. "My baby died for that flag," she said, holding back tears.

Iowa Town Loses Another To War



Sgt. James Skalberg Jr.

Jun. 29, 2012 Written by GRANT RODGERS, Altoona Herald

U.S. Army Sgt. James “Jamie” Skalberg Jr. on Wednesday became the second man from his small southwestern Iowa town to die in combat in the Afghanistan war.

Skalberg, 25, an Emerson native, loved to have fun and was a leader on his high school basketball and football teams, a former coach said.

He was killed in Wardak province in eastern Afghanistan when an improvised explosive device struck the vehicle he was in, military officials said on Friday.

Also killed in the attack was 1st Lt. Stephen Prasnicki, 24, of Lexington, Va.

Skalberg had an infant son with his wife. His family asked for privacy this week.

Skalberg graduated from Nishna Valley High School in Hastings in 2005 in a class of 21 students, said former educator Deb Taylor, who retired in 2010. He was voted to both the homecoming and prom courts his senior year, she said.

Taylor best remembers Skalberg for an encounter the two had in the spring of 2005, when she returned to work after a leave of absence because of breast cancer.

“I remember when I came back, he put his arm around me and said, ‘It’s so good to have you back,’ ” she said. “He was very caring.”

By his senior year, Skalberg was a top scorer on the basketball team, said former coach Kevin Schafer. Skalberg played forward on the basketball team and wide receiver on the school’s eight-man football team, he said.

“He was a little immature when he first came to our school, but when he aged, he really blossomed,” Schafer said. “He was a really good teammate.”

Nishna Valley has since consolidated with Malvern to form the East Mills school district.

Emerson and its 432 residents have twice lost hometown heroes to the war in Afghanistan. In November 2004, Iowa National Guard Spc. James Kearney III became the first Iowan to die in the conflict when his convoy was hit with rocket-propelled grenades.

Kearney also attended Nishna Valley High School and played football under Schafer.

“It’s been tough on our community, but we’re proud of both young men and everybody that’s willing to sacrifice and do whatever it takes for our country,” Schafer said.

Skalberg has been awarded a posthumous Purple Heart.

More than 80 members of the military with Iowa ties have died during overseas deployments in Iraq, Afghanistan or elsewhere since fighting in Afghanistan began in 2001.

Since 2001, 1,900 U.S. soldiers have died in Afghanistan.

Staff Sgt. Robert Massarelli, East Kentwood Graduate Killed In Afghanistan, Remembered As Hard Worker And Skilled Craftsman



Robert A. Massarelli

July 04, 2012 By Megan Durisin, MLive.com

KENTWOOD -- Staff Sgt. Robert Massarelli is remembered as being a committed student with a strong work ethic during his time at Kentwood Public Schools.

"He was a good student and a good kid," said assistant superintendent Michael Zoerhoff. "He was one of those types of kids who comes to school every day, does his job, doesn't get in trouble."

Massarelli, 32, was killed June 24 when a truck he was in reportedly hit an improvised explosive device, or IED, while traveling in Kandahar, Afghanistan.

Massarelli was a staff sergeant in the U.S. Army's 96th Transportation Company and had completed three tours in Iraq before serving in Afghanistan, according to his obituary on the Colligan Funeral Home website. He was one of two soldiers killed in the attack.

Massarelli graduated from East Kentwood High School in 1998. He also attended Crestwood Middle School and Bowen Elementary School.

Massarelli, the son of Pat and Mary Renneker Massarelli, who currently live in Hamilton, Ohio, is also survived by two brothers, Mike and Ben Massarelli.

Zoerhoff said he did not know Massarelli personally during his time with Kentwood Public Schools, but his records show he was a hard worker and skilled craftsman. He was involved in the school's residential construction program, in which students are selected to work to build a house over the course of several years. Upon completion, the home is put up for sale to the public.

"You could tell he was a good soldier back then," Zoerhoff said. "We are very saddened by Robert's death and grateful for his service to our country."

Massarelli is remembered by a fellow soldier as being "the soldier of soldiers" and helping others stay sane during deployments, according to his obituary.

"Robert was fun loving. He took his love of life and levity to the field helping his fellow soldiers to maintain their sanity during their deployments," the obituary states. "He will be truly missed by his fellow soldiers, friends and family."

A visitation service for Massarelli will be held from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. Friday at Badin High School in Hamilton, Ohio, and a burial mass is scheduled to take place at 10 a.m. Saturday at St. Julie Billiard Church.

Memorial contributions can be made to The Fisher House for Families of the Fallen, 116 Purple Heart Drive Dover AFB, Dover, Delaware or to the USO, 2111 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1200, Arlington, Virginia.

Two Australian Soldiers Wounded In Afghanistan

July 12, 2012 By Dylan Welch, National Security Correspondent, Fairfax Media

Two Australian soldiers have been wounded in Afghanistan - one seriously - after a roadside bomb exploded near their armoured vehicle on Tuesday.

The two soldiers were patrolling in a Bushmaster in the Deh Rawud area in the province of Oruzgan, where Australia's 3rd Battalion has recently taken over combat operations from the 8th/9th Battalion.

Both soldiers were evacuated to the base at Tarin Kot where they were treated, and remain in a satisfactory condition. The seriously wounded soldier is expected to be returned to Australia.

One Australian soldier - SAS sergeant Blaine Diddams - has been killed and 17 Australian defence personnel wounded in Afghanistan this year.

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE
BLOODSHED**

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

Resistance Action

12 July 2012 Radio New Zealand & 13 LUG 2012 AGI

New Zealand soldiers in Afghanistan have helped evacuate injured local police officers after five were killed in a roadside bomb attack in Bamiyan Province.

A two-vehicle convoy of Afghan National Police hit an improvised explosive device in the Shikari Valley in the north of Bamiyan on Sunday night.

The New Zealanders secured the area and assisted the wounded officers, who were helicoptered to the United States military base of Bagram, near the capital Kabul.

Herat - An Italian armored vehicle was hit by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan but escaped unscathed with 3 soldiers only slightly bruised. The event occurred yesterday evening a few kilometres from the Italian base 'Lavaredo' near Shindand, headquarters for Task Force Centre.

ANNIVERSARIES

July 14, 1789: ***Magnificent Anniversary:*** **“Revolutionaries And Mutinous Troops Stormed And Dismantled The Bastille”**



Carl Bunin Peace History

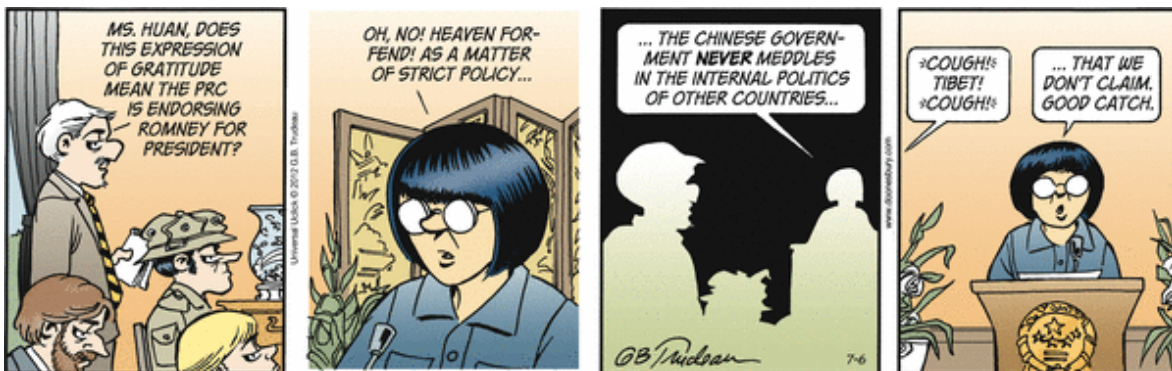
Bastille Day in France: Parisian revolutionaries and mutinous troops stormed and dismantled the Bastille, a royal fortress converted to a state prison, that had come to symbolize the tyranny of the Bourbon monarchs.

This dramatic action was proof that power no longer resided in the King as God's representative, but in the people, and signaled the beginning of the French Revolution and the First Republic.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS



Syrian Rebellion Reaches Deeper Into Heart Of Damascus: “Anti-Regime Graffiti Are Scribbled On The Walls In Almost Every Neighborhood” “At Night, The Sound Of Shelling In Nearby Suburbs That Have Fallen Under Rebel Control Echoes Through The Streets”

July 12 By Special Correspondent, The Washington Post [Excerpts]

DAMASCUS — The revolution that has engulfed much of Syria in bloodshed is now encroaching on the capital in ways that challenge long-held assumptions about President Bashar al-Assad's hold on power even in the city presumed to be his stronghold.

Compared with places such as Homs, Hama and Deir al-Zour, where bombardments and battles are commonplace, Damascus is still relatively calm.

No longer, however, can the government boast that the capital is an oasis of tranquility or that a silent majority of its residents are loyal to the regime.

The city now feels pregnant with rage, and ready to explode.

Anti-regime graffiti are scribbled on the walls in almost every neighborhood.

At night, the sound of shelling in nearby suburbs that have fallen under rebel control echoes through the streets, disturbing the sleep of rich and poor alike.

Flying — or tayara — protests, in which small groups stage sudden and swift demonstrations, are increasing even in some of the more upmarket neighborhoods of the city.

And recent strikes by merchants of the renowned Damascus souks have eroded perceptions that they still support the government.

On Thursday, the violence came even closer, with government forces firing shells into fields adjoining the long-restive neighborhood of Kafr Souseh on the southeastern edge of the city, sending plumes of smoke rising into the sky and sounds of explosions reverberating through the streets.

One reason for the shifting mood is the influx of people who have flooded into Damascus in recent months, seeking refuge from the fighting elsewhere in the country. The United Nations estimates the overall number of displaced people in Syria at 500,000, and although no one knows for sure how many of those have made their way to the capital, the city's population has tangibly swelled, with families crowding into hotel rooms, renting cheap apartments and descending on the homes of relatives.

They have brought with them stories of pain and injustice, infecting Damascenes with some of the anger that has sustained the uprising elsewhere for about 16 months.

"The presence of the refugees made us live the tragedy, not only hear about it or read about it as if in a book," said Samer, 30, a Damascus-based activist who took in a family of 10 from the Bayadeh area of Homs in March.

One of them, a woman, wept as she showed him photographs of her son stored on her cellphone, he recalled. The son had been torn apart by shellfire in Homs.

"I was speechless and felt that it was me who wanted help at that moment," said Samer, who, like others interviewed for this article, requested that he be identified only by his first name because he fears for his safety.

Most of those seeking sanctuary are women and children whose husbands and fathers have been killed or have remained behind to fight or to protect their property.

But activists have come, too, along with their enthusiasm for staging the kind of anti-government demonstrations that have so far taken place only on a limited scale in the capital.

"I came to Damascus because I want to protest," said Ahmad, an activist displaced from the besieged Khalidyeh neighborhood of Homs, which comes under near-daily bombardment by government troops seeking to dislodge the rebels who control it.

Ahmad used to own a clothes shop, but he has lost his livelihood and his home in the uprising. Since June 20, he has been living with his family in the southern neighborhood of Sitt Zeinab, alongside an estimated 7,000 former residents of Homs.

He spends his time mingling with local residents, sharing his experiences of the revolt in Homs and encouraging them to organize protests.

There are also other indications that discontent is growing among native Damascenes, notably the merchant classes whose silence has long been interpreted as tacit support for the Assad regime.

The May 25 massacre of at least 108 people in the village of Houla, outside Homs, marked a turning point, triggering the first concerted display of defiance by the

merchants of the Damascus souks, the storied bazaars in the city center that are the hub of the capital's commercial life.

Three days after the killings, the merchants closed their stores in protest, responding to a call by activist groups. Several shop owners said, however, that the strike followed a visit to the souk by two men who threatened to burn the shops of those who did not comply with the call. Nonetheless, the shop owners said they were relieved to be given an excuse to express their anger, as well as an excuse to offer the security forces when they roamed through the souks trying to force the merchants to reopen.

"We were actually hoping for that to happen," a store owner said, referring to the strike.

A second strike, last weekend, was more widespread, affecting several Damascus neighborhoods as well as the souks.

The authorities tried to prevent it, sending out text messages urging people not to participate, then dispatching security forces armed with machine guns and hammers to force open the shutters of those who did.

Shop owners clustered near their stalls, ready to open them quickly when the security forces appeared.

And the rebel Free Syrian Army is increasingly making its presence felt.

Several clashes between the rebels and the government forces have been reported in Kafr Souseh, which is home to some of the capital's fanciest shopping malls and key security headquarters.

The shelling there Thursday seemed only to signal the extent to which parts of the neighborhood have begun slipping out of government control.

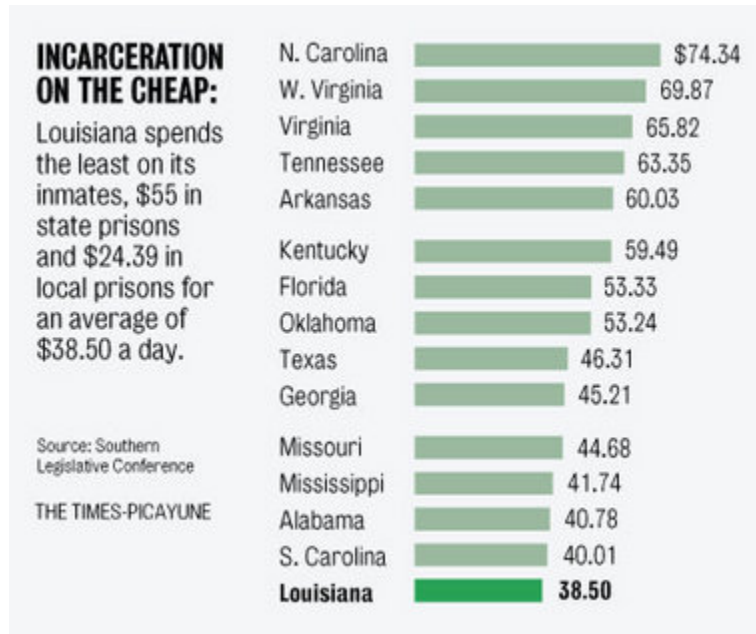
Last week, a new Free Syrian Army battalion announced its formation in a video posted on YouTube. Calling itself the Miqdad Ben Amro battalion, the group of about 50 armed and masked men said it had been formed to fight in the city center.

The regime, said the statement read out on the video, "knows, as everyone knows, that its end will come in Damascus."

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.

Louisiana Locks Up More People Per Capita Than Any Other State.
“More Than Half Of The State’s 40,000 Inmates Are Housed In Local Prisons Run By Sheriffs Or Private Companies Like LaSalle For The Express Purpose Of Making A Buck”
“Clay McConnell Will Not Discuss LaSalle’s Balance Sheets, But The Family Business Exists To Make Money”



May 14, 2012 By Cindy Chang, The Times-Picayune

JONESBORO -- Clay McConnell is an unlikely scion for a prison empire.

An ordained minister, his curly brown hair is fashionably ruffled, and he gets flustered when speaking in front of a video camera. His father, Billy, is the brains behind LaSalle Corrections, the one who expanded the family business from senior citizens to criminals.

When a prison-building boom swept north Louisiana in the 1990s, Billy McConnell got in on the financing and construction ends.

Then he thought, why not run the prisons, too?

He already ran nursing homes, and the bottom line was the same. His experience feeding and housing old folks could be applied to keeping drug pushers and petty thieves behind bars.

"We realized that prisons are like nursing homes. You need occupancy to be high. You have to treat people fairly and run a good ship, but run it like a business, watch food costs, employee costs," said Clay McConnell, 37.

Today, the McConnells are a major force in Louisiana's vast prison industry, playing a role in the incarceration of one in seven prisoners.

The family's fortunes have risen hand in hand with those of rural sheriffs who are the best-known face of Louisiana Incarceration-for-Profit Inc.

More than half of the state's 40,000 inmates are housed in local prisons run by sheriffs or private companies like LaSalle for the express purpose of making a buck.

Whether a sheriff uses the revenue to buy shotguns or whether LaSalle uses it to build a gleaming new headquarters, the result is the same.

If you are sentenced to state time in Louisiana, odds are you will be placed in a local prison -- a low-budget, for-profit enterprise where you are likely to languish in your bunk, day after day, year after year, bored out of your skull with little chance to learn a trade or otherwise improve yourself.

A coveted spot at a state prison like Angola, Hunt or Dixon is a long shot for anyone not convicted of a violent crime such as murder, rape or armed robbery.

Local prisons specialize in incarceration on the cheap. State prisons are built on huge acreage, offer an array of vocational classes and require able-bodied inmates to work. While the average daily price tag for an inmate at a state prison is \$55 a day, local prisons only get \$24.39 -- and try to wring a few extra dollars from that.

Yet these are the very inmates, convicted of minor crimes such as drug possession and writing bad checks, who will soon be back in society. While lifers at Angola learn welding, plumbing and auto mechanics, 11,000 of the 15,000 people released from Louisiana prisons each year come out of local facilities and have had no such opportunities.

Louisiana locks up more people per capita than any other state.

One in 86 of its adult citizens is behind bars. Of those Louisiana inmates, 53 percent are housed in local prisons -- by far the highest percentage in the country.

The two statistics are inextricably linked.

Prison operators, who depend on the world's highest incarceration rate to survive, are a hidden driver behind the harsh sentencing laws that put so many people away for long periods.

Then, there are the regime's losers: the ex-convicts who have not received any rehabilitation in local prisons and the innocent citizens who become their victims.

This incarceration bonanza evolved with the wholehearted encouragement of the Louisiana Department of Corrections as a cheap, ad hoc solution to overcrowding in the state prisons.

The state spends \$182 million a year to house inmates in local prisons. While rural sheriffs and private investors reap the benefits, the negative consequences are most acute in New Orleans and other urban areas that produce more criminals than they can house in their own local jails.

South Louisiana's crime problems fuel north Louisiana's incarceration industry. The dollars that might have been scraped together to pay for inmate rehabilitation go instead to upgrading a rural sheriff's vehicle fleet.

Annual profits in good years range from about \$200,000 for an average-sized operation to as much as \$1 million for parishes with several prisons.

"For the sheriffs, that became like heroin, that became a regular source of income for them," said Burk Foster, a former University of Louisiana-Lafayette professor and an expert on Louisiana prisons.

"The way they save money is not because the sheriffs are more efficient but because they have fewer staff and almost no services in terms of medical care or psychological assistance or rehab or educational classes."

The drive down U.S. Route 167 to the Jackson Parish Correctional Center on a cold, drizzly December day is bleak and beautiful. For mile upon mile, pine trees mingle with bare branches and the last of the season's dying leaves in a panorama of green, gray and red. Near Jonesboro, the parish seat, a factory spews white clouds, infusing the air with a sickly sweet smell as cardboard boxes made from local lumber take shape inside.

For as long as anyone can remember, north-central Louisiana has been timber country. These days, it is also prison country.

Although Jackson Parish came relatively late to the prison game, the correctional center and its 130 jobs are as vital to the local economy as the Smurfit-Stone cardboard plant.

Inside, prisoners in black-and-white striped jumpsuits nap on bunk beds. It is 9 a.m., and breakfast was served hours ago.

There is nothing to do until lunch. Some watch television in a corner of the dormitory, which houses about 80 men. At least there is a cafeteria and daily yard time. At some local prisons, inmates eat in their dorms and only breathe fresh air a few times a week.

An orange uniform denotes trustee status -- about 100 of these inmates mop floors and prepare food inside the prison. Another 100 leave the premises each day for jobs in the free world as part of a work-release program. Two dorms are devoted to a Christian-themed substance-abuse program called Celebrate Recovery. The rest of the 1,100 men, the lowly black-and-white stripes, must figure out how to amuse themselves.

When Sheriff Andy Brown was elected in 2004, Jackson Parish's only jail was on the top floor of a 1930s-era courthouse so Old South it retains a long-defunct hook and trapdoor for hangings. Inmates enjoyed plugging up the toilets so the whole building, including the sheriff's office, would flood. Brown ran on the promise of a new jail for local residents incarcerated while awaiting trial.

The best way to finance the operation, Brown realized, was to scale it up by also keeping prisoners from other parishes who would bring in the \$24.39 state per diem. Could he raise enough cash from his rural electorate to build such a large prison, and did he want to branch out from law enforcement to feed, house and secure hundreds of inmates from tough urban areas?

The sheriff decided to bring in Billy McConnell's company, LaSalle Corrections, which is based in nearby Ruston and runs a dozen prisons in north Louisiana and Texas.

LaSalle poured \$15 million into the one-story warehouse-like structures a few miles from Jonesboro's quaint, semi-abandoned downtown.

The company owns and manages the Jackson Parish Correctional Center, but it needs the sheriff as much as the sheriff needs it: Only government entities can receive inmates from the state. In return, Brown's department gets a guaranteed \$100,000 a year.

Brown now has a decent place to house his pretrial inmates. The regular payments from LaSalle certainly come in handy. But for him, the real cake is the jobs. He made sure the prison's 100-plus employees would be sheriff's deputies with full government benefits, instantly tripling his workforce. LaSalle pays their salaries, while Brown has the final say on hiring and firing. His constituents are always asking about openings. For a parish of only 16,000 residents, a 1,147-bed prison is an economic powerhouse. Last fall, Brown won re-election unopposed.

"There's a lot of patronage here by hiring all these people. It's good for a rural community," Brown said. "We were able to bring a facility to this community without using any tax dollars. We employ X number of people and don't spend any money, plus the \$100,000 a year sponsor fee. I get the patronage."

Among the inmates from New Orleans in Jackson Parish Correctional Center on that chilly December day are Michael Heine, 26, serving five years for burglary; David Adams, 45, transferred from a state prison because of his skill in painting cars; and Tyrone Dupleche, 39, with five years left on drug charges.

Since Hurricane Katrina, Orleans Parish Prison has not had room for all the low-level convicts sentenced at Tulane and Broad.

About one in five of those with sentences of fewer than 10 years ends up at a local prison in another parish. In Jefferson Parish, nearly all the convicted burglars, swindlers

and drug dealers are sent hundreds of miles from home to be fed on as little as \$1.50 a day.

Jackson gets about a quarter of its inmates from the New Orleans metro area, with more than 200 typically hailing from Jefferson Parish. LaSalle houses many more south Louisiana natives at its other prisons, which form a swath roughly paralleling Interstate 20 -- Catahoula, Claiborne, LaSalle, Richwood, Lincoln, Concordia. In Richland Parish, the company has a financial stake in the prison but does not manage it.

Few Louisianians have heard of LaSalle Corrections, but its reach is broad: A quarter of local prison inmates are incarcerated in a LaSalle-affiliated facility.

Dupleche, a 9th Ward native, is lucky to have a job in the prison cafeteria. At least there is something to take his mind off the distance from his family in New Orleans. He applied for a geographic transfer but never heard back.

"These places, you just housed. It's a warehouse. And then to be away from home," said Dupleche, a round-faced man with a shaved head, clad in an orange trustee jumpsuit. In nearly a year, he has not had a visit from his aunt and grandmother, who are too old and sick to make the five-hour drive from New Orleans. In a previous stint at Dixon Correctional Institute, a state prison, Dupleche learned the plastering trade, landing a job at Stucco King when he returned home. At Jackson, he simply marks time.

Adams is more philosophical about the distance. The Algiers native started his armed-robbery sentence in 1998 at Avoyelles state prison. There, he learned how to paint cars.

After 12 years, Adams was transferred to a local prison in Concordia Parish, near the Mississippi River. The reason? The Concordia sheriff needed someone to paint his patrol vehicles. Adams didn't get along with a lieutenant there, so off he went to a LaSalle-run prison, also in Concordia. Since last June, he has been at Jackson, where the staff is making good use of his painting skills.

Adams chooses not to dwell on the series of transfers. The private prisons are less authoritarian than state facilities, he said, and there is more trust between inmates and guards. His job allows him to spend most of his time outdoors. He doesn't mind being far from home; he is planning to leave New Orleans and its troubled streets behind anyway. When he is released in three years, he would like to open an auto body shop in Natchez, where he has family.

"You accept your surroundings. This is part of my sentence," said Adams. "All I'm worried about is the 36 months. Prison is prison."

Heine is similarly sanguine. He wishes the prison offered more classes, which would be "a lot more time off people's hands and give them something to look forward to when they get home." But for him, the distance from New Orleans is a good thing, providing him with distraction-free time to think about what went wrong and how to do better.

Two decades ago, the last thing Louisiana sheriffs wanted was more inmates. The state prison system was under a federal court order to reduce overcrowding, and there was no money for new facilities.

The backlog flowed to the sheriffs, who were outraged at having the problem foisted on them. Charles Foti, then the sheriff of Orleans Parish, famously dumped a busload of inmates in a state prison parking lot.

Richard Stalder, who took over the Department of Corrections in 1992, saw a solution. Sweeten the financial incentives, he reasoned, and sheriffs would change their tune. Sure enough, an increased per diem payment and a guarantee of 40 percent occupancy was enough to spark an incarceration gold rush. Sheriffs, seeing jobs for their constituents and new equipment for their deputies, volunteered to build the new prisons the state could not afford. The once-recalcitrant Foti expanded his prison to more than 7,000 beds.

In rural, impoverished north Louisiana, the deal was particularly alluring, not only for sheriffs but for private investors, who knocked on sheriffs' doors, dangling financing and profit-sharing deals. Low, cinder-block buildings ringed with barbed wire sprouted along country highways across the state.

Some small-time investors merely fronted capital for construction costs, collecting monthly rent while avoiding the headaches of running a prison. Billy McConnell, with his nursing home experience, plunged into the management side. Another Louisiana company, LCS Corrections, developed a similar profile, with three prisons in Louisiana and three in Texas. Louisiana's private prison industry is mostly homegrown: The national chains CCA and GEO each operate a state prison but no local prisons.

A handful of tiny towns have even gotten in on the spoils. Richwood, a town of 3,400 near Monroe, gets more than \$100,000 a year from LaSalle for the right to operate a 900-bed prison. Epps, population 854, leases its prison rights to Lafayette-based Emerald Prison Enterprises in exchange for an annual payment of as much as \$200,000. The 700-some prisoners almost outnumber Epps residents, and the detention center accounts for half the village's annual revenue.

Michael Ranatza, executive director of the influential Louisiana Sheriffs' Association, downplays the profit motive. Sheriffs are saving taxpayers a lot of money by incarcerating a prisoner on just \$24.39 a day, Ranatza said. The association is in favor of more inmate programs, but money is an issue.

"It's not like just warehousing. We are providing a lot of programs for \$24.39," Ranatza said. "But as costs continue to rise, that's what they're faced with -- you're getting a lot of them operating right on the edge."

So many prisons were built in the boom times of the 1990s that sheriffs are having trouble keeping their beds full, in a business where less than 100 percent occupancy means going in the red.

Now, instead of unloading inmates, sheriffs compete with each other for the catch of the day. They trade inmates as they please -- shipping some to a colleague with beds to fill, unloading a guy who complains too much or asking around for a skilled mechanic.

As the cost of food, staffing and health care rises without a corresponding increase in the per diem, some sheriffs are even thinking about selling.

"If you're losing money, you have to do something. If you have a business and it's losing money, you've got to get out of it," said Caldwell Parish Sheriff Steve May. "Since the economy got bad and the cost of everything's gone up, we haven't been able to funnel money to the department. It's been just strictly to keep the prisons going."

A private company is more adaptable than a law enforcement agency with a single prison enterprise, and the McConnells are not worried. Their pipelines from the New Orleans metro area are so well-established that Jackson Parish Warden Tim Ducote does not call Jefferson Parish. Rather, Jefferson calls him to announce that a busload of inmates is ready to be shipped up north.

A drop in the incarceration rate could spell doom for both LaSalle Corrections and the sheriffs.

The Louisiana Sheriffs' Association lobbies extensively on its members' behalf and funds campaigns through a related political action committee. Private prison companies have the resources to be major political donors themselves. With strategically placed contributions, they can influence legislation as well as potentially steer inmates to their own prisons.

In the past decade, LaSalle and the McConnells have donated about \$31,000 to campaigns, including \$10,000 to Gov. Bobby Jindal and numerous contributions to north Louisiana state legislators. LCS and its owners have thrown much more cash at politicians -- about \$120,000 since 1999.

Some of LCS's donations are to urban sheriffs who have a surplus of state-sentenced inmates and can choose where to send the overflow. LCS gave East Baton Rouge Sheriff Sid Gautreaux the maximum, \$5,000, in 2008, 2009 and 2010, for a total of \$15,000. About 3,100 Baton Rouge residents are currently incarcerated throughout the state, while Gautreaux's own prison has room for only 1,800.

Pat LeBlanc, one of LCS's founders, ran unsuccessfully for Lafayette-area state representative before dying in a plane crash in 2008. His brother, Michael LeBlanc, continues as the chief executive. LCS has run into corruption allegations in Texas, but a spokesman said the Louisiana operations have not had any issues.

If worse comes to worst, the McConnells will get into the more lucrative business of housing federal and out-of-state inmates, which they have already been doing to some extent. They are quick to seize on expansion opportunities.

When Jindal floated a short-lived proposal to sell two state prisons, LaSalle's bid included the option of closing those facilities and moving the inmates to existing LaSalle properties. The company is angling to open a 1,000-bed facility in Arizona, where the detention of illegal immigrants is a growth industry. Jindal's new plan to privatize the state-run Avoyelles Correctional Center presents a golden opportunity for experienced prison operators like LaSalle.

Clay McConnell will not discuss LaSalle's balance sheets, but the family business exists to make money.

"I'm not running a nonprofit," he said.

Local prisons undergo annual inspections and are required to comply with the Department of Correction's Basic Jail Guidelines. Beyond that, they are so loosely regulated that even Secretary of Corrections Jimmy LeBlanc is having trouble getting a handle on the daily transfers of inmates among facilities.

According to a review of inspection reports for the state's 100-some local prisons, physical conditions are usually adequate, if basic.

A major exception is Orleans Parish Prison, an aging, understaffed facility where violence and substandard living conditions are endemic. Following multiple lawsuits and withering criticism from federal authorities, Sheriff Marlin Gusman recently closed one building, the House of Detention, which housed over 600 inmates.

Prisons dating from the 1990s boom are new enough to still be in good shape physically. Prison officials, inmates and former inmates say the main problem is the lack of constructive activities, which not only engenders stifling boredom but leaves prisoners ill-prepared to re-enter society when they are released. Many sheriffs say they would gladly offer more programs, but they need more money from the state to do so.

In part because of their religious bent, the McConnells are more focused on rehabilitation than many local prison operators and are willing to set aside a portion of their profits for that aim. The relationship is sometimes symbiotic: Offering the Blue Walters substance-abuse rehab program, as LaSalle does, fills beds with inmates even as it only consumes 60 hours

Clay McConnell may want to show his charges the right path, but there is no disguising that these are bare-bones operations. The \$24.39 per diem is by far the lowest that any state spends on prisoners. Out of that, LaSalle must not only turn a profit but divvy up the money with its public-sector partners. At Richwood Correctional Center, a row of classrooms is shuttered, awaiting teachers and books.

One of LeBlanc's signature initiatives is the 100-hour job and life skills curriculum known as re-entry, which is offered to all inmates leaving state prisons. He said he hopes the 53 percent of inmates serving their time in local prisons will someday go through the program, too.

But at a time when budget cuts have forced him to leave guard towers at the Angola state penitentiary unmanned, finding money is like squeezing the proverbial blood from a stone. Lowering the incarceration rate would free up some cash, but the political winds do not seem to be blowing in that direction.

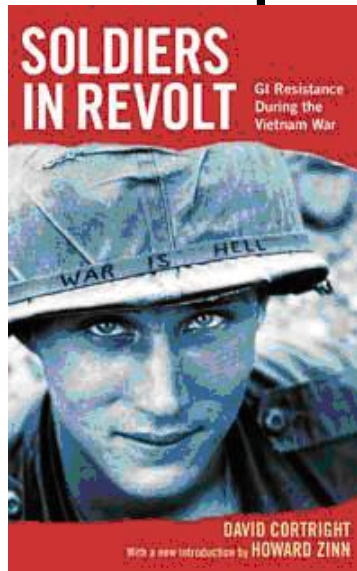
LeBlanc, always careful to praise the sheriffs as important "partners," said he would like to see a smaller prison population, with more resources devoted to those who remain behind bars. Under that scenario, sheriffs would continue to house state prisoners, receiving higher payments in return for providing more rehabilitation.

LeBlanc has also hinted that he might implement a centralized system for distributing inmates among local prisons, ending the daily horse trading that goes on below the radar.

In the past few months, Department of Corrections officials have begun to regulate the locations of inmates from Orleans and Jefferson parishes.

"You have to understand that, politically, it has a lot to do with the politics side," LeBlanc said of the sheriffs. "Economically, it means a lot to their parish. They use that money for patrols. It helps their parish and public safety to have extra funds. You can't knock them for that, and that's why we've got to do it in partnership."

FREE TO ACTIVE DUTY: A Vietnam Soldier Wrote The Book All About How An Armed Forces Rebellion Stopped An Imperial War



SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT

**[CIVILIANS: \$16 INCLUDING POSTAGE:
BUY ONE FOR A FRIEND/RELATIVE IN THE SERVICE.
CHECKS, MONEY ORDERS PAYABLE TO: THE MILITARY
PROJECT]**

**Requests from active duty or
orders from civilians to:**

**Military Resistance
Box 126
2576 Broadway
New York, N.Y.
10025-5657**

GET MILITARY RESISTANCE NEWSLETTER BY EMAIL

If you wish to receive Military Resistance immediately and directly, send request to contact@militaryproject.org. There is no subscription charge.



“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?

Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request identification published.

Military Resistance Available In PDF Format

If you prefer PDF to Word format, email: contact@militaryproject.org

Military Resistance Looks Even Better Printed Out

Military Resistance/GI Special are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org>. The following have chosen to post issues; there

may be others: <http://williambowles.info/military-resistance-archives/>;
news@uruknet.info

Military Resistance distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **Military Resistance has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is Military Resistance endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, a copy of this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.