

Military Resistance 10J14



[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Veteran, who sent this in.]

**The Arizona National Guard
Recruiter Horrors:
They Engaged In “Sexual Abuse,”
“Collected Recruiting Fees To
Which They Were Not Entitled,
Forged Guard Documents, And
Committed Other Offenses Such
As Hunting The Homeless With
Paintball Guns”**

**“A Systemic Patchwork Of Criminal And
Ethical Misconduct That Critics Say
Continues To Fester In Part Because Of
Leadership Failures And Lax Discipline”
“The Way The Arizona National Guard Is
Today, I Would Not Trust It With My Son
Or Daughter,” Said White. “It Disgusts
Me”**

Lt. Col. Rob White, who conducted a command climate investigation in 2009 to assess whether commanders were at fault, said he is sickened by the failure of National Guard leaders to root out misconduct and impose punishment.

Oct. 13, 2012 by Dennis Wagner, The Republic

A five-month investigation of National Guard conduct and culture by The Arizona Republic has uncovered a systemic patchwork of criminal and ethical misconduct that critics say continues to fester in part because of leadership failures and lax discipline.

According to interviews with military officers and records obtained by The Republic, Arizona Army National Guard members over the past decade engaged in

misbehavior that included sexual abuse, enlistment improprieties, forgery, firearms violations, embezzlement, and assaults.

The wrongdoing, most of which has not been previously disclosed, was concentrated among military recruiters who often visit high schools in search of teenage recruits. National Guard investigators found that non-commissioned officers, known as NCOs, engaged in sexual misconduct, collected recruiting fees to which they were not entitled, forged Guard documents, and committed other offenses such as hunting the homeless with paintball guns.

Investigators asserted that National Guard commanders failed to hold subordinates accountable, in part because many supervisors also engaged in unethical behavior.

Many high-ranking officers contend an atmosphere of disdain for discipline persists.

The National Guard is a state organization of more than 9,000 military and civilian personnel.

Corruption and other misconduct appear to be confined to a small minority of the roughly 2,300 soldiers and airmen who are full-time employees. Many of these were in the Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Command, according to The Republic's review of more than a dozen military and police reports.

Maj. Gen. Hugo Salazar, the Arizona National Guard's top officer, said in an interview that a rogue atmosphere in recruiting was detected and quietly addressed in the past few years.

Salazar said recruiting operations were reorganized with greater command oversight, and the most culpable soldiers were discharged or demoted.

But other high-ranking officers who talked with The Republic disagreed that problems have been dealt with.

“The Way The Arizona National Guard Is Today, I Would Not Trust It With My Son Or Daughter”

They said the National Guard suffers from lax discipline, cronyism, cover-ups, whistleblower abuse and other systemic flaws.

To this day, they note, the Guard has never successfully court-martialed an officer or soldier despite serious wrongdoing uncovered by investigators.

Lt. Col. Rob White, who conducted a command climate investigation in 2009 to assess whether commanders were at fault, said he is sickened by the failure of National Guard leaders to root out misconduct and impose punishment.

“The way the Arizona National Guard is today, I would not trust it with my son or daughter,” said White.

“It disgusts me ... People don’t get fired, they get moved.”

**“And, When Victims Come Forward, The Arizona Guard Turns On Them
And Eats Them”**

White, who oversees future operations at the Guard’s Arizona Joint Forces Headquarters, is a soldier of 23 years with a Purple Heart and a Bronze Star.

He and others said attempts at reform have repeatedly failed, in part because appeals to Brewer or the National Guard Bureau’s inspector general have been simply referred back to Arizona Guard headquarters.

“The organization is there to take care of soldiers. That’s what we’re supposed to do,” White said.

“But what they’re doing is taking care of good ol’ boys. And, when victims come forward, the Arizona Guard turns on them and eats them.”

White and several other officers came to The Republic with their grievances out of frustration that the problems were not being addressed.

Others shared their views confidentially for fear of losing their jobs.

“I’ll probably get retaliated against,” White said. “I’ll be gone. I think they’re already going for me.”

Lt. Col. Paul Forshey, who recently retired as the National Guard’s top lawyer, or JAG officer, said he was dismayed that a list of reforms suggested by a panel of high-ranking officers was disregarded by top leaders.

**“I Have Never Seen A Board Like That ... Where Command Did Not Follow
The Recommendations Of Three Senior Officers”**

“I have never seen a board like that ... where command did not follow the recommendations of three senior officers.”

The Guard last week accused Forshey of violating attorney-client privilege and threatened him with a state Bar complaint for speaking with The Republic, but he said he won’t be silenced.

“This Is The Inbred Stepsister Of The Active-Duty Military”

He said an ethical breakdown has created a culture of arrogance.

“It’s hubris,” added Forshey, who reviewed disciplinary cases as part of his job.

“They (wrongdoers) know nothing’s going to happen. Nobody can touch them ... This is the inbred stepsister of the active-duty military.”

White, who was among three officers who uncovered widespread misconduct in the Recruiting and Retention Command during 2009, said recommendations were mostly discarded and culpable soldiers received minimal discipline.

The Republic filed public-records requests and obtained more than a dozen military investigative files dating back to 2006, many of which show recommendations for reform and tough discipline. Yet, in interviews and sworn testimony, Guard officers say egregious offenders frequently face minimal consequences.

Non-commissioned officers caught driving drunk in military vehicles were given reprimands.

Recruiters found to have forged enlistment records or taken fraudulent bonus pay received transfers.

Sergeants who had affairs with teenage recruits were given counseling.

One NCO who allegedly got drunk with privates and had sex with a female enlistee was allowed to deploy overseas, where he was disciplined for inappropriate sexual relations with two more subordinates.

Instead of being discharged from the military, records show, he transferred to the California National Guard as a recruiter.

“Some Who Sought To Uphold Army Standards By Reporting Unethical Behavior Were Shunned, Harassed And Threatened With Demotions”

Some who sought to uphold Army standards by reporting unethical behavior were shunned, harassed and threatened with demotions.

Records obtained by The Republic also describe how a former prison inmate allegedly was used to retaliate against one whistle-blower.

Police records contain allegations that the ex-con, who now faces criminal harassment charges, issued a death threat, obtained stolen personnel records, made false criminal accusations and posted derogatory fliers near the National Guard headquarters.

“In Violation Of National Guard Regulations, Some NCOs In The Recruiting Command Sneaked Guns Into Their Offices At A Shopping Mall Out Of Fear Of A Violent Reprisal”

Hostility and paranoia escalated to the point where, in violation of National Guard regulations, some NCOs in the Recruiting Command sneaked guns into their offices at a shopping mall out of fear of a violent reprisal, records show.

Corrupt conduct is described in numerous investigative reports by military officials.

One completed in 2009 by Maj. Nathaniel Panka focused on fraud and improper relationships.

It noted: “Several comments were made by an alarming number of NCOs in this (recruiting) command. The two most troubling were: ‘It doesn’t matter how much you investigate, nothing is going to happen ...’ and ‘I don’t want to make a statement because, if I do, the first time I screw up and don’t make mission, I’ll be fired. There is a network of people that have dirt on each other here, and if you’re not ‘in’ then you have to watch your back.’”

Panka wrote that soldiers gave similar answers when asked why they allowed wrongdoing to go unchecked: “Every single one of the NCOs we interviewed said, ‘It will cost us our job if we bring this up.’”

Over and over during investigations in 2009-10, soldiers testified that high-level commanders in the National Guard were in no position to reprimand subordinates because some of them had fraternized with subordinates in violation of Army Command Policy which prohibits other-than-professional relationships between officers of differing ranks, officers and enlistees or soldiers and prospective recruits.

White said the Guard’s full-time work force of about 2,700 employees is equivalent to a high school student population, except that most of the personnel have been together for more than a decade.

“It’s Like A College Fraternity. It’s Not An Army Organization. It’s A Frat House.”

The result: Friendships, promotion powers and mutually destructive information make it difficult to root out wrongs -- especially sexual misconduct.

“It’s good ol’ boys,” White said. “It’s like a college fraternity. It’s not an Army organization. It’s a frat house.”

Allegations of criminal or ethical violations are the subject of military reviews known as 15-6 investigations, command-directed inquiries and inspector general reports. Documentation typically includes detailed interviews, findings and recommendations.

Behavior at the Arizona National Guard documented in military records include:

“Bum hunts” -- Thirty to 35 times in 2007-08, Sgt. 1st Class Michael Amerson, a former “Recruiter of the Year,” drove new cadets and prospective enlistees through Phoenix’s Sunnyslope community in search of homeless people.

Military investigators were told that Amerson wore his National Guard uniform and drove a government vehicle marked with recruiting insignia as he and other soldiers -- some still minors -- shot transients with paintballs or got them to perform humiliating song-and-dance routines in return for money.

During some of these so-called “bum hunts,” female recruits said, they were ordered to flash their breasts at transients. Homeless women, conversely, were offered food, money or drinks for showing their breasts.

Amerson, during military interviews, denied paintball assaults but admitted to some wrongdoing. He was demoted to private and given an other-than-honorable discharge. Amerson declined to be interviewed for this story except to say that allegations against him were untrue.

Sexual misconduct -- Military investigative records describe multiple cases of sexual relations, abuse or harassment by male recruiters against female cadets and enlistees, as well as fraternization in violation of military regulations.

In a case last year, two investigators concluded independently that an NCO in the National Guard’s Human Resources Office had retaliated against a female soldier after she rebuffed his alleged attempt to kiss her while at work.

According to military records, both investigators found that Chief Warrant Officer Jerardo “J.C.” Carbajal was unfit to supervise any personnel, especially women. Earlier this year, Carbajal was assigned as the Army Guard’s TAC officer (training, advising and counseling) for enlistees striving to become warrant officers. Salazar said Carbajal no longer has supervisory responsibilities.

Recruiting violation -- Investigators uncovered several schemes where recruiters collected unwarranted bonus pay.

Under a Pentagon program known by the acronym GRAP (Guard Recruiting Assistance Program), soldiers credited with enlisting others can collect awards of \$2,000 each.

In 2008, Sgt. Cirra Turpin admitted \$12,000 in bonuses for which she was not eligible.

Although investigators recommended termination, 29 supervisors and colleagues wrote letters saying Turpin should not be so severely punished. She was reassigned as a military police officer.

During a 15-6 inquiry, officers asked the recruiting commander, Lt. Col. Keith Blodgett, to explain.

Question: “What if she had robbed a bank?”

Blodgett: “That would’ve been a crime...”

Question: “What’s the difference?”

Blodgett: “Good question.”

Military records contain no evidence that Turpin was referred for criminal prosecution.

Blodgett testified that he notified the Defense Department's National Guard Bureau of the improprieties. "It sounded like they weren't very concerned about it at all, which to me, indicated that that was something that was common," he said.

In an interview with The Republic, Blodgett said Turpin expressed remorse, paid back the money and had an otherwise clean record.

Today, GRAP fraud is the subject of a nationwide probe by the Department of Defense. According to a March report in the Washington Post, more than 1,700 recruiters are suspected of engaging in fraud. Salazar said fewer than 10 Arizona Guard recruiters are under suspicion, and he believes one will be referred for a full criminal investigation.

Meanwhile, Turpin allegedly used a Department of the Army stamp to falsify military documents and wound up getting discharged, according to National Guard records.

Turpin could not be reached for comment. She now is founder and owner of a Phoenix non-profit group known as Cirra's Cloud, which says it raises money for financially distressed families of deployed soldiers.

Forgeries -- Investigators also found that recruiters falsified academic documents, medical files and fitness tests to make potential enlistees eligible for service, or to qualify for promotions.

"One Tucson Recruiter Forged The Signatures Of Commanders On Numerous Documents And Lied About It"

One Tucson recruiter forged the signatures of commanders on numerous documents and lied about it when first confronted, according to investigative records. He received a reprimand as discipline.

Blodgett was asked by an investigator, "Do you think that set a new standard inside the organization -- that forgery and lying equals keep your job?" Blodgett's answer: "When you put it like that, perhaps."

Drunken driving -- Several National Guard recruiters cited for DUI in military vehicles were either sanctioned lightly or faced no discipline.

One example: In October 2010, a top recruiter in Tucson was arrested on suspicion of DUI with other Guard members in his government vehicle. Military records indicate it was a repeat offense. The NCO initially was given a letter of reprimand, which was withdrawn and replaced with a less severe letter of concern.

Blodgett told investigators he requested an Article 15 proceeding -- a formal, non-judicial disciplinary procedure in the military -- which might result in discharge or severe punishment, but was overruled by the Guard's chief of staff.

Records show that, after the recruiter was convicted and sentenced to jail, he was transferred to a transportation unit and demoted to staff sergeant.

The outcome seemed fair, Blodgett said, because higher-ranking soldiers also had been arrested for driving while intoxicated and were not fired.

Dishonesty -- In many of the documented cases of misconduct reviewed by The Republic, soldiers lied to investigators. Dishonest National Guard personnel in those investigations typically kept their jobs.

By comparison, outright dishonesty at civilian jobs often results in termination, said Steven Mintz, a professor and ethics specialist at California Polytechnic University. "Lying or covering up is always worse than the crime itself because it raises issues of trust and reliability."

Mintz said workplace discipline depends on employment contracts or conduct codes. However, in reference to the Guard issues, he added, "In private industry, those things would be firing offenses."

Salazar said it is misleading to compare civilian disciplinary standards with the Guard's. He said most non-military jobs are "at-will," which means a person can be fired without cause. By contrast, soldiers have extensive due-process and appeal rights under Arizona law and military regulations.

The goal of most Guard discipline, Salazar said, is not to punish or set an example, but to rehabilitate the offender.

During one investigation, Master Sgt. Keith Stall described how an NCO arrested for drunken driving got the proverbial slap on the wrist because he'd been named a top recruiter. "They looked at production, you know, how well you've done," said Stall. "Production, production, production. Numbers, numbers, numbers."

"If You Drink Our Kool-Aid, Then We'll Take Care Of You"

Sgt. Maj. Donald Wilcox Jr., with 27 years of military service, told investigators the recruitment mission trumped other values, with this message emanating from the Pentagon's National Guard Bureau: "If you drink our Kool-Aid, then we'll take care of you."

In late 2008, Lt. Col. White and two other officers conducted an investigation of leadership in the Recruiting Command.

They found numerous NCOs were dishonest and complicit in corruption.

They found that Blodgett, the former recruiting chief, had failed to uncover gross wrongdoing or to take appropriate action when it was exposed.

Salazar, the adjutant general, initially reprimanded Blodgett for dereliction and "inexcusable" leadership failures, blocking promotion. But Salazar months later removed the letter to a restricted file, enabling Blodgett to this year win a coveted appointment to the Army Senior Service College, where he is virtually assured advancement to full colonel.

“How can this be?” White asked. “He failed as a commander. How is this in keeping with Army values?”

Salazar said under military regulations a reprimand is meant to rehabilitate, not punish. He said Blodgett did not engage in misconduct but failed to detect an outlaw culture. That merited corrective action, Salazar said, but not a permanent black mark for an officer with an otherwise clean record.

But White and other officers said they’ve lost faith, especially when it comes to protecting female service members from harassment and sexual abuse.

They said leadership is compromised, the Defense Department’s inspector general is a “toothless tiger,” and complaints to the Arizona Governor’s Office are punted back to Maj. Gen. Salazar.

“As a female, you don’t have any outlet,” said one NCO who reported sexual harassment and retaliation. She asked not to be identified for fear of further reprisal. “Nowhere to go ... They don’t want to be accountable. I don’t think they want to do a damned thing.”

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Attacks By “Allies” Kill Two U.S. Troops

Oct 26, 2012 The Associated Press & 10/25/12 Ministry Of Defense

On Friday, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the deaths of two American service members in southern Uruzgan province the day before.

An individual wearing an Afghan National Police uniform turned his weapon against them in Khas Uruzgan, Uruzgan.

In an emailed statement, Taliban spokesman Yusuf Ahmadi said a member of the Afghan security forces shot the two men and then escaped to join the insurgents.

It was the second insider attack in two days. On Wednesday, two British service members and an Afghan policeman were killed while on patrol in the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand Province. Their patrol came under small arms fire near the village of Char Kutsa.

U.S. “Servicemember” Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan

October 23, 2012 AP

A U.S. Forces-Afghanistan service member died following an insurgent attack in eastern Afghanistan today.

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

October 25, 2012 AP

A foreign servicemember died following an insurgent attack in western Afghanistan today.

Army Ranger From Long Beach Killed In Afghanistan, Awarded Posthumous Purple Heart



15 October 2012 By Sarah Bennett, Long Beach Post

Sad local news from the Pentagon this weekend: Sgt. Thomas MacPherson, a 26 year-old Long Beach native and married father of one, died on October 12 from wounds incurred during combat in Afghanistan.

MacPherson was a U.S. Army Ranger Team Leader killed while leading an assault against an enemy position in the Ghazni Province, Andar District. There was heavy firefight and MacPherson was mortally wounded by small arms fire.

“Sgt. Tom MacPherson lost his life courageously leading his Rangers into a close quarters fight with the enemy,” said Lt. Col. Gregory Anderson, the commander of MacPherson’s battalion, in an Army statement. “Tommy MacPherson never backed away from the dangers of combat, and his warrior spirit, personal example, and zeal for life continue to inspire all who knew him. We will honor his service to our Nation and the heroic example he set for all Rangers. Our thoughts and prayers are with the MacPherson Family.”

The Los Alamitos High School graduate enlisted in the U.S. Army in 2007 and was assigned to Company D, 2nd Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash. He had been deployed to Iraq once and was on his fourth deployment in Afghanistan, serving the military as a medal-earning mortarman, Fire Team Leader and Ranger Team Leader.

He was posthumously awarded the Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service and Purple Heart though his awards and decorations already included (among many) the Expert Infantryman’s Badge, the Parachutist Badge, the Bronze Star Medal with Valor, Afghanistan Campaign Medal with three Campaign Stars and the NATO Medal.

He is survived by his wife Claudia and son Braydon of Tacoma, Wash. as well as his parents, Troy and Diona MacPherson of Long Beach.

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE
BLOODSHED**

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

**“A Bomber Detonated Explosives
Outside A Mosque Packed With**

Senior Regional Officials In Northern Afghanistan”

“Many Of The Dead Were Soldiers And Police”

Oct 26, 2012 The Associated Press& 10.26 Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

A bomber detonated explosives outside a mosque packed with senior regional officials in northern Afghanistan on a major Muslim holiday Friday, killing 41 people. The officials escaped unhurt, and many of the dead were soldiers and police.

The bomber on Friday was wearing a uniform of the Afghan National Army, according to witnesses.

Health Minister Soraya Dalil said 41 people were killed and 56 wounded in Friday's attack.

The attack took place in the town of Maymana, capital of northern Faryab province, where the Taliban and allied militant groups have been active far from their traditional strongholds in southern and eastern Afghanistan.

The bomber struck after top provincial officials, including the governor and the police chief, had assembled inside the mosque to celebrate the Eid al-Adha holiday.

The blast went off in the middle of a large crowd that included police and soldiers waiting for the dignitaries to remerge.

“The targets of the bomber were all the officials inside the mosque,” Deputy Governor Abdul Satar Barez said. Nobody inside the mosque was reported hurt. The carnage was all outside.

“There was blood and dead bodies everywhere,” said Khaled, a doctor who was in the mosque at the time of the blast and who, like many Afghans, uses only one name. “It was a massacre.”

Video from the scene showed the motionless bodies of several soldiers and policemen lying next to their vehicles parked on a tree-lined avenue of the city, located about 500 kilometres northwest of the capital, Kabul.

On the sidewalk, civilians were lying along the mosque's outer wall, some writhing and moaning in pain.

**Bamiyan: “The Province Selected Last Year To Kick Off The U.S. Handover To Afghan Security Control Because It Was Deemed The Country’s Safest”
“The Province Increasingly Feels Under Siege Because Of Taliban Control Of The Roads Leading Here”**

“Taliban Checkpoints Have Mushroomed On The Main Roads Leading Here As The Insurgency Spreads Into Bamiyan”

“If Anyone Comes Here, The Police Just Will Rush To Take Off Their Uniforms As Soon As Possible And Escape”

October 23, 2012 By YAROSLAV TROFIMOV, Wall Street Journal [Excerpts]

BAMIYAN, Afghanistan—Taliban checkpoints have mushroomed on the main roads leading here as the insurgency spreads into Bamiyan—the province selected last year to kick off the U.S.-led coalition’s handover to Afghan security control because it was deemed the country’s safest.

With insurgents and bandits openly roaming Bamiyan’s remote districts and the Taliban blowing up food and fuel trucks on the road to Kabul, many residents here increasingly fear they will be overrun once the last coalition base in the province closes in April.

“Right over these mountains, they are waiting to launch rockets at us as soon as the foreign forces leave,” said Ali Hekmat, dean of Bamiyan University’s Education Department, pointing at the pink-hued cliffs ringing the provincial capital. “It is very easy to destabilize this province.”

The handover continues though the Taliban-led insurgency shows no sign of being defeated.

In September, according to coalition statistics released Tuesday, the number of insurgents attacks was 1% higher than in September 2011.

Bamiyan isn’t the only “transitioned” part of the country facing challenges from the Taliban. In the western province of Herat, 10 Afghan troops, including a district police chief, were killed in a Taliban ambush on Monday.

Bamiyan was selected by the Afghan government and the coalition as a pioneer of the transition because little Taliban activity occurred here since the 2001 U.S.-led invasion. The province is populated mostly by the Hazara ethnic minority, which was severely persecuted under Taliban rule and has little sympathy for the insurgency.

As part of the U.S.-led coalition, New Zealand’s troops have been in charge of security in Bamiyan since 2003. New Zealand forces have already shut down their outlying combat outposts, concentrating the remaining 140 troops at the main camp in the Bamiyan airport.

All of the coalition forces are slated to leave Bamiyan by April.

Just before these outposts were closed, five New Zealand soldiers were killed in two separate insurgent attacks in August, the country’s highest combat toll since the Vietnam War. By comparison, only one New Zealand soldier died in combat in Bamiyan in the previous eight years.

With troops badly needed in the Taliban heartland to the south, there is no Afghan army presence in Bamiyan.

Security in the province of 450,000 people is now largely in the hands of an underequipped police force of some 800 men that has repeatedly come under attack. Six policemen were killed in a roadside bombing in July.

These days, the province increasingly feels under siege because of Taliban control of the roads leading here.

Bamiyan Gov. Habiba Sarabi said she relies on United Nations planes when she visits the central government in Kabul because it is too dangerous to drive.

A convoy of the Afghan vice president’s bodyguards was ambushed on the road to Kabul two weeks ago.

When the transition was first announced in early 2011, the central Afghan government and the coalition commander at the time, U.S. Army Gen. David

Petraeus, promised to strengthen Bamiyan's security forces with more men and equipment.

Only a few old unarmored Humvees have arrived since then.

The province's police numbers were cut by Kabul in recent months, said Gov. Sarabi.

The government has yet to fulfill her request to deploy a well-equipped quick-reaction force. "They made promises—but then nothing happened," she complained.

Bamiyan's police arsenal is largely limited to old Kalashnikov rifles.

They travel in Ford Ranger pickup trucks that—unlike the New Zealanders' cannon-equipped armor—offer no protection from roadside bombs or gunfire.

Once the New Zealand forces are gone, the police will no longer be able count on the coalition's medevac, air support or intelligence capabilities.

"We need armored vehicles, we need machine guns, we need heavy weapons and the budget for more people on the force," said Bamiyan police commander, Brig. Gen. Juma Geildy Yaardam.

"If we get this, then we should be able to maintain security in the province."

Abdul Sabur, who co-manages with his Japanese wife Bamiyan's Silk Road hotel, a resort built in more optimistic times when tourists could drive here from Kabul for the weekend, fears that even a beefed-up police won't be enough. Many policemen in Bamiyan usually work second jobs running businesses or serving as security guards, Mr. Sabur said.

"If anyone comes here, the police just will rush to take off their uniforms as soon as possible and escape," he said.

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

**[Who Would Have Thunk It?]
"In Terms Of Combat Operations, The
Americans Are At Least In Many
Operations In The Lead"**

“All This Contradicts The Public Line, Which Is That Afghan Forces Are Out In Front”

October 24, 2012 by Tom Bowman, NPR [Excerpts]

America's exit strategy in Afghanistan is to have Afghan forces take the lead in fighting for their country. But too often these days, the job still falls to U.S. troops.

A senior officer in Afghanistan tells NPR that Americans continue to coddle Afghan forces and that this must stop.

In May, just outside the city of Kandahar, Sgt. Matthew McMurray and his platoon joined Afghan troops on a patrol through a village.

The Americans prodded the Afghans to lead the effort to search homes for insurgents or bomb-making materials. Hours later, McMurray offered his assessment of the Afghan soldiers.

“I think it'll take a long, long time. We have to keep pushing them,” he says. “It is very frustrating.”

That sounds familiar to Seth Jones, a defense analyst at the RAND Corp. who just returned from Afghanistan.

“Overall the Americans are still conducting a lot of operations in Afghanistan right now,” Jones says.

“In terms of combat operations, the Americans are at least in many operations in the lead.”

All this contradicts the public line, which is that Afghan forces are out in front.

More Resistance Action

October 23, 2012 By ALISSA J. RUBIN, The New York Times Company & 24 October, 2012 PakTribune

In western Afghanistan, the Taliban staged an attack on four trucks full of school books, leading to the death of 10 members of the security forces, including 5 policemen and 5 members of the Afghan National Army, said Ghulam Mohaydun Noori, the spokesman for the governor of Herat Province.

On Monday afternoon, the Taliban hijacked the trucks as they were driving through Herat Province bound for Ghor Province, one of the poorest and most rural in the country.

The Taliban took the trucks and their drivers to a remote valley in Obe District. The police and the Afghan Army staged a rescue operation, and during that mission 10 members of the security forces were killed; one was a district police chief, said Col. Noor Khan Nikzad, spokesman for the Herat Provincial police chief.

KABUL: Defence ministry on Tuesday announced three Afghan National Army (ANA) troops were killed and four wounded in separate attacks over the past 24 hours.

The ANA troops were killed and wounded after bomb and direct attacks in Farah, Laghman and Ghazni provinces, the defence ministry said in statement.

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Four Ugandan Occupation Troops Killed

October 23, 2012 SH.M.Network

KAMPALA

Four Ugandan soldiers serving on the African Union's mission in Somalia were on Thursday killed in an ambush by suspected Al Shabaab fighters.

The attack on the soldiers, whose unit was part of a force advancing towards Baidoa, is the first serious incident directly targeting the peacekeepers [translation: occupation troops] since the beginning of the 'Operation Free Shabelle' in August. Baidoa is about 200 kms from Mogadishu.

Ugandan troops are said to have moved over 100 km from the Somali capital.

Sources said the AU peacekeepers [translation: occupation troops] were attacked in Baldogule by the insurgents who had retreated from the area following a UPDF attack on the town.

Baldogule Airbase, which is bigger than Mogadishu International Airport, was captured last week by the Ugandan forces. Army spokesperson Felix Kulayigye yesterday confirmed the incident, saying the Ugandans were killed in an explosion in which improvised explosive devices were detonated.

The spokesperson of the Ugandan contingent in Somalia, Capt Henry Obbo, said yesterday they had crossed Shabelle region and were half way to reaching Baidoa.

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

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004**

The Gift Of The True Organizer: “Jerry Tucker Was The Most Notorious Living Organizer Of Work- To-Rule Actions In The U.S.” [Obituary: Jerry Tucker]



Jerry Tucker

[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade; United Auto Workers GM Retiree, who sent this in. He writes “I was in UAW New Directions, was in Jerry Tucker’s Actions.”]

October 23, 2012 By Gregg Shotwell, Socialist Worker

Jerry Tucker, the former rank-and-file activist in the United Auto Workers (UAW), dissident regional director and a leading figure in the struggle for fighting unions in the U.S., died on October 19.

Gregg Shotwell, a retired autoworker and author of *Autoworkers Under the Gun: Live Bait & Ammo*, pays tribute to Tucker and his legacy of rank-and-file activism.

In 2003, when I was researching work-to-rule--a process by which workers slow down production, drive up costs and thereby leverage negotiations--I called Dave Yettaw. Dave, a retired autoworker and former president from UAW Local 599 in Flint, Mich., was an old hand and trusted adviser.

Dave told me that I should call Jerry Tucker, which to me was like saying, "If you want to learn about song writing you should call Bob Dylan."

Jerry Tucker was the most notorious living organizer of work-to-rule actions in the U.S.

The 1991 version of *A Troublemakers' Handbook* by Dan LaBotz included a chapter that described Tucker's success with work-to-rule techniques at four different companies. Tucker was using work-to-rule to negotiate gains for workers at a time when the UAW was rolling backward faster than a gerbil wheel.

Dave gave me Jerry's number. I got up the nerve to call, and Jerry generously gave me a personal tutorial. It was the beginning of a friendship I will always treasure.

In the worst of times, Jerry was there for me.

I am not alone in this regard. That's who he was. Jerry never told me what to do, but after talking with him, I felt I knew what I had to do next.

That's the gift of a true organizer. It's because of such gifts that organizing will never die.

Jerry Tucker passed away October 19, 2012. When I got the call, I expected to hear Jerry's voice. I am not ashamed to say that when his daughter Tracy told me the news, I dropped to my knees and cried. I am not used to feeling so vulnerable. Even in death, he had another lesson for me. Whatever strength I may possess is dependent on other people.

Jerry's passion for organizing was driven by his love and respect for fellow workers. If he was in it for the money, he would have kept his mouth shut.

In 1986, when UAW members--frustrated by concession contracts, union cooperation with management and lackluster leadership--asked Tucker to run for regional director in upcoming union elections, Jerry understood the personal risks.

A challenge to the reigning director could cost him his career in the UAW, lucrative salary and benefits, and a cushy retirement.

At the time, Tucker was the assistant regional director. If he followed protocol, he would inherit the position. Given his talents and experience, it was likely he could expect further advancement in the bureaucratic hierarchy. Protocol was the safe bet.

Tucker weighed the risk and came down on the side of his principles. It was, he told me, the choice he could live with.

Fortunately, his wife Elaine is a woman who could live with a man most mothers of three children would call reckless and foolish. Without Elaine, Jerry Tucker wouldn't amount to a footnote, and Jerry was the first to admit it.

Tucker won the election after a federal court ordered a rerun based on evidence of the ruling administration's shenanigans. The victory cost him his career in the UAW, but not his vocation as an organizer or his reputation.

He went on to organize union struggles such as Staley, a corn-processing plant in Decatur, Ill., where a sugar conglomerate, Tate & Lyle, was determined to break the union.

Tucker charged the members of the local union at Staley \$100 for each day he spent on location. All expenses were on his own dime. Decatur is 120 miles from Jerry's home in St. Louis. I think it's fair to say it was a labor of love, without mitigating the biblical weight of the phrase.

He drove that long, hard road for 40 months and left behind a struggle that organizers will draw lessons from for decades.

One of the hallmarks of Tucker's leadership in the UAW was the New Directions Movement. He was, in his own words, one of many co-founders of the New Directions Movement. Of the many, he was the most prominent and the one who paid the heaviest price for challenging the UAW hierarchy's backflip into corporate model unionism.

Jerry Tucker was a tower of conviction, a welder's jewel of commitment, and a man whose charisma was grounded in humility. He began with the premise that the rank and file knew the answers, not him.

Like many who knew him, I felt that Jerry Tucker was a great man.

I didn't feel that I deserved his attention, yet he always treated me as if my needs were more important than his time. He conferred his dignity upon me and I left our conversation a better, stronger person. I am not unique. Jerry treated every working person with the same regard. Such is the gift of the true organizer. He uncovered leaders among the followers.

May his wife, Elaine, his daughters, Nicole, Tracy and Cynthia, and all of us who follow in his footsteps forever remember his most constant invocation, "Carry on! Carry on!"

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OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Strike Wave Paralyzes West Bank: “The Union Would Call A General Strike If The Ministry Continued Its “Policy Of Procrastination And Intransigence”



27/10/2012 Ma'an

RAMALLAH -- The Palestinian Authority cabinet on Tuesday called on civil servants to go back to work as strikes in ministries, universities, schools and refugee camps paralyzed the West Bank.

The cabinet in its weekly meeting said employees who continued to strike would be “held liable.”

Palestinian Authority employees, including public university staff and school teachers, suspended work Tuesday over the late and incomplete payment of their salaries.

On Thursday, the Palestinian Authority finance ministry announced it was distributing partial September salaries after repeatedly delaying payment to employees and capping payments to high earners.

Ministers in Ramallah urged unions to “continue the dialogue” and said that while the government understood unions’ needs, the financial crisis and challenges facing the PA provided “limited possibilities.”

The cabinet urged donor countries, especially Arab countries, to keep providing support to the Palestinian people.

University staff are also embroiled in an ongoing dispute with the Ministry of Education over employee benefits and demands to abolish taxes on end-of-service pay.

Amjad Barham, head of the union for university staff, said the union would call a general strike if the ministry continued its “policy of procrastination and intransigence.”

Employees of UNRWA, the UN agency for Palestinian refugees, also went on strike Tuesday to protest cuts in the agency’s services and the dismissal of 130 workers

UNRWA health clinics, schools and offices were closed and shops shut their doors for two hours.

Ahmad Abu Khayran, who chairs a popular committee in Hebron’s al-Fawwar refugee camp, said UNRWA’s austerity measures were making life harder for refugees who were already suffering from the economic crisis.

Abu Khayran told Ma’an that UNRWA was trying to “shirk its responsibilities” to refugees and treating them as Europeans or Americans, forcing them to pay 25 to 40 percent of their medical costs.

He said UNRWA should reduce the wages of its foreign staff instead of increasing medical expenses for refugees, as well as pressuring donor nations to meet their obligations.

UNRWA criticized the strike, which it said had prevented 51,000 from attending school. The agency said it remained committed to meeting the needs of refugees, but a 50 percent drop in funding since 2010 had forced the agency to “re-prioritize” its emergency services.

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

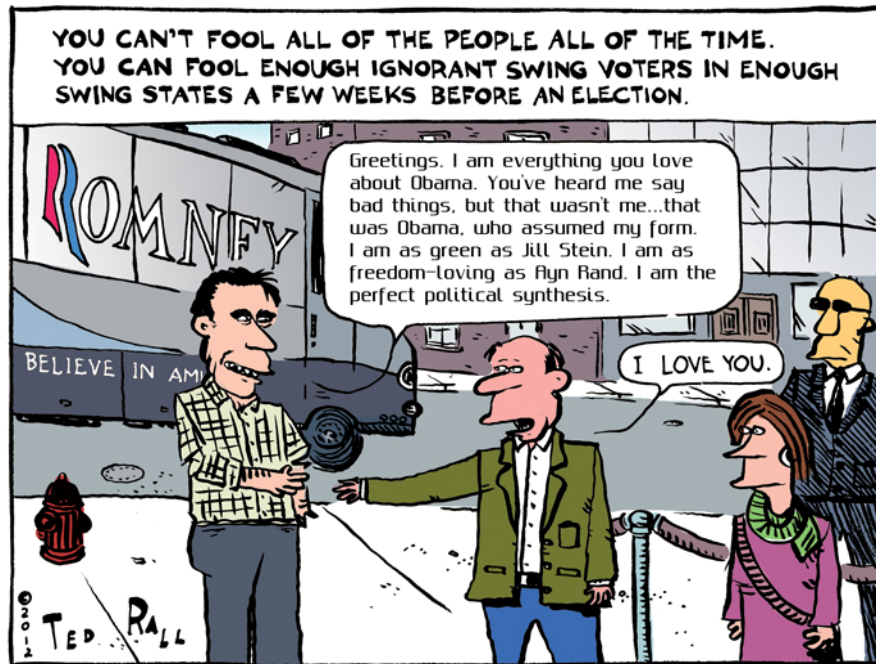
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DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS

Demonstrators Against Syria's Al-Assad Near Damascus



Demonstrators against Syria's al-Assad, in Sermeen near Damascus October 26, 2012. The banner reads as "Sermeen". REUTERS/Mahmoud Abu Al-Ezz

Vietnam GI: Reprints Available



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Edited by Vietnam Veteran Jeff Sharlet from 1968 until his death, this newspaper rocked the world, attracting attention even from Time Magazine, and extremely hostile attention from the chain of command.

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“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

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