

## Military Resistance 10L22



AUSTERITY MADE SIMPLE

**At Fort Campbell High School “Most Of The Students — And Parents — Said It Was Long Past Time For The War To End”**

**“It’s Pointless Fighting,’ Said Joshua Orellana, An 18-Year-Old Senior Whose Father Has Deployed Twice To Afghanistan And Is Scheduled To Go Again Next Year”**

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. — Signs of the season have been everywhere at Fort Campbell High School over the last couple of weeks: a student soloist sang the Carpenters' "Merry Christmas, Darling" at the annual holiday concert, a big tree sparkled in the cafeteria under the Screaming Eagle emblem of the 101st Airborne Division, and thousands of parents were deployed yet again in Afghanistan.

It is nothing unusual for Alexandra Alfield, a 17-year-old senior whose father, a Special Forces soldier, has been gone since August and for six of the last nine years. "I do miss him," she said, "but I'm just so accustomed to it."

Nearly 10,000 men and women from the 101st Airborne, a third of the active-duty troops based here, are either in Afghanistan or getting ready to go.

That has made the high school, which is run by the Defense Department and is one of only four secondary schools on military bases in the United States, something of a window into the pain, pride and resentment felt by the families of the all-volunteer military force, which has borne the burdens of 11 years of war.

The high school, which has about 700 students and is open to any 9th to 12th grader who lives on the 100,000-acre post along the Kentucky-Tennessee border, is by definition physically and psychologically cut off from the world outside the gates.

One thing that neither she nor the rest of her family wants is sympathy at Christmas simply because her father is doing his job.

"When you're out in the real world, it's 'Oh, I'm so sorry, it must be so hard,'" said Kate Sullivan, Ms. Sullivan's mother. "You appreciate they care, so it's a hard balance. But who wants to be somebody that somebody feels sorry for?"

Even so, most of the students — and parents — said it was long past time for the war to end.

"It's pointless fighting," said Joshua Orellana, an 18-year-old senior whose father has deployed twice to Afghanistan and is scheduled to go again next year, when Mr. Orellana knows his worries will start.

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

# **Foreign Occupation "Servicemember" Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan: Nationality Not Announced**

December 29, 2012 Reuters

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

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE  
BLOODSHED**

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

**“Col. Babagul Aamal Is A Proud  
Veteran Of 28 Years In The  
Afghan National Army”**

**“It Shames Him, Aamal Said, That  
He Is Not Allowed To Wear His  
Pistol When He Enters The  
Fortified Gate Of The New  
American Military Base”**

**“Afghan Generals Get Searched By  
Low-Ranking Foreign Soldiers” “Our  
Soldiers See This, And They Feel  
Insulted”**

**“The Colonel Said He Could Not  
Guarantee That His Men Wouldn’t Attack  
The Journalist”**

December 25, 2012 By David Zucchino, Los Angeles Times [Excerpts] Special correspondent Hashmat Baktash contributed to this report.

SUROBI, Afghanistan —

Col. Babagul Aamal is a proud veteran of 28 years in the Afghan National Army. Short and fit, with a thick black beard, he's a leader who blurts out exactly what he's thinking.

"I don't talk politics — I talk facts," Aamal said, wearing a sweater beneath his uniform in his unheated command office on a dusty base 40 miles east of Kabul.

It shames him, Aamal said, that he is not allowed to wear his pistol when he enters the fortified gate of the new American military base next door.

Though he's a brigade commander, he's required to stand before an airport-type scanner with his arms raised, almost in surrender.

Yet when Americans visit Aamal's base, they are not searched. They are offered chai tea. And they bring half a dozen soldiers armed with M-16s, so-called Guardian Angels on the lookout for "insider attacks" by Afghan soldiers.

Sixty-two Western coalition troops have been killed this year in 46 such attacks, leaving many American soldiers deeply suspicious of their erstwhile allies.

At the same time, some Afghan officers and soldiers say they feel abandoned and patronized. After 11 years, they say, certain Americans still don't respect Afghan customs.

"Afghan generals get searched by low-ranking foreign soldiers," Aamal said.

"Our soldiers see this, and they feel insulted."

**"The Americans have the weapons, so they go wherever they want. It's like this is their country," the brigade's public affairs officer, Maj. Ghulam Ali, said with a weary shrug.**

**"How Can My Soldiers Perform Under These Conditions?" "Some Of Them Can't Survive Like This, And They Just Walk Away And Quit"**

At a desolate battalion base beneath towering snowcapped mountains, Lt. Col. Hussian Hadl sat in his office, shivering in an overcoat and puffing on a cigarette. The electricity was on, but only because Hadl was using precious fuel to run a generator for a visit by an American journalist.

Hadl's 1st Battalion recently took over the base from a French military unit, which had fuel for generators. Hadl said he's been supplied enough fuel to power communications equipment, but not for heat or lights.

**His 700 men have 40 Humvees, he said, but half the vehicles are in the shop, awaiting parts. There's barely fuel for 20 of them. The battalion has just three heavy machine guns, he says, and no rounds for its Russian-made mortars.**

Inside the chilly officers' mess hall, 1st Lt. Ali Ahmad wolfed down a hot meal of goat and rice. He said the Afghans would like to use traditional Afghan wood stoves, called bukharis, but there are no stovepipes in the French-constructed buildings, and no firewood.

"I'm worried we won't have enough weapons and fuel to fight on our own."

**But he also pointed to 27 trucks that sit idle on the base, waiting for replacement batteries. Humvees, parked in a line, need new brake pads. There is not enough fuel for heat.**

He blames the Afghan Defense Ministry and the coalition forces.

**"How can my soldiers perform under these conditions?" Aamal asked. "Some of them can't survive like this, and they just walk away and quit."**

Aamal says his relations with the coalition hit a low point under the French, who occupied the adjoining base before the American unit arrived.

"Let me be blunt: The French didn't like us," Aamal said.

When three Afghans were badly wounded by a roadside bomb, he said, the French took three hours to provide a medevac helicopter.

By then, one of the soldiers had died. The copter flew another of the soldiers to a Kabul military hospital, but Aamal said he was told to transport the third man — and the body of the dead man — by road.

The colonel cited incidents involving U.S. soldiers elsewhere that have enraged Afghans: the slaying of 16 villagers in Kandahar province, for which Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales is accused, and the inadvertent burning of Korans by U.S. soldiers at the Bagram air base.

**"These things make Afghan soldiers feel their self-respect has been taken away," Aamal said. "They feel like servants."**

### **"The Colonel Said He Could Not Guarantee That His Men Wouldn't Attack The Journalist"**

A reporter embedded with the Afghans was not permitted by U.S. military authorities to interview members of the 2nd Battalion because he was not embedded with the unit.

But because of insider attacks, the reporter was allowed to sleep on the U.S. base at Aamal's request.

**The colonel said he could not guarantee that his men wouldn't attack the journalist.**

**"I'm afraid one of my soldiers might do something foolish," Aamal said. "Even I, as an Afghan officer, cannot know what is inside that Afghan soldier's heart and mind."**

Equipment and supplies are paid for primarily by the U.S. and distributed by the Defense Ministry. Over the years, American officers have said that much of that is stolen or sold by ministry officials, or by field commanders.

**At the same time, the U.S. inspector general for Afghanistan reported this month that the NATO training mission could not account for \$201 million in fuel supplied to the Afghan army because NATO officers had shredded fuel purchase documents.**

Aamal, the colonel, is skeptical. "We don't have our own air support, artillery, medevac," he said. "We can't suddenly create these things."

**Some of the equipment his brigade is using was provided in the 1980s by Russia, which Aamal served as an Afghan officer.**

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## **MILITARY NEWS**

### **HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WAR?**



The remains of Army Spc. Tyler J. Orgaard, left, and Army Sgt. 1st Class Darren M. Linde Dec. 5, 2012 at Dover Air Force Base, Del. Orgaard, 20, of Bismarck, N.D., and

Linde, 41, of Devils Lake, N.D., both died Dec. 3, 2012, in Lashkar Gah City, Helmand province, Afghanistan, of wounds sustained from an improvised explosive device.  
Bismarck Tribune

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## **Increasing Numbers Of Iraq, Afghanistan Veterans Suffer From Spinal Damage: “There’s A Lot Of Things I’m Not Really Able To Do Anymore,’ Bouwma Said”**



Soldiers such as Pfc. Richard Flynn of Starke, Fla., can carry 50 to 60 pounds of armor and gear. Associated Press

Nov. 10, 2012 By Meg Jones of the Journal Sentinel

Andrew Bouwma worried he wouldn't be able to pick up his 3-year-old daughter and newborn son.

His back was killing him.

An Army infantryman who served a tour in Iraq, Bouwma wore an extra 50 to 60 pounds every day on foot patrols.

Clad in helmet and body armor weighted down with a medical kit and extra ammunition pouches, Bouwma crouched inside Stryker vehicles and jumped out small hatches, contorting his body.

He also was shot in the hip in 2006 in Mosul and began favoring one side during rehabilitation, adding to his back pain.

“There’s a lot of things I’m not really able to do anymore,” Bouwma said.

Bouwma, 27, of Racine, is part of an alarming rise in the number of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans suffering from spine pain.

While amputations and traumatic brain injuries from improvised explosive devices have become the signature wounds of those wars, musculoskeletal and spine pain are by far the most common cause of evacuation from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Among the key findings in studies published in a recent edition of *The Spine Journal*:

There have been 10 times as many long-term spinal pain casualties unrelated to combat injuries among Iraq and Afghanistan veterans compared with blast injuries.

After being medically evacuated from Iraq with non-battle-related spinal pain, patients have less than a 20% chance of returning to their unit and regular duty. 60% of veterans seeking care for spine problems have serious psychological distress.

“We see quite a bit of spine pain among returning veterans,” said Tom Kotsonis, a staff physician in physical medicine and rehabilitation at the Zablocki Veterans Administration Medical Center in Milwaukee.

“The vast majority of young combat veterans we see are suffering from neck and back pain.”

The number of people getting evacuated from war zones for back pain has been as high as 60% of the wounded, said Eugene Carragee, a physician who edited *The Spine Journal*’s September issue, which was devoted to the casualties of war.

That’s a huge problem for commanders worrying about troop strength in war zones. And it’s a problem for the military members when they come home and try to resume their lives.

“These numbers were shocking to us,” said Carragee, who retired as a lieutenant colonel in 2010 and served as command surgeon for a special operations unit in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“That’s completely different from anything seen before. In Vietnam and Korea it was mainly infectious diseases and heat and cold injuries as the reasons why people were evacuated.

This isn’t taking people off the line for a few days, these are people air- evacuated to Landstuhl” Regional Medical Center in Germany, Carragee said.

The studies noted that combat casualties decreased and spine pain casualties dramatically increased in Iraq in 2005 and ‘06, while back pain casualties dropped by a third during the surge in 2007.



Carragee, who earned a Purple Heart in a suicide bomber attack in Iraq in 2008, said the vast majority of troops in war zones suffer from bad backs, a reflection of the heavy loads they carry and their high-intensity activity. But the studies noted that back injuries were found not just in front-line troops but also among all deploying military personnel, even those with desk jobs.

“It didn’t correlate with combat intensity either, which is when you think people would get more knocked around and more likely to wear their body armor 24/7 and carry more ammunition. It was the inverse. It was the slow times when (medical evacuation for noncombat spine pain) was higher,” Carragee said.

“I don’t think the soldiers are fabricating the back pain or malingering. I think it’s much more complex. But when soldiers are really in the fight, they do their duty and take care of the people around them. They’re very resilient,” Carragee said.

Hariharan Shankar, director of the pain clinic at Milwaukee’s VA hospital, estimated that three-quarters of the veterans seeking help at the pain clinic suffer from back pain, specifically lower back troubles. Of that amount, about a third are recent combat veterans.

The causes for their back pain range from heavy lifting, trauma and falls in combat zones to a genetic predisposition for weaker spines.

Usually by the time veterans show up at the VA hospital in Milwaukee, they already have seen their primary care physician for help and tried physical therapy or medication or both. When their backs continue to hurt, they’re referred to the musculoskeletal or pain clinics at the VA.

“Ninety percent of back pain gets better in three months without treatment. We tend to get the 10% suffering from acute pain,” Kotsonis said.

Treatment includes physical therapy and exercise, bracing, medication, injections and acupuncture as well as surgery for severe cases. At Milwaukee’s VA, patients can take yoga classes to strengthen their back and core muscles, and the hospital is planning on offering tai chi classes soon, said Judith Kosasih, chief of the polytrauma support clinic team.

For Bouwma, who played volleyball at Racine Park High School and enjoyed playing softball and football, his lower back pain, as well as the gunshot wound that passed through both hips, means he can no longer play sports.

“Walking long distances or playing any sports is kind of out of the question,” Bouwma said. “The one time I tried to play flag football I ended up using a cane for two weeks.”

Bouwma, a patient of Kotsonis’, performs exercises, Pilates and stretches to alleviate pain in his back muscles. He sometimes takes ibuprofen and Tylenol. So far he has been able to avoid surgery.

More important, Bouwma is able to bend down to hug and pick up his children, 3-year-old Malia and 10-week-old Maddox.

“When I first started to seek help here in Wisconsin, I was recommended to Dr. Kotsonis,” Bouwma said. “My wife had just become pregnant and one of my fears was I wouldn’t be able to do that, but since I’ve seen him I’m able to play with my kids and keep up with them.”

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**“Mr. Assad’s Government Has Mustered Neither The Popular Support Nor The Military Might To Stop The Rebels’ Slow Momentum, Much Less To Defeat Them”**

**“Syrian Army Units Here Have Been Largely Cut Off From The Capital”**

**“For Weeks They Have Been Yielding Ground, Contracting Under The Pressures Of Persistent Rebel Attacks From Almost Every Direction And The Related Difficulties Of Resupply”**

**Syrian Air Force support, almost continuous in the city over the summer, has dwindled. The sound of Russian-made helicopters, once constant, is now unusual.**

December 27, 2012 By C. J. CHIVERS, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

ALEPPO, Syria — The sniper walked through the rubble near this city’s front lines. He was searching for another spot from where he might catch a Syrian soldier in his rifle scope’s cross hairs.

Now in its sixth month, the battle for Aleppo has become the contest for Syria in a microcosm, exposing the weakness of both sides, while highlighting anew the perils and costs of the country’s bitter civil war.

Simultaneously, the fighting has exposed the government’s seemingly fatal miscalculations.

For all of its statements to the contrary, and no matter its effort to mass soldiers and firepower here, Mr. Assad's government has mustered neither the popular support nor the military might to stop the rebels' slow momentum, much less to defeat them.

As winter descends, intensifying the humanitarian crisis for Aleppo's civilians, the battle's direction has decisively shifted.

The Syrian Army units here have been largely cut off from the capital. For weeks they have been yielding ground, contracting under the pressures of persistent rebel attacks from almost every direction and the related difficulties of resupply.

**The military's tactic of collective punishment — manifested through seemingly indiscriminate airstrikes and artillery barrages on residential neighborhoods — has earned it only anger and disgust.**

One opposition activist noted the army's practice of firing a few artillery rounds into neighborhoods, waiting five or ten minutes for civilians to gather to help the wounded, and then firing again — resembling NATO's practice of repeat airstrikes in its campaign in 2011 to unseat Col. Muammar el-Qaddafi of Libya.

“Sometimes we wait and don't go out after the first shells, because we know other shells are coming,” said the activist, Mumtaz Mohammad. “There are a lot of victims who were killed because of this policy.”

**Once able to roam freely in its armored columns, the army begins the winter confined mostly to the city's south and west.**

**It also retains tenuous control of the airport in the southeast, although rebels have pushed close to its fences and claim to have positioned many antiaircraft weapons there.**

**Syrian Air Force support, almost continuous in the city over the summer, has dwindled. The sound of Russian-made helicopters, once constant, is now unusual.**

**Passing attack jets often dispense bright strings of decoy flares — a sign that pilots fear the rebels' portable, heat-seeking missiles, used to shoot down at least one aircraft late in the fall.**

But these accumulating rebel successes have not come without setbacks, costs and questions about Syria's future. The army, while weak, is still potent and difficult to dislodge where it has concentrated forces in Aleppo, just as it has done in most of Syria's cities.

On one recent day, rebels gathered at their front-line posts near the Hanano military base. The rebels had captured the base in the summer, only to lose it to an army counterattack, apparently after the rebels left too light a guard and failed to consolidate their gains.

Now the rebels tried to retake what they had held, pressing within 65 yards of their enemies via a warren of alleys.

In one street, the corpse of a Syrian soldier lay in the rubble. Both sides watched over the body, since neither could venture into the daylight to retrieve it without drawing fire.

One front-line commander, Mohammad Bakkar, 36, said he had been drawn almost unwillingly into his life as an urban guerrilla.

**“The regime considered almost every grown man who was not on their side to be a wanted man,” he said. “They started visiting my house, asking about me. They left a note telling me to come visit them at the intelligence department.”**

**“Instead I joined the Free Syrian Army,” he said.**

Mr. Bakkar, like others, spoke of returning to a peaceful life after Mr. Assad’s defeat.

But these men also said that the army could prove even more dangerous in its decline. Cornered units, knowing that rebels have killed prisoners, might fight until death.

And there have been ample signs throughout the year that the government has exercised less restraint as rebels have grown stronger.

(Colonel Okaidi said that rebels often try to take army positions piecemeal, hoping, as they advance, to persuade soldiers to surrender.)

**MORE:**

**“Rebel Fighters In Syria Said They Had Taken Control Of A Strategic Town On The Turkish Border On Tuesday”  
Government Fighters “Had Apparently Departed In A Hurry, Leaving Their Bedding, Pots And Pans, A Boot, And A Helmet Behind”**

December 25, 2012 By KAREEM FAHIM, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Rebel fighters in Syria said they had taken control of a strategic town on the Turkish border on Tuesday

In the last week, emboldened rebel groups have pushed aggressively to capture territory in the capital's suburbs and near the city of Hama, in west-central Syria.

Heavy fighting was reported Tuesday in the eastern suburbs of Damascus and north of Hama, where government forces and rebels have been fighting each other from neighboring villages.

In northwestern Syria, rebels said they had wrested control of the town of Harem, on the border with Turkey, after months of fighting.

In October, a Reuters photographer traveled with the rebels as they came under attack from government warplanes and snipers. The photographer witnessed ferocious street battles and scenes of brutality, including what appeared to be at least one summary execution of a government loyalist by armed rebels.

Amateur video posted on the Internet on Tuesday showed rebel fighters strolling through a medieval citadel in the town, gazing up at its stone arches.

Government fighters, who had used the fortress as a base, had apparently departed in a hurry, leaving their bedding, pots and pans, a boot, and a helmet behind.

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## **“Top General Responsible For Preventing Defections Within The Military Became A Defector Himself” “Chief Of The Military Police One Of The Highest-Ranking Military Officers To Abandon Al-Assad”**

December 26, 2012 By KAREEM FAHIM and RICK GLADSTONE, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

BEIRUT, Lebanon — Syria's government suffered an embarrassing new setback as the top general responsible for preventing defections within the military became a defector himself, making what insurgents described on Wednesday as a daring back-roads escape by motorcycle across the border into Turkey.

The defector, Maj. Gen. Abdul Aziz Jassem al-Shallal, the chief of the military police, was one of the highest-ranking military officers to abandon President Bashar al-Assad in the nearly two-year-old uprising against him.

Opposition fighters embraced the defection as more than a symbolic blow to the government because of the general's primary responsibility as an enforcer of Mr. Assad's repression of dissent and guarantor of loyalty by the armed forces.

**As head of the military police, General Shallal was responsible for the department that was supposed to stop defections. He also presided over a force that guarded prisons where civilian dissidents were held.**

Maj. Ibrahim Moutawe, who defected from the Syrian Army a year ago, said defection was a “last resort” for high-ranking officials like General Shallal.

**“They only consider it when fear and danger begin to threaten them directly, and when the regime can no longer protect them,” he said.**

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## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**



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

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

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

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

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

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

-- Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach"

## **Abu Ali Sulaibi Was One Of The First People To Take Up Arms In Aleppo:**

**"I Mix Everything. Filth With Honesty. Street Language With Religion"**

**"I Have Mixed All The Revolutions In Me"**

**"I Am The Bolshevik Revolution, The French Revolution. I Am The Modern Guevara"**



The once upper-class Saif al-Dawla Boulevard in Aleppo, Syria. Photograph: Ghaith. Abdul-Ahad for the Guardian

28 December 2012 by Ghaith Abdul-Ahad in Aleppo, Guardian News and Media Limited

The man stands among the blackened, shell-shattered buildings, and reaches up to encompass them in a broad sweep of his wiry arms.

“This,” he proclaims, “is the state of Abu Ali Sulaibi.”

The ruined corner of downtown Aleppo does not, of course, constitute a state and nor does it belong to the man claiming it in his name. But as the Syrian civil war has stagnated and Aleppo has fractured into “liberated” neighbourhoods run by different militias, Abu Ali and commanders like him have become the rulers of a series of mini-fiefdoms. These two blocks of the rebel frontline in Saif al-Dawla are his.

Walking through the once prosperous streets, Abu Ali recalls the life he lived here, pointing out the places where he played as a child, went to school and fell in love.

He now lives in a small apartment in the heart of the zone with his wife, Um Ali, three daughters, a son, and a cat named Sanjoob, or Squirrel.

Fifty metres from Abu Ali’s sector, across the Saif al-Dawla Boulevard, a similar array of shattered buildings is occupied by government troops. They are close enough that during lulls in the shooting they can continue the conflict by shouting abuse.

Half of the building where his parents used to live has been sheared off by a rocket attack, spilling furniture and a chandelier into the street. The remaining structure serves as Abu Ali’s command centre, where some of his fighters sleep. He stands in the middle of a small living room surrounded by fighters resting under thick blankets on the floor.

“I can’t believe that this is my mother’s living room,” he says. Then, to the men: “Wake up, you beasts!”

As no one stirs, he pulls a pistol from his belt and fires into the ceiling, bringing down a chunk of plaster. The men jump from their mats, grabbing their guns. “That was Abu Ali’s wake-up call,” he says.

Outside, Abu Ali sits on a broken plastic chair set amid the rubble. His fighters, bleary-eyed, sit around him, making Turkish coffee and smoking. There is no food. The men live on one meal a day and many have not eaten since lunch the day before.

A trickle of civilians who braved the sniper fire to reach Abu Ali’s headquarters now come forward, as they do each morning, to ask favours of the chief. Some are trying to salvage their food or furniture, others come to ask permission to scavenge or squat in the empty apartments.

On this morning, six civilians stand sheepishly in front of him: a man in his 50s and his teenage son; a lanky man in a coat that is too big for him; a young engineer in rimless glasses and a bald man with his sister, who wears a black hijab. The civilians stay at a distance out of respect or fearing his unchecked anger.

“What do you want?”



“We want to collect some of our stuff, Abu Ali,” the older man says.

“Not today. Come back on Saturday.”

“But you told us to come on Wednesday.”

“I changed my mind. You should know that this is the state of Abu Ali Sulaibi.” He roars out his catchphrase as much for the benefit of his men as the civilians.

“You are all informers,” he tells the scared civilians. “I know you cross back to government side and report on us.”

“We are not,” says the bald man. “Our hearts are with you.”

“When you say that, I know you are an informer.” Turning to one of his men he says, half-joking: “Wasn’t he the one who was chasing us when we were out demonstrating?” The bald man’s face turns pale.

Abu Ali keeps the civilians waiting for two hours. Then, like a true autocrat, he quickly changes his mind and summons two of his men to take them where they want to go.

Abu Ali’s neighbourhood is a nest of snipers, and to reach the frontline you must run across streets that are covered only by curtains to hide from the gunmen’s view. Elsewhere fighters have punched holes through deserted apartments to make protected routes to the front.

The returning civilians register that their homes have become sniper positions, and that everything of value has been stripped.

One man stops in his children’s bedroom. It is a mess, the window blown in and toys scattered on the beds. He starts sifting through papers in drawers and rearranging the books on shelves.

The walls are blackened, and broken pipes have flooded the floors. Gripped by a strange fervour, the man and his teenage son start to pack everything they can find into plastic bags and suitcases. Their faces are lit by slits of light that filters through the bullet holes in the blinds.

“Get some sweaters for your brother,” the father says.

“Is there any money left?” asks the son.

“No, everything has been stolen.”

The two fighters wait in the staircase watching the street and urging the people to move quickly. “I know they hate us,” one says. “They blame us for the destruction. Maybe they are right, but had the people of Aleppo supported the revolution from the beginning this wouldn’t have happened.”

The wind blows hard, and shards of glass from the broken windows cascade on to the street below, sending up a faint jingling sound.

In the kitchen, the son finds a half-empty bag of lentils, a bag of rice and some stock cubes. He picks up a jar, opens it, sniffs and places it back on the shelf, making a disgusted face.

At the sound of heavy machine-gun fire, the civilians hurry out into the stairwell, each carrying bundles of plastic bags. The father is carrying more bags than the others and a flat-screen TV. As they rush back from the frontline, he becomes dizzy and leans against a wall for support, sweating heavily. The group pauses.

“This is all my life,” he says to the fighters. “I worked for 30 years to buy an apartment. Will I be around for another 30 years to buy another one?”

When they get back to the command centre, Abu Ali is still in a foul mood. “You were going to kill my men for this?” he says, gesturing at their bags. “All of you, get out of my area. I have a war to run.”

“We just wanted to check if anything was looted,” the engineer says quietly.

“Every single house has been looted,” shouts Abu Ali. “And the (government) army has never been to this area. It is us who looted them!”

### **“In Their Fight Against The State, One Of The Brothers Was Killed And Another Spent 15 Years In Jail”**

Later, we walk to Abu Ali’s house behind the frontline. He stops at the bottom of a flight of stairs and stands for a while in the cold next to a huge pile of rubbish, watching the distant bombs flashing over the dark city. Then he climbs up to his apartment. “Girls!” he shouts. “Girls!”

The shrieks and screams of children carry out of the apartment. They come running to meet him, and he lifts the smallest on to his shoulder while another clings to his legs and the elder pulls him into their bedroom.

“Father, we made a house for Squirrel,” they shout excitedly. Squirrel the cat is shivering and scared, either from the continuous sounds of gunfire or from the bath the girls subject him to daily.

Abu Ali sits on the floor, the three girls hanging from his neck like three little limpets.

Um Ali arrives with a tray of food. Her kind, round face is wrapped in a pink scarf. Apart from the sound of shooting from down the street, it could be a typical Syrian family scene, with Abu Ali playing the harassed dad to a tee. The adult conversation is interrupted constantly by requests from the girls. The boy watches TV silently.

“The kids live in the most dangerous area, but I feel safe. She makes me feel safe,” he says, indicating his wife.

“Daddy, make me a sandwich,” says one of the girls.

“Can’t you get it yourself? I’m trying to talk to your mother.”

“Baba, can I talk into your radio?”

Abu Ali’s brothers had actively opposed the rule of Bashar al-Assad’s father, Hafez, joining the Muslim Brotherhood in the 80s.

In their fight against the state, one of the brothers was killed and another spent 15 years in jail.

**Abu Ali chose a different path, training to be an assistant engineer. He got a job with the government. Life was good. “I had a good income, my own car and my own house,” he says. “My kids used to go to the best schools and we had a perfect family life.**

**“When Bashar [al-Assad] came to power I disagreed with my father and brother. I said he would be good, that things would change.”**

**But little did change, and when the revolution came in 2011, Abu Ali was one of the first people to take up arms in Aleppo. With a group of friends he formed a small armed unit to target security forces.**

“See this pistol,” he says, pulling the weapon from his belt and placing it on the floor. “The first bullet in Aleppo was fired from this pistol.”

### **“We Used To Know How Our Days Started And Ended. Now I Can’t Afford To Think Ahead. We Just Want To End The Day Alive”**

The small girl grabs at the shiny gun but he snatches it away. “I knew there wouldn’t be a revolution without violence, and the people of Aleppo needed someone to drag them into the revolution.”

“He was the first who carried weapons and I encouraged him,” says Um Ali, who trained as a mechanical engineer. “His parents and family blamed me and still blame me. He was hesitant in the beginning because he had three children, but I encouraged him.

“He used to go out without telling me where, but I knew it was to do with the revolution. I used to pray for him and felt ashamed in front of God because I was praying only for him.”

He has been hit several times in the fighting: he shows two shrapnel wounds on his head and pulls up his T-shirt to reveal a depression under his right shoulder blade where a machine gun bullet struck him. He is often referred to as the “majnoon” – the madman – for his reckless bravery.

“Revolution, ah, what do you know of the revolution?” he asks her. “I said from the start that it wouldn’t finish until the whole country was turned into ruins.”

He stirs his tea with the sugar spoon, and she admonishes him. "Sorry, sorry, I forget that here I am not the military commander any more."

"This is what I know of the revolution," says Um Ali in her quiet, deep voice. "You run from shop to shop looking for things. But the pharmacies are empty. The grocery stores are empty. We toured half of Aleppo to try to find a bucket of yoghurt. This is revolution.

"You don't have to work for the regime to be a shabiha," she says, referring to the hated pro-government militias. "The grocer who raises the price of the vegetables is a shabiha.

"The fighting is there," she nods her head towards the window, "but how do you feed your kids and give them a normal life in the middle of this?"

"We used to know how our days started and ended. Now I can't afford to think ahead. We just want to end the day alive."

Her voice is calm but her hands tremble as she fetches another cigarette. The children are now mesmerised by the TV.

"War is a moment of life frozen. Our lives have stopped. They haven't been to school, but life is moving on for them. Even before the fighting started I used to go to sleep waiting for the security forces to come and arrest him. I gave the kids cough medicine to sleep so they wouldn't wake up when they stormed into the house."

Sarah, the little daughter, is asleep in her mother's lap, wrapped in a brown shawl. Abu Ali lifts her and carries her to bed. "I deserve a rest," says Um Ali. "I am too tired."

Abu Ali goes to the small kitchen and squats before a small stove, boiling another pot of thick Turkish coffee. "Now I will sit with her," he says. "We will lie on the mattress, turn off the light and talk about what happened today. This my favourite moment of the day."

He goes back to the room carrying the pot. Um Ali is staring at the floor, her cigarette burning slowly between her fingers. Outside, the pop-pop sound of gunfire has ceased.

"I am scared of the silence," she says. "I feel something bad will happen. When they are shooting, I know we are safe."

### **"He Sits On The Floor Listening To Old Syrian Musicians Singing Love Songs, And The Men Talk About The Battle"**

Abu Ali decides to attack the government forces, not only to give the impression they are strong and not lacking ammunition, but also to show the other battalions he is still active. "I tell you I face two enemies now – the battalions and the government."

He stands with five of his gunmen behind a wall. He is carrying a heavy machine gun, its bandolier of bullets wrapped around his chest. The plan is simple and bold: attack the government forces face to face. They will not be expecting that, he says. "All our fighting had been with snipers for the past two weeks."

As the battle rages and the volume of gunfire rises to deafening levels, Abu Ali stands in the middle of a window, exposed to the army, and fires his machine gun. His men are hiding behind walls trying to support him. Bullets fly all around him.

Afterwards, back in his parent's half-ruined house, the men's morale is sky-high. In his adrenaline rush Abu Ali jokes and laughs with them. He sits on the floor listening to old Syrian musicians singing love songs, and the men talk about the battle.

"I still can't believe that this was my mother's room, and now look at all of the men sitting there," Abu Ali says.

"Ah, how I jumped when a bit of exploded bullet hit my ass," he laughs. "I swear we killed at least four."

The Taliban and al-Qaida should employ him, he jokes, because of his experience. "Mullah Omar and Zawahiri should buy me for all the battles I have been through, just like Barcelona bought Messi."

He continues in a serious tone: "For a week I told them not to shoot, but to preserve their ammunition.

Now when they see we have burned 500 bullets in half an hour, they will think we have new supplies. It's a game of poker."

By the time he reaches home, Abu Ali's elation has left him. He sits with one leg on the ground, the other resting on the sofa, lost in thought. Sarah comes up to him and he pushes her away.

"We had a fight today," he tells his wife, like someone reporting the day's work.

"I know, my love. I know the sound of your bullets."

After dinner he becomes reflective: "I mix everything. Filth with honesty. Street language with religion. I have mixed all the revolutions in me. I am the Bolshevik revolution, the French revolution. I am the modern Guevara.

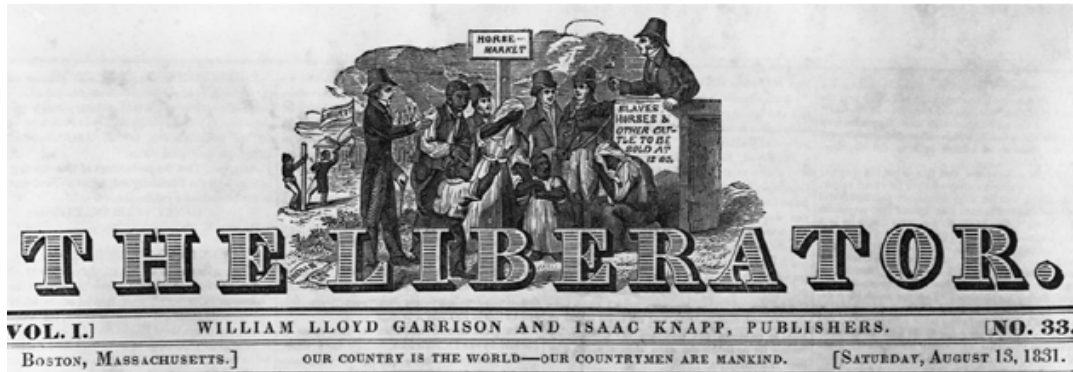
"Do you know, I am so special. My wife hates it when I say this, but I have had angels fight with me. Many times. In battle, I can feel myself flying," he says. "Flying above the ground."

### **MORE:**

<p><b>A revolution is always distinguished by impoliteness, probably because the ruling classes did not take the trouble in good season to teach the people fine manners. -- Leon Trotsky, History Of The Russian Revolution</b></p>
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## **ANNIVERSARIES**

# January 1831: Magnificent Anniversary



The masthead of William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper, The Liberator, denounces slavery. [Wwnorton.com/]

January 1831:

William Lloyd Garrison, abolitionist, announces his anti-slavery newspaper, The Liberator.

**“I am aware that many object to the severity of my language, but is there not cause for severity? I will be harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice.**

**“On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation.**

**“No! No! Tell a man whose house is on fire to sound a moderate alarm...but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present...**

**“I am in earnest--I will not equivocate--I will not excuse--I will not retreat a single inch--AND I WILL BE HEARD.”**

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## January 1, 1781: Anniversary Of A Betrayal: “General George Washington Tricked The Troops Into Disarming” “He Then Had Their Leaders Shot By A Firing Squad”

1.1.11 By Dave Blalock, GI Café Kaiserslautern, Facebook, Open Group

**PAST NEW YEARS DAY IN THE GI RESISTANCE MOVEMENT  
FIRST RECORDED FRAGGING & MUTINY!!!**

Vietnam wasn't the first war in which disgruntled US troops murdered their own officers. This tradition goes back to the American Revolution.

The first incident of "fragging" was recorded in the Revolutionary War diary of a 9th Pennsylvania troop officer named Captain Joseph McClellan, who wrote that drunken troops turned on their superiors on January 1, 1781.

These soldiers were disgruntled because they felt they should have been discharged after serving for three years. In describing the casualties of this fragging he wrote that, "Captain Bitting was shot through the body and soon died," and that "Captain Tolbert was badly wounded."

**Later in the month the Pennsylvania and New Jersey troops of the Army wage a mutiny.**

**In order to crush their rebellion General George Washington tricked the troops into disarming. He then had their leaders shot by a firing squad made up of some of their fellow mutineers.**

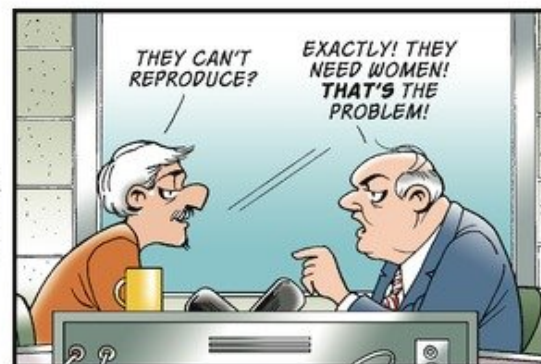
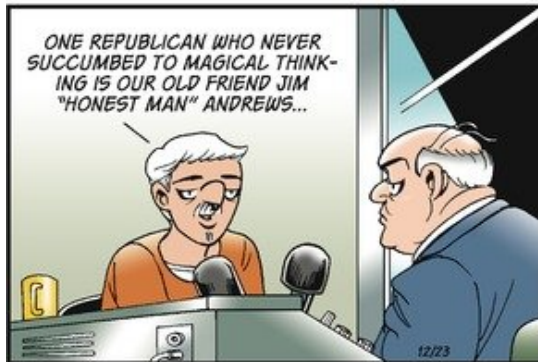
**DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE  
MILITARY?**



U.S. soldier in Bejjia 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.**

# DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK





### **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](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

**How Did Guantanamo Prisoner  
“Manage To Die At The Tightly-  
Controlled Facility Of A Self-  
Administered Drug Overdose,  
As The Autopsy Report Cites As  
The Cause?”**

**“And How Could An Inmate  
Suffering From Acute Pneumonia  
Be Languishing In A Disciplinary  
Cell Without Medical Care?”**

**“If It Was Suicide, It Was Assisted  
Suicide”**

**His Client ‘Foresaw That The Military  
Was Trying To Kill Him, But Without  
Their Fingerprints’”**

**Remes said that his client “foresaw that the military was trying to kill him, but without their fingerprints.”**

**Other Guantanamo detainees have reported finding “scissors and sharp objects in their cells,” he said.**

December 25, 2012 By Chantal Valery (AFP)

WASHINGTON — The suicide of a Guantanamo inmate underscores the grim reality for detainees held there for nearly 11 years without charge or trial, with no end in sight to their imprisonment.

Three months after Adnan Farhan Abdul Latif was found dead in his cell, the US Army formally declared his death to be a suicide -- the seventh at the prison.

US Southern Command, which oversees Guantanamo, said the US Navy’s criminal investigation unit has opened a probe into Yemeni’s the death.

“Too many questions are open,” his attorney David Remes told AFP.

How, Remes would like to know, did the prisoner manage to die at the tightly-controlled facility of a self-administered drug overdose, as the autopsy report cites as the cause?

And how could an inmate suffering from acute pneumonia be languishing in a disciplinary cell without medical care?

“If it was suicide, it was assisted suicide,” the attorney quipped.

Remes said that his client “foresaw that the military was trying to kill him, but without their fingerprints.”

Other Guantanamo detainees have reported finding “scissors and sharp objects in their cells,” he said.

Remes recalled that Latif was known as a difficult inmate, and had been placed in a block of inmates being punished for throwing urine on his jailers.

“He was a pain in the neck for the authorities. No doubt that he expressed and tried to commit suicide,” Remes said.

**“Nothing worse than spending 11 years of captivity. Nobody asked whether they are guilty or not. It’s a misery. They feel very depressed.”**

Remes said the despair is especially acute among the 15 Yemenis that he represents at Guantanamo.

President Barack Obama’s re-election, after nearly four years of failing to fulfill his vow to shutter the controversial facility, has compounded the despondency felt by many detainees.

In one of his first acts in office, Obama declared that he would close the doors of the George W. Bush-era “war on terror” prison for good. But it remains open, housing 166 detainees on the eve of his inauguration next month to a second term.

Lieutenant Colonel Barry Wingard, an attorney who represents three of the detainees, said closing the prison would not necessarily solve the inmates’ problems.

“If closing Guantanamo means relocating my clients to other prisons throughout the world without a chance to prove their innocence, then it represents a new beginning without end for the prisoners,” he said.

“What we really need is the beginning of the end, and that involves release after 11 years in animal cages.”

Among his clients is Fayiz Kandari, a Kuwaiti man who saw his war crime charges recently dropped.

“People always ask me ‘why are you so committed to your clients?’” Wingard told AFP.

“When I travel to Gitmo, I look into the eyes of evil and injustice. There can be nothing more obscene in a legal system than keeping innocent men in prison.”

Prison conditions and legal constraints have only gotten tougher, not easier, under the Democratic president, according to Wingard.

“Some of the best examples involve the current regime insisting on reading my mail to my clients, deciding what mail he can receive and not allowing me to travel outside the US on behalf of my clients,” he said.

“Under the Bush administration, these were protections we took for granted,” Wingard said, adding that the prison conditions “haven’t gotten any better.”

Wingard said detention under Obama has been no less cruel than under Bush.

“Being punched in the face with a leather glove feels the same as being punched with a velvet glove,” he said.

Of the 166 detainees still held at Guantanamo, 55 have received the US military’s formal approval to be transferred, as had Latif. But there is no immediate prospect for their release.

And their status only became more uncertain after Congress gave its final nod last week to an annual defense bill with provisions barring detainees from being moved to the United States or to foreign countries -- in effect forcing the controversial facility to remain open.

Various human rights groups, including the American Civil Liberties Union, Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International, have urged Obama to veto the bill.

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# CLASS WAR REPORTS



## **Military Resistance** [www.militaryproject.org](http://www.militaryproject.org)

*This is how Obama brings the troops home,  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.*



*Military Resistance is a near-daily news bulletin for service members  
[www.militaryproject.org](http://www.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](mailto:news@uruknet.info); <http://www.scribd.com/>

**“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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