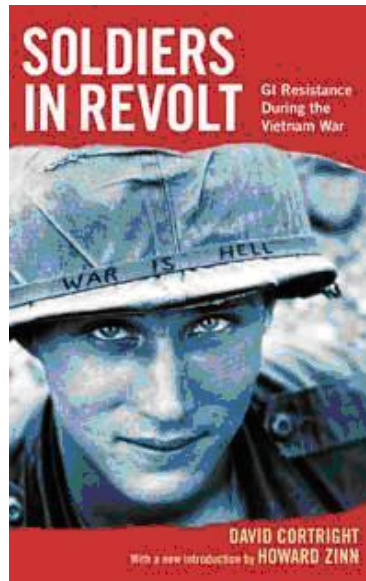


Military Resistance 14K9

Soldiers In Revolt; GI Resistance During The Vietnam War [Book Review]



**“Not So Distant Memories Echo From
The Horrors Of Vietnam That
‘Soldiers In Revolt’ Reminds Us Of
So Well”**

**“The Essence Of People Becoming
Subjects Of Rebellion, Previously
Undreamed Of, Reminds Us What
History Can Do To Or For Us All”**

November 17, 2016 by Alan Stolzer, Military Initiative Organizing Committee

SOLDIERS IN REVOLT; GI Resistance During the Vietnam War

By David Cortright; Published by Haymarket Books, 2005; First published 1975 by Anchor Press/Doubleday

Who could serve their oath to the Constitution better than those who may very well turn their backs on planned or actual Imperial war/occupation and face, instead, domestic responsibilities provided by one of the two least favored candidates in history, all too indicative of mass displeasure?

Nat Turner has been in the news recently; a long awaited film released to conflicting review. No, I haven't seen it (yet) but will before long.

This book isn't about Turner, although he scared hell out of a significant amount of people (still does), but it is about people, many years later, who did what he did - revolted.

The parallel point(s) are that those who rebel do what they must at a given time during political and social development.

It is done, uncompromisingly, since it must, without retreat, without endless thought process, but with terrible, everlasting conviction and consequence (Turner cannot nor needn't supply italics here or anywhere else).

Vietnam, for instance, still tears at the tender membrane of U.S. conscience. No matter how long ago its revealed horrors keep many awake to this day with more than a toothache.

War vet David Cortright, author of this diary of dissent, documents atrocity, grief and resistance through dedicated and incisive reporting without invitation of sympathy or artificial remorse usually available in the soup kitchen of hypocrisy.

Who rebelled (in arms), when, how and why are depicted clearly as well as keeping an eye to history many would choose not to consult. The essence of people becoming subjects of rebellion, previously undreamed of, reminds us what history can do to or for us all.

What good is it some might ask?

After all, it was another time and generation indicating the question of timelessness could be inconvenient to address.

It isn't.

What it is, is struggle produced under the harshest circumstances that could, as history's beck and call, be just around the corner, reasons provided by uncaring leadership, carrying out distorted will that only points subordinates to hell.

Consider the following: Who would think aircraft carriers could be scuttled by angry, young sailors, many from tidy, American homes, unused to disobedience but now ready to rebel heedless of cost. Knowledge of Vietnam's corrupt mission and their part in it created opposition to its poison.

Enlightenment and epiphany became answer to slaughter proscribed by Imperial design in refusal to carry out twisted mandate but confront it instead. Freedom, after all, chooses different roads from time to time.

Learn about “fragging” - the killing of officers and non-commissioned officers who ignored symbolic warning being disarmed fragmentation grenades placed on their bunks by enraged troops dramatically transformed by unthinking command that endangered them unnecessarily.

Or troops in mutiny, non-caring of threatened punishment but providing threats of their own toward those who compromised them.

Other tactics included units who had communicated with the Vietnamese, sending word they wouldn't engage but rested beyond battle perimeter and smoked marijuana instead.

Interestingly, it wasn't draftees who displayed such anger and intent but enlisted troops who thought they were headed for patriotic duty in Vietnam only to have their souls pawned by those needy of career boost and perverse sense of duty.

Cortright covers the numerous anti-war, anti-command newsletters, newspapers and other publications that erupted throughout conflict created by combatants themselves fed up with political aims of the U.S. in Indochina.

The spirit of rebellion is faithfully recorded by title, place and time. This, after all, was no fluke, no historical burp but determined rank and file resistance at its most fierce and dedicated having wildfire effect.

The effect on the military was sobering to say the least. Measures were taken by command to suppress discontent by increasing discipline or muzzling printed and spoken resistance. Soon some units were disarmed in order to prevent more outbreaks.

However, none were ever completely stamped out.

The Pentagon noted it well, alarmed insofar as “By every conceivable indicator, our army that now remains in Vietnam is in a state approaching collapse, with individual units avoiding or having refused combat, murdering their officers and noncommissioned officers, drug-ridden, and dispirited where not near mutinous.” This from a well-circulated memorandum by Col. Robert Heinl, ahead in his field it would seem.

A constant issue, central to Cortright's review were black troops, being most affected and, though alliances were formed with whites, remained victims of racism throughout hostilities. The Army, especially, was in danger of being torn apart. A war within a war was fought with few ready for the consequences.

Make no mistake - these rebellions were critical part of a larger theater of change involving much of the world during the period, its place in this or any other era assured no matter how time and brainwashed memory may act to muffle it.

Cortright is meticulous as he records troop-worker alliances, fair housing efforts for the military, successful and failed attempts at unity within ranks, more troop dissent during World War II and Korea and changes in military attitude as per pre-Vietnam War thinking are all well recorded.

Detail, however, can be friend or foe as the book tends to monotone lacking personal insight or interviews. Individual memories are absent not having integrated the stream of the book with human change of pace. Though thousands were forced into crime by those who would make them criminals the fuller human aspect is missing. Dryness results.

Nevertheless, the book's motion is contagious, unfrozen in time. This serves as lesson now brought more clearly to the stage by current events.

Who could serve us better in times to come when more belligerent class lines form as perhaps never before?

Who could serve their oath to the Constitution better than those who may very well turn their backs on planned or actual Imperial war/occupation and face, instead, domestic responsibilities provided by one of the two least favored candidates in history, all too indicative of mass displeasure?

A potential alliance between our troops and us is truly something to think about if not to act upon. Not so distant memories echo from the horrors of Vietnam that "Soldiers in Revolt" reminds us of so well.

Who knows? The Second Amendment may yet come in handy.

Nat Turner doesn't rest so easily.

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Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome.

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AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Stockton Soldier Dies In Blast



Nov 14, 2016 By Nicholas Filipas, Record Staff Writer, Recordnet.com

STOCKTON — A soldier with Stockton ties was one of two killed in an explosion at a United States airbase in Afghanistan on Saturday.

Sgt. John W. Perry and Pfc. Tyler R. Iubelt of Tamaroa, Illinois, died from their injuries after an attack by an apparent suicide bomber at the Bagram Airfield after 5:30 a.m. local time.

Perry was 30 years old.

The Department of Defense said Monday in a statement that the blast also took the lives of two U.S. contractors working on the base. Sixteen other U.S. service members and one Polish soldier participating in a NATO mission were wounded.

“I want to express my sincere condolences to the families of the fallen, and I want to reassure the loved ones of those injured that they are getting the best possible care,” Defense Secretary Ash Carter said. “Force protection is always a top priority for us in Afghanistan, and we will investigate this tragedy to determine any steps we can take.

“We will not be deterred in our mission to protect our homeland and help Afghanistan secure its own future.”

Perry was assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Special Troops Battalion, 1st Sustainment Brigade, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas. He was at the base supporting Operation Freedom’s Sentinel.

Perry’s father, Stewart Perry of Stockton, said Monday his son was an avid runner and was preparing to participate in a 5k run at the base in northeast Afghanistan as part of a post-Veteran’s Day activity to benefit disabled veterans.

“He was just stretching on the sidewalk, getting ready and warming up,” Stewart Perry said as he was about to board a flight from Sacramento to Dover.

“There was a suicide bomber in the same location and he blew himself up and killed my son.”

On Monday, Gov. Jerry Brown ordered flags to be flown at half-staff over the state Capital and extended condolences.

“It’s very frustrating, to experience the loss of your kid when it could’ve been prevented,” Stewart Perry said.

An only child, Perry was born in Mission Viejo in 1986 to Stewart and Kathy Perry. His parents divorced when he was 6 years old and he spent time living with his father, a former Marine, in north Stockton.

In 2005, he graduated from Pleasant Valley High School in Chico, where he enjoyed running on the cross country team. He enlisted in the Army two years later and was on his second tour in Afghanistan, serving at Bagram Airfield, the largest U.S. military base. He was deployed Sept. 11.

According to The Associated Press, the Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, adding a spokesperson for the group said they had been planning for four months.

Stewart Perry said his son was a talented athlete and fisherman. He created a YouTube channel called “Fishing On Base” dedicated to fishing for bass in small ponds around the Fort Hood base, where John Perry was living with his wife, Julianne, and two children in Nolanville, Texas.

John Wood, a friend of John Perry, was at his own birthday party on Sunday when he got a call from Perry’s wife.

“I could hear it in her voice. I sort of knew immediately,” said Wood, who is from Los Angeles. “I couldn’t do anything but just tell her how sorry I was and how much I loved him.”

Wood’s wife served with Perry in the same unit at Fort Carson in Colorado Springs. They worked in a mechanical shop. Later on, after Perry’s first deployment to Afghanistan in 2010, each couple had children at about the same time.

Perry and Julianne knew each other as children and were “exceedingly close,” Wood said. They have two children, 5-year-old Lena and a younger brother, Gavin.

“Really that’s what makes this so particularly difficult,” Wood said. “We all feel bad to have lost a friend. Even though I haven’t seen John on a regular basis, our bond was very strong. The greater sadness is the fact that she has lost her husband and, worse still, the kids have lost their father.”

He said Perry was adventurous and energetic, and didn’t mind taking risks. He even volunteered for riskier assignments during his first deployment, Wood said.

“We talked about the American mission in the Middle East and he was skeptical about a lot of the politics surrounding the war, but at the end of the day he felt it was an honor to wear the uniform and he was always going to do what he was told,” Wood said. “He was proud to serve.”

And he was proud to be a dad.

“Going to be a father soon,” Perry posted on his Facebook page in 2011. “Easily the best feeling I’ve ever had.”

Community Remembers Fallen Soldier Tyler lubelt

Nov 14, 2016 By Rachael Krause, WorldNow and WPSD

TAMAROA, IL –

It was supposed to be a morning of fun and relaxation at Bagram Air Force Base in Afghanistan. Now, southern Illinois and much of the country are grieving the loss of Private First Class Tyler lubelt.

lubelt grew up in Tamaroa, Illinois, a small town near Du Quoin in Perry County. The 20 year old attended Tamaroa Grade School and graduated from Pinckneyville Community High School in 2015. lubelt entered the army after graduation, stationed at Bagram Air Force Base.

He died Saturday morning while getting ready for a fun run with other troops and contractors. The Taliban claimed responsibility for the attack, saying a suicide bomber dressed as a laborer managed to enter the heavily protected base. A Taliban spokesperson says the attack had been planned for four months.

lubelt is one of four who died.

Seventeen others were injured. Staff Sergeant John W. Perry also died in Saturday’s attack. Perry and lubelt were both stationed with the First Cavalry Division out of Fort Hood, Texas. While lubelt had served for about a year, Perry entered the army in 2008. It was Perry’s third tour. Two American contractors also died. Their names have not been released.

Community members from lubelt’s hometown are grieving over the loss of a longtime friend. In the small town of Tamaroa, some of his former teachers say they got to know Tyler well over the years. They say they’re in shock over losing such a bright, young man.

For students and staff walking in to Tamaroa Grade School, it’s Tyler lubelt’s face greeting them. After finding out he was among those killed in Saturday’s bombing in Afghanistan, teachers such as Tyler’s former science teacher, Phil Hamil, say they’ve been struggling with the news.

"Shock is probably the best word. I didn't really want to believe it, to be honest. It hits pretty close to home," said Hamil, who is now the superintendent and principal at Tamaroa Grade School. Hamil taught Tyler's science and social studies classes in the fifth through eighth grade at the school. But he says they became more like buddies, playing practical jokes on each other over the years and talking or joking over social media.

"It seems kind of surreal. At first you're hoping that the rumors are wrong," said Cindy Opp, who was Tyler's language arts teacher. Opp says in a tiny town, you get to know the kids well over the years. And as a kind jokester of a kid, she says Tyler stood out.

"He could be mischievous and was always good natured and good hearted, never hurtful. He'd keep you on your toes as a teacher," Hamil said.

On a class trip, Tyler was one of the students taking funny pictures behind Opp while she napped. She says the town was proud of him when he joined the service, and losing him so suddenly is painful. But, she says what she'll remember most will be Tyler having fun and playing jokes.

"You know, I loved seeing him in his military uniform and that he made that a goal and he made that sacrifice. And, you know, he was a part of the armed forces. But I'll also enjoy looking back at that picture of him kind of leaning over me," Opp said.

"It hits a lot of the adults here pretty hard, because we've all gotten to know him. So, we'll listen to each other and support each other, and our community, and Tyler's family. And we want them to know that we're thinking of and praying for all of them," Hamil said.

In the town of fewer than 1,000 people, Tyler's death is a loss felt throughout the community and one they say won't soon be forgotten.

Memorials for Tyler are still being planned. At Monday night's women's basketball game in Tamaroa, school leaders say they'll hold a moment of silence during the game in his honor.

**POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE
BLOODSHED**

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

Taliban “Threatening To Overrun A Substantial Part Of The Country”

“Local Forces That Are Often
Reluctant To Fight”

“There’s No Aim,” He Said. “We Are
Dying For Nothing. It Hurts”



An Afghan National Army checkpoint overlooking Chardara, a district in Kunduz province that has become a Taliban hotbed, Oct. 26.

11.19.2016 By Jessica Donati and Habib Khan Totakhil, The Wall Street Journal
[Excerpts]

On the night of Nov. 3, U.S. and Afghan Special Forces in helicopters landed in a village on the outskirts of Kunduz, Afghanistan, hoping to kill or capture local Taliban leaders planning another major attack on the city, the capital of Kunduz province in the country’s north. Instead, the militants led them into a trap.

An hourslong battle erupted.

By the time it was over, two U.S. and three Afghan soldiers had been killed, nine had been wounded, and some 30 civilians lay dead in the rubble.

U.S.-trained Afghan commandos and U.S. Special Forces are bearing the brunt of efforts to prevent the Taliban from seizing major cities such as Kunduz. They face an increasingly dangerous foe that is threatening to overrun a substantial part of the country.

At least three provinces—Kunduz, Helmand and Farah—would probably have been lost already had it not been for the deployment of U.S. Special Forces to their capitals to support Afghan commandos with additional firepower and airstrikes, coalition officials say.

As a result, the U.S. is expected to face an unappealing choice: either escalate its involvement in the Afghan conflict—by sending in more troops or increasing the tempo of airstrikes and Special Forces operations—or risk allowing the Taliban to capture several Afghan provinces next year.

The coalition raid in early November came just one month after the Taliban had mounted a lightning strike on Kunduz, which prompted a battle that ended 10 days later when Afghan and U.S. forces managed to drive the insurgents out.

The Taliban assault on the northern city was part of a campaign also involving other provinces.

The offensive has opened several new fronts in the war, exposed weaknesses in the Afghan government's security operations and highlighted the growing dependence of Afghan forces on the support of their U.S. counterparts.

In early October, two U.S. Special Forces teams were dispatched in rotating shifts to the governor's compound, the symbolic headquarters of Kunduz province, to help Afghan commandos regain control of the city.

When they arrived, no one was there—not even the Taliban.

Provincial staff had left a message for them in English on a whiteboard, according to a U.S. soldier. It said: The Taliban are at the gates, we had to go.

After Kunduz began to collapse, the Taliban broke through front lines north of Lashkar Gah, the capital of Helmand province in Afghanistan's south. U.S. troops stationed at a makeshift base in the city center called for airstrikes to hold the militants back.

As U.S. and Afghan forces were regaining control of Kunduz, the Taliban struck in the provincial capital of Farah province in the west. U.S. Special Forces were rapidly deployed to the remote western city, where they helped to coordinate at least 21 devastating airstrikes against columns of Taliban fighters.

The U.S. military insists that Afghan forces are battling the Taliban to a stalemate and says that its recent operations in Afghanistan fall within the scope of the military's mission to train and advise Afghan forces, not to fight their battles.

“In the conduct of our noncombat missions, there are times where U.S. forces are in combat situations,” said Brig. Gen. Charles Cleveland, a spokesman for the coalition.

The Taliban’s gains signal a crumbling of state control across Afghanistan—one that the U.S. military has been hard-pressed to reverse since it withdrew most of its forces and left the Afghan government in charge of the war, alongside local forces that are often reluctant to fight.

Afghan security forces have suffered some 15,000 casualties in the first eight months of the year, including more than 5,500 deaths, according to government figures. U.S. and Afghan officials say that Taliban deaths are even higher.

Afghan President Ashraf Ghani expressed dismay at the disarray of his forces at a recent security conference in Kabul. He added that casualty rates among the country’s special forces, which are being used to prop up the army and police, were shocking. “I want discipline. I want these complaints to be addressed,” he told Afghan and coalition officials.

A spokesman for Mr. Ghani acknowledged that the Taliban had raised the pressure on major Afghan cities but said that the government’s efforts, supported by coalition forces, had prevented the insurgents from achieving their military objectives this year.

Afghan authorities have struggled to inspire regular police and soldiers to fight the Taliban.

When the militants attacked Kunduz in the early hours of Oct. 3, they encountered scant resistance—even though many had arrived on sandaled feet, armed only with Kalashnikov rifles, city residents said. Afghan soldiers abandoned checkpoints and police stations emptied without a fight, the residents said.

By afternoon, the insurgents were in Kunduz’s main square, snapping photos of one another in the deserted city streets.

American firepower proved crucial to driving them out. U.S. Special Forces soldiers fired on Taliban militants who had holed up around the local governor’s compound as Afghan commandos cheered in the background, according to a video shot by one of the Afghan soldiers. As Afghan commandos battled in the streets outside, U.S. drones and attack helicopters chased Taliban fighters, killing the majority of the estimated 200 Taliban militants who took part in the attack on Kunduz.

Since the Taliban attack on Kunduz, there is little evidence of a coordinated effort to protect the city from another offensive. Bedraggled Afghan soldiers have been positioned in makeshift bases among civilian homes. On the city’s outskirts, white Taliban flags flap over homes not far beyond soldiers rebuilding their stations flattened in the fighting.

The Afghan government spokesman denied that Kabul lacked a strategy, adding that Kunduz would have fallen to the militants by now had there not been a program to secure it. He declined to elaborate.

The Nov. 3 raid by U.S. and Afghan soldiers was a daring bid to pre-empt an attack. Instead, they were overpowered.

Even with a coalition AC-130 gunship circling overhead, and the subsequent arrival of Apache helicopters, it took the troops some three hours to fight their way to safety in open ground, Afghan soldiers said.

By the time a backup team of U.S. Special Forces was in position to extract their colleagues, the sun had risen over the rubble.

A frustrated Afghan commando later wondered what the point of the raid had been if they lacked a broader plan to defeat the Taliban insurgency. "There's no aim," he said. "We are dying for nothing. It hurts."

“Afghan Troops Trapped In An Infinite Loop, Losing And Struggling To Regain Ground While Sustaining Heavy Casualties”

“As The Insurgency Gains Strength, Shortage Of Equipment, Supplies And Food Hampers Army Beset By The Internal Dysfunction And Declining Morale”

"We Have Many Things That Don't Work: Radios, Trucks, Guns"

“Afghan Forces Surrendering To The Taliban In Several Provinces”

November 20, 2016 By Martin Kuz, San Antonio Express-News. Qadir Sediqi and Zubair Babakarkhail contributed to this report.

ACHIN, Afghanistan (Tribune News Service) –

The floor pillows and mattresses that Himat Agha had piled high and tied down in the back of his pickup suggested his sense of urgency. His wide brown eyes revealed his unease.

"Daesh is coming," Agha said, referring to the Islamic State, or ISIS, by its Arabic acronym. He had the hollowed-out voice of a man exhausted by war. "It is too dangerous here for my family. We need to go to a safe place."

He talked outside his mud-walled home in the Achin district of Nangarhar province in eastern Afghanistan, a farming region 10 miles from Pakistan. A short time later, with his wife and five children riding in back, Agha drove away along a pitted dirt road, the truck pitching like a boat in rough seas.

Troops with the Afghan National Army's 201st Corps watched the family and a half-dozen others flee the area on a warm September afternoon. Two weeks earlier, after a month-long battle that killed as many as 200 insurgents, the army had expelled ISIS from the largest villages in Achin and three adjoining districts that formed the Islamic group's stronghold in Afghanistan.

Yet with enemy fighters retreating to a mountain range only a few miles away, villagers and soldiers alike saw the relative calm as a mirage.

[T]he army lacks the bodies, resources and organization to impose lasting order.

A San Antonio Express-News reporter recently embedded with an Afghan National Army unit that has seen heavy fighting in the Achin and Dur Baba districts of Nangarhar province.

"We know we can't leave our men in any one place forever," said Maj. Malang Jan Safai, deputy commander of the unit that patrols Achin. He stood in the shade of an ash tree by the empty Agha home. "The Taliban and Daesh know this, too. When we leave an area, they come back in."

His lament attested to the military's plight 15 years after U.S. forces removed the Taliban from power following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

Across the country, Afghan troops remain trapped in an infinite loop, losing and struggling to regain ground while sustaining heavy casualties as they attempt to eradicate the insurgency.

John Sopko, the special inspector general for Afghanistan reconstruction, reported in October that the Taliban holds more territory than at any time since 2001. The army and national police agencies had suffered more than 5,500 fatalities through mid-August, and the war has forced 400,000 civilians from their homes this year alone.

A San Antonio Express-News reporter embedded with Safai's unit in September. His men operate across 11 districts of Nangarhar in the country's restive

borderland, beset by the Taliban and ISIS, the military's internal dysfunction and their own declining morale.

As the insurgency gains strength, a shortage of equipment, supplies and food hampers the army, whose infantry soldiers live in austere, almost squalid conditions and earn an average of \$300 a month. For the 430 men in Safai's company, the prospect of perpetual war breeds a collective pessimism, tempering the pride they feel in their mission.

"I want to be a soldier for my country," said Capt. Abdul Wahdat, 25, a platoon leader who joined the army seven years ago. "But our life is always hard. We just go day to day and try to keep going forward. We don't think the fighting will end soon. We need more support from the Americans."

The U.S. government has spent \$800 billion on the war effort in Afghanistan, and foreign aid has swaddled the country's military since its birth as a professional force in 2002.

Most of the 9,800 American troops deployed to the country serve in an advisory role to Afghan forces as part of an ongoing training mission that has cost \$65 billion. The personnel includes more than 1,500 soldiers with the Army's 1st Cavalry Division and 3rd Cavalry Regiment based at Fort Hood and a small contingent with the Texas Army National Guard.

President Obama loosened the rules on U.S. airstrikes against insurgents in June, and weeks later announced that at least 8,400 American troops would stay in Afghanistan through the end of his term. The decisions reflected the tenuous state of the country's security.

ISIS has sent 1,000 to 1,500 fighters to Nangarhar, where its leaders seek to establish a base for their self-styled caliphate in the country. Villagers fear the group's outsized reputation more than the Taliban's larger fighting force.

Serajudin Shinwari, a farmer who lives near the Agha home, brought green tea and warm naan to the Afghan troops during their patrol in the village. His callused hands and deeply lined face offered evidence of a life devoted to the fields. The sight of the soldiers at once reassured and alarmed him.

"We are glad to see the military but we wonder when the next attack will happen," he said. "We live in terror. There is a feeling of always being surrounded by the possibility of death."

Capt. Fazel Safi stood at the side of a road while his platoon ran a security checkpoint near the village of Ghani Khel. A line of cars a quarter-mile long formed as drivers and passengers stepped out to submit to body searches.

Earlier this year, as Safi's men conducted a checkpoint in the same area, five insurgents in a vehicle opened fire. They killed one soldier and wounded a second before other members of the platoon shot the attackers dead.

This day proved quiet. The motorists complied without complaint, and most chatted with the soldiers who patted them down. The absence of tension testified to the routine

presence of troops in civilian life, and to the apparent allegiance of villagers here to the military.

During its clash with insurgents that had ended two weeks earlier, the army received support from residents, who tipped off soldiers to the location of enemy positions and weapons caches. Still, even after pulling back to the mountains, ISIS lingered as a pathogen of the mind, preying on the anxieties of villagers.

"We can fight them physically," Safi said, "but it is the idea of Daesh that creates fear. They torture and behead people, and everyone has seen the videos and the propaganda. They are afraid of the Daesh ghost."

At age 32, Safi appears closer to 50, his bearded face clouded by the strain of a war in which he has fought since 2002. His stooped bearing evokes the weariness of a country weighed down by nearly four decades of bloodshed that began when the Soviet Union invaded in 1979.

"Each of us in the army wants to fight for Afghanistan," he said. "But there are not enough of us. We cannot completely get rid of the Taliban and Daesh without more soldiers."

In his report last month, Sopko, the special inspector general, labeled more than a third of the country's 407 districts as either "contested" or under insurgent control or influence.

The escalating violence has drained troop levels this year. The army has lost a third of its estimated 150,000 soldiers to death and injury, desertion and retirement. The attrition has coincided with recent reports of Afghan forces surrendering to the Taliban in several provinces.

Sopko has asserted that the official count of 320,000 Afghan army and national police personnel may exaggerate the figure by up to 200,000. The plague of so-called ghost soldiers has infected the 201st Corps in Nangarhar.

An Afghan military spokesman claimed that the company patrolling Achin and the surrounding region consists of 700 troops. Safai, the unit's deputy commander, gave the total as 600. Safi insisted there were no more than 430; lower-ranking soldiers corroborated that figure.

The reduced manpower inhibits their efforts to tame the insurgency in an area roughly the size of the triangle between San Antonio, Laredo and Corpus Christi. Frustration and fatigue shadow the unit.

“‘It Is Hard To Win A War Without Bullets,’ Said Muhammad Yousuf, 23, An Infantryman Who Enlisted Five Years Ago”

"We are willing to give every last drop of blood to fight the Taliban and Daesh," said Lt. Abdullah Momand, 26, who enlisted eight years ago. "But it is impossible to stop them from attacking without more help from the U.S. You see how long the war has been going. We do not have the ability to end it on our own."

Unlike American and other foreign forces, who deploy to Afghanistan knowing they will depart within months, Afghan troops cannot escape the war.

Their fatalism deepens when the military deprives them of the basic materials of combat.

Soldiers in Nangarhar ran low on ammunition and food while battling ISIS in late summer. Resupply shipments took days to arrive, a chronic problem across the Afghan armed forces rooted in corruption and negligence among senior defense officials. As fighting intensified, soldiers debated whether to walk away.

"It is hard to win a war without bullets," said Muhammad Yousuf, 23, an infantryman who enlisted five years ago.

"How can we win if we are dying?"

High rates of poverty and unemployment in Afghanistan entice young men to enlist. The unceasing danger and wretched living environs tempt them to quit.

Afghan commanders, desperate to sustain the fighting strength of their units, exacerbate the discontent by typically allowing soldiers only a day or two of leave at a time, preventing them from returning home.

The privations provoke thousands to shed their uniforms every year either by deserting or refusing to re-enlist.

Yousuf had seen his newborn son once since his wife gave birth in January, and he held little hope that commanders would grant his request for a longer leave. He signed up to defend the country for his family's sake. He resents that peace remains an abstraction.

"My whole life, there has been war in Afghanistan," he said. "But if I don't fight, what future will my son have? So I have to fight, and the army knows I have to fight."

He sat atop a weathered picnic table outside his barracks on a base in Ghani Khel that the U.S. military turned over to Afghan forces two years ago. The sprawling complex exists in a state of slow-motion collapse, mirroring the decay of bases throughout Afghanistan that American forces once occupied.

Most of the base lacks electricity because of a shortage of fuel to power generators. Viscous rivers of raw sewage run beneath latrines with broken plumbing; dry streams of trash snake through the grounds.

Dozens of wooden barracks stand vacant and rotting while a few serve as garbage bins for discarded mattresses, lighting fixtures and other debris. Many soldiers choose to sleep outside rather than in buildings stained black by mold.

Safi, the platoon captain, likened the condition of the military's bases to the circumstance of Afghan troops.

"Our situation is very serious. It is hard to have confidence without more soldiers, more supplies, more petrol," Safi said. He gestured toward an unmanned guard tower. "If you can't watch out for the enemy at all times, you will be in trouble."

Dust swirled skyward as a convoy of Ford Ranger pickups clattered along a sinuous mountain road three miles from Pakistan. Maj. Safai and his soldiers intended to meet with Hamisha Gul, the district governor of Dur Baba, who lives in a village near an ISIS camp.

Safai's salt-and-pepper beard, barrel-shaped build and voluble manner bring to mind the character Tevye from "Fiddler on the Roof." He had planned a different mission for today until a commander with the Afghan National Police refused to take part.

The Ministry of Defense directs the army to lead combat operations and police forces to provide backup. The roles switch during house raids, with police in charge because of their ties to village residents and familiarity with ethnic and tribal sensitivities in a given region.

"We Have Many Things That Don't Work: Radios, Trucks, Guns"

Safai wanted to travel to a town in Achin to search for three suspected insurgents. He had spent the previous afternoon coordinating the mission with commanders of national and local police agencies in Nangarhar. He sat at a folding table outside his office to take advantage of the fading sunlight, juggling calls on the four cell phones he carries owing to the army's scarcity of functioning radios.

"We have many things that don't work: radios, trucks, guns," said Safai, 50, who joined the military in the late 1980s, a few years before the civil war that preceded the Taliban's rise.

"We fight for our soil, we fight for our souls. But without equipment, how can we do our job?"

One of the police commanders called Safai later in the evening to tell him he had changed his mind about the house raids. His reversal derailed the mission, and Safai's irritation flared.

"This is the problem -- there is too much waiting," he said. "The enemy doesn't wait to attack. But we have to wait to look for them."

Reluctant to spend a day on base doing nothing, he arranged to meet with Gul at the governor's estate in Dur Baba.

The 90-minute route from the base in Ghani Khel passed over serrated mountain ridges and cut across emerald-green valleys. The imposing terrain offered a silent explanation for why ISIS fighters retreated to the area after troops pushed them out of Achin two weeks earlier.

The trucks pulled into the dirt parking lot outside Gul's residence. Maj. Muhammad Hakimi, riding with Safai, climbed out and nodded toward a ridgeline less than two miles away.

"Daesh is there," he said. "They know we cannot come here and have a long fight. They know we do not have the men and equipment and support."

He pointed at the bright blue morning sky. "The only way you can do this is with planes and helicopters."

U.S. air support gave the edge to Afghan forces in their offensive against ISIS in Achin. A comparable scenario has unfolded on dozens of occasions this year when the Taliban has seized control of district and provincial capitals, from Lashkar Gah in the south to Kunduz in the north. American fighter jets, attack helicopters and drones have thwarted insurgents from holding the ground for more than a few hours or days, firing on them until Afghan troops could regroup.

The frequency of U.S. airstrikes has exposed the impotence of an Afghan air force comprised of 150 aircraft and an excess of crews untested in combat. The inexperience showed last month, when a helicopter pilot's errant airstrike killed five soldiers as they battled Taliban insurgents in western Afghanistan.

The U.S. military has committed a series of similar mistakes. Fifteen civilians died in Achin in late September in a drone strike that American officials claimed had targeted ISIS fighters. Earlier this month, U.S. airstrikes killed 30 civilians in Kunduz during heavy fighting between Afghan forces and Taliban insurgents, a year after 42 people died when a U.S. gunship bombed a hospital in the city.

The United Nations reported in July that the war killed 1,601 civilians during the first half of the year, the highest six-month total since the agency started tracking casualties in 2009. The toll has inflamed public opinion against Afghan forces in some districts even as insurgents cause the vast majority of casualties.

Gul, the Dur Baba district governor, welcomed Safai and his top officers by serving them plates of lamb, rice and naan. He has nurtured a strong relationship with the military as the war has found its way to a village that, aside from cell phones, appears almost untouched by time.

A Taliban bomber targeted Gul four years ago while he attended the funeral of a tribal elder. The blast killed 25 people, including Gul's 26-year-old son, who attempted to grab the attacker.

He regards the presence of ISIS fighters in the mountains above the village as an invisible fog that hangs over its 200 people, who live in mud-brick homes and whose days revolve around their crops and livestock.

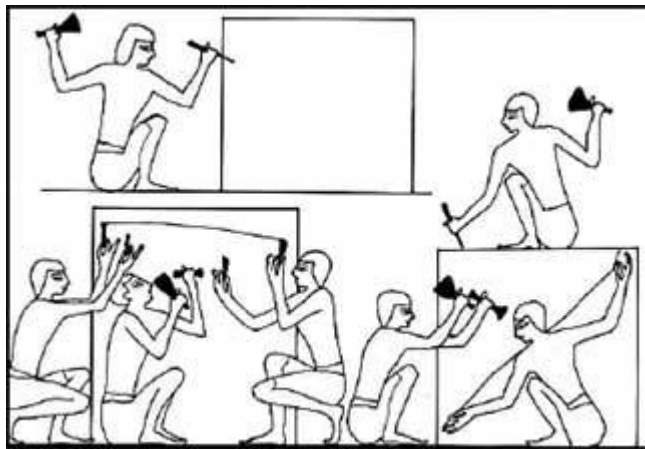
"We are grateful for the military's support," Gul said. "But the enemy has eyes. They see that we are vulnerable."

Later in the day, Safai's soldiers went on a foot patrol, climbing to a ridgeline from where they could glimpse Pakistan in the valley below. As they walked back down to their trucks, a girl emerged from her family's home, her blue flowered dress and hijab a beacon in the gray-brown landscape.

She handed the men bowls of yogurt milk. They took turns drinking and laughed at their milk mustaches. The sun seemed to brighten, and for a moment, in a village at the edge of nowhere, the war felt as remote as the rest of the world.

ANNIVERSARIES

November 23, 1170 BC: The First Recorded Strike



Carl Bunin Peace History November 19-25

The first recorded strike took place in Egypt when necropolis workers who had not been paid for their work in more than two months sat down and refused to work until they were paid and able to eat.

***November 23, 1887:* Dishonorable Anniversary The Louisiana Militia Butchers Unarmed Sugar Plantation Strikers**

Carl Bunin Peace History November 19-25

Black Louisiana sugarcane workers, in cooperation with the racially integrated Knights of Labor, went on strike.

The Louisiana Militia, aided by bands of “prominent citizens,” shot and killed 35 unarmed black sugar workers striking to gain a dollar-per-day wage, and lynched two strike leaders.

“Many Were Told To ‘Run For Their Lives’ Before Being Summarily Executed”

By Stephen Kliebert, Dougriddle.com [Excerpts]

The Thibodaux Massacre of 1887 was the second most bloody labor dispute in U.S. history.

Although most of the blood letting occurred in the environs of Thibodaux, the strike encompassed a larger area. The strike affected sugar plantations in St. Mary, Terrebonne, and Lafourche parishes. These parishes make up an area known as the “sugar bowl.” Thibodaux is the parish seat of Lafourche.

The plight of the sugar cane worker in 1887 was one of back-breaking labor and meager pay.

Most field hands were paid approximately 13 dollars a month. They were also paid in script. Script was basically a coupon redeemable only at the company store owned by the planter. The store’s prices were normally marked up 100%.

You can see that the worker usually wound up being indebted to the planter. Louisiana law stated that if a worker owed money to a planter he could not move off the planters land until the debt was paid. This law essentially reduced the plantation laborer to the status of serf.

In 1885 the Knights of Labor was successful in organizing railroad workers who worked for the Charles Morgan Railroad and Steamboat company. The company owned a stretch of tracks that ran from New Orleans to Texas. The railroad passes through the communities of Des Allemands, Raceland, Schreiver, and Morgan City on its way to Texas.

The K. of L. felt that the sugar cane workers were fertile ground to expand their organization. In 1886 a L.A. (local assembly) of the K. of L. was established in Schreiver, La. for sugar cane workers.

It was the probably the first assembly of a labor union that allowed both black and white members to join. During a time when a strict caste system was imposed this was one hell of an achievement!

In late October, 1887 LA 8404 (Schreiver local) presented a list of demands to L.S.P.A. The L.S.P.A.’s (Louisiana Sugar Producer’s Association), members included local sugar

planters. The workers wanted elimination of script, a small increase in their daily wages, and payment every two weeks. The planter's association rejected the demands

The planter aristocracy ruled Louisiana at this point in time. They worked for many years to deny poor whites and blacks access to education, and better working conditions. They were not about to cede any of their power now.

The Knights of Labor scheduled a strike to commence on the 1st of November 1887.

The strike began during the crucial harvest period known as "grinding." On November 1st workers in St. Mary, Lafourche, and Terrebonne parishes refused to work, and refused to vacate their cabins that were plantation-owned. Attempts to evict tenants by local sheriffs were unsuccessful.

The sugar planters were faced with the possibility of losing their crops to a freeze if the strike persisted.

On the same day the strike began, the planters association called on the governor to send them help in the form of the state militia.

Governor McEnery (1881-1888) who was himself a plantation owner had no problem in ordering the state militia to the embattled region. The first militia companies arrived in Schriever, Louisiana from New Orleans on the first of November. They made the short trip to Thibodaux where they intended to store their equipment which included horses, rifles, and a Gatling gun in front of the Lafourche parish courthouse.

The two militia companies that arrived in Thibodaux were not the only ones to take part in strike-breaking. Other companies were sent to Houma and Lockport.

Some 10,000 plantation workers took part in the strike. Most of the strikers were black, but nearly 1000 were white.

The militia companies sent to the region worked with local judges in evicting strikers from plantations, and provided protection for "scabs" sent in to replace the strikers.

When striking plantation workers were faced with soldiers armed with Springfield rifles they offered little to no resistance. They heeded the orders to leave the plantations. Many congregated in the black section of Thibodaux.

Problems arose when white scabs were fired upon in Terrebonne parish. Strikers, who were forced off plantations, were believed to be involved in firing into sugar mills in Lafourche parish.

Pickets were placed in around the city of Thibodaux. The "pickets" were composed of white civilians from Thibodaux, and neighboring parishes. They were no doubt horrified by the rumor spreading around town that black strikers intended to burn the city down.

The struggle came to a head when two white picketers were fired upon while at their posts in a black section of town. The two picketers survived, but the incident enraged the white population of Thibodaux. White vigilantes rode through the neighborhood firing their weapons and wreaking havoc.

Strikers and their family members were rounded up by vigilantes. Many were told to “run for their lives”, before being summarily executed.

On the morning of November 23, 1887 anywhere between 30 to 300 black strikers were killed. A company of militiamen known as the Shreveport Guards is considered to have taken place in the massacre.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

**She Was Shot 17 Times By
Zionist Soldier Acquitted On All
Charges By A Military Court
Yesterday:**

**“A Soldier In A Watchtower
Radioed A Colleague In The Army
Post's Operations Room And
Describes Iman As ‘A Little Girl’
Who Was ‘Scared To Death’”**

**“Was Heading Away From The Army
Post When She Was Shot”**

**“This Is Commander. Anything That's
Mobile, That Moves In The Zone, Even If
It's A Three-Year-Old, Needs To Be
Killed”**

An Israeli army officer who fired the entire magazine of his automatic rifle into a 13-year-old Palestinian girl and then said he would have done the same even if she had been three years old was acquitted on all charges by a military court yesterday.

The soldier, who has only been identified as "Captain R", was charged with relatively minor offences for the killing of Iman al-Hams who was shot 17 times as she ventured near an Israeli army post near Rafah refugee camp in Gaza a year ago.

The manner of Iman's killing, and the revelation of a tape recording in which the captain is warned that she was just a child who was "scared to death", made the shooting one of the most controversial since the Palestinian intifada erupted five years ago even though hundreds of other children have also died.

After the verdict, Iman's father, Samir al-Hams, said the army never intended to hold the soldier accountable.

"They did not charge him with Iman's murder, only with small offences, and now they say he is innocent of those even though he shot my daughter so many times," he said. "This was the cold-blooded murder of a girl. The soldier murdered her once and the court has murdered her again. What is the message? They are telling their soldiers to kill Palestinian children."

The military court cleared the soldier of illegal use of his weapon, conduct unbecoming an officer and perverting the course of justice by asking soldiers under his command to alter their accounts of the incident.

Capt R's lawyers argued that the "confirmation of the kill" after a suspect is shot was a standard Israeli military practice to eliminate terrorist threats.

Following the verdict, Capt R burst into tears, turned to the public benches and said: "I told you I was innocent."

The army's official account said that Iman was shot for crossing into a security zone carrying her schoolbag which soldiers feared might contain a bomb. It is still not known why the girl ventured into the area but witnesses described her as at least 100 yards from the military post which was in any case well protected.

A recording of radio exchanges between Capt R and his troops obtained by Israeli television revealed that from the beginning soldiers identified Iman as a child.

In the recording, a soldier in a watchtower radioed a colleague in the army post's operations room and describes Iman as "a little girl" who was "scared to death". After soldiers first opened fire, she dropped her schoolbag which was then hit by several bullets establishing that it did not contain explosive. At that point she was no longer carrying the bag and, the tape revealed, was heading away from the army post when she was shot.

Although the military speculated that Iman might have been trying to "lure" the soldiers out of their base so they could be attacked by accomplices, Capt R made the decision to lead some of his troops into the open. Shortly afterwards he can be heard on the

recording saying that he has shot the girl and, believing her dead, then "confirmed the kill".

"I and another soldier ... are going in a little nearer, forward, to confirm the kill ... Receive a situation report. We fired and killed her ... I also confirmed the kill. Over," he said.

Palestinian witnesses said they saw the captain shoot Iman twice in the head, walk away, turn back and fire a stream of bullets into her body.

On the tape, Capt R then "clarifies" to the soldiers under his command why he killed Iman: "This is commander. Anything that's mobile, that moves in the (security) zone, even if it's a three-year-old, needs to be killed."

At no point did the Israeli troops come under attack.

The prosecution case was damaged when a soldier who initially said he had seen Capt R point his weapon at the girl's body and open fire later told the court he had fabricated the story.

Capt R claimed that he had not fired the shots at the girl but near her. However, Dr Mohammed al-Hams, who inspected the child's body at Rafah hospital, counted numerous wounds. "She has at least 17 bullets in several parts of the body, all along the chest, hands, arms, legs," he told the Guardian shortly afterwards. "The bullets were large and shot from a close distance. The most serious injuries were to her head. She had three bullets in the head. One bullet was shot from the right side of the face beside the ear. It had a big impact on the whole face."

The army's initial investigation concluded that the captain had "not acted unethically". But after some of the soldiers under his command went to the Israeli press to give a different version, the military police launched a separate investigation after which he was charged.

Capt R claimed that the soldiers under his command were out to get him because they are Jewish and he is Druze.

The transcript

The following is a recording of a three-way conversation that took place between a soldier in a watchtower, an army operations room and Capt R, who shot the girl

From the watchtower (three-way conversation between watchtower soldier, the operations room in another location, and finally, Captain R, the officer on the ground near watchtower)

"It's a little girl. She's running defensively eastward." "Are we talking about a girl under the age of 10?" "A girl about 10, she's behind the embankment, scared to death." "I think that one of the positions took her out." "I and another soldier ... are going in a little nearer, forward, to confirm the kill ... Receive a situation report. We fired and killed her ... I also confirmed the kill. Over."

From the operations room "Are we talking about a girl under the age of 10?"

Watchtower "A girl about 10, she's behind the embankment, scared to death."

A few minutes later, Iman is shot from one of the army posts

Watchtower "I think that one of the positions took her out."

Captain R "I and another soldier ... are going in a little nearer, forward, to confirm the kill ... Receive a situation report. We fired and killed her ... I also confirmed the kill. Over."

Capt R then "clarifies" why he killed Iman

"This is commander. Anything that's mobile, that moves in the zone, even if it's a three-year-old, needs to be killed. Over."

To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to:

<http://www.maannews.net/eng/Default.aspx> and
<http://www.palestinemonitor.org/list.php?id=ej898ra7yff0ukmf16>

The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."

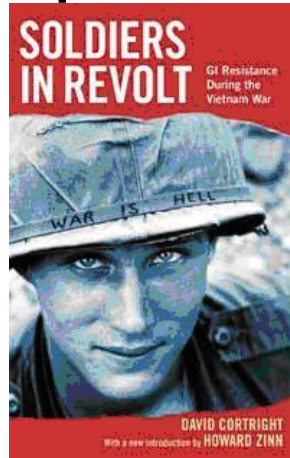
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