

Military Resistance 15A3



More U.S. Troops Are Being Wounded In Iraq And Syria: “At Least 14 American Military Personnel Have Been Wounded In Combat Since The Start Of October”
“The Pentagon And The White House Made Painstaking Efforts To Minimize Any Perception That American Forces Are Actively Engaged In Ground Combat”

At least 14 American military personnel have been wounded in combat since the start of October while battling Islamic State fighters in Iraq and Syria, according to Defense Department data reviewed by Military Times.

The sudden increase accounts for nearly half of the 30 wounded-in-action reports that the U.S. has publicly acknowledged since the ISIS campaign began in August 2014, and coincides with two ongoing offensives targeting the terror group's strongholds in both countries: Mosul in Iraq and Raqqa in Syria, the Islamic State's self-declared capital.

Although comparatively small when measured against monthly casualty reports from the height of America's full-scale conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the numbers suggest that more U.S. troops are being sent closer to the Islamic State's front lines to direct or help local forces who are in the lead.

It's a sensitive topic for the Pentagon and the White House, which has made painstaking efforts to minimize any perception that American forces are actively engaged in ground combat despite steadily increasing force levels in both theaters where now more than 5,500 U.S. troops are deployed.

At least eight American troops have been killed in action since the start of Operation Inherent Resolve, according to figures maintained in the Defense Casualty Analysis System, a comprehensive database charting American combat casualty information dating to the Revolutionary War. The most recent occurred Nov. 24 in a Syrian village located north of Raqqa. Another 23 Americans have died in nonhostile incidents while supporting the war on ISIS.

Of the 14 wounded-in-action reports since October, eight stem from unspecified incidents recorded in December. That's the highest monthly tally since March 2016.

Citing Defense Department policy, a Pentagon spokesman declined to elaborate on the spike in casualty reports or the scope of any recent injuries, saying only that it "should not be considered to be the result of one incident, or even a series of closely-related incidents."

"The Department of Defense does not routinely release detailed information regarding service members who are wounded in action," said Army Lt. Col. Myles Caggins III. "This is due to concerns about operational security and about releasing health information that may be protected" under federal privacy laws.

Among the 30 troops who've been wounded in action while battling ISIS, 15 are Marines, according to Defense Department data. The remaining 15 incidents involve 11 Army personnel, three from the Navy and one from the Air Force.

Eight of the 15 cases involving Marines occurred last March, after the U.S. established a fire base on the fringe of ISIS-held territory near Mosul. One Marine was killed by a rocket attack that wounded four others there. It's unclear how or precisely where the other four Marines were wounded that month, although the fire base did experience repeated attacks until their task force pulled out in June.

Another six Marines were among the eight U.S. troops wounded throughout December, according to Defense Department data. One appears to be Staff Sgt. Patrick Maloney, whom friends, family and fellow Marines have identified as a dog handler assigned to the service's elite 2nd Raider Battalion out of Camp Lejeune in eastern North Carolina. Maloney, whose condition was publicized by friends seeking to raise money for the Marine's family, suffered a head injury as a result of enemy action in Iraq on Dec. 30, an acquaintance of his told Military Times this week.

It's unclear specifically where in Iraq that incident occurred. U.S. officials will not acknowledge it, nor will they confirm that any Marine Raiders are operating there as part of the counter-ISIS campaign. It's been reported previously that elements of other elite special operations units — namely the Navy SEALs and the Army's Delta Force — are active on these battlefields.

"We do not discuss specifics of special operations personnel in the interest of operational security," a military spokesperson in Baghdad said via email.

Officials with Marine Special Operations Command in North Carolina have not addressed questions posed by Military Times seeking details about the Raiders' activity as part of Operation Inherent Resolve.

As the battles for Mosul and Raqqa intensify, the U.S. has dispatched additional military advisers to assist allies fighting in and around each city.

In Iraq, the number of coalition advisers has doubled to about 450, Air Force Col. John Dorrian said Wednesday. They include special operations forces, combat engineers and intelligence specialists, troops who are closely partnered with Iraqi units fighting to retake the city. Some have been sent inside Mosul, he added.

"They're with (Iraqi) headquarters elements in most cases," Pentagon Press Secretary Peter Cook said Thursday, noting at least one instance in which U.S. advisers have been partnered with an Iraqi army battalion. "With the conventional Iraqi forces, they're providing advice and assistance at the division levels with the leadership. ... Some of those headquarters elements are moving as the forward line of troops moves, and certainly there are Iraqi commanders who are closer to Mosul now than they were previously.

"I want to make clear that not all these folks are specifically tied to Mosul," Cook added. "We have advisers right now, for example, in Baghdad. We have advisers at various locations, installations that may be supporting Mosul. I mentioned Qayyarah again, Camp Swift," both of which are south of Mosul.

In Syria, there are about 500 American troops closely partnered with militias battling to reclaim territory from the Islamic State. The last increase, totaling 200 U.S. troops, was announced by Defense Secretary Ash Carter in early December.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**“Baghdad Doesn’t Want Anyone
To Know How Many Of Its
Troops Are Dying In The War
Against ISIS”**

**“The Battle For Mosul Is Bleeding
Iraq’s Security Forces”**

**“Iraqi Special Operations Forces ‘Are
Suffering Upwards Of 50-Percent
Casualties’”**

**“The Division Could Become Combat
Ineffective In A Little Over A Month, And
Perhaps Even Sooner”**

1.4.16 Sebastien A. Roblin, War Is Boring [Excerpts]

On Dec. 1, 2016, the United Nations Assistance Mission to Iraq reported that 1,959 Iraqi Security Forces troops had died in combat during the month of November, including army, police on combat operations, Kurdish Peshmerga and other allied militias.

The casualty report came six weeks after Iraq launched an operation aimed at liberating Mosul from Islamic State.

On Dec. 2, the Iraqi Joints Operations Command angrily refuted the United Nations’ claim. “This figure is not accurate and much exaggerated,” the command stated. However, JOC refused to offer casualty figures of its own, claiming it wasn’t obligated to do so—and that such figures would only boost Islamic State’s morale.

By Dec. 3, 2016, UNAMI backtracked, sort of. Amid the bureaucratic squabbling, one thing is obvious.

Baghdad doesn’t want anyone to know how many of its troops are dying in the war against ISIS.

But it's Baghdad's fault that the United Nations can't relay verifiable casualty statistics, UNAMI pointed out. "Previous requests by the mission to the relevant government ministries for verification of military casualty figures have not received a response."

Now, Joint Operations Command didn't object to the United Nations' casualty report for October 2016, which counted 672 fatalities and 353 wounded, just a third of November's figures.

For their part, the Kurdish Peshmerga militias claimed in December 2016 that they had lost 1,600 soldiers killed in action since 2014. The Peshmerga are helping cordon the northern approaches to Mosul, but aren't involved in the street fighting itself.

UNAMI has stood by the figures, claiming they are "subjected to a rigorous methodology based on a range of sources, triangulation of sources and assessment of credibility, among other things."

Despite Baghdad's protestations, the United Nations' figures seem likely to be far below the true total for recent Iraq war casualties.

"The mission's methodology is conservative, in that civilian casualty figures do not include many of the reports received by the mission that do not meet verification criteria, and hence should be considered as minimums," UNAMI explained.

The United Nations reported the highest number of deaths in Baghdad province, rather than in Nineveh province where the siege of Mosul is taking place.

It's conceivable that better reporting is possible around Baghdad because ISIS isn't in control there, meaning that additional casualties are going unreported in the area around Mosul.

Another anomaly is the ratio of wounded to killed. Typically in current wars, there are three or four injuries for every fatality. Weirdly, UNAMI has reported more dead than wounded.

The U.N. figures likely reflect a bias against reporting injuries, implying that many wounded are going unreported.

The Iraqi government claimed "inaccurate" casualty figures could hearten ISIS fighters in Mosul. The same flawed rationale seems to explain Baghdad's December 2016 policy banning reporters from embedding with Iraqi forces.

The controversy over casualty-reporting doesn't change the reality on the ground. The battle for Mosul is bleeding Iraq's security forces—and the local populace.

One of ISIS's signature tactics is to hide armored suicide cars in narrow alleys perpendicular to advancing coalition forces and attack without warning. There were some 632 suicide car-bomb attacks in Mosul in November alone.

Additionally, ISIS fighters have littered major roads with improved explosive devices—and have booby-trapped cars and houses. ISIS dug tunnels to connect fortified outposts.

To advance in such an unforgiving environment demands a high level of tactical skill and morale. As a result, most Iraqi offensive operations in Mosul have been spearheaded by just one unit—the 10,000-man Golden Division.

Also known as the 1st Special Operations Brigade, the Golden Division is an elite unit that U.S. personnel trained in counterterrorism operations. Even fighting in a conventional role, the Golden Division and other Iraqi Special Operations Forces units have proved to be Iraq's only truly reliable formations.

The Golden Division and other S OF units attack, while regular army units trail behind them to maintain defensive cordons.

The problem is, the constant fighting is bleeding dry the Golden Division.

A Pentagon source told Politico that Iraqi Special Operations Forces “are suffering upwards of 50-percent casualties.”

“The division could become combat ineffective in a little over a month, and perhaps even sooner,” the source continued.

POLICE WAR REPORTS

The Story Of The 16-Year-Old Who Died In Custody After Being Arrested For Arguing With Her Mother:

**“A Worker Carrying A Tray Of
Breakfast Food Knocked On The
Door, The Suit States. When She
Didn't Answer, He Noted That
Gynnya ‘Declined Breakfast—
Refused To Acknowledge Staff’”**

“Later, At 8:53, He Opened Her Cell Door And Noted On The Bed Check Form That She ‘Declined Snack’” “At Both Points, Though, Gynnya Was Already Dead”

06 January 17 By Caroline Preston, Jezebel

On a Saturday evening last January, Gynnya McMillen was staying at her mother’s apartment complex in Shelbyville, a city of 15,000 in northern Kentucky. Gynnya, 16, lived in foster care but was allowed weekend visits with her mother, Michelle McMillen, since their long-strained relationship had begun to improve.

That night, however, the two started to argue.

Around 1:30 a.m., Michelle called 911 to complain that her daughter had gotten physical and hit her. She told the operator that Gynnya “was gonna whup me,” according to a recording of the call obtained by the Kentucky Center for Investigative Reporting.

Gynnya protested, screaming in the background, “No, I didn’t!” Police officers soon arrived at the apartment, arrested Gynnya for a domestic-violence related offense, and took her to Lincoln Village Juvenile Treatment and Detention Center, a troubled state-run facility 70 miles away.

Approximately 28 hours later, Gynnya was found dead in the cell where she’d been detained.

Scrutiny of her death focused first on the way facility staff had restrained her—by forcing her to the ground with an “aikido style” martial arts move—after she’d refused to remove her sweatshirt to be searched. Medical examiners later determined that Gynnya had a previously undiagnosed heart condition and died of a cardiac arrhythmia.

On August 31, her family sued current and former employees of Lincoln Village and the Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice, alleging that Gynnya’s death might have been prevented if detention center staff had checked on her every 15 minutes, as facility rules required.

Shortly after her arrival around 6:07 a.m. on Sunday, Gynnya was placed in isolation room 423, a cell with a heavy steel door and a narrow window that looked out onto the intake area. Surveillance footage cited in her family’s wrongful death lawsuit shows that staff removed the mattress pad from her metal bed frame; Gynnya balled herself up in her sweatshirt to stay warm.

Between the early hours of Sunday and Monday at 9:55 am, when a guard assigned to help take Gynnya to court found her lifeless body, Lincoln Village staff falsified 64 bed

checks, the lawsuit claims. In some cases, they didn't check on her at all, while in other cases they failed to recognize that she'd stopped breathing. (The Kentucky Department of Juvenile Justice, which did not respond to multiple phone and email requests for comment for this story, has fired at least three Lincoln Village employees on duty during Gynnya's stay at the facility. Lawyers representing Gynnya's family did not respond to requests for comment, and the family did not respond to an interview request via Facebook).

At around 6:30 a.m. on Monday, a worker carrying a tray of breakfast food knocked on the door, the suit states. When she didn't answer, he noted that Gynnya "declined breakfast—refused to acknowledge staff." Later, at 8:53, he opened her cell door and noted on the bed check form that she "declined snack." At both points, though, Gynnya was already dead.

Video Shows N.C. Police Officer Picking Up A High School Student And Slamming Her To Floor “She Lands On Her Side With A Thud And Lies Motionless For A Few Seconds Before The Officer Hoists Her Up And Leads Her Away, Holding Her Hands Behind Her Back”

January 4 By Derek Hawkins, Washington Post [Excerpts]

A North Carolina police officer was placed on paid administrative leave Tuesday after videos surfaced showing him picking up a high school student and slamming her to the ground.

The footage, which was shared widely on social media, shows a resource officer at Rolesville High School lifting a student by the torso and throwing her onto the floor as a crowd of other students and school employees watch. The police department in Rolesville, which is about 15 miles northeast of Raleigh, identified the officer as Ruben De Los Santos and said he was responding to a fight that broke out between two female students in the cafeteria shortly after 7 a.m.

The officer will remain on paid leave while the department investigates the incident. Police said they asked the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation to conduct a third-party review, but they did not provide any further details.

“We will work diligently to review any and all pertinent information so that we provide an accurate account of the events,” Rolesville Police Chief Bobby Langston said in a statement. “We ask the community and all members involved to be patient while we investigate this matter.”

School officials also said they were looking into the incident. The school’s principal, Dhedra Lassiter, said she was “deeply concerned” by what she saw in the video, saying it raised questions about “the manner in which we keep students and staff safe in our schools.”

“The safety of our students is always our first priority. Our school district works with many dedicated officers who protect our students,” Lassiter said in a statement. “It is vital that our children have a positive relationship with these law enforcement officials.”

The footage stirred outrage on social media and drew comparisons to video that went viral in late 2015 of a South Carolina police officer yanking a high school student out of her chair and throwing her across a classroom. In that incident, federal authorities opened a civil rights investigation and the officer was fired from the department for using excessive force.

As a nationwide debate has raged over police accountability, the Obama administration has sought to clarify the role officers play in schools and colleges. In September, the administration sent letters to schools across the country urging education officials to make clear what they expect of the police who work on their campuses. Education Secretary John B. King Jr. said at the time that the incident in South Carolina and other violent episodes raised concerns about “unnecessary school discipline practices.”

A nine-second video of the incident in Rolesville was posted by a student and retweeted more than 3,400 times as of Tuesday night. The video pans across a crowd of students wearing backpacks and jackets standing in the school’s cafeteria.

Moments later, the video shows De Los Santos wrapping his arms around a young woman in a pink shirt and blue jeans, lifting her and throwing her onto the concrete floor. She lands on her side with a thud and lies motionless for a few seconds before the officer hoists her up and leads her away, holding her hands behind her back.

A second video shows the chaotic scene beforehand. In the blurry, minute-long video, a fight breaks out between two young women, who can be seen throwing punches at each other and wrestling on the ground. Some students and school employees appear to try to pull them apart. As the camera moves through the crowd, De Los Santos can be seen from behind throwing the student down.

The student who posted the first video tweeted that the young woman was trying to protect her sister, who was one of the two who were fighting. “Then the cop came outta nowhere,” she wrote.

The Wake County Public School System thanked her for sharing the video, saying it was working with the police department on the investigation.

Rolesville Mayor Frank Eagles said body-camera footage of the incident may exist, according to the Raleigh News and Observer. The Rolesville Police Department announced in August that all officers would be equipped with body cameras, the paper reported. The mayor told ABC11 that De Los Santos had been assigned to the school since it opened in 2013.

The North Carolina chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union said it was investigating the incident and called on anyone with information to contact the group.

“We’re very disturbed by what we saw in the video,” ACLU staff lawyer Irena Como told the News and Observer. “This kind of force, especially with kids in schools, is never justified.”

MILITARY NEWS

Witnesses Say Parris Island Drill Instructor Sent Recruits To ‘The Dungeon’ Failed To Provide Medical Care For Recruit Who Passed Out While Doing Pushups. “Right After Mosier Passed Out, Burke Told The Platoon, ‘Look, That Didn’t Happen, Did It?’”

January 5, 2017 By: Jeff Schogol, Marine Corps Times

A drill instructor at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina, was accused Thursday of making recruits exercise in a dusty, abandoned building nicknamed “the dungeon,” and failing to provide medical care for a recruit who passed out while doing pushups.

Staff Sgt. Antonio Burke appeared before an Article 32 hearing at Marine Corps Base Quantico in Virginia. He faces charges including cruelty and maltreatment, failure to obey a lawful general order and making a false official statement.

Four recruits testified against Burke, alleging misconduct that included ordering recruits to do "illegal" exercises; forcing one recruit to call his sister so the drill instructor could ask her out; having other recruits do his homework for him; and using profane words instead of their last names.

An Article 32 hearing is the military's equivalent of a civilian court's grand jury proceeding. Col. James Bartolotto, the preliminary hearing officer, has up to 10 days to recommend to Maj. Gen. James Lukeman, commanding general of Training and Education Command, whether Burke should be referred to a court-martial or receive non-judicial punishment, or if the charges should be dismissed.

Burke, whose name was disclosed for the first time Thursday, is the latest Parris Island drill instructor to face charges in a hazing scandal that erupted after a recruit's death on March 18, 2016. The recruit, Raheel Siddiqui, fell nearly 40 feet in a barracks stairwell, and the command investigation into his death uncovered allegations of widespread abuse and hazing.

The allegations of misconduct against Burke are not connected to the death of Siddiqui and are part of a separate investigation.

Burke's alleged misconduct took place between March and June 2016, while Burke was senior drill instructor for Platoon 3044 at Parris Island.

When Burke and other drill instructors were not happy with the platoon's performance, they made recruits do "incentive training," such as pushups and running inside the squad bay, witnesses said. Incentive training is only supposed to last 15 minutes, but former members of Platoon 3044 testified that they were made to exercise much longer than that while weighed down with packs and other gear.

Some of those exercise sessions were held in an abandoned building at Parris Island, which drill instructors called "the dungeon," witnesses said.

"Dust blew up and made it very difficult to breathe," testified Zachary Mosier, a former Marine recruit who was medically retired for a heart condition.

Mosier said he and other recruits coughed as they performed burpees and other exercises in the building. Afterward, their uniforms were covered with dust, but they were not allowed to change.

During a separate exercise session in the platoon's squad bay, Mosier passed out while doing pushups, he said. Burke gave him Gatorade, but Mosier did not see any medical personnel nor was he taken to a hospital, Mosier said.

Burke later admitted to an investigating officer that he was making recruits do "illegal IT" at the time, but he denied that Mossier had passed out, according to an audio recording of the conversation played by the military prosecutor at Thursday's hearing.

Right after Mosier passed out, Burke told the platoon, "Look, that didn't happen, did it?," according to Evan Murdoch, a former recruit who was discharged from the Marine Corps due to injuries he sustained in training following boot camp.

When Mosier passed out again the following day, Burke told recruits not to discuss the previous incident, Murdoch said.

Burke and other drill instructors often used profanity such as “bitch” and “ho” when addressing recruits, Murdoch said. In one incident, Burke slammed Murdoch onto a table and imitated punching him, he said.

Murdoch also recalled seeing Burke appear drunk with a beer can in his hand one night as Murdoch stood fire watch.

Lance Cpl. Kelvin Cabrera testified about other incidents of alleged unprofessional behavior by Burke, such as having recruits do his homework for college courses.

When recruits received pictures of their families and girlfriends in the mail, Burke would routinely confiscate them, said Cabrera, of the 4th Civil Affairs Group.

After taking one of Cabrera’s family pictures, Burke and three other drill instructors summoned Cabrera and made him do burpees until he helped them change his Facebook password so Burke could contact one of his sisters, whom Burke said was “hot,” Cabrera said.

Ultimately, Burke made Cabrera call another of his sisters after seeing her picture on Facebook, Cabrera said. Burke snatched the phone from him and told her, “I heard you were single; I am single too,” before asking if they could have drinks, Cabrera said.

Toward the end of boot camp, Cabrera found that someone had changed his Facebook password again, and the conversations with his sister had been deleted.

Burke told an investigator that he never took family pictures from recruits without their permission or called any recruits’ sisters or girlfriends, according to a second audio recording played at Thursday’s hearing.

The other drill instructors there were Staff Sgt. Matthew T. Bacchus, Staff Sgt. Jose Lucena-Martinez and Sgt. Riley R. Gress, Cabrera said. Charges have already been preferred against them and they are expected to be arraigned on Friday.

The other three drill instructors will face a special court-martial, meaning their potential sentence is capped at one year.

Burke, Bacchus, Lucena-Martinez and Gress are among the roughly 20 Marines at Parris Island who face punishment over allegations of abuse.

None of the Marines have been charged in connection with the March 18 death of Muslim recruit Raheel Siddiqui, who jumped to his death after being slapped by his drill instructor. An investigation into Siddiqui’s death could not determine if he intended to commit suicide or was trying to get away from the drill instructor.

“His Undiagnosed And Untreated Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Was Hard Enough For Him To Deal With — Now He Had Discharge Papers That Looked Like A Criminal Record”

“He’s Been Invited To The White House To Speak About Mental Health Programs, And He’s Started Classes At Columbia University”

“Yet The Army Continues To Deny His Request For An Honorable Discharge, Holding The Line On Its Initial Conclusion That A Suicide Attempt Amounts To A Serious Act Of Misconduct”

DEC. 30, 2016 By JOHN ROWAN, New York Times [Excerpts]

Kristofer Goldsmith spent the end of his teenage years photographing mutilated bodies.

Mr. Goldsmith knew that he would face bullets and bombs when he enlisted in the Army shortly after Sept. 11, and like almost every soldier of his generation, he volunteered to serve with the understanding that he would go to war. He made sergeant in just over two years and spent an entire year in Baghdad.

The battle that Mr. Goldsmith wasn’t prepared for was coming home. He drank to get to sleep. He isolated himself so he wouldn’t hurt his friends and family when he suddenly lashed out with rage.

Then he tried to kill himself. Rather than treat him medically, the Army treated Mr. Goldsmith like a criminal. Just a few weeks after his unsuccessful suicide attempt, he

was issued a less-than-honorable discharge for what the Army labeled serious misconduct.

There was no court-martial finding him guilty. In 2007, Mr. Goldsmith was separated administratively with a few strokes of a pen.

His undiagnosed and untreated post-traumatic stress disorder was hard enough for him to deal with — now he had discharge papers that looked like a criminal record.

Mr. Goldsmith has spent the last decade appealing his discharge.

He has sought treatment for his PTSD and his depression. He's been invited to the White House to speak about mental health programs, and he's started classes at Columbia University.

Yet the Army continues to deny his request for an honorable discharge, holding the line on its initial conclusion that a suicide attempt amounts to a serious act of misconduct.

The Department of Veterans Affairs estimates that as many as 20 percent of veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan may have PTSD. Earlier this year, The New York Times reported that as many as 13 percent of post-9/11 veterans have received less-than-honorable discharges.

Last year, NPR reported that between 2009 and 2015, the Army separated more than 22,000 combat soldiers for misconduct after they had received diagnoses for mental health problems or traumatic brain injury.

That's why Vietnam Veterans of America wrote to President Obama urging him to use his power to pardon all post-9/11 veterans who received less-than-honorable discharges without the due process of a court-martial.

As outlined in a recent memorandum to Mr. Obama by the Veterans Legal Services Clinic at Yale Law School, using this presidential power is not without precedent. On his last day in office, President Gerald R. Ford issued a mass pardon, granting clemency discharges to Vietnam veterans in violation of the Military Selective Service Act or the Uniform Code of Military Justice between August 1964 and March 1973. President Jimmy Carter, in 1977, issued full pardons to those Americans who had refused induction via the Vietnam-era draft, erasing the felony-level offense of draft resistance for thousands of people. Today's veterans deserve similar consideration.

The “misconduct” the military frequently cites to justify less-than-honorable discharges is often related to PTSD, traumatic brain injury or other service-related illnesses and injuries.

Yet the military itself is culpable, having for years underdiagnosed those problems.

After service, things often get worse, since “bad paper” discharges can result in the denial of veterans benefits.

Without proper care, and with the stigma of a less-than-honorable discharge, these veterans are often more likely to become substance abusers, homeless or incarcerated — or to die by suicide.

Because PTSD was not entered into the Diagnostic Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders until 1980, countless Vietnam veterans were also separated from service unfairly with “bad paper” administrative discharges that denied them access to critical benefits.

Now that we better understand the effects of war, it is unconscionable that our newest veterans are being discharged for similar reasons.

It is extremely difficult for veterans suffering from a service-related condition such as PTSD to successfully appeal for a discharge upgrade on their own.

This process can cost tens of thousands of dollars for private doctors who can treat and document their conditions. Furthermore, the complicated process of fact-finding and case-building typically requires hundreds of hours of work by a lawyer.

The federal government stopped sponsoring discharge-upgrade centers in the early 1980s, so veterans are stuck on waiting lists for years before they can find attorneys familiar with the process.

This could be rectified if Mr. Obama simply upgraded them all to honorable discharges. The president should immediately grant access to PTSD and T.B.I. screening through the Department of Veterans Affairs for all veterans, regardless of discharge status. To avoid overwhelming the already-strained V.A. system, he should call on the broader medical community to help in the screening.

Our country should be ashamed that, after volunteering to serve in wartime, injured and ill veterans are forced to spend years fighting the bureaucracy to get the recognition and treatment they deserve. Mr. Obama, our commander in chief until Jan. 20, must stand up for these people.

OOPS

Engine Drops Out Of B-52 During Training At Minot Air Force Base



January 4, 2017 By: Valerie Insinna and Aaron Mehta, Defense News [Excerpts]

MINOT AIR FORCE BASE, N.D. — An engine dropped out of a B-52 bomber during a training flight on Wednesday, the Air Force has confirmed following questions from Defense News.

Because the B-52 runs on eight Pratt & Whitney TF33-P-3/103 turbofan engines, pilots were able to land the aircraft safely without any injury to the five personnel on board. The Air Force has since dispatched a UH-1N Huey helicopter to recover engine debris, which was found located in an unpopulated area about 25 nautical miles northeast of Minot Air Force Base, an Air Force spokesman said in a statement.

There were no weapons onboard the B-52, which belongs to Minot Air Force Base's 5th Bomb Wing and was conducting a training mission, he said.

The service was not able to provide the root cause of the mishap, but the spokesman said an initial safety investigation has been initiated.

The incident could also ignite debate about whether and how to re-engine the service's B-52 inventory. The Boeing-manufactured bomber has been flying since

1952 and is expected to remain operating until around 2040, depending on when it is fully replaced by the Northrop Grumman's B-21.

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.”

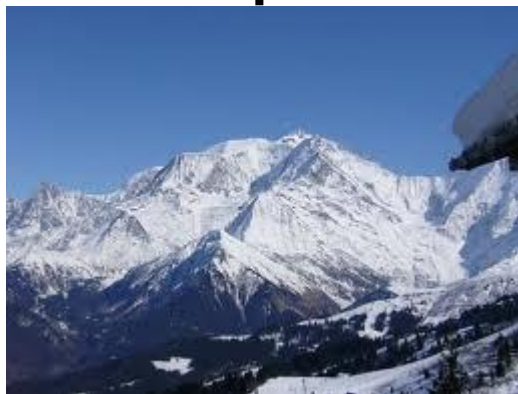
“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

They treasured up wrath for the time to come.

-- Edward, Earl of Clarendon, 1702, on the growing discontent below that led to the revolutionary overthrow and 1649 beheading of Charles I, King of England.

“Wanting To Measure The Political Maturity Of The Proletariat Through Statistics Drawn From Elections And Union Membership Is Like Wanting To Measure The Mont Blanc With A Tailor’s Tape”



Mont Blanc

Excerpt from *‘After the First Act’* by Rosa Luxemburg (4 February, 1905)

Wanting to measure the political maturity of the proletariat through statistics drawn from elections and union membership is like wanting to measure the Mont Blanc with a tailor’s tape.

In the so-called normal times of everyday bourgeois life, we know almost nothing about how deeply our ideas have already sunk roots, how strong the proletariat is, or how inwardly rotten is the structure of the ruling society.

All the vacillations and mistakes of opportunism can ultimately be attributed to a false estimation of the forces of the socialist movement and to a subjective illusion of weakness.

**“On April 27 [1968] A Group Of
Forty Active-Duty People Marched
At The Head Of An Anti-War
Demonstration In San Francisco,
“The First Time GIs Led A Civilian
Peace Rally”**

**“On February 16, 1969, The Alliance
Sponsored A Peace Rally In Downtown
Seattle, With Two Hundred Active- Duty
People Leading A Crowd Of Several
Thousand”**

[No, they didn't go to DC begging the Imperial Congress to stop the war. They weren't fools. They knew that when the army rebelled, the war would end. They did, and it did. T]

Excerpts from: SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975.

The young people forced into the ranks by the Vietnam build-up expressed a sometimes articulate, sometimes desperate, opposition to an unwanted mission.

The GI movement imbued the military with the voice of a troubled citizenry, providing a measure of democratic restraint on though otherwise unresponsive and imperious institutions of war.

The appearance of coffeehouses and a burgeoning GI press, in an atmosphere of mounting disillusionment over stalemate in Vietnam, set the stage for the first significant GI action.

The Army's huge armored training center at Fort Hood experienced a particularly rapid deterioration of troop morale, especially among combat returnees, and throughout the Vietnam period witnessed extensive unrest and drug use (the base's copious marijuana supplies earned it the sobriquet "Fort Head").

The civilians who opened the Oleo Strut in the summer of 1968 thus met with an enthusiastic response; with the founding of Fatigue Press, a long history of successful GI activism began.

The first political gathering of Fort Hood soldiers occurred in Killeen on July 5, 1968. A "Love-In" and countercultural festival was held in Condor Park, featuring rock music and anti-war speeches; approximately two hundred soldiers attended, most of them white.

The atmosphere at the base grew considerably tenser in the following weeks, however, as thousands of troops were prepared for possible use against civilian demonstrators at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago — culminating in a dramatic and important act of political defiance among black troops.

On the evening of August 23, over one hundred black soldiers from the 1st Armored Cavalry Division gathered on base to discuss their opposition to Army racism and the use of troops against civilians.

After a lengthy, all-night assembly, which included a visit from commanding general Powell, forty-three of the blacks were arrested for refusal to follow orders.

The action of the blacks was spontaneous and unrelated to the work of the white soldiers (reflecting a common pattern of parallel but separate development of dissent among blacks and whites), but the Oleo Strut GIs supported the brothers and helped with their legal defense.

Because of widespread support for the resisters, especially among blacks, the Army's treatment of the Fort Hood 43 was not as harsh as it might have been; most received only light jail sentences.

The San Francisco Bay Area has been in the vanguard of most of the radical movements in the United States during the past decade, and the GI movement was no exception. With the support of two local GI newspapers, The Ally and Task Force, area servicepeople were among the first to speak out in 1968.

On April 27 a group of forty active-duty people marched at the head of an anti-war demonstration in San Francisco, the first time GIs led a civilian peace rally.

Two months later, also in San Francisco, nine AWOL enlisted men (five soldiers, two sailors, one airman, and one Marine) publicly took sanctuary at Howard Presbyterian Church in moral opposition to the war. After a forty-eight-hour "service of celebration and communion," they were arrested by MPs on July 17.

In the fall, the growing network of GI activists in the area laid plans for the largest servicemen's peace action to date — an active-duty contingent for the scheduled October is anti-war rally in downtown San Francisco.

Among the efforts to mobilize area soldiers and distribute literature about the march was Navy nurse Susan Schnall's daring feat of dropping leaflets from an airplane onto five area military bases (for which she was later court-martialed).

As the demonstration date approached, military authorities became nervous that a large number of GIs might become involved, and, in a manner that became standard whenever protests were planned, sought to prevent servicemen from attending.

A communication from the Military Airlift Command in Washington, later anonymously released to *The Ally*, depicted the military's attitude toward even lawful dissent: it urged that 'this demonstration be quashed if possible because of possible severe impact on military discipline throughout the services.'

On the Saturday of the actual march, soldiers at the nearby Presidio were detained for mandatory company formations, while special maneuvers and other diversions were held at several West Coast bases.

Despite such obstruction, two hundred active-duty GIs and some one hundred reservists marched at the head of the demonstration, in what was the largest gathering yet of the expanding GI movement.

Two days later, in an incident partly inspired by the show of antiwar strength on October 12, twenty-seven inmates of the Presidio stockade held a sit-down strike to protest the shooting death a few days earlier of fellow prisoner Richard Bunch and to call attention to unbearable living conditions—what became known later as the Presidio mutiny. (For a sensitive and penetrating account of the Presidio incident see Fred Gardner's *Unlawful Concert*.)

As the GI movement emerged, civilian radical organizations played an important role in helping to sustain rank-and-file dissent. One of the first agencies to recognize the changes taking place within the Army was the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) and its closely allied counterpart, the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA). One of the first examples of this co-operation was the GI-Civilian Alliance for Peace (GI-CAP) and the newspaper Counterpoint at Fort Lewis.

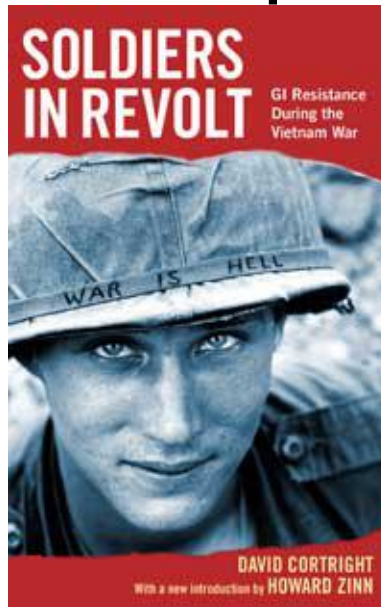
Aided by SMC activists, GI-CAP developed into one of the most successful early GI-movement groups, with as many as fifty servicemen at regular weekly meetings.

On February 16, 1969, the Alliance sponsored a peace rally in downtown Seattle, with two hundred active-duty people leading a crowd of several thousand.

A few months later, the servicemen formed their own organization apart from the civilians and continued their work as an all GI group.

MORE:

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



SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York

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ANNIVERSARIES

Jan. 8, 1811: Magnificent Anniversary: The Largest Slave Revolt In U.S. History: “There Were People Willing To Make The Ultimate Sacrifices To Better Not Just Themselves But Other People”



Art by renowned River Parishes artist Lorraine Gendron depicts the revolt by enslaved people in 1811 in St. John and St. Charles parishes that reverberated around the country. The art hangs in the Destrehan Plantation exhibit commemorating the 200-year anniversary of the revolt. David Grunfeld, The Times-Picayune

January 03, 2011 By Littice Bacon-Blood, The Times-Picayune [Excerpts]

More than a century before the first modern-day civil rights march, there was Charles Deslondes and his make-do army of more than 200 enslaved men battling with hoes, axes and cane knives for that most basic human right: freedom.

They spoke different languages, came from various parts of the United States, Africa and Haiti, and lived miles apart on plantations along the German Coast of Louisiana.

Yet after years of planning at clandestine meetings under the constant threat of immediate death, they staged a revolt on Jan. 8, 1811, that historians say is the largest uprising of enslaved people in this country.

“Slavery was very harsh and cruel, but the slaves themselves were not mindless chattel with no aspirations and no basis for humanity,” said John Hankins, executive director of the New Orleans African American Museum. “This revolt demonstrates that there were people willing to make the ultimate sacrifices to better not just themselves but other people.”

To mark the 200 year anniversary of that revolt, Destrehan Plantation, in conjunction with Tulane University and the African American Museum, located in Treme, is organizing a yearlong look at the uprising that reverberated around the fledgling nation because of the large number of enslaved people involved, its military strategy and oddly enough, because it demonstrated that all was not well among those held in bondage.

“I don’t think the United States as a whole understood that the enslaved black population were as unhappy as they were,” said Hazel Taylor, the special project coordinator at Destrehan Plantation. “Slave owners had a tendency to say that (slaves) were happy. What this did was put awareness on the people who were being oppressed.”

The revolt, which started in St. John the Baptist Parish about 30 miles west of New Orleans, also raised awareness of the harshness of the slave system and fueled the abolitionist movement, Taylor said.

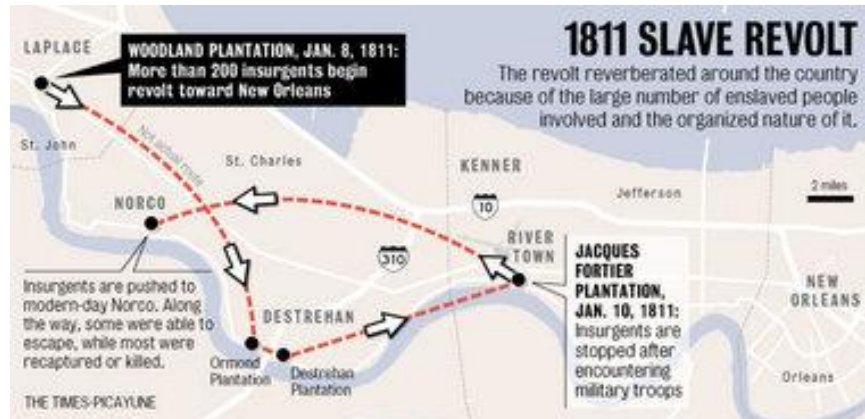
It occurred just a year before Louisiana gained statehood and 50 years before Louisiana and 10 other southern states voted to secede from the union in favor of forming the Confederacy.

While historians may differ on whether there was one specific catalyst for the uprising, the historical accounts of the events that unfolded on Jan. 8 are generally uniform.

It started in LaPlace on the Woodland Plantation, led by Charles Deslondes, the son of an enslaved black woman and her white owner.

Deslondes, along with more than 200 others known mainly by first names, were headed to New Orleans in the hopes of joining with other revolution-minded free and enslaved black people.

Historian Daniel Rasmussen spent two years researching the revolt as part of his senior thesis at Harvard University and has expanded his initial work into a recently published book, called “American Uprising: The Untold Story of America’s Largest Slave Revolt.”



According to Rasmussen, the revolt had been planned for years and was “highly organized.”

“There were 11 separate leaders of the revolt, representing various different ethnic groups. In my book, I profile a few of these leaders, mainly Charles Deslondes, Kook, and Quamana. Kook and Quamana were Asante warriors brought over from Africa a mere five years before,” Rasmussen said.

“Charles Deslondes was the half-white son of a planter who had risen to the rank of driver, but was, actually, the ultimate sleeper cell, plotting revolt. These leaders took advantage of clandestine meetings in the cane fields and taverns of the German Coast, the slave dances in New Orleans, and the vast network of slave communications that extended throughout the Caribbean.”

Rasmussen and other historians say the revolt was inspired by the 1791 events in Haiti where the enslaved population took over that island nation and abolished slavery.

These revolutionists had similar dreams as they marched to the beat of drums and under waving banners toward New Orleans.

“These three men, each with different insights and abilities, had planned their insurrection and spread word of the uprising through small insurrectionary cells distributed up and down the coast, especially at James Brown’s plantation, the Meullion plantation, and the Kenner and Henderson plantation,” Rasmussen writes in his book.

Along the way they burned plantations and crops and collected weapons and ammunition. Two white planters were killed; their wives and children were spared.

“I realized that the revolt had been much larger -- and come much closer to succeeding - - than the planters and American officials let on. Contrary to their letters, which are the basis for most accounts of the revolt, the slave army posed an existential threat to white control over the city of New Orleans,” he said. “My biggest surprise as I dug into the sources was . . . just how close they came to conquering New Orleans and establishing a black Republic on the shores of the Mississippi.”

But their dreams of freedom were not to be realized.

On Jan. 10 at Jacques Fortier's plantation near present-day River Town in Kenner, the makeshift army was forced to turn back after encountering a detachment of military troops, but found their retreat blocked by a group of local militia organized by planters. The number of insurgents killed when they were forced back to an area close to present day Norco varies: Some say 40 to 66, but the end result was that the uprising was stopped in Kenner.

Historians say some survivors were able to escape into the swamps, while others were returned to bondage.

On January 13, 1811 a tribunal convened at Destrehan Plantation and after three days of hearings, 45 men were either sentenced to death or sent on to New Orleans for further trials. Those sentenced to death, among them Charles Deslondes, Kook and Quamaan, were executed by a firing squad and beheaded.

Their heads were stuck on poles and placed along the river levee from New Orleans to LaPlace in an attempt to discourage similar rebellions.

"It was really brutally put down," said Gwendolyn Midlo Hall, a New Orleans author and historian who is now an adjunct history professor at Michigan State University.

"It was incredibly bloodthirsty in the way the elite put it down, cutting people into little pieces, displaying body parts."

"There's been a historical amnesia about anything that showed a really bitter exploitation and violence directed on the slave and former slave population," Hall said. "A lot of historians didn't want to talk about it and a lot of the public didn't want to hear about it. But that's evidently changing and I'm glad I lived long enough to see it."

YOUR INVITATION:

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OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Occupation Troops Demolish 11 Bedouin Homes: Dozens Of Children Among The 87 Made Homeless And “Forced Into The Cold”

**“The Israeli Army Carried Out The
Demolition Without Giving Any Notice To
The Families, And Without Allowing
Them To Retrieve Any Of Their Personal
Belongings From Their Homes”**



January 3, 2017 by Celine Hagbard, IMEMC

On Monday morning, Israeli forces invaded Khan al-Ahmar, east of Jerusalem, and destroyed the homes of 87 Palestinian Bedouins, most of whom are women and children.

Adal Jahaleen, one of the residents of the Bedouin village, told the Palestinian Wafa news agency that the Israeli military arrived with several Caterpillar D9 armored bulldozers in the morning and forced his family and other families out of their homes.

The Israeli military then proceeded with the destruction of eleven dwellings, home to 87 people.

The demolition took place in the middle of winter, and Jahaleen said that he is extremely worried for his family and the other families that were forced into the cold today when the military destroyed their homes.

Dawood al-Jahalin, a representative of the Abu Nuwwar Bedouin community, told Press TV reporters that the Israeli army carried out the demolition without giving any notice to the families, and without allowing them to retrieve any of their personal belongings from their homes before the military demolished them.

Nearly 7000 Palestinians have been rendered homeless this year by Israeli home demolitions. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs recently issued a report that the number of home demolitions of Palestinian homes by the Israeli military during 2016 reached a record number.

**Zionist Destroy 15 Homes And
Only School At Khirbet Tana
Leaving Scores Of Bedouin
Palestinians Homeless:
“We Now Live In The Open And Cold
Air...(But) We Are Not Going To Give
Up. We Are Going To Rebuild Our
Village”
“The School Was Built With Funding
From The Humanitarian Aid And Civil
Protection Of The European Commission
And Was Opened For Students Only In
November”**

JAN. 4, 2017 Ma'an

NABLUS -- Israeli forces demolished some 15 structures in Khirbet Tana on Tuesday morning, including homes and the only school in the small hamlet, which is located on the outskirts of the village of Beit Furik in the Jordan Valley in the northeastern occupied West Bank.

The village was demolished at least four times over the course of 2016, leaving scores of Bedouin Palestinians homeless, sparking condemnation from the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), who warned that the village was at risk of "forcible transfer" by Israeli authorities.

A Palestinian official who monitors settler activities in the northern West Bank, Ghassan Daghlis, told Ma'an on Tuesday that several Israeli military vehicles stormed Khirbet Tana and declared the area a closed military zone.

Bulldozers then demolished 15 improvised structures, including residences, barns, and the sole school of the village, which also serves other nearby communities.

According to state-run Palestinian news agency Wafa, the school was built with funding from the Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection of the European Commission and was opened for students only in November.

Israeli soldiers also reportedly confiscated three vehicles during the military raid.

Majid Afif, a resident of Khirbet Tana, told Wafa after Israeli army bulldozers demolished his home: "We now live in the open and cold air...(but) we are not going to give up. We are going to rebuild our village."

"Palestinian communities like Khirbet Tana are amongst the most vulnerable in the West Bank," Robert Piper, the UN's humanitarian coordinator for the occupied Palestinian territory, said in a statement back in March 2016, after three separate demolitions in the first three months of that year left 87 of the village's 250 residents homeless.

In April, 34 more structures in the village were demolished in a single day, displacing 69 Palestinians, 29 of them children.

Many of the demolished structures had been provided by donors as relief after earlier demolitions. According to Wafa, demolitions in Khirbet Tana in 2016 targeted 150 structures, displacing a total of 214 people.

Khirbet Tana lies in an Israeli-declared military training zone, known as a "firing zone," which rights groups say Israel intends to fully annex. Communities that find themselves inside declared "firing zones" face a high risk of losing their livelihoods, homes, and schools.

"The destruction of the relief provided to these households in these harsh winter conditions adds insult to injury" Piper wrote in his statement at the time.

"Destroying homes and livelihoods in order to place pressure on households to move places communities at risk of 'forcible transfer,' a grave breach of the laws of occupation."

Nearly 20 percent of the occupied West Bank has been declared "firing zones" since the 1970s, but according to the UN, recent research shows that nearly 80 percent of these areas are not in fact used for military training.

However, when military training does take place, Israel forces families to leave their homes for hours or days at a time until the drill is over.

A spokesperson for the Coordinator of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), the Israeli agency responsible for implementing Israeli policies in Palestinian territory, confirmed to Ma'an that the three vehicles were confiscated and that the 15 buildings were destroyed for being built without the permits required by Israel to build in the area -- "fire zone 904."

The spokesperson wrote that the structures had been built "while endangering the residents' lives that entered the zone," and added that the demolition came after the Israeli Supreme Court rejected a petition by residents to legalize their homes regarding the structures. "But the structures' owners choose to build the structures again and with that to break the law" (sic).

Demolitions in Khirbet Tana came amid the most extensive demolition campaign in the occupied West Bank in the last seven years. Israel demolished more Palestinian homes in the occupied territory in 2016 than in any year since the United Nations began documenting demolitions in 2009, OCHA said last week.

The unprecedented demolition campaign left some 1,593 Palestinians homeless and affected the livelihoods of another 7,101, according to a conservative, preliminary analysis of the data.

The "vast majority" of the Palestinian structures were destroyed or seized for lacking Israeli-issued building permits, according to the report.

Israel almost never gives Palestinians permission to build in land classified as Area C -- the more than 60 percent of the West Bank under full Israeli control, leaving residents no choice but to build their homes without permits who "live in constant fear of their homes and livelihoods being destroyed," Israeli rights group B'Tselem has said.

Tuesday morning's demolition in Khirbet Tana was already the second to occur in the first days of the new year.

On Monday morning, 87 were left homeless when 11 residential structures in the Bedouin community of Khan al-Ahmar were demolished, without allowing the owners to evacuate personal belongings and furniture.

Like Khirbet Tana, Khan al-Ahmar is one of several Bedouin villages facing forced relocation. Residents of Khan al-Ahmar are targeted due to the village's location in the contentious E1 corridor east of Jerusalem, where Israel plans to build thousands of homes for Jewish-only settlements, with new legislation set to be proposed to annex the massive Maale Adumim settlement there.

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.”

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Trump’s Cabinet Picks Have More Wealth Than Third Of American Households Combined: “The Amount Of Wealth Possessed By The 17 Picks, At Least \$9.5 Billion, Is Greater Than The 43 Million Least Wealthy Households In America”

15 December 16 By Jennifer Calfas, The Hill

The 17 people filling President-elect Donald Trump’s Cabinet and similar positions earn more money than a third of households in America combined, Quartz reported Thursday.

The amount of wealth possessed by the 17 picks, at least \$9.5 billion, is greater than the 43 million least wealthy households in America.

Quartz included Vice President-elect Mike Pence and Reince Priebus, Trump’s chief of staff, on its list.

The wealthiest members of Trump’s Cabinet include Education pick Betsy DeVos, who is worth \$5.1 billion, and Commerce pick Wilbur Ross, who is worth \$2.9 billion.

Trump himself would be the wealthiest president in U.S. history, and his Cabinet appears set to be at least among the wealthiest.

It is wealthier than the past two administrations.

The New York Daily News compared President Obama’s richest Cabinet members’ wealth compared with Trump’s picks, and all of them were still less wealthy than Trump’s choices for the same positions.

President George W. Bush's entire first administration was worth \$250 million — which is one-tenth of the wealth Ross possesses on his own, The Washington Post reported.

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