

Military Resistance 16H4



“A Shrinking Army” “The Dark Cloud Of A Drawdown Is Still Looming”
New Soldiers “Arrive With Little Respect For Authority And Precedence, And Who Are Not Shy About Questioning Authority”
“New Soldiers’ Lack Of Willingness To Keep Their Heads Down And Do

The Work Makes It More Difficult To Lead”

“Soldiers Felt They Needed To Look Out For Their Own Interests, Because The Army Would Not Necessarily Be Taking Care Of Them As They Had Been Told Or Believed It Would In Years Past”

August 2 By: Meghann Myers; Army Times [Excerpts]

Ah, the lament of the joes: This place sucks, my chain of command sucks, this food sucks, my job sucks.

A study published in July by the RAND Corp., “Assessing the Needs of Soldiers and Their Families at the Garrison Level,” aims to cut through that noise and break down the issues affecting morale and welfare in the Army, pinpointing them by location and including soldiers of all ages, family make-up and experience.

And while researchers set out to evaluate a range of “needs,” from child care to mental health support, what they found was a plea from noncommissioned officers for more time and staff to be able to accomplish the range of duties placed on their units, and a question floating over the heads of many — what is my future in the Army?

“Performance expectations were felt more keenly because of the broader context of a shrinking Army,” the report found.

The dark cloud of a drawdown is still looming over the Army, according to RAND’s research, despite the Army’s efforts in the past two years to grow the force through both recruiting and retention.

Soldiers felt that “zero-defect” policies around conduct, leadership and promotion requirements could end their careers if they weren’t careful.

“One respondent described how it is now harder for people to make mistakes without feeling as though their careers will be over, and there was a sense among several respondents that rules or requirements for promotion or expectations for their performance are continually changing, which decreases their sense of control over their career and increases feelings of uncertainty,” according to the report.”

Earlier this year, the Defense Department announced it would begin forcibly separating service members who are not able to deploy, for instance.

“Respondents felt that these changes in Army retention policies had fostered a climate in which soldiers felt that they needed to be looking out for their own interests, because the Army would not necessarily be taking care of them as they had been told or believed it would in years past,” according to the report.

RAND surveyed more than 4,500 soldiers, who selected their top concerns from a long list of choices, then conducted site visits to four posts during spring 2016.

Team members chose Fort Gordon, Georgia, Fort Hood, Texas, Fort Huachuca, Arizona, and Fort Meade, Maryland, based on the number and range of problems reported and the percentage of the soldiers there who reported them.

Researchers found that not only are soldiers stressed and tired, but they have trouble sleeping, maintaining healthy diet and exercise routines, and feel they don’t have mentors or a chain of command they can communicate with.

“When soldiers described problems related to their own well-being, they frequently attributed the problems to work-related stress,” according to the report.

“Soldier respondents reported work-related stress due to units being short staffed or having too much work put on their units.”

“Some senior leaders complained about a lack of effective mid-level leaders, which resulted in relatively senior soldiers getting involved in issues that should have been the purview of a lieutenant or a team leader,” according to the report.

Those mid-level leaders, in turn, expressed frustration with getting through to younger soldiers.

“While a period of adjustment is expected, experienced soldiers described how there is more distance between contemporary civilian culture and military culture than there used to be,” according to the report.

“They described how new soldiers do not always acculturate well, especially those who arrive with little respect for authority and precedence, and who are not shy about questioning authority.

NCOs expressed the view that new soldiers’ lack of willingness to keep their heads down and do the work makes it more difficult to lead.”

While part of a broader issue, new soldier discipline is precisely an issue the Army is trying to tackle, by building more of it into basic training.

“Some leaders and service providers noted a challenging tendency of many junior soldiers to prefer staying in the barracks — playing video games, for example, or watching Netflix — rather than showing up for events or engaging in activities,” thwarting their efforts to build rapport with their joes.

Sudden Increase In Dissatisfaction With Military Health Care: “Across All Categories, Including Costs Of Medication, Provider Choice And Access To Providers” “More Than 50% Of Those Who Responded Were ‘Somewhat’ To ‘Very’ Concerned About Being Able To Afford Their Medications”

August 2 By: Karen Jowers; Army Times [Excerpts]

Half a year into major changes in Tricare, a survey of more than 8,500 Tricare beneficiaries indicates that satisfaction is eroding with the Defense Department health care program.

The online survey was conducted in June by the Military Officers Association of America, to provide a snapshot of what’s happening in the wake of Tricare changes this year.

This survey showed increasing dissatisfaction with the Tricare program across all categories, including costs of medication, provider choice and access to providers.

In February, costs for prescriptions increased at network retail pharmacies and through the online pharmacy program.

And this year, with changes in the Tricare program and changes in regions, there have been fewer health care providers, and a number of families have had problems getting appointments for health care.

Some families are also finding they’re paying more for certain medical care.

MOAA conducted a similar survey in December, to determine a baseline of sorts for perceptions about Tricare, before the changes took effect in January. About 4,000 people responded to that survey.

More than 50 percent of those who responded said they were “somewhat” to “very” concerned about being able to afford their medications.

This is a “dramatic increase” from the December survey, when beneficiaries were “largely unconcerned” about being able to afford their prescriptions, said retired Navy Capt. Kathy Beasley, MOAA’s director of government relations for health affairs.

Of those who participated in this online survey, 91 percent were retired service members and/or their spouses, and 4.5 percent were active duty. About 75 percent were current or former officers.

About half were Tricare for Life beneficiaries — those 65 or older are enrolled in Tricare for Life, which wasn’t affected by the Tricare changes on the medical side. These beneficiaries showed the greatest overall satisfaction — 80 percent — with their health care, Beasley said.

About 50 percent of survey respondents who were using Tricare Select were very or mostly satisfied. Like other Tricare beneficiaries, Tricare for Life beneficiaries have been affected by Tricare pharmacy co-pay increases in February at retail pharmacies and in the Tricare Pharmacy Home Delivery program.

Of those surveyed, 17 percent reported shifting from the retail pharmacy to home delivery, which is cheaper, and 8 percent shifted from home delivery to their military treatment facility, where prescriptions are available at no cost.

Co-pays for health care have also been a concern. Fifteen percent of survey respondents said they had canceled or postponed medical appointments in the previous year because of cost concerns, compared with 6 percent in the survey six months ago.

“People may not experience a lot of dissatisfaction with cost shares with medical appointments until it hits them, until they have to pay these cost shares,” she said.

“We got a lot of comments from people with children. They talked about their special needs child needing a series of appointments, ... which are becoming cost-prohibitive for them.

“The leading indicators are those who have these series of appointments,” she said, such as specialty appointments.

She highlighted one representative comment: “Because the co-pays went from \$12 to \$30, it is hard for me to afford therapies for my 4-year-old son. He is supposed to receive speech therapy twice a week and occupational therapy once a week. Under the old way, it was \$36 every week. Now I am paying \$90 every week.

“We only do speech and occupational once a week because it has put a financial strain on us. It is hard to provide the adequate care for my son who has special needs that should be met.”

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Hawaii Soldier Dies After Explosion In Southern Afghanistan



Sgt. 1st Class Reymund Rarogal Transfiguracion. ASSOCIATED PRESS

August 13, 2018 Associated Press and Star-Advertiser staff

An Army special forces soldier from the Big Island has died from wounds he received earlier this month in Afghanistan's southern Helmand province, the Defense Department said Monday.

Sgt. 1st Class Reymund Rarogal Transfiguracion, 36, of Waikoloa, died Sunday at a hospital in Germany. He was wounded when an improvised explosive device detonated near him while he was on patrol.

Transfiguracion was a staff sergeant when he was wounded but was posthumously promoted to sergeant first class, said Maj. Beth Riordan, spokeswoman for 1st Special Forces Command. He was an engineer assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 1st Special Forces Group, based at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington.

Gov. David Ige said in a news release, "Hawaii has lost a brave soldier who sacrificed his life serving his country. My deepest condolences to Sgt. 1st Class Transfiguracion's wife and children, and his entire ohana. Let our community come together to support them now and in the coming months." U.S. Sen. Mazie Hirono said, "Staff Sergeant Reymund Transfiguracion served our country and the people of Hawaii honorably in the U.S. Army and as a member of the Hawaii National Guard. My condolences and aloha are with Staff Sergeant Transfiguracion's wife Edelyn, their two daughters, and the Transfiguracion ohana."

Born in the Philippines, Transfiguracion enlisted in the Hawaii National Guard in 2001. He joined the active-duty Army in 2008 and later went through special forces training at Fort Bragg, N.C.

Transfiguracion deployed to Iraq in 2005 and 2008, then went to the Philippines in 2010 for six months, Riordan said. His latest war tour in Afghanistan started in March.

Among his numerous awards, Transfiguracion received a Bronze Star, a Purple Heart and a Meritorious Service Medal as a result of his Afghanistan service. It was the second Purple Heart he received during his military career.

POLITICIANS REFUSE TO HALT THE BLOODSHED

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

In Afghan North, Another District Falls To The Taliban: A Disturbing Pattern Of Afghan Forces Being Surrounded By The Taliban And Then Either Overwhelmed Or Forced To Surrender

August 19, 2018 BY BILL ROGGIO, Long War Journal. [Excerpts] Bill Roggio is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and the Editor of FDD's Long War Journal.

The Taliban overran the district of Bilchiragh in the northern province of Faryab after besieging it for more than a week.

More than 100 Afghan security personnel are reportedly missing.

This latest fall of another northern district is part of a disturbing pattern of Afghan forces being surrounded by the Taliban and then either overwhelmed or forced to surrender.

The head of Faryab's provincial council confirmed that the Bilchiragh district center was surrounded by the Taliban for more than one week before it fell.

At least 40 Afghan soldiers defending it were captured, according to ATN News. The final toll may be worse: TOLONews reported that more than 100 Afghan security personnel are remain unaccounted for.

In statement released on its official website, Voice of Jihad, the Taliban confirmed that its fighters took control of Bilchiragh and claimed that Afghan forces surrendered before the Taliban's final assault.

"Mujahideen were planning to attack Balcheragh district administration center, police headquarter, bases, defensive check posts and other installation overnight, but the enemy troops have laid arms before Mujahideen after getting news of Mujahideen attacks, saving their precious lives," the Taliban said.

Security in Faryab province has deteriorated over the past several years. Currently, the Taliban controls three of Faryab's 14 districts, and contests seven more, according to a study by FDD's Long War Journal. The district of Bilchiragh had been contested since the Taliban seized the administrative seat and then abandoned it in May 2018.

In May 2018, the Afghan military identified Maimana, Faryab's provincial capital, as one of seven provincial capitals that were under direct Taliban threat.

The Taliban has been able to mass its forces in Faryab and elsewhere and overwhelm what should be numerically superior Afghan forces. Afghan soldiers and police have repeatedly complained that they call higher command for reinforcements and a resupply of food and ammunition, but their calls go unanswered.

This same situation occurred in Faryab just one week ago, in the district of Ghormach. The Taliban overran the Chenayeeha (or Chinese) base after a three day siege. At least 43 soldiers were killed, 17 more were captured during the fighting, and more than 40 surrendered after the Afghan military failed to send reinforcements and supplies.

Such attacks are not isolated only to Faryab. In the past week, the Taliban overran the Abdullah military encampment in Baghlan province and killed 36 soldiers and nine Afghan Local Policemen. In Ghazni, while the Taliban was assaulting Ghazni City, the Taliban overran a company of elite Afghan Army Commandos who were protecting the Ajristan district center.

The Taliban has used its control of rural districts to surround exposed Afghan military bases and outposts.

The Taliban Overran The Districts Of Dih Yak, Ajristan, Khwaja Umari, Nawur, And Jaghatu As Its Fighters Challenged The Afghan Government For Control Of Ghazni City

August 18th, 2018 BY BILL ROGGIO, Long War Journal. [Excerpts] Bill Roggio is a Senior Fellow at the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and the Editor of FDD's Long War Journal.

With all eyes focused on their coordinated assault on Ghazni City on Aug. 10, the Taliban never took their foot off the gas in launching attacks on several districts across Ghazni province.

Five districts fell to the Taliban between Aug. 11-14.

The Taliban released video of their fighters looting the Deh Yak district center and celebrated their victory.

In what has become an all too familiar scene, the fighters did so in broad daylight, without fear of reprisal.

On Aug. 16, the Taliban released a video entitled “Conquest of Dih Yak” on its official propaganda website, Voice of Jihad. In the video, the Taliban fighters roamed the captured administrative seat of Deh Yak, raised their flag over the buildings and communications towers, and looted the buildings and storage containers.

Also, a Taliban commander gave a lengthy speech on the steps of a building.

All of this was done during the daytime. The Taliban fighters were clearly not concerned about being targeted in an airstrike.

At the time, the Afghan military and Resolute Support, NATO’s command in Afghanistan, were busy fighting Taliban fighters in the provincial capital of Ghazni City.

The events in Dih Yak are far from an isolated incident.

This has been repeated numerous times in many other districts over the past several years as the Taliban routinely overruns district centers and celebrates its victories with speeches and the display of weapons and prisoners, all without being targeted.

The Taliban overran the districts of Dih Yak, Ajristan, Khwaja Umari, Nawur, and Jaghatu as its fighters challenged the Afghan government for control of Ghazni City.

The Taliban currently controls 10 of Ghazni’s 19 districts, and contests six more.

Afghanistan’s Tank Battalion Is Melting Away:

**“‘These Tanks Are Needed In
Combat Operations,’ He Said.
‘That’s Why We Have Sent Them
To Military Bases And Military
Corps In The Country’”**

**“Yet Few Of The Tanks Are Being
Sent Into Battle These Days — Four
In Helmand Are Dug In As Base
Defenses, While Many Have Been
Rolled Off To Kabul’s Khan Steel Mill
Instead”**

**“They’ve Been A Key Source Of Material
For The Steel Plant, Which Opened In
2015”**

August 17, 2018 By CHAD GARLAND, STARS AND STRIPES

KABUL, Afghanistan — U.S. Marines plugged their ears as the muzzle blast from an Afghan T-55 tank firing toward enemy positions ripped through a gap in Hesco barriers at an embattled base in Helmand province, the same violent area where an American Green Beret was killed earlier this week.

A video clip of the 60-year-old tank firing its 100 mm main gun, released Tuesday, was shot earlier this month as Task Force Southwest Marines were advising Afghan commanders on maintaining equipment and sustaining personnel “deployed to the frontlines,” the military said.

The advisers spent more than two weeks on Camp Nalay, a former U.S. and British base in the deadly Sangin district of the Taliban-dominated province, where nearly 1,000 coalition troops have been killed since 2001.

The brief footage is a rare glimpse at one of more than a dozen decrepit Afghan tanks still deployed to the besieged provinces of Helmand, Kunduz, Kapisa and Baghlan;

many more of the country's remaining Soviet-made T-55s and T-62s are gradually succumbing to the ravages of time.

Maintainers can barely keep the beasts running, and those they can't are being cannibalized for parts or sold off as scrap.

Some Afghan military leaders cling to hope that the country's lone tank unit, 3rd Kandak (battalion), 2nd Brigade of the 111th Capital Division, will one day be re-equipped with new armor. But there are no plans to modernize the fleet of 40-ton machines because the U.S.-led NATO coalition that largely funds the Afghan armed forces sees little use for heavy armor in a guerrilla war now in its 17th year.

At the battalion's Kabul headquarters, U.S. advisers have been training its troops for an altogether different mission of defending the gates of the increasingly deadly city as infantrymen.

As far as the Americans are concerned, it's no longer a tank unit.

"The Afghan Ministry of Defense, Afghan National Army and Capital Division do not consider and therefore do not employ the (government's) only tank kandak as a tank kandak," said U.S. Army Lt. Col. Martin O'Donnell, a coalition spokesman in Kabul. "They operate it as an infantry kandak."

But, Maj. Gen. Abdul Nasir Ziaee, Capital Division commander, said he hoped the U.S.-led coalition would find a donor to help modernize the unit's armor, which he said still plays a key role.

"These tanks are needed in combat operations," he said. "That's why we have sent them to military bases and military corps in the country."

Yet few of the tanks are being sent into battle these days — four in Helmand are dug in as base defenses, while many have been rolled off to Kabul's Khan Steel Mill instead.

On the Afghan capital's eastern outskirts one recent Saturday, cars and vans weaved around flatbed trucks hauling half a dozen busted-up battle tanks. Pedestrians stopped and stared at the broken machines.

A common sight in the 1980s and '90s, the tanks have seen rare use in the ongoing insurgency. More recently, they've been a key source of material for the steel plant, which opened in 2015 and has provided a boost to the local economy, officials said.

"We have decreased the import of (steel construction) products from abroad by 40 percent, provided direct jobs for 700 people and indirect jobs for hundreds more," said Shahab Wardak said, a spokesman for the steel plant. "We are planning to double our employees in the next year."

Derelict war machines have long been valuable as salvage here. During the civil war in the 1990s, warlords sold off to Pakistan the weathered remains of hardware the Soviets had lost or abandoned the previous decade.

“Sending These Tanks To The Scrap Heap Isn’t What Col. Mohammed Nowroz Hidayat, The Battalion Commander, Had In Mind For His Combat Mission”

But sending these tanks to the scrap heap isn’t what Col. Mohammed Nowroz Hidayat, the battalion commander, had in mind for his combat mission.

“As a professional, I would have liked to see them refurbished,” said Hidayat, who had led an infantry unit in Helmand before taking command of the tank battalion five years ago. “I would like a proper maintenance regime.”

Four years ago, when Stars and Stripes toured the unit’s base on the edge of Kabul, the tank engines rumbled to life and billowed smoke, but officials did not start them on a recent visit. Instead, soldiers crowded around a table to learn machine gun maintenance, surrounded by standing rows of tanks with mismatched paint jobs and spots of rust on their hulls and turrets.

Off in the distance, a newer light armored vehicle stood watch on the ridge of a hill.

Introduced in the 1950s, the T-55 was a mainstay of Warsaw Pact forces through much of the Cold War. Reputedly the most widely produced tank in history, it was popular with Third World armies because of its simplicity, relatively low cost and rifled 100 mm main gun. The T-62 followed in the 1960s, armed with a smoothbore 115 mm gun.

Of the hundreds Afghanistan once operated, fewer than 60 remain operational — 13 T-55s were brought to augment about four dozen T-62s after ammunition for the latter began running low.

Kept running by scavenged components from a dwindling stockpile of rusting hulks, they’re not in good condition, Hidayat said.

Fire-suppression systems and equipment needed to drive through high water no longer function, he said, and few can roll very far.

One tank was destroyed in Helmand province more than a year ago, after it stalled and had to be abandoned on the battlefield. The Taliban couldn’t get it to move either, so they blew it up.

Hidayat still sees a mission for the machines’ booming cannons and blast-resistant armor, which he said shocks and frightens the insurgents, but tanks have historically had limited use here.

Soviet invaders in the 1980s found them unsuitable for the mountainous terrain. U.S., Canadian and Danish tanks have served here since 2001, but in the country’s south, where the terrain is flatter and the insurgency stronger.

In 2010, Marine officials said 15 M1A1 Abrams slated for Helmand during the surge would help project power into Taliban havens there. Lately, however, the Trump administration’s strategy has focused on aerial bombardment of insurgent enclaves.

Afghanistan hasn't acquired any new tanks in decades, and in the years since the U.S.-led coalition routed the Taliban, international donors have supplied only lighter armored vehicles.

More recently, as ground forces have struggled to beat back a resurgent Taliban, NATO resources have been directed toward building up the military's more promising components — its air force and special operations command, including two battalions of wheeled armored vehicles reassigned from the regular army to the commandos to boost their combat power.

Such efforts are focused on “sustainable and cost-effective solutions that increase the mobility and lethality of the (security forces) for the current threat,” O'Donnell said. “There is no hardened opponent at the moment that requires investment in a traditional heavy armor force.”

The old tanks are a part of the unit's legacy, O'Donnell said, but not its future.

Despite boasting on Facebook in June that it was advising Afghanistan's only tank kandak, the U.S. Army's 5th Battalion, 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade, has been largely focused on improving the unit's skills and equipment for searches and screening of pedestrians and vehicles heading into Kabul, said battalion executive officer Maj. Charles Comfort.

“They don't show any interest in the tanks,” Hidayat said.

Still, his men had little experience or knowledge of guarding the city's gates when they took over the mission from the Interior Ministry this spring. Afghan and coalition officials pledged to bolster defense of the capital after a series of attacks earlier this year. The first six months of 2018 were the bloodiest on record since the conflict began.

Hidayat was somber about the withering tank fleet.

“It's like when you cultivate a garden and someone comes along and cuts down your trees,” he said.

Nothing New Here. Nothing Good Here: New U.S. Training Unit In Afghanistan Faces Same Old Failures;

“Questions About Why Such Problems Persist Despite The Billions Of Dollars Poured Into Training Afghan Forces”

AUGUST 17, 2018 by James Mackenzie, Reuters [Excerpts]

CAMP DAHLKE, Afghanistan (Reuters) - Captain Joe Fontana, a team leader with the U.S. army's 1st Security Force Assistance Brigade, is part of a new unit but he is working on problems that have been stubbornly familiar to American military advisers in Afghanistan for years.

The problems they have found are the same ones that existed a decade ago when they began to reshape Afghan forces into an army on U.S. lines - poor logistics and organization as well as a reliance on static checkpoints that are vulnerable to attack.

[T]he army is dogged by persistent problems with supplies, maintaining equipment and making sure units get proper support, issues which for years have been an obstacle to creating Afghan forces capable of standing on their own.

But a large part of their work consists of helping commanders file requests for vehicle repair and ammunition resupply correctly or pushing units to carry out routine tasks like cleaning and maintaining their weapons and equipment.

t is the basic work of military organization and essential to ensuring army units function but it raises questions about why such problems persist despite the billions of dollars poured into training Afghan forces.

“Every kandak (battalion) we go to, regardless of where they're located, they all have major sustainment issues,” said Command Sergeant Major Tim Bolyard, the senior non-commissioned officer in Fontana's battalion.

It is a job needing patience and diplomacy, working through interpreters to coax sometimes reluctant commanders to abandon isolated checkpoints or try to develop their own solutions instead of relying on U.S. air strikes to defeat the enemy.

During a visit to an outpost in the volatile province of Wardak this month, Fontana listened for 40 minutes while a battalion commander explained the problems he was having getting the ammunition his troops needed.

It was not clear whether the correct resupply forms had reached the right person at brigade headquarters and numerous calls ensued to try to find out. It is slow and sometimes frustrating work, but the trainers say it is vital if Afghan forces are ever to stand alone.

**“Events In Ghazni Destroy
Confidence In A Government
Which Proved Incapable Of
Providing Security”
Government “Incompetence,
Neglect And Complacency”
“Its Repeated Assurances That The
Taliban Attack Had Failed, Even
While Hundreds Of Fighters Were
Roaming At Will Through The City”
“All We Heard From Officials Were Lies
And Deceit And The People Know This”**

August 14, 2018 Reuters

After five days of fighting, Ghazni, a strategically vital center two hours from Kabul on the main highway between the capital and southern Afghanistan was a city of burned-out buildings and vehicles with bodies lying in the streets.

Local officials had been warning for months that the Taliban’s growing control over surrounding districts had left Ghazni vulnerable to attack and President Ashraf Ghani faced bitter accusations over the failure to protect the city.

The government has faced accusations of incompetence, neglect and complacency, as well as anger at its repeated assurances that the Taliban attack had failed, even while hundreds of fighters were roaming at will through the city.

“The government knew about Ghazni very long ago and did little to protect it. “All we heard from officials were lies and deceit and the people know this,” said Etemadi, who added that fighting was still going on.

A senior Taliban official said the attack on a strategic city so close to the capital was intended as a demonstration that the insurgents held the upper hand on the battlefield, which would strengthen their position in talks.

“We wanted to convey a message to the Americans, their allies and the puppet government in Afghanistan that if we want, we can target them anytime and anywhere,” he said.

“Bodies of Taliban fighters and police can be seen in the streets. I saw two bodies that were eaten by dogs,” said Abdul Hakim Sulaimankhel, 37, who owns an auto parts shop in Ghazni.

He said shops and a big carpet market had been burned out and a neighbor’s granddaughter had died of illness because her family could not take her to hospital.

“There is no bread and shops have all been destroyed. It will take months for it all to be rebuilt,” he said.

Ghazni parliamentarian Chaman Shah Etemadi said the events in Ghazni would destroy confidence in a government which had proved incapable of providing security.

“It doesn’t make much difference if government troops secure full control of Ghazni, it is a disaster - destruction, burned out buildings and panic,” he said. It will be impossible to encourage people to take part in democratic processes like elections.”

MILITARY NEWS

**Report Finds Kids In Army
Housing Being Poisoned By Lead:
“More Than 1,100 Children Tested
Above The Center For Disease
Control’s Elevated Lead Level
Threshold”**

**“Benning’s Command Issued Messages
To Its Families To Not Participate In Any
Investigation Regarding The Lead”**

8.16.2018 By Neil Fotre, Army Times

Medical data shows that 31 children living in on-post housing at the Army's Fort Benning suffered harmful levels of lead poisoning, according to a new investigative report published Thursday by Reuters.

The children were exposed to the lead in military family housing on base via lead-based paint, dust and peeling or flaking of painted areas in the aging homes, according to the report. The Villages of Benning is comprised of housing complexes for married and single soldiers.

The investigation also found Army housing and other structures with dangerously high levels of lead at Fort Polk, Fort Riley, Fort Hood, Fort Bliss, Fort Knox and the United States Military Academy at West Point.

Data showing an alarming number of children testing positive for blood-based lead was provided to Reuters by the Army. The reporting discovered that from 2011 to 2016, the Army identified more than 1,100 children who tested above the Center for Disease Control's elevated lead level threshold.

The investigation by Reuters has resulted in mixed reactions from the military that vary by installation and command.

Fort Knox contract housing announced a lead-abatement initiative in response to the findings, while Fort Benning's command issued messages to its families to not participate in any investigation regarding the lead. The Army declined to comment on the lead findings by Reuters.

However, a written statement was released to Reuters by Col. Kathleen Turner, an Army spokeswoman. "We are committed to providing a safe and secure environment on all of our installations."

According to the Villages of Benning website, there are homes that are newer or recently renovated. However, much older homes do exist for families to reside in. For example, families have been housed in the area known as the "Iron Triangle" dating back to before World War II.

This isn't the first report of problems in military family housing. A 2015 report by the Military Times found that bases in the Washington area had hundreds of deficiencies that were considered potentially dangerous.

Many of the on-post housing for military families is managed by private contracting companies. According to Reuters, "Private contractors house some 700,000 Americans at more than 100 military installations nationwide, including an estimated 100,000 children ages 0 through 5."

According to the Army, families who rent homes built before 1978 are given lead-oriented disclosure forms before they can sign the lease. This is required by federal law for all landlords in the U.S.

Lead was used in house paint before 1978.

The Army Public Health Center maintains an Army Lead Program on their website. The U.S. Army Lead Program falls under the Office of the Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management.

The organization's homepage said it offers "a resource to Major Army Commands and Installations for management of lead and asbestos in Army facilities.

But the link for "Training Information" under the Lead Program Overview tab reads "unavailable."

"Lead affects virtually every system in the body," according to the Center of Disease Control (CDC) website.

"Very severe lead exposure in children (blood lead levels \geq 380 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$) can cause coma, convulsions, and even death. Lower levels cause adverse effects on the central nervous system, kidney, and hematopoietic system. Blood lead levels as low as 10 $\mu\text{g}/\text{dL}$, which do not cause distinctive symptoms, are associated with decreased intelligence and impaired neurobehavioral development. Many other effects begin at these low blood lead levels, including decreased stature or growth, decreased hearing acuity and decreased ability to maintain a steady posture," explains the CDC website on the range of effects of lead.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



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

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

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

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

Frederick Douglass, 1852

**The past year – every single day of it – has had its consequences. In the obscure depths of society, an imperceptible molecular process has been occurring irreversibly, like the flow of time, a process of accumulating discontent, bitterness, and revolutionary energy.
-- Leon Trotsky, “Up To The Ninth Of January”**

Automatic Reflex, Automatic Fire



Free Fire Zones Killing little fish in a pond. Composite photograph by Mike Hastie

From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: August 31, 2017
Subject: Automatic Reflex, Automatic Fire

Automatic Reflex, Automatic Fire

I was talking to a fellow soldier on Fire Base Schueller near An Khe, Vietnam in 1970.

He told me he had recently come in from the bush, and was getting some rest before he went out again. It was late evening, and I remember a beautiful sunset. We didn't say much, just talked about home and where we were from back in the World.

Later that night I had a conversation with a medic who knew him pretty well.

This medic, who I knew, told me his friend had recently killed five North Vietnamese soldiers when he came upon them suddenly while walking point when they were all taking a bath in a riverbed.

Full Metal Jacket.

Automatic reflex.

Automatic fire.

And the river runs with waste.

What a waste.

That is what this 19-year-old American soldier had to do to stay alive.

This is what he has to live with for the rest of his life, if he is still alive, while U.S. Corporate Warlords plan the next war, far away from the public domain.

Serial Killers!

Do I hear a " Fuck You ?! "

Mike Hastie

Army Medic Vietnam

August 30, 2017

Full Disclosure

Death, like a great eagle, flew over Vietnam and picked out its prey. What a waste.

Jo Vabolis

Play about the Battle of Long Tan

Composite photograph by Mike Hastie

Free Fire Zones

Killing little fish in a pond...

Photo and caption from the portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact hastiemike@earthlink.net)

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a

so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

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

ANNIVERSARIES

August 16, 1819: Horrible Anniversary: The Peterloo Massacre; “The Government’s Attitude Was Made Clear By Its Total Endorsement Of The Massacre”



[spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk]

**'Rise, like lions after slumber.
In unvanquishable number!
Shake your chains to earth like dew,
Which in sleep had fallen on you!
Ye are many- they are few!'**

[Thanks to Max Watts, who sent this in.]

When all the contingents had arrived and assembled in the centre of Manchester, something like 12 per cent of the population of the county of Lancashire, and over half that of its industrial South East were present. It was the largest assembly England had ever seen.

As soon as all the contingents had filled St Peter's Field, to the point where, according to a contemporary report, people were packed in so tightly that 'their hats seemed to touch', the area was ringed by 1,500 troops with cannon.

1981 By Graham Milner, Unpublished

On August 16, 1819, mounted regular troops and yeomanry of the British army, acting on the instructions of Government officials, attacked without warning a mass meeting of over 100,000 people drawn from the industrial centres of Lancashire in the north-west of England.

The meeting, held on St Peter's Field in the centre of Manchester, the major industrial city of Lancashire, had been organised as part of a national campaign to win a radical reform of the British parliament and to redress the economic grievances of working people.

Over four hundred men, women and children were killed or seriously injured as a result of this 'action'.

One of the cavalry units involved - the 11th Hussars - had been present at the Battle of Waterloo, which had occurred four years earlier. As soon as the massacre became known to the public, the savage sobriquet 'Peterloo' was universally adopted.

The August 16 massacre in Manchester was one outcome of an extraordinarily powerful and determined agitation for social and political justice in England which at times approached pre-revolutionary proportions. The primary social force behind this mass agitation was the new working class.

This new class, the industrial proletariat, emerged from the industrial revolution, a transformation of economic and social relations that began towards the end of the 18th century, primarily in parts of north-west England. The cradle of this revolution was in fact south-east Lancashire, and Manchester in particular.

Here, technological innovations developed in the latter third of the 18th century, such as the steam engine, the power loom and the spinning jenny, were applied to the

previously-dispersed, domestic-based cotton industry then existing. The 'putting-out' system, whereby spinners and weavers worked at home at more or less their own pace, was replaced by vast factories employing hundreds or thousands of workers.

The new machine industry was concentrated in these factories. Raw materials and fuel for the machines came from the coal and iron extraction industries then emerging in other parts of England and Scotland. Around the factories grew up large industrial towns such as Rochdale, Stockport, Oldham and Blackburn, as well as the world's first industrial city - Manchester.

The previously-existing social order broke up in Lancashire and other emergent industrial districts, and was replaced by a new one.

Ties of dependence descended from feudalism - a deferential hierarchy linking 'masters' and 'men'; the static, rigid order overseen by landlord and parson; all this was burst asunder and replaced by the cut-throat world of capitalist competition.

In these regions the whole pattern of life was revolutionised.

By 1800, of English cities, Manchester was second only to London in size.

Near to the centre of Manchester, in large opulent houses, lived the new rich - the capitalist factory owners. Surrounding the factories lived the workers and their families. Many of these workers were ruined hand-loom weavers or hand spinners forced to seek work in factory towns like Manchester, as competition from cheap, machine-produced goods forced them out of their traditional occupations.

Many capitalists made quick fortunes raising jerry-built, back-to-back slums to house the workers. Almost without exception these slums were overcrowded, damp, ill-lit, without sanitation, and without running water or gardens.

Many who sought employment were denied it by the frequent slumps that punctuated the evolution of capitalist industry. Those who did find work were faced with ruthless exploitation and appalling working conditions.

Long hours - fourteen hours per day was quite usual - abysmally low wages, child labour and dangerous, unguarded machinery were the norm. Sexual abuse of women by foremen and capitalists was rampant. Immigrant workers, especially those from Ireland, fared particularly badly.

The new working class was by no means a 'dormant, passive mass' in the face of these conditions of life and work. It hit back at its oppressors in an increasingly intelligent, organised and effective way.

Working class radicalism in England was on the rise when the French Revolution broke out in 1789. Jacobin democratic clubs sprang up across the country during the 1790s, inspired by the Revolution in France, and by widely-circulated books such as Tom Paine's 'The Rights of Man'.

The Government's repression of domestic radicalism, which it combined with a reactionary war against the French republic, was strongly and widely opposed by workers.

The historian Edward Thompson, in his book 'The Making of the English Working Class' reveals how the English workers fought back during the period of the French wars, by organising unions and secret societies in defiance of the Combination Acts, and by burning mills and smashing the machines that threatened their livelihoods.

By 1815 the revolutionary ferment brewing underground burst forth in the mass radicalism that was to come to a head in 1819.

At this time Manchester and its surrounding area was, among governing circles, considered to be the most 'turbulent and seditious' in the country. The mass movement as a national force directed itself towards achieving first political rights, and secondly social and economic justice.

Political rights included first and foremost a democratic, representative parliament, and it included the sweeping away of 'Old Corruption'. Under that system bribery and patronage of electors were rife.

Old Sarum, which had been the parliamentary seat of William Pitt the Elder, consisted of a few tufts of grass, while Manchester, with its population of 200,000, went unrepresented. Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, under which religious minorities - Jews, Roman Catholics and Non-Conformists in particular - faced discrimination in public life, was another major issue.

Repeal of the anti-trade union Combination Acts, and the monopolistic Corn Laws also were major focuses of organised agitation.

The ongoing economic struggle for improved wages, shorter hours and better working conditions was made more imperative by the acute distress of the post-war years in England.

Industry and trade slumped.

Unemployment rose and was swelled by the return of demobilized troops from Continental Europe.

Wages fell. Actual starvation faced many working-class communities.

Joseph Johnson, a shareholder in the Radical newspaper the 'Manchester Observer', wrote of conditions in Manchester in 1819, the year of Peterloo: 'Everything is almost at a standstill, nothing but ruin and starvation stare one in the face. The state of the district is truly dreadful.'

The Government in power at this time, that of the Tory Prime Minister Lord Liverpool, has been described as one of the most reactionary and repressive in British history. It represented the interests of no more than a narrow ruling class of big landowners, City financiers and merchants.

Liverpool and his closest advisors were firmly convinced that England was on the brink of revolution.

The Home Secretary, Sidmouth, who had control of the police, militia and army units stationed in England, had organised an elaborate network of spies to disrupt the radical movement.

Castlereigh, another of Liverpool's ministers, had been instrumental in the suppression of the Irish Rebellion of 1798 and the subsequent terror campaign and forced Union of Ireland with Britain.

Control of Manchester itself was in the hands of the descendents of the same local landed clique that had ruled this once small market town in pre-industrial times. Landowners and clergymen dominated the local magistracy - this body was to have direct responsibility for instigating the Peterloo massacre.

A local levy of merchants, manufacturers, publicans and shopkeepers, all rabid enemies of the working-class radical movement, formed the backbone of the 'Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry' - the body that charged into the assembly at St Peter's Field.

Although one of the powerhouses of the mass movement for radical reform was centered in the industrial districts of Lancashire, by 1819 a coordinated national effort was well under way, based on mass mobilisations in all the major cities.

1817 had witnessed a huge meeting of workers, mainly spinners and weavers, assembling on St Peter's Field to see off the famous 'March of the Blanketeers' from Manchester to London. The march sought redress of economic grievances.

1818 had been a year of mass strikes aimed at restoring falling wage levels. These strikes showed a great capacity by workers for discipline and organisation, with meetings, marches and pickets in Manchester and Stockport.

A new feature of these actions was the increasing participation of women workers. Union Societies were founded to develop basic education in the working class and to circulate the ideas of radicalism in an organised way. Women had their own separate Union Societies.

The workers' press advanced the ideas of radicalism with imagination and tenacity. The most widely-read newspapers among radicals and radical sympathisers were William Cobbett's 'Political Register', as well as 'The Black Dwarf'.

A typical issue of the Radical 'Manchester Observer', founded in 1818, included alongside a demand for the impeachment of Sidmouth, coverage of the republican revolution in Venezuela.

Mass meetings for parliamentary reform and for the repeal of the hated Corn Laws, which artificially inflated the price of bread, took place in Stockport and Manchester in the first half of 1819.

By July thousands of workers had begun drilling on the moors and in the fields outside working-class districts in Lancashire. The same thing occurred in other parts of the country. In July as many as 2000 workers paraded in semi-military formation along the High Rd from Manchester to Rochdale.

These preparations were primarily aimed at improving organisation for the planned August mass meeting at St Peter's Field, to which contingents from surrounding towns were to march. The planned assembly in Manchester was part of a broader national effort for July-August 1819, which organised large meetings in Birmingham, Leeds and London.

The reactionary oligarchy controlling the city of Manchester made preparations in league with Sidmouth and the national Government for what amounted to the waging of civil war on the workers expected to pour into Manchester to demand reform of parliament.

In July the magistracy formed an 'Armed Association for the Preservation of the Peace' and enrolled special constables.

Military units in the S.E. Lancashire areas were mobilised as part of a national military alert. As soon as instructions came through, the yeomanry sent its sabres to be sharpened.

On the final weekend before the rally at St Peter's Field the city magistracy sat in almost continuous session to discuss ways and means of dealing with the mobilisation.

In the weeks before the St Peter's Field meeting, which as everyone expected would be the largest meeting ever seen in England, Manchester's streets and buildings were covered with posters and placards, and thousands of leaflets and fliers were distributed.

The publicising and organisation of the assembly was a major achievement of communication and organisation. Assembly points were announced from which people in the towns and districts surrounding Manchester could gather and from there march in disciplined contingents to the rally.

August 16 in Lancashire was a lovely summer day with a cloudless sky and a hot sun shining. There was a confident, cheerful and festive atmosphere as the contingents gathered and prepared to march.

Bands played, and the beautiful banners, woven and embroidered with great care, were unfurled. Oldham's banner was of pure white silk, emblazoned with the inscriptions 'Universal Suffrage, Annual Parliaments - Election by Ballot', and 'No Combination Acts: Oldham Union'.

Saddleworth's was jet black, with the inscription 'Equal Representation or Death' in white over two joined hands and a heart. One of the banners carried by the Stockport contingent read 'Success to the Female Reformers of Stockport'. Many red caps of liberty were carried.

When all the contingents had arrived and assembled in the centre of Manchester, something like 12 per cent of the population of the county of Lancashire, and over

half that of its industrial South East were present. It was the largest assembly England had ever seen.

As soon as all the contingents had filled St Peter's Field, to the point where, according to a contemporary report, people were packed in so tightly that 'their hats seemed to touch', the area was ringed by 1,500 troops with cannon.

No-one in the crowd, least of all the organisers, suspected that an attempt to physically disperse the meeting was planned. Meetings such as this, even if smaller and without the same evident discipline and organisation, had been held many times before up and down the country.

The ensuing massacre was completely unexpected and unprovoked, and met with little organised resistance.

The city magistrates had even gone to the lengths in their preparations for the massacre of employing scavengers to remove every stone, brick or possible missile from the Field and surrounding streets, so that the meeting's participants were thus left entirely without defence.

Barely had Henry Hunt, the main featured speaker, begun to address the meeting when mounted troopers of the yeomanry charged the hustings to arrest him and others on the platform.

At first the crowd, which had not been aware of the presence of the troops, did not panic and Hunt shouted: 'Stand firm, my friends: there are only a few soldiers, and we are a host against them'.

But as the yeomanry, many of whom were drunk, charged with sabres drawn, slashing and cutting their way through the crowd and trampling and crushing many people, chaos and panic gripped the field.

According to witnesses cited in Joyce Marlow's account 'The Peterloo Massacre', the yeomanry, having tasted blood, went berserk. They dragged the speakers and organisers from the hustings and would have killed Hunt had he not been quickly whisked away to jail. The yeomanry continued to slash and cut indiscriminately at men, women and children alike, while smashing wagons and platforms, and tearing the banners and the caps of liberty. The regular cavalry then moved onto the field to complete the work. Hundreds more people suffered serious injuries from the slashing sabres and flying hooves, or were smothered under piles of falling bodies.

Ten minutes from the first charge it was all over. Samuel Bamford, the Lancashire poet, described the scene:

'...the field was an open and almost deserted space. The hustings remained, with a few broken and hewed flagstaves erect, and a torn and gashed banner or two drooping; whilst over the whole field were strewn the caps, bonnets, hats, shawls and shoes and other parts of male and female dress; trampled, torn and bloody. The yeomanry had dismounted - some were easing their horse's girths and some were wiping their sabres'

Many more people were killed and maimed as the troops continued to 'disperse' the crowd through surrounding streets.

That night one person was shot dead and several injured in clashes between soldiers and crowds of angry workers.

The Government's attitude was made clear by its total endorsement of the massacre.

The Prince Regent, then disporting himself on his yacht, made it known, through Sidmouth, what great satisfaction he had derived from the magistrate's 'prompt, decisive and efficient measure for the preservation of public tranquility'. Despite repeated and widely-voiced demands for one, there was never an official inquiry into the Peterloo Massacre.

An immense wave of anger swept across England in the wake of the massacre.

The mass movement for reform was not appreciably set back by the Peterloo massacre. A huge crowd estimated by the conservative 'Times' at 300,000 lined the streets of London to greet Hunt after his release from jail.

Meetings were spurred all over England by the events at St Peter's Field, especially in the North East counties, where over 50,000 miners marched into Newcastle from surrounding districts.

Loyalist forces in this area began arming, and the pitmen took up arms to defend themselves. In the months of October and November, according to Edward Thompson, workers across the country stocked pikes and other weapons to defend themselves and their meetings.

Drilling and armed demonstrations were reported in Newcastle, Wolverhampton, Wigan, Bolton and Blackburn.

Divisions within the Radical movement's leadership between constitutionalists and revolutionaries were not resolved, and this crisis of leadership, combined with renewed Government repression and an economic upturn brought this early phase of mass working class struggle to a close.

The events in Manchester on August 16, 1819 however, will remain forever inscribed in the collective memory of the international working class.

Shelley's poem 'The Masque of Anarchy' was written just after Peterloo, and its final stanza carries the fighting sentiments of thousands of workers:

**'Rise, like lions after slumber.
In unvanquishable number!
Shake your chains to earth like dew,
Which in sleep had fallen on you!
Ye are many- they are few!'**

August 21, 1831: Honorable Anniversary: Nat Turner's Rebellion



Carl Bunin, Peace History Aug 21-27

August 21, 1831

Nat Turner, a 30-year-old man legally owned by a child, and six other slaves began a violent insurrection in Southampton County, Virginia.

They began by killing the child's stepfather, Joseph Travis, and their family. Within the next 24 hours, Turner and ultimately about 40 followers killed the families of adjacent slaveholding properties, nearly 60 whites, while freeing and inciting other slaves to join them.

Militia and federal troops were called, and the uprising was suppressed with 55 African Americans including Turner executed by hanging, and hundreds more killed by white mobs and vigilantes in revenge.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Zionists Steal Palestinian Land “For Military Purposes” Then Give It To Their Own Civilians

August 10, 2018 by Celine Hagbard, IMEMC

After initially seizing Palestinian land from four villages “for military purposes” last year, Israeli military authorities transferred the seized land to Israeli civilians in direct violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention, and is now recognizing the illegal colony ‘Adei Ad’.

The land on which the colony was constructed was stolen from Palestinian landowners in the villages of Turmusayya, Mughayyir, Jalud and Qaryut. The area in question is about 205 dunams of land, located north of Ramallah, and south of Nablus, in the north-central part of the West Bank.

In its recognition of the outpost on Wednesday, in the midst of a bombing campaign on Gaza, Israeli authorities explicitly recognized the legitimacy of a colony that was constructed in violation of Israeli law.

According to Israeli sources, the aim of the legitimization of the outpost of Adei Ad is to expand the existing settlement of Amichai, which is located deep within Palestinian Territory in the West Bank, and was itself constructed on stolen Palestinian land.

The idea, according to the Israeli sources, is to vastly expand the Israeli settlement presence in the central West Bank, in order to expand the state of Israel further onto Palestinian land.

Since its creation in 1948, the state of Israel has never officially declared its borders, and has used military and paramilitary force to continually expand its land base onto what had been Palestinian land.

The large settlement of Amichai was initially constructed to transfer Israeli colonists who were moved from the illegal outpost of Amona. Since that time, the colonists, made up of paramilitary forces and their families, have expanded the land base of their colony onto stolen Palestinian land.

In addition, the settler-only roads leading from inside Israel to the settlement colony discriminate against Palestinians and do not allow them to drive on the roads, or even to cross the roads to reach their land.

Adei Ad was constructed a year ago, several kilometers east of Amichai, without licenses or permits from the Israeli government.

But Israeli policy allows for colonies to be recognized and receive services from the Israeli government, including water, electricity and sewage services, once they establish themselves illegally on stolen Palestinian land and remain in place for a

certain period – despite the fact that they were initially created in violation of Israeli law.

The recognition of the colony of Adei Ad comes despite the fact that there is an active appeal process in the Israeli court system, filed by the Palestinian landowners whose land was confiscated by the Israeli military and then turned over to paramilitary forces for the construction of the colony.

According to an expose' of the Adei Ad settlement colony by the Israeli human rights group Yesh Din, "Yesh Din has documented 96 offenses committed by Israeli civilians against Palestinians in the area of the outpost since its establishment. These offenses include: violence, land seizure and property offenses."

**To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation commanded by foreign terrorists, go to:
<http://www.palestinechronicle.com/>
The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."**



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