

GI SPECIAL 5F15:



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

**Semper Dedecor:
The Traitors In DC Just
Discover What They Knew
Three Years Ago:
Military Families & Troops
Poisoned By Command At
Lejeune;**

[See The GI Special Story From 2004 Just Below This Lame Bullshit]

[Thanks to Alberto Jaccoma, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

June 12, 2007 by Kimberly Hefling, Associated Press

Marine families who lived at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina over three decades drank water contaminated with toxins as much as 40 times over today's safety standard, federal health investigators said Tuesday.

The government disclosed results from a new scientific study on the same day that some families testified for Congress about cancers and other illnesses they blame on drinking tainted tap water at the sprawling training and deployment base.

The House Energy and Commerce panel, which held the hearing, described the sickened Marines as "poisoned patriots."

At least 850 former residents of the base have filed administrative claims, seeking nearly \$4 billion, for exposure to the industrial solvents TCE and PCE that contaminated Camp Lejeune's drinking wells before 1987.

"My wife and I now have new full-time careers just staying alive and figuring out how to pay for it all," former Navy Dr. Michael Gros of Spring, Texas, said. He was stunned to learn years after his work in the 1980s as an obstetrician and gynecologist at Camp Lejeune that he had a rare non-Hodgkins lymphoma.

Gros told lawmakers Tuesday that he has accumulated medical bills of more than \$4.5 million and he worries regularly about bankruptcy.

The U.S. Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry said its new modeling and analysis of Camp Lejeune's Tarawa Terrace drinking water system from 1957 to 1987 found levels of the dry-cleaning solvent PCE, or tetrachloroethylene, as high as 200 parts per billion, compared to 5 parts per billion that federal regulators in 1992 would set as the maximum allowable level.

Federal health officials have new analyses indicating Camp Lejeune's water was contaminated as far back as 1957 and up to 1987.

The Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry cites the new endpoint nearly two years after the Marines said they closed all the tainted wells in a continuing study on whether Camp Lejeune's water led to leukemia and birth defects in children.

Jerry Ensminger of White Lake, N.C., a Marine for 24 years, lost his 9-year-old daughter to leukemia. In heart-rending testimony, he described comforting her during agonizing cancer treatments. He said toward the end of her life, she endured taunts from classmates teasing her about her appearance after chemotherapy.

“It is time for the United States Marine Corps to live up to their motto ‘Semper Fidelis,’” always faithful, Ensminger said.

MORE:

[THIS ISN'T ‘NEWS’] [They Knew This Three Years Ago!]

[From GI SPECIAL 2#22: 2.6.2004:]

Poisoned Water In The Land Of Semper Fi: Marines Want To Know Why Base Didn't Close Wells When Toxins Found

By Manuel Roig-Franzia and Catharine Skipp, Washington Post Staff Writers, **January 28, 2004**

CAMP LEJEUNE, N.C. A military engineer assigned in 1980 to test the drinking water at this sprawling Marine Corps base punctuated his findings with a handwritten exclamation point.

“WATER HIGHLY CONTAMINATED WITH . . . CHLORINATED HYDROCARBONS (SOLVENTS)!” William C. Neal wrote in capital letters on one of his surveillance reports in early 1981.

A private firm followed up with tests the next year. One of its samples showed an astonishing result: 1,400 parts per billion -- 280 times the level now considered safe for drinking water -- of trichloroethylene, a likely cancer-causing chemical used for degreasing machinery that can impair the development of fetuses, weaken the immune system, and damage kidneys and livers.

The number of people who may have drunk the tainted water, bathed in it, had water fights with it is staggering: The Marine Corps estimates 50,000 Marines and their families lived in base housing areas that may have been fed by the wells before they were closed in 1985. **Victim advocacy groups place the figure even higher, at**

200,000, which would make Camp Lejeune one of the largest contaminated-water cases in U.S. history.

Already, more than 270 tort claims have been filed with the Navy's judge advocate general's office by former residents, who are required by law to file claims with the military before proceeding with any possible action in civilian courts.

One of those claims was filed by a Marine air traffic controller named Jeff Byron. **Within months of the 1982 tests, Byron moved his family into base housing at Lejeune,** grateful to leave behind a rickety mobile home in favor of a modest townhouse with a postage-stamp back yard. **Byron and his wife, Mary, were not told about the water-sampling results, and nearly two decades would pass before they would find out about them.** Now he wakes up thinking about all the frozen lemonade and apple juice he mixed with tap water for Andrea, who was born three months before he moved on base, and for Rachel, who was born two years after.

Both of his girls have been beset with a lifetime of ailments: Rachel, who is developmentally disabled, was born with a cleft palate and needed leg braces as a child. She has spina bifida; a gangly, arachnoid cyst on her spine that cannot be removed; and brittle, rotting teeth. Andrea had a rare bone marrow syndrome known as aplastic anemia and has been told by her doctors that the disease could recur if she becomes pregnant.

"I find myself asking, 'What if I hadn't joined the Marine Corps?'" said Byron, who left the military for the private sector in 1985.

Both Marines and civilians living on base -- hundreds of whom have organized into a lobbying group known as Water Survivors. The group's members blame the contamination for a variety of ills, from chronic headaches to virulent cancers, from infertility to the incurable leukemia that claimed their children's lives.

The battle over the water contamination at Lejeune has strained age-old loyalties, matching Marine veterans against the power structure of an organization that prides itself in the motto *Semper Fidelis*, or "always faithful." The Marine Corps has not denied that contamination took place at Lejeune.

In a written response to questions from The Washington Post, the Corps said the wells were not shut down for five years because there were no federal drinking-water regulations then for the chemicals found in Lejeune's water:

trichloroethylene, or TCE, the metal degreaser that federal researchers say was kept in leaky underground storage tanks, and tetrachloroethylene, or PCE, which researchers believe leaked into the wells from a dry cleaner that still operates across the street from Lejeune's main gate. The Environmental Protection Agency had recommended levels -- not enforceable standards -- at the time,

For many former residents, the contamination saga did not begin until 1999, when they received questionnaires from the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, or ATSDR, which studies polluted Superfund sites, such as Lejeune.

The ATSDR, which focused its research on women who were pregnant while living on base from 1968 to 1985, issued a progress report in July that identified 103

cases of birth defects or childhood cancers among nearly 12,600 births included in the survey. Jeffords and his research staff say the rate is three to five times the normal rate.

The release of the ATSDR report came after three years of often bitter clashes between members of Water Survivors, who used the Freedom of Information Act to gather mounds of evidence that they say proves federal officials have not been forthcoming about the contamination. **In a series of 1998 e-mails recently disclosed on the Marines' Web site, officials at Lejeune discussed how public concern about water contamination could be stoked by the release of the film "A Civil Action," which traced the legal battle over contaminated drinking-water wells in Woburn, Mass.**

"Just a thought," Neal Paul, director of Lejeune's toxic cleanup program, wrote to an official at Marine headquarters. "With the movie coming out in Dec., can we delay the questionnaires until April/May time frame?"

The ATSDR estimates that the Lejeune wells may have been contaminated as many as 30 years before being closed -- going back to the mid-1950s -- a projection that would greatly expand the number of potential contamination victims to encompass the massive buildup of troops at Lejeune between the Korean and Vietnam wars.

Extending the contamination dates to the 1950s would draw in veterans, such as Tom Townsend, a retired Marine major, whose wife, Anne, is ineligible for the study because she was pregnant with their third child, Christopher, in 1966 -- two years before the start date of the ATSDR study, which was chosen because it marks the beginning of computerized birth records in North Carolina.

Christopher always had a "strange cry," Anne Townsend recalled, "not a healthy, full-wallop cry." Christopher's father, who was on duty in Vieques, Puerto Rico, got home just in time to see him die of a heart defect when he was 3 months old.

Tom Townsend trades documents and talks strategy with Jerry Ensminger, another retired Marine once based at Lejeune, whose eyes still well with tears when he talks about Janey, the 6-year-old daughter he lost to leukemia in 1985. Ensminger said he wonders whether doctors would have been able to change her treatment if they had known about the contamination.

For Townsend and Ensminger, one of the most galling pieces of paper they have unearthed is a notice sent in 1985 to residents of Tarawa Terrace, a large housing development at Lejeune where Byron and Ensminger once lived, by the base's then-commander, Maj. Gen. Louis H. Buehl. The notice announces the closure of two wells because "minute (trace) amounts of several organic chemicals have been detected," though it does not specify which chemicals were found.

Some water-contamination experts believe the lack of enforceable regulatory standards for the chemicals would be a weak defense if the case ever made it into the courts.

"Even in those days, that would have constituted pretty close to a drinking-water crisis," said Richard Maas, director of the environmental studies department at the University of North Carolina at Asheville. "That information was all out there; it was

being used in the late 1970s and early 1980s. . . . If a typical town had done that [sampling], they probably would have abandoned that as a water source.”

The ATSDR has been assailed by the Water Survivors group and by Jeffords for limiting the scope of the study to pregnant women.

“We didn’t want the whole world to know, or they’d all start calling -- we couldn’t handle that,” said Marie L. Socha, an ATSDR researcher who has worked on the Camp Lejeune project.

Michael Gros, an obstetrician at Lejeune from 1980 to 1983. Gros, who has T-cell lymphoma and can no longer practice, has been pushing for the ATSDR to notify all former residents, regardless of age.

“They’ve just done the biggest ghoulish experiment on adults, and they don’t want to know the results,” Gros said. “What’s happening while they’re stalling us is everybody’s gone hither and yon, and they’re dying.”

Leaders of the Water Survivors group, increasingly skeptical about the pace of federal research, are hoping the possibility of congressional hearings could speed their efforts to get compensation for the medical bills of possible victims.

“We want to force these people, under oath, to come in and talk about this stuff,” Gros said. “How do you know your water is contaminated for five years and do nothing about it? How do you explain that away?”

But, for all the passion, some of Ensminger’s old Marine pals want him to let up. “They say, ‘*Semper fidelis* -- give ‘em a break. Why do you want to hurt the Corps?’ “ said Ensminger, a former master sergeant who retired in 1994 after 24 1/2 years in the Corps.

But an image that rattles around inside Ensminger’s stubborn, crew-cut head will not let him give up. He sees Janey, all big, brown eyes and silly smiles, watching him as her doctors advised him to stop treatment because there was no hope. Janey looked up at them, Ensminger recalls, and said: “You’re talking about *me*. I’m not dead. You’re not giving up on me.”

One week later, she was gone.

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send to contact@militaryproject.org:. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential. Same to unsubscribe.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Ennis Mourns Fallen Soldier



June 5, 2007 By CANDIE BECK-ADAMS The Daily Light

ENNIS — The family of Army Sgt. Chadrick O. Domino is taking comfort that in his death he is remembered by the community he called home for more than eight years.

The 23-year-old's sister, Ursula, of Longview said her family is overwhelmed by the outpouring of love from the people of Ennis.

"Our family is at a loss for words for the love shown by the city of Ennis towards Chad. We are overwhelmed and very appreciative of the way he is being remembered," she said.

Ennis City Manager Steve Howerton said the city will fly flags at half staff until after Domino is laid to rest.

"We are very appreciative of the sacrifice this young man made and we are very proud that he called Ennis home. Our flags will fly at half staff to honor the sacrifice he made and the person he was," Howerton said.

Domino is remembered as a shy and sincere student by former high school Principal Linda Pirtle.

"I just remember Chad as a good kid who kept his nose to the grindstone but was very friendly and well liked by his peers. He had lots of fun but he always did what he was supposed to do," Pirtle said.

Ennis Mayor Russell Thomas believes that for Domino, doing what he had to do was something he took very seriously.

"From all I've heard and can recall about Chad, I have no hesitation when I say that as far as I'm concerned, he was still doing what he felt he had to do. Our hearts and prayers are with his family. He was a true patriot and we are proud to be able to say he was from Ennis," he said.

Domino's sister, Ursula, recalls that her brother always wanted to enter the service and that for him his service to his country was something he was passionate about.

"Chad took all the entrance tests for the Army and the recruiters were blown away by the high scores he received. He entered the Army to serve his country and keep all of us safe and even after being wounded in his first tour in Iraq, he went again," she said.

Domino was hurt during his first stint in Operation Iraqi Freedom and was awarded a Purple Heart for bravery. His mother, Gloria, was unaware he was in Iraq at the time because he didn't want her to worry about him.

"When the officers called to say Chad had been hurt my mother was hysterical. When she finally spoke to him on the phone, he told her it was his job and he didn't want to upset her, so now his term in Iraq was half over and she only had six months to worry about him instead of a full year. He was always thinking of us," she recalled.

The last time Ursula spoke with her brother was to thank him for an unexpected gift of three dozen roses delivered to her for Mother's Day and as an early birthday gift.

"The card was not signed and I couldn't figure out who sent them, but about a week later he called to ask if I'd gotten them. He was always thoughtful and sweet like that. We told each other we loved one another and that was the last time I spoke with him," Ursula said.

Having good memories to hold onto is what she feels will help her family through this difficult time and she is thankful for all the times they had together.

"Chad loved to eat and he loved our mama's cooking, that boy would eat us out of house and home when he came back on leave. He always liked to take us out to his favorite restaurant and try to get us to try his favorite dishes. I don't think I can go there anymore now that he won't be with me," she said.

Services for Domino, 23, have not been finalized but they will be held in Longview with interment to follow.

"The army officers are handling all the arrangements for us and because it will take from seven to 10 days for his body to arrive from Iraq, we have not set anything up yet. Whenever the arrangements are final, we would like to invite all Chad's classmates from Ennis and whoever else that would like to pay their respects to come to the services. He would be honored by their presence," Ursula said.

Despite their grief, Ursula said the Domino family takes comfort that their loved one died serving our country and that he was happy to do so.

Domino, who was posthumously promoted to sergeant, was a 2002 Ennis High School graduate. He died from wounds suffered when he encountered enemy small arms fire

while on dismounted patrol. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division (Stryker Brigade Combat Team) at Fort Lewis, Wash.

Domino joined the U.S. Army on Nov. 20, 2002. He attended initial entry training at Fort Jackson, S.C., where he was trained as an administrative specialist, and reported to Fort Lewis on May 2, 2003. He was initially assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company of 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, and deployed to Iraq from November 2003 to November 2004. In August 2004, he was assigned to 1st Battalion, 23rd Infantry within the same brigade, and deployed with the Stryker Brigade to Iraq in June 2006.

He held the primary Military Occupational Specialty of 11B: Infantryman and a secondary specialty of 42A: Human Resources Specialist.

Prior to his death, his military awards and decorations included the Purple Heart, Army Commendation Medal (two awards), Meritorious Unit Commendation, National Defense Service Medal, Global War on Terror Expeditionary Medal, Global War on Terror Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, the Combat Infantryman Badge and the Combat Action Badge.

Domino's death marks the fourth military member from Ennis and the seventh from Ellis County to be killed in the line of duty in recent years.

THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH; COME HOME, NOW



SSG Travis Platt of New Jersey of 2nd brigade, 12th Infantry Division, investigates a manhole after a roadside bombing in the Dora neighborhood in southern Baghdad June 15, 2007. (AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris)

Zachary Family Mourns Soldier Lost In Iraq



Specialist William Jared Crouch

June 9, 2007 Greg Meriwether, WAFB

His mother got the news over the weekend that one of her two sons serving in Iraq had been killed, but the mother in Zachary had to wait an agonizing half hour after the army showed up at her door to find out which one of her two military sons had died. WAFB's Greg Meriwether reports.

The army arrived at 9:30 Friday night.

The bark of the family dog brought Kathy Rushing outside: "They called out their names and who they were and asked if I was Kathy Rushing and I knew then that it was not good news."

Two sons, Jared and John, both serving in Iraq. Which one would not be coming home? She would have to wait for the answer.

"They would not give me any information at all until my husband got home," Rushing explains. "I told them, 'I have two sons. Which one is it?' They couldn't tell me until James got home."

Thirty minutes later her husband, James, sped up the driveway.

"That's when they sat us down and told us it was Jared that was killed in action," Rushing says.

Specialist William Jared Crouch was just 21 years old. He'd only been in Iraq for a little more than a month when he was killed by a roadside bomb.

At his high school alma mater, the flag flies at half staff and his former English teacher, Debbie Pierce, remembers the young man voted "most courageous" in his senior class. "He died doing what he wanted to do: defend his country," Pierce told WAFB 9 News.

"One of his friends described him as an angel because no matter where you were, what you needed, Jared came to your aid," Rushing says. "That was just the kind of person he was."

The Army says both Jared's mother and his stepfather were on his 'next of kin' notification list.

They say because of that, they decided to wait until the stepfather got home so the soldier's mother would have the moral support she needed.

TROOP NEWS

THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE



The funeral of U.S. Army Pfc. Junior Cedeno Sanchez in La Romana, Dominican Republic, June 10, 2007. Sanchez was killed by a Baghdad bomb on May 28. His body returned to the Caribbean city where he was born for military honors and a heartbroken farewell. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

Against the Iraq War? Take a Stand! & have some fun too.

**Rally
for
Peace
Staten
Island**

- U.S. Out of Iraq ○ Bring the Troops Home Now
- No Blood for Oil ○ Spend Money for Education not Occupation

**Saturday, June 30, 12noon-1:30pm
Tappen Park, Stapleton, Staten Island**

At Bay St. and Water St. Directions from Staten Island Ferry: By car or walking: Head south on Bay Street one mile. By bus: Take the S51 bus from the Staten Island Ferry Terminal. Get off at Water St. (18 minutes).

**Rev. Billy ○ Rude Mechanical Orchestra
○ Iraq Veteran ○ Filthy Rich for Fossella
○ Clown & Face Painting ○ More...**

Rev. Billy preaches a broad message of economic justice and anti-militarism, protesting sweatshops and the Iraq War. The Rude Mechanical Orchestra is a New York City-based activist marching band. Fernando is an active member of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW). Hey, we couldn't get Billionaires for Bush so we got the Filthy Rich for Fossella. More info: www.revilly.com / www.rudemechanicalorchestra.org / www.ivaw.org

The U.S. Occupation of Iraq has meant:

- 3,457+ U.S. service members have died in Iraq.
- Almost 700,000 Iraqis have died including 122,000 children under 5 years old.
- 1.2 million Iraqis are refugees because their communities have been destroyed since the war started.

Join Peace Action of Staten Island (PASI) on Saturday June 30th. We need you to show your community and your elected officials that you are disgusted with an illegal, immoral war to control Iraq's oil production.

Show that Staten Islanders want the U.S. to get out of Iraq, want the troops home and want social services, education and veterans' benefits to get full funding.

Contact us to help us organize and reach others: 718.989.2881,
P.O. Box 201, St. George Station., Staten Island, NY 10301
or visit <http://www.panys.org/SI/> or email us at pasi.eblast@gmail.com

Peace Action 

[Thanks to Elaine Brower, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

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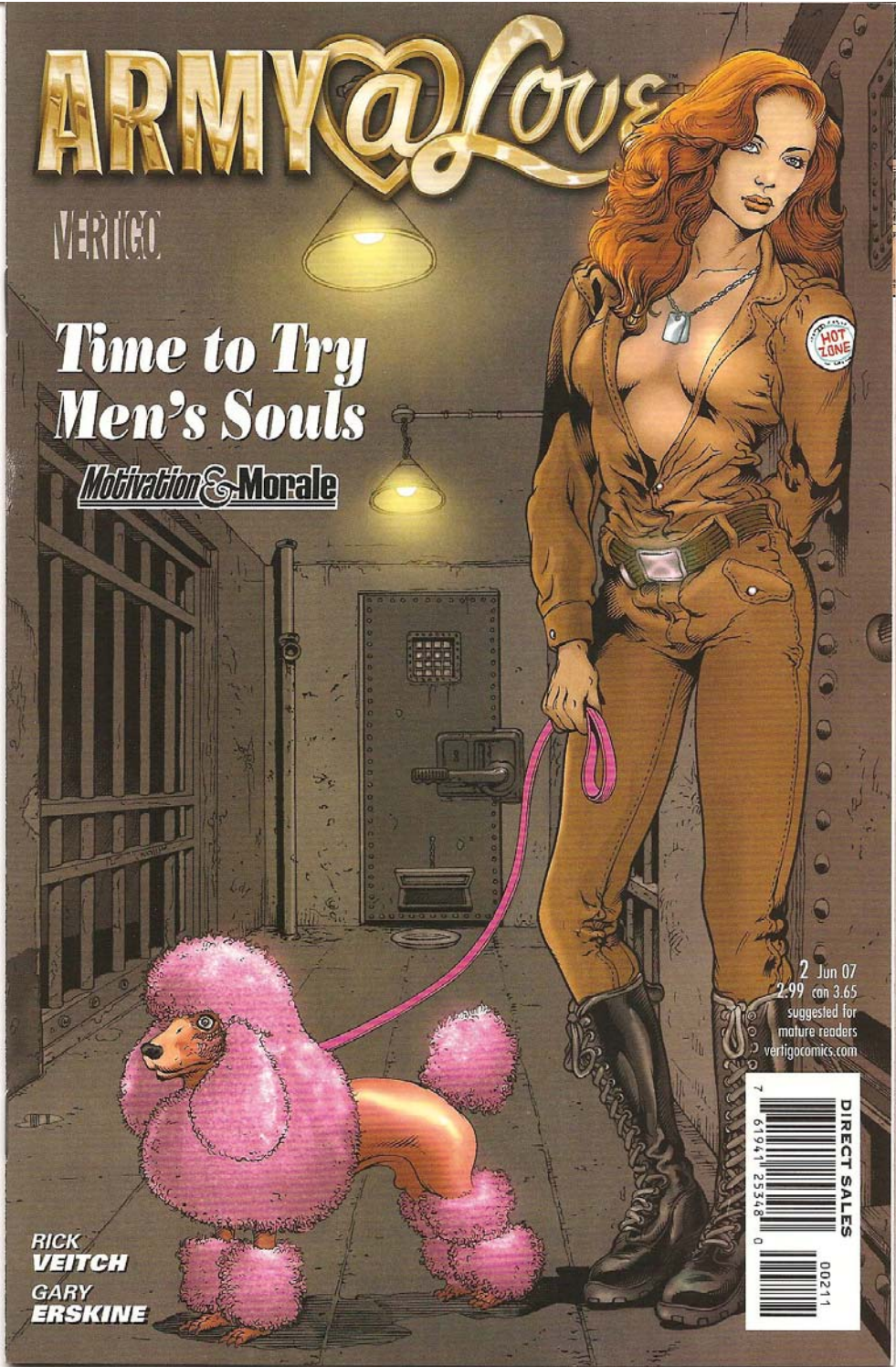
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Marine Major Accuses Corps Of Hiding Guilt Of Other Senior Officers In Haditha Massacre Coverup; “The Accused Was Selectively Singled Out For Prosecution”

[Thanks to Katherine GY, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

Jun 11, 2007 by Rowan Scarborough, The Examiner

A Marine officer presiding over an investigation of civilian deaths at Haditha has criticized the Corps for prosecuting only some of the senior officers who failed to report the incident in the Iraqi town.

Marine Maj. Thomas McCann leveled the charge in a June 8 investigative report obtained Monday by The Examiner.

It came in the case of Capt. Randy W. Stone, a military lawyer facing dereliction of duty charges for not passing word up the chain of command that Marines killed at least 15 Iraqi civilians in Haditha in November 2005.

McCann wrote that Stone's pre-trial hearing at Camp Pendleton, Calif. uncovered evidence that other officers also heard reports of a possible atrocity, but did not notify senior officers at the battalion or division level, as required by Marine regulations.

“Other information presented during the hearing indicated the accused was selectively singled out for prosecution,” McCann wrote.

“Despite significantly more experience and access to the same information, officers senior to the accused have not been charged. Each of these officers is under the same duty as the accused to report law of war violations...”

The Marine Corps has charged Stone and three other officers with failing to report what they heard. In addition, the Corps plans to court-martial three enlisted Marines on murder charges.

A criminal investigation was not launched until 2006 after Time magazine published an account of the killings.

In Stone's case, McCann recommended to Lt. Gen. James N. Mattis, commander of Marine forces in U.S. Central Command, that the case be handled administratively rather than by a court-martial. A spokesman for Mattis declined to comment on McCann's report.

Charles Gittins, Stone's civilian defense attorney, told The Examiner, "The investigating officer's report demonstrated there was no basis for criminal charges against Captain Stone in the first place.

"It also discloses that highly experienced commanders, including the division commander, were singularly disinterested in learning the facts surrounding the deaths of innocent Iraqis after they were properly reported by Captain Stone's unit."

McCann said there was a "complete failure" by Stone and other Marine lawyers in Iraq to bring the Haditha case to the attention of their superiors. Stone was "negligent in failing to contact his higher headquarters regarding the killings."

"In Recent Months, Our Cafe Has Become A Center For Organizing Among Anti War Iraq Veterans Serving At Drum" Different Drummer Internet Cafe at Ft Drum, NY A Six Month Report (Nov. 06 through May 07)

Clearly, the "anti-war" Democratic majorities in Congress lack the resolve to end these wars. As happened in Vietnam, once the military command can no longer rely on its rank and file to execute its orders, the pressure to withdraw the troops will become irresistible.

June 05, 2007 Citizen Soldier

Friends of the "Drummer" We're pleased to announced that Arison Cain, 22, of La Fargeville, N Y has been named as the new cafe coordinator for the Different Drummer effective today.

Cindi Mercante has resigned to devote full time to her growing real estate sales business. She will continue as a volunteer at our project.

Please stop by and say hello to Arison during our open hours (now Weds and Thursday from 5:30 to 9:30 pm, Friday and Saturday's hours will remain the same as before.

We are planning several important events the weeks just ahead, so please stay in touch via our website.

Best,
Tod Ensign,
Dir., Citizen Soldier

Different Drummer Internet Cafe at Ft Drum, NY A Six Month Report (Nov. 06 through May 07)

One of the greatest achievements of the Vietnam anti war movement was the creation of a network of GI coffeehouses and counselling centers. At its height, there were over twenty GI projects functioning outside all of the principal US military bases both at home and abroad.

Civilian activists worked in tandem with active duty GIs, some of whom had already served in Vietnam.

In October, 2006, Citizen Soldier opened its "Different Drummer" internet cafe near Ft Drum, in upstate New York. This is the first such project of the Iraq and Afghan wars.

Ft. Drum is home to the 10th Mountain (Light) Division and has the highest combat deployment rate of any Army division. Many of the 13,000 combat troops at Drum are currently serving their second combat tour of a year or longer and many will be sent for a third tour within the next twelve months! The base also trains and deploys thousands of military reservists for duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Clearly, soldiers of the Tenth Mountain are bearing a disproportionate burden from Bush's illegal wars. A principal goal of our project is to assist soldiers and their families in mobilizing against further deployments and to fight for first-class health care for injured veterans.

Political Outreach And Education

Our 1,600 square-foot internet cafe is well stocked with racks of books, DVDs, brochures and pamphlets which offer critical analyses of Bush's wars as well as of militarism itself.

Saturday afternoons have been set aside for showing war-related films, which are followed by political discussion.

So far, we have shown the following films: "Sir, No Sir!" (documentary of the Vietnam GI movement) "Iraq for Sale" (an expose of massive ripoffs by defense contractors) "The Ground Truth" and "The War Tapes," documentaries featuring the first-person accounts of returning war vets & "Poison Dust" (expose of the hazards of depleted uranium (DU) weapons).

We have also sponsored several political forums, in conjunction with Jefferson County Community College. These have featured; Col. Ann Wright, prominent war critic, Anthony Arnove, author of "Iraq: the Logic of Withdrawal," and Liam Madden, an Iraq war vet and organizer of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

The cafe has also sponsored the prize winning photographic exhibition, "Purple Heart: Home from Iraq" which features large color photos of injured soldiers, accompanied by their personal commentaries. This exhibit, which has been shown in over 100 cities, attracted media coverage and was well attended during its three week run.

In recent months, our cafe has become a center for organizing among anti war Iraq veterans serving at Drum.

In April, the first Iraq Veterans Against War (IVAW) chapter on any military base was created by these GIs.

At the end of June, the IVAW's national bus tour of GI bases will be launched at Ft Drum and we will co-sponsor a picnic BBQ at a local park to which thousands of Drum soldiers and their families will be invited.

Legal Counselling And Advocacy

Citizen Soldier attorneys have become involved in defending two soldiers from Ft Drum who'd returned from either Afghanistan or Iraq suffering from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)

In one case, Matt had served a year in Afghanistan before having a nervous breakdown upon his return to the US.

After we publicized the inequity of someone with mental illness being court martialled, he was eventually separated with a medical discharge.

In the other case, Sp/4 Eugene Cherry had served as a combat medic for a year in Iraq.

Once home, he suffered from flash backs, sleeplessness and suicidal ideation.

Eugene sought mental health treatment but was, instead, given only psychotropic drugs which didn't alleviate his symptoms.

In frustration, he went home to Chicago in search of treatment.

While there he was treated by Dr. Hannah Frisch, who diagnosed him as suffering from PTSD. After a year's absence, Eugene returned to Drum seeking a medical discharge which would entitle him to VA mental health care. Instead, he has been charged with AWOL and faces a year in prison and a Bad Conduct discharge, which would bar him from any VA health care in the future.

The Different Drummer continues to work with soldiers and family members to advocate for the expansion of mental health resources on Ft Drum. In June, nearly 3,500 more

combat soldiers will return from Afghanistan; past experience shows that hundreds of them will suffer from various degrees of PTSD. This is an enormous national problem which, so far, has been ignored by the Bush administration.

Social & Cultural Activities

We have worked hard to make our internet cafe a "safe space" for soldiers and their families and friends. In recent months, we have booked a number of young rock and punk bands which draw large crowds of twenty-somethings on Friday and Saturday nights. Our staff and volunteers engage socially with the young soldiers and Army dependents who're attracted to these events.

We are also working to develop "talent" and "open mike" nights when young soldiers are encouraged to perform on our cafe's stage. Other local musicians, folk singers, guitar duos, etc., have already adopted our cafe as a popular venue for their performances.

Looking To The Future

Since its inception, "Different Drummer" has sought to encourage anti war activists working near other military bases to establish similar GI projects. We have had discussions with several interested groups and hope that one or two other projects will emerge in the months ahead.

Today's combat soldiers are under enormous pressure and we believe that at some point soon increasing numbers of soldiers are going to decide that "enough's enough!" For such upsurges to succeed, the presence of experienced (and trusted) organizers from projects like the "Different Drummer" will be essential.

Clearly, the "anti-war" Democratic majorities in Congress lack the resolve to end these wars.

As happened in Vietnam, once the military command can no longer rely on its rank and file to execute its orders, the pressure to withdraw the troops will become irresistible.

Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

Three Brothers Go AWOL:

“I Didn’t Feel So Strongly About Fighting For George Bush’s War”

[Thanks to Ward Reilly and David Honish, Veterans, who sent this in.]

June 06, 2007 Minneapolis-St. Paul Star Tribune

CARLTON, MINN. -- Luke Kamunen began to wonder if he’d made a mistake the moment he arrived for basic training. He was still in the airport at Fort Jackson, S.C., with other members of his Minnesota National Guard unit, when an officer reprimanded him publicly for leaving a paper cup on his seat in the airport.

“I was thinking, is this what it’s going to be like the whole time?” Luke said. “I’m not even on the bus yet.”

His twin brother, Leif, started having doubts within weeks when a drill sergeant indicated they were probably headed to Iraq. Leif said that possibility had been downplayed by the recruiter who signed him up in Duluth.

On Jan. 2, the twins, age 21, and their brother Leo, 20, went AWOL from the Army.

All three failed to return to basic training after Christmas break in northern Minnesota. Five months later, Luke has been released from the military, while Leif and Leo remain absent without leave. They say they plan to turn themselves in soon.

The Kamunen brothers are an example of a growing problem -- Army desertions have risen 35 percent in the past two years, according to Defense Department figures. The number rose from 2,450 in 2004 to 3,301 in 2006.

There are many more who go AWOL -- tens of thousands who leave without permission for anywhere from 24 hours to 30 days.

Still, the Kamunens’ situation is unusual, simply because there are three of them. “I’ve talked to thousands and thousands of AWOLs,” said the GI Hotline’s Bill Galvin. “And I don’t think I’ve ever heard of two brothers going AWOL at the same time.”

The brothers’ decision to walk away has made barely a ripple in this northern Minnesota county.

“I hadn’t heard of it,” said Robert Langenbrunner, commander of the Cloquet American Legion post. Recruits pledge to serve their country, he said. “I’m dead set against” anyone going AWOL “unless there’s something traumatic, like a death in the family.”

Bruce Ahlgren, mayor of Cloquet, noted that a couple of years ago, three soldiers from the area died in Iraq. “It hit our area very hard,” he said. “I think young kids have a tough situation when it comes to war.”

Ahlgren doesn't know the Kamunens. "They signed up for a reason, and for whatever reason they changed their minds and will have to suffer the consequences," he said. "But I am certainly not going to condemn them for it."

Carlton County's jobless rate is more than 6 percent. "It's really hard to find a job that's going to pay what you're worth," Luke said. "You either work for McDonald's or as a janitor."

Their father, Leo, suggested Luke join the Guard because he believed the military would help him pay for college. "It sounded really good," Leo said. "I encouraged him as much as I could."

In March 2006, Luke walked into the National Guard recruiting office in Duluth. The recruiter, Sgt. Chris Beron, told him about a \$20,000 signing bonus and, according to Luke, said that deployment was unlikely.

"He told me that it's really a rare occurrence that I was going to war," Luke said. And if he did go to Iraq, "he told me I would be sitting in the barracks somewhere fixing a vehicle."

Leif was next to sign up. He had done telemarketing, worked construction, stocked grocery shelves and washed dishes. "I didn't know what direction I wanted to go," he said.

Beron "was telling us all the benefits and what we would be doing," Leif said. "He made it seem too good to be true. All the money, we would be together through our career. He said there was always a chance (of Iraq), but he kind of minimized it."

Over the summer, younger brother Leo signed up too. "I was sick of this town," he said.

The recollections of the brothers and Beron diverge on another issue.

Luke said Beron told them not to disclose any medical problems or juvenile records that might bar them from enlistment. Beron denies it.

Luke said Beron told him to conceal his scar from surgery to insert a rod in an ankle and even sent someone to Wal-Mart to buy a fake tattoo to cover it.

Once at basic training, Luke said he hated the way drill sergeants yelled at recruits. And then he started hearing rumors about deployment to Iraq.

He thought, "You can't do nothing now. You're in the Army, you're screwed."

He also learned that his unit, which was supposed to be fixing Army vehicles, would carry weapons. He was trained to use M-16s and grenade launchers.

The drill sergeant told them, "Don't think you are not going to war," Luke said.

Maybe this shouldn't have been a surprise, he conceded. But, "I have been living in a small town, trying to get a job," he said. "I don't know what's going on."

Meanwhile, the week before Leif left for Fort Jackson, his girlfriend gave birth to their daughter. "Halfway through basic training, I didn't want to be there anymore," he said.

At home over Christmas, Leo started dating a local woman.

"I decided there was no way I could be apart from her for long periods of time when I didn't feel so strongly about fighting for George Bush's war," he said.

On Jan. 2, Luke slept in and missed the plane back to his military base. Leif missed the flight, too. So did Leo.

"We saw each other a couple days later," Luke said, "and we're saying, 'What, you didn't go back, either?' "

Months passed, and the brothers began getting calls from military officers, demanding they return. About a month ago, Luke was spotted by a police officer, who told him he had a military warrant for his arrest. He was jailed in Carlton County for a week and then flown to Fort Knox, Ky., where he was given an "other than honorable discharge."

Leif and Leo remain AWOL.

"I realized I made a mistake, and I am sorry about wasting their time and money," Leo said. He wants to move to the Twin Cities and get a job. Leif is looking for work. Luke enrolled last week in Fond du Lac Tribal and Community College in Cloquet. None got their \$20,000 bonus; recruits get half after finishing training and half after four years, Beron said.

It is not unusual for the military to be slow about catching AWOL soldiers. Galvin, of the GI Rights Hotline, said the Army has few people tracking them down.

After 30 days, officials can get a desertion warrant. He said the military figures that most of them will eventually be picked up during traffic stops, as with Luke. Or the AWOL soldier will get tired of looking over the shoulder and surrender.

If AWOL soldiers are still in training, such as the Kamunens, a common penalty is an "other than honorable discharge." Diener, the counselor for the GI Hotline, said people with that kind of discharge can have a difficult time getting a job with police, government or major corporations.

"For smaller companies, it does not make as much difference," he said.

Schulstad, the retired brigadier general, said it's understandable why the Army's numbers were up. "They are the guys on the ground fighting the war," he said.

Don Olson of Minneapolis is an anti-war activist who has counseled hundreds of soldiers, going back to the Vietnam War. He also counseled Luke Kamunen.

"Luke was recruited on the basis he'd be a mechanic for the Guard in Duluth," said Olson. "He told me he really didn't want to kill people."

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

“This Is Unreal!”

[This comment is about the efforts by U.S. Marine Corps senior officers to punish Iraq veterans no longer on active duty who have joined Iraq Veterans Against The War and are organizing to bring all the troops home now. T]

From: Michele Summerford
To: GI Special
Sent: June 11, 2007
Subject: This is unreal!

I have a son right now fighting for our freedom in Iraq.

I do not understand why anyone should say these brave men and women who are putting their lives on the line for US every day, do not have the right to speak out!

They are the ones that are there and see first hand what is going on over there.

If anyone should be able to speak out on whether or not we should be there it should be them!

Quit condemning our soldiers for fighting for our freedom and risking their lives in the process!

IRAQ VETS LEAD MARCH ON PENTAGON



Has Baghdad Captured Petraeus?

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in.]

June 13, 2007 by Stuart A.P. Murray, CommonDreams

When top British general Sir William Howe marched his powerful professional army of Redcoats, American Loyalists, and German mercenaries into Philadelphia in 1777 it appeared the American Revolutionary War was over.

At least Howe and King George III were convinced the American revolutionaries were defeated, their Congress forced to flee the city and General George Washington's army apparently shocked and awed from the battlefield.

The king's troops entered Philadelphia in triumph and settled down for a comfortable winter in this, the British Empire's second largest city, with its many Loyalists and their pretty ladies.

To Parliament back in London, Howe's capture of Philadelphia seemed a brilliant move - politically, at least: Howe had shown the hitherto unconvinced British population that a military solution to the American colonial uprising might be possible.

American revolutionary leaders were not, however, about to give up the fight. And as for Howe's occupation of Philadelphia, Benjamin Franklin described it another way:

"Howe has not captured Philadelphia. Philadelphia has captured Howe."

The most powerful military force in North America - one of Britain's best field armies - was actually bottled up far from its main supply base at New York.

Howe was in Philadelphia, but what was he to do next if the revolutionaries continued to fight? And fighting was precisely Washington's intention. He stepped up training at Valley Forge, and his army's morale rose. Further, France, with its powerful navy, entered the war on the side of the revolutionaries. It became apparent that the revolution was not defeated, and the British army in Philadelphia could be cut off by land and sea.

Howe, a brilliant general, became the scapegoat for misguided British colonial policies and was compelled to resign his command - all this for taking Philadelphia! By springtime, Howe's replacement, General Henry Clinton, had to abandon the city. Clinton began a fighting withdrawal, marching his troops back to New York.

On a hot and steamy June day at Monmouth, New Jersey, the Americans fought Howe's best troops to a standstill, inflicting heavy losses. A formerly ragtag revolutionary force was now a formidable and confident field army.

Now, the American Revolution could not be defeated.

The revolutionaries might not win by pitched battle, but time was on their side. They were fighting for their own homeland, on their own soil. It was a classic insurgent scenario, to be replayed many times in the following centuries, from Napoleon's failed invasion of Russia to Hitler's failed occupation of Europe and America's failed campaigns in Indochina.

The Revolutionary War dragged on another five years, but the result was total victory for the uprising. In the future, many of the best British regiments would mention little about the "American War" in their otherwise glorified regimental histories.

Is there a comparison to be made between Howe's proud army and the tens of thousands of American troops now "occupying" Baghdad under the command of the much-admired General David Petraeus?

Well, there is always a comparison in cases of military folly.

With Petraeus's troops scattered in company-sized units planted in vulnerable outposts throughout the city's ever-dangerous neighborhoods, the American army is being made captive.

Captive to the teeming, violent city of Baghdad.

Captive to the anti-occupation insurgents, who now have the initiative to strike when and where they choose.

Captive, also, to the whims of American domestic politics, wherever they might lead. Captive to the arrogance of political and military leaders who said the seizure of Iraq would be a "cakewalk" and are now desperate for any victory, anything that might be described as victory, at whatever cost, in the coming few months.

Have President George Bush and the "Neoconservatives" and our leading military commanders walked into a trap of their own making in Baghdad? Just like Sir Billy Howe in Philadelphia?

More important, more crucial: What if the Iraqi puppet government collapses, and with it go the army and police - essential allies in any block-by-block contest?

And if the Iraqi insurgents make it too costly in terms of truck drivers' lives and helicopters to supply those thousands of duty-bound soldiers in their scattered outposts, how do we extricate them?

As with Howe in 1777, the main American supply bases are far away - mostly to the south, in Kuwait and other client states. Vital American supply lines are vulnerable to being cut by roadside bombs and calculated, determined insurgent attacks.

An "exit strategy" from Iraq that depends on fighting rather than political agreements will wash Baghdad's streets in blood this summer. Much of it American blood.

What then, as the question goes, are we fighting for?

To avoid a humiliating and bloody retreat from Baghdad?

Is this what our soldiers are killing and dying for?

Or to prevent a defeat that has been brought on by corrupt leadership at the highest level of our government?

Or to prop up an incompetent administration in Washington until the next election?

Historically, the result of such misguided policies is always the same: Dead fighters on both sides. Many more dead civilians. And humiliation for the invaders, no matter how brave or patriotic they might be.

Now is the time, before it is too late, to lay the groundwork for all parties concerned with the destiny of Iraq to forge a truce that will permit General Petraeus and his army to leave Baghdad with some semblance of military honor.

Otherwise, so many American soldiers will be stationed in vulnerable posts throughout the city that it could be said Baghdad has captured General Petraeus.

Just as Philadelphia once captured General Howe.

Troops Invited:

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email contact@militaryproject.org:. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

OCCUPATION REPORT

Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!

U.S. Occupation Commands' Stupid Terror Tactics Recruit Even More Fighters To Kill U.S. Troops



An Iraqi family held prisoner at gunpoint after foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. soldiers broke into their home in the middle of the night in the town of Al-Meshahda, 50 km (32 miles) north of Baghdad, June 11, 2007. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqi troops over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION
BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

Received:

"We All Get Fucked"

**The VA Has Changed The Laws Pertaining To
Psychosis, In Favor Of The V.A. Not The Vet**

From: V
To: GI Special
Sent: June 11, 2007 9:15 PM
Subject: we all get fucked

ha man

I x nam usmc recon let me tell ya some things so you can check it out look up this doc, fr doc.E6-12079

the va has changed the laws pertaining to psychosis, in favor of the va not the vet, so look this up for your self or some other troop, cause if you get a diagnoses from a doctor for being or having psychosis the way the new law is your fucked you fall between the cracks

this is my way to fuckem back,

I love my country but my government sucks,

if ya need any advice drop a line, later mike,1 usmc 321 recon 1974 killem all. co, e4

remember this it is hard to kill a man when he is not afraid to die, so watch your 6 man,

in my day it was shoot first ask what the hell ya doing later, it hard to tell one from the other, and dead men tell no tells,

just wanted to drop that on ya, latter

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