

GI SPECIAL 5K6:

“Need some wood?”



* Discontinue use after 4 years

Because screwing an entire nation is hard work.

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

**Disposable Heroes:
“Today’s Veterans Are The Latest Victims Of The U.S. Government’s Oldest Tradition — Betraying Those Who Fought For It”**

“Our Job Was To Deny Claims. We Celebrated Beating Veterans, Especially Those Representing Themselves”

The fate of today’s veterans depends directly on how organized, determined, and militant they are in their fight against the government, the generals, and the politicians on both sides of the aisle that sent them to kill or be killed for oil and empire.

By PHAM BINH November–December 2007, International Socialist Review. Pham Binh is a socialist activist in New York City. His blog is at <http://prisonerofstarvation.blogspot.com>.

THE *WASHINGTON Post* exposé last February of conditions at Walter Reed Army Medical Center unmasked an ugly reality: the government these injured veterans fought, bled, and killed for does not give a damn about them.

The articles that sparked the political firestorm¹ revealed that medicated amputees suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) were put in charge of other injured soldiers even though their problems made them incapable of caring for themselves, much less for anyone else; that outpatients were warehoused in rat-infested decrepit buildings; that medical paperwork was routinely lost; and that veterans and their families received no help, guidance, or counseling from hospital staff.

The hospital lost track of patients, one of whom died of alcohol poisoning, while another was killed in a drunk-driving accident after wandering out of the facility. No wonder former Secretary of the Army Togo West Jr. decried the “virtually incomprehensible” inattention to building maintenance and “almost palpable disdain” for the welfare of injured troops when he released the findings of his investigation of Walter Reed ordered by Secretary of Defense Robert Gates.²

Today’s veterans are the latest victims of the U.S. government’s oldest tradition—betraying those who fought for it.

Although every generation of veterans has been betrayed since the U.S. won its independence from Britain, this article will examine only some of the most notable examples.

THE REVOLUTIONARIES BETRAYED

Contrary to what we are taught in school, the nation created by the American Revolution was not an idyllic, democratic republic free of class conflict.

In fact, postcolonial America was rife with struggle, and veterans of the Revolutionary War played a key role in it.

The Continental Army that fought the British reflected the class structure of North America at the time: the rank and file was made up of poor farmers and urban laborers while their officers were wealthy merchants and/or slave owners.

This was no accident.

For example, when the state of Connecticut enacted a draft for all males between the ages of sixteen and sixty, it exempted government officials, ministers, Yale students and faculty, and anyone who could pay five pounds.³

As the war dragged on, mutinies and rebellions became more common, triggered by abusive officers and failure to pay the troops on time or in full.

Upon being discharged, troops were given stubs for future payment instead of cash, and many had accumulated large debts while they were away from their farms fighting.

Local courts seized the land of farmers who were unable to pay their debts, triggering Shays' Rebellion in Massachusetts in 1786.

Revolutionary War veterans Daniel Shays and Luke Day organized thousands of local farmers into squads and companies and led armed marches to local courthouses to prevent judges from ruling against them.

The local militia defied the orders of the sheriff and sided with the rebels, who were their friends and neighbors.

In Rhode Island, debtors seized the legislature and began issuing paper money to pay their debts.

In New Hampshire, rebels surrounded the state legislature and asked that their taxes be returned and paper money issued; they dispersed only after being threatened with force.

Terrified wealthy merchants in Boston, seeing the desertion of local forces to the side of the poor farmers and the inability of the federal government to intervene,⁴ raised funds for a private army to suppress the debtors' rebellion.

Samuel Adams, one of the Founding Fathers, spoke for the new ruling class when he argued that the rebellion should be crushed: "In monarchy the crime of treason may admit of being pardoned or lightly punished, but the man who dares rebel against the laws of a republic ought to suffer death."⁵

The rebels, armed only with their personal rifles, were no match for the numerically larger mercenary force armed with artillery and staffed with professional officers. A dozen rebels were tried and sentenced to death while a handful of them, including Shays, were eventually pardoned.

The difficulty in suppressing this rebellion of debt-ridden veterans convinced the merchants and slaveholders ruling America to scrap the government created by the Articles of Confederation.

Clearly, it was too weak to hold down the rebellious majority.

Within a year of Shays' Rebellion, the Constitution was adopted, creating the much more centralized federal government that we know today.

THE DEFEAT AND VICTORY OF THE BONUS ARMY

Almost 150 years after Shays' Rebellion, veterans marched again, this time on the nation's capital.

The onset of the Great Depression robbed millions of their jobs and their savings as banks all over the country went under before people could withdraw their money. With unemployment reaching 25 percent, hunger and desperation gripped the working class, including World War One veterans.

Congress voted in 1924 to compensate them for the difference between their military pay and what they would have earned as civilians during wartime, and many worried that they would not live to see the money because the payment was set for 1945.

In 1932, a Congressman introduced legislation to give veterans this compensation immediately.

Walter Waters, a sergeant who served in World War One, at a meeting of unemployed veterans in Portland, Oregon, suggested that they march on Washington to press Congress to pass the law.

The idea caught on and 300 local veterans went to the train station and hopped onto freight cars headed for Washington. They called themselves the Bonus Expeditionary Force, a play on the American Expeditionary Force that served in France during the war, but they quickly became known as the Bonus Army.

As the men traveled, local newspapers picked up their story, and Waters' idea spread like wildfire. Spontaneously, groups of veterans and their families from all over the country climbed aboard trains or drove in caravans to join Waters' march.

By June of 1932, 20,000 veterans and their families had erected an enormous Hooverville in Anacostia Flats, Maryland, near Washington, D.C.

Amazingly, the veterans did not segregate themselves by race even though the army was segregated during World War One.

Black and white veterans played sports together, formed interracial units based on where they were from, and even shaved one another in makeshift barbershops.⁶

The veterans marched through the streets of Washington and Waters set up an enormous lobbying operation, hoping to copy the methods of professional lobbyists working for big business. Their efforts seemed to pay off when the House of Representatives passed the Bonus Bill on June 15. On June 17, when the Senate moved to vote on the bill, the Bonus Army rallied outside the Capitol Building.

Their chant, "The Yanks are starving! The Yanks are starving!" could be heard inside the Senate during its debate. Waters delivered the results of the vote to his troops: the Senate had defeated the bill by a 2-to-1 margin.

Stung by the callousness of "their" government, many veterans and their families returned home, but more than 11,000 stayed at Waters' urging. (He pledged to stay until 1945 if necessary.)

On July 16, Washington was on edge as thousands of angry veterans surrounded the Capitol Building, hoping to prevent Congress from adjourning for the summer. Congressmen exited using secret underground tunnels and back doors to avoid facing the veterans they had stiffed.

On July 28, Republican President Herbert Hoover ordered the D.C. police to evict the Bonus Army from downtown Washington. At an abandoned apartment building taken over by veterans, a scuffle broke out between the police and the veterans. Two veterans were killed by police gunfire.

Hoover called in the army to finish the eviction, violating the Posse Comitatus Act of 1878, which prohibits the use of federal troops within the United States.

General Douglas MacArthur, in full dress uniform, led 400 infantrymen, tanks, armored vehicles, and 200 cavalrymen with sabers drawn down Pennsylvania Avenue in a show of force before firing tear gas on the veterans without warning.

By evening, the veterans had been driven across a drawbridge that led to their main camp in Anacostia Flats.

Hoover ordered MacArthur to halt his advance, but MacArthur ignored him, saying, "I cannot bother with pieces of paper during a military operation."⁷ MacArthur's troops lit the camp's shacks and tents on fire.

By morning, the entire Hooverville was burned to the ground and two infants died from smoke inhalation. The Bonus Army had been decisively defeated.

The brutal treatment meted out to the veterans transformed public sympathy for them into anger against the government, especially Hoover.

Hoover and MacArthur justified the repression by claiming that the Bonus Army was heavily infiltrated by communists and that their presence in Washington, D.C., was a prelude to a Bolshevik-style insurrection.

Not a shred of evidence was ever produced to back this claim up.

However, the spectacle of tens of thousands of rebellious working-class veterans marching on Capitol Hill, ignoring the racial divisions so painstakingly nurtured by the ruling class, in the middle of the deepest slump in capitalism's history, did scare the hell out of them.

A few months after the Bonus Army's defeat, the public dumped Hoover in a landslide and put Democrat Franklin Delano Roosevelt in the White House. Every year after his election, veterans returned to Washington to pressure politicians into passing the Bonus Law. Instead of deploying the army to crush them, Roosevelt deployed his wife, Eleanor, to have coffee and chat with them, but he opposed the bonus just as Hoover had.

He also reappointed MacArthur as army chief of staff.

As an alternative to the cash payment the veterans sought, Roosevelt drafted them into a work-relief program, the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

On September 2, 1935, the most powerful hurricane in the history of the Western hemisphere hit Florida, killing more than 280 veterans who, as part of the CCC, were completing the southernmost section of U.S. Route 1.

Many of the 280 were sandblasted to death, their skin and clothes ripped from their bodies by sand moving at 200 mph. At first, the government tried to cover up the circumstances of their deaths, but writer Ernest Hemingway was on the scene and wrote an angry piece that appeared in many newspapers declaring: "the veterans in those camps were practically murdered."⁸

After this horrific incident, ruling class opposition to the bonus waned and Congress passed the Bonus Bill in 1936, overriding Roosevelt's veto. Four million veterans were overjoyed.

Although the Bonus Army was defeated on the battlefield, they were victorious in the long run. Not only did they win benefits for themselves, they also won benefits for future generations of veterans.

In 1944, Congress passed the Serviceman's Readjustment Act, also known as the G.I. Bill of Rights, which paid for veterans' college education, gave them one year of unemployment benefits while they looked for work after being discharged, and extended low-interest loans to help them buy homes and start their own businesses.

With 18 million serving in the armed forces during World War Two,⁹ the ruling class feared a repeat of the Bonus Army march on a much bigger scale. The bill made "the American Dream" a reality for millions of working-class families.

VIETNAM: THE WAR COMES HOME

Like their comrades today, veterans of the war in Vietnam came home to dilapidated and understaffed Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals.

Their experience was immortalized in Ron Kovic's autobiography, *Born on the Fourth of July*. He described his stay in a Bronx VA hospital where he would press a buzzer, shout, and yell for assistance and no one would respond (he was paralyzed from the waist down).

The sheets were rarely washed, vomit on the floor was not cleaned up, and he sat in his own excrement for hours on end.

One day, Kovic broke his leg doing exercises. To avoid amputation, the hospital hooked up a pump to his leg that would keep it hydrated and expel toxins from it. When the pump broke down, it looked as though he would lose the leg because the hospital only had one pump.

A doctor explained to him why the hospital only had one: "It's the war in Vietnam, Ron. The cutbacks. The government's not giving us the money we need to take care of you guys."¹⁰ For no apparent reason, the pump began to work again, and Kovic kept his leg. How many weren't so lucky?

The end of the war in Vietnam in 1975 did not mean the end of suffering for those who fought in it.

As the years went by, tens of thousands of veterans began to experience strange symptoms, develop bizarre tumors, and have children with severe physical and mental birth defects.

Most of these veterans were exposed to Agent Orange, a defoliant containing dioxin, one of the most toxic chemicals known. The U.S. military sprayed 77 million liters of it over Vietnam, killing dense jungle and destroying crops to deprive National Liberation Front fighters of cover and food.¹¹ Up to 4.5 million Vietnamese¹² and as many as 2.4 million U.S. soldiers were exposed to Agent Orange.¹³

In 1979, VA director and Vietnam veteran Max Cleland announced that the air force would conduct a twenty-five year health study of the twelve hundred pilots and chemical handlers who sprayed Agent Orange on Vietnam as part of Operation Ranch Hand.

This was an unusual step for two reasons. First, caring for and monitoring the health of veterans was the VA's job, not the air force's.

Second, the study was not broad-based and would not examine the effects of Agent Orange on ground troops who made up the bulk of those filing Agent Orange claims.

It would be like studying the effects of radiation by examining the Enola Gay crew (who dropped the atomic bomb) instead of the survivors of Hiroshima.

The National Academy of Sciences reviewed the parameters and methods that the air force intended to use and warned that the study "probably would not identify adverse health effects" because of its design flaws.¹⁴

That was exactly what the government wanted.

These flaws were essential for the government to cheat tens of thousands of ill veterans out of disability benefits.

While the air force conducted its whitewash study, the VA continued to reject almost all Agent Orange claims out of hand, triggering a revolt from veterans who were in dire need of help.

On March 14, 1981, Vietnam veteran and marine Jim Hopkins drove his jeep through the glass doors and into the lobby of the multimillion dollar Wadsworth VA hospital in Los Angeles, California.

He fired rounds from his AR-14 into pictures of Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter while screaming that he was not receiving the medical attention he needed. As he was hauled away by police after the incident, he screamed into television cameras that his brain was “being destroyed by Agent Orange.”¹⁵

Hopkins' action got national media attention focused on Agent Orange for the first time.

After Hopkins was released from prison and underwent subsequent treatment at a VA hospital, he went on a national speaking tour to publicize the Agent Orange issue. Sadly, he died of unknown causes on May 17, 1981. News of his death sparked a sit-in by veterans in the same lobby into which he crashed his jeep.

In response to the protest, the VA claimed it did not neglect veterans while the Reagan administration alternated between ignoring and ridiculing the protestors.

The veterans escalated their protest by going on a hunger strike and Reagan retaliated by evicting them from the Wadsworth lobby.

The starving veterans regrouped.

They redeployed their protest in front of the White House and forced congressional veterans' committees to meet with them.

Fearing the collapse or death of one of the veterans, Congress agreed to a settlement: the veterans would end their fifty-three-day hunger strike and Congress would override Reagan to keep the VA's outpatient centers open, refrain from cutting veterans' benefits, and conduct studies of PTSD and Agent Orange.

In 1984, the air force released the preliminary results of the Ranch Hand study. Despite its flaws, it found that pilots involved with spraying Agent Orange had higher rates of skin cancer, liver disorders, circulatory problems, and that their children had higher rates of birth defects, infant mortality, odd rashes, and things described as “birthmarks.”¹⁶

However, the study claimed that there was “insufficient evidence” to prove that any of the health problems found were due to Agent Orange.

In other words, the study proved that there was a correlation between Agent Orange exposure and various illnesses but it did not definitively prove that Agent Orange was the cause.

In response to the government's rejection of almost all disability claims based on Agent Orange exposure, Vietnam veterans launched a class-action lawsuit in 1979 against five manufacturers of Agent Orange, hoping to win some compensation for their injuries (U.S. courts have consistently ruled that soldiers cannot sue the government for injuries suffered in war).

In 1984, the chemical companies offered \$180 million to the veterans if they settled the suit out of court.

The veterans took the settlement because hard scientific evidence for their claim that Agent Orange was directly responsible for their illnesses was nonexistent, thanks to the government's refusal to undertake the kind of large-scale and meticulous study needed to prove it.

Without such evidence it was highly unlikely that the veterans would prevail against the army of corporate lawyers and paid "experts" that the chemical companies would employ in court.

For the chemical companies, \$180 million was a small price to pay to avoid admitting guilt, garnering bad publicity, and receiving the subpoenas that might have brought to light internal documents proving that they knew about dioxin's toxicity in 1965, if not earlier.¹⁷

The Agent Orange study mandated by Congress — the hard-won demand of the hunger-striking veterans — was abandoned in 1986 by government bureaucrats at the Center for Disease Control (CDC).

After spending \$46 million, they claimed that no scientifically sound study could be performed.

They claimed that the military's shoddy record keeping about what areas of Vietnam were sprayed, when, and which ground units were where at a particular time made it impossible to determine who was exposed to Agent Orange.

Senior CDC official Dr. Vernon Houk said, "If we could find a population of people who were exposed in sufficient numbers, we would have proceeded with our study. We just simply could not find them."¹⁸

If Houk had really wanted to find large numbers of people to examine for Agent Orange exposure, he could have looked in Vietnam.

Subsequently, the House of Representatives Government Operations Committee found in 1990 that officials in the Reagan administration "controlled and obstructed" the CDC study because they did not want to admit the government's liability and pay disability benefits.¹⁹

Although the CDC failed to produce an Agent Orange study, it did release a report in February 1987 that showed that Vietnam veterans were dying at a rate 45 percent higher than their non-Vietnam veteran counterparts.

They also had a 72 percent higher suicide rate and a high incidence of violent deaths, including homicides, suicides, motor vehicle accidents, accidental poisonings, and drug overdoses.

That same year, the VA mistakenly leaked a suppressed study that showed Marines who served in Vietnam died of non-Hodgkins lymphoma at a 110 percent higher rate²⁰ and lung cancer at a 58 percent higher rate compared to other veterans.²¹ This was the largest study of deaths among Vietnam veterans ever conducted by the VA at the time and involved more than 52,000 death records.

The final report of the Ranch Hand study was released in 2005 over the objections of some scientists involved with it.

They revealed that some members of the “control” group, air force veterans, who were not involved in Ranch Hand but served in Southeast Asia, were exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides because they had served in Vietnam.

Therefore the basis on which the air force concluded that there were no significant differences in cancer rates between the two groups was totally undermined.

When one scientist, Joel Michalek, reanalyzed the data to compensate for the flaws, he found that the cancer rate doubled among Ranch Hand veterans with the highest level of dioxin exposure.

He also found that the cancer rate increased in direct proportion to dioxin levels, the first time such a trend had been seen in the Ranch Hand study.

When Michalek tried to get an outside contractor to formally reanalyze the data, the air force sent him a letter on July 6, 2006, ordering him to delete the data.

In the end, the chemical companies and the VA were tremendously successful in robbing ill Vietnam veterans of the compensation and care they deserved.

The \$180 million settlement fund was depleted by lawyers, who received \$9.2 million of the money, and was hamstrung by the stringent terms of who was eligible to receive money.

Only a quarter of the 200,000 veterans and their families who filed claims actually received compensation.²²

Out of 92,276 Agent Orange claims filed with the VA by veterans and their families, only 5,908 had been approved as of 1998,²³ despite a 1991 law, which listed some illnesses linked to Agent Orange that would automatically qualify veterans to receive benefits.

TODAY’S WAR ON VETERANS

In addition to coping with unsanitary conditions and neglect at VA facilities across the country, today’s veterans and their loved ones continuously battle military and

government bureaucracies for proper diagnosis, adequate care, and disability benefits.

As one former army private put it: “It is a shame that a man goes to war for his nation, and when he comes home he has to go to war to get his benefits and is treated like a criminal.”²⁴

The private who said this suffers from severe PTSD but received a disability rating of only 40 percent. Now he is trying to support his wife and two children on \$700 a month and is nearing bankruptcy because he is unable to work.

He has been waiting five months to receive treatment at the nearest VA hospital.

Like the ex-soldiers who joined Shays’ Rebellion, crushing debt continues to plague veterans and their families.

The number of veterans from the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq entering the VA system today is staggering — 100,000 entered the system last year and over 300,000 are expected to enter next year.²⁵

The VA has a backlog of more than 600,000 applications and appeals for disability benefits that will take an average of six months to process and only a very small percentage of which will be successful. This case load is expected to grow by 1.6 million in the next two years.²⁶

As of July 2006, 152,669 veterans filed disability claims after fighting in Iraq or Afghanistan, and only 1,502 of them received disability ratings of 100 percent.²⁷

A mere 3 percent of soldiers going through the medical retirement process have been given permanent disability benefits, down from 10 percent in 2001.²⁸

Although 26.7 percent of disabled airmen have been given a rating of 30 percent or more, only 4.3 percent of disabled soldiers and 2.7 percent of disabled marines made the grade.

Since the year 2000, 2,497 airmen have been found unfit for duty for medical reasons and given lifetime retirement benefits while the numerically larger army with its higher tally of wounded has given those benefits to only 1,763 of its soldiers.

In the last six years, the military has discharged 22,500 personnel due to “personality disorders,” disqualifying them from receiving disability benefits and saving the VA \$4.5 billion over the course of their lifetimes.

The number of personality disorder discharges has grown steadily since 2001.²⁹

Clearly, these veterans are the victims of ruthless cost-cutting bureaucrats at the Pentagon and the VA.

“Our job was to deny claims. We celebrated beating veterans, especially those representing themselves,” admitted Craig Kabatchnick, who was a senior appellate attorney for the VA’s Office of General Counsel.³⁰

Like the private sector, however, that ruthless cost-cutting does not extend upward.

Last year, budget officials at the VA received “performance” bonuses of up to \$33,000, a figure equal to about 20 percent of their annual salaries, even though these officials “forgot” to include the cost of caring for injured Iraq and Afghanistan veterans in the VA’s 2005 budget, leading to a \$1 billion shortfall in the middle of the year.

Annual bonuses to senior VA officials average more than \$16,000—the most lucrative in the government.³¹

While VA officials rake in bonuses, on any given night, there are 195,000 homeless veterans, 9,600 for whom the VA does not have beds. In the last two years, one-third of Afghanistan and Iraq veterans classified as being at risk for homelessness lost their homes.³² Given the VA’s extreme neglect, it’s no surprise that the suicide rate for veterans is double that of the civilian population (incidentally, this study did not include veterans from the latest Iraq or Afghanistan wars).³³

Once again, veterans and their supporters have been forced to resort to lawsuits to overcome the VA’s criminal negligence.

The family of Iraq veteran and marine Jeffrey Lucey sued the head of the VA because Lucey committed suicide after being denied treatment for PTSD on multiple occasions.³⁴

A separate class-action lawsuit against the VA has been filed charging the VA with violating veterans’ constitutional right to due process because of the multiple layers of bureaucracy that veterans must wade through, inconsistent standards used to judge disability claims, and the length of time that veterans wait for their cases to be processed.³⁵

The health-care crisis facing today’s veterans is only beginning.

Consider this: in World War Two, two Americans were wounded for every one who died. In Vietnam and Korea, the ratio was about three to one. In Iraq, sixteen soldiers are wounded or get sick for every one who dies. Better armor, helmets, and emergency care are saving more soldiers.

Those who survive the first few minutes after an explosion have a 98 percent chance of surviving.³⁶ But the improving survival rate means that the VA’s health-care system will be burdened as never before.

Already, the mental health care component of the system has been overwhelmed. More than one-third of the 1.6 million veterans who served in Iraq or Afghanistan have reported everything from PTSD symptoms to brain injuries, yet out of 1,400 VA hospitals only 27 have programs dedicated to treating PTSD.³⁷

Another cause for alarm is that 100,000 veterans out of the 700,000 who served in the first war on Iraq later reported mysterious illnesses ranging from chronic fatigue, brain

cancer, and birth defects in their children.³⁸ (Congress only paid benefits to veterans who became ill within two years of 1991, eliminating 95 percent of applicants from eligibility.³⁹)

Causes range from the destruction of Iraq's WMD facilities, which released chemical and biological weapons into the air, unsafe anthrax vaccinations, desert parasites, and exposure to depleted uranium (DU, an armor-piercing radioactive substance used to case munitions). The U.S. used 320 tons of DU in Iraq and Kuwait in 1990–91⁴⁰ and has used 130 tons so far in the current war.⁴¹ DU has the potential to become this war's Agent Orange.

American socialist Eugene Debs famously declared: “The master class has always declared the wars; the subject class has always fought the battles. The master class has had all to gain and nothing to lose, while the subject class has had nothing to gain and all to lose—especially their lives.”⁴²

Thanks to modern medicine, fewer troops are losing their lives on the battlefield, but more and more are losing their limbs, their health, their sanity, their families, and their lives after they return home.

The fate of today's veterans depends directly on how organized, determined, and militant they are in their fight against the government, the generals, and the politicians on both sides of the aisle that sent them to kill or be killed for oil and empire.

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IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Iraq Military Casualties Rise To 61,596

November 06, 2007 By Michael Munk, Michaelmunk.com [Excerpts]

US military occupation forces in Iraq suffered at least 178 combat casualties in the six days ending Nov. 6, as total casualties reached at least 61,596.

The total includes 31,596 killed or wounded by what the Pentagon classifies as "hostile" causes and 30,294 (as of Oct. 1) dead and injured from "non-hostile" causes.

Haskell Soldier Dies In Iraq



Private Cody Carver of Haskell, Okla., died Oct. 30, 2007, after his patrol was struck by an explosive and small arms fire in Salman Pak, Iraq. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

November 01, 2007 By Keith Purtell, Phoenix Staff Writer

HASKELL — Cody Carver's mother said she'll always smile when she remembers how her son enjoyed joking around.

“He liked to jump out and scare me,” Pam Carver said. “He would put a piece of tape around the handle on the sprayer next to the kitchen sink, and then aim it so that it would squirt me when I turned on the water.”

Cody, 19 and only in Iraq for several weeks, was killed Tuesday in Baghdad along with two other soldiers. He was a private in U.S. Army with A Company, 1st and 15th Infantry, 3rd Infantry Division Mechanized.

“I asked him, ‘Son, is the Army going to take away this part of you?’” Pam said. “He said, ‘No, mom, you’ll always need to be looking around corners for me.’”

Pam Carver spoke outside the family’s home while the afternoon sun shone on a tall pole with the United States flag at half-staff, and the blue-and-white flag for Cody’s unit below it.

Cody’s uncle, Chuck Orsburn, said the family asked a local business to lower its flag to half-staff, but they wouldn’t do it without an order issued by the governor or the president. He wished Oklahoma flags could be lowered whenever a military person from this state lost their life.

“I remember how much he loved skateboarding when he was a kid,” Orsburn said.

That same fun-loving boy turned into a soldier who took on the toughest missions. The family said Cody’s infantry group was sent into violent areas and made sure they were secure.

“He always wanted to do it right,” Orsburn said.

Pam Carver agreed that her son always wanted to be “No. 1.” But he did so while maintaining good relationships.

“He was really outgoing,” she said. “Everybody loved him. You couldn’t have asked for a better child. There were no drugs, and he was never in trouble with the law. Life was a party, and he was the life of the party.”

Cody’s older brother Lee Carver, 35, said he believed Cody joined the military for two reasons: because he was deeply affected by Sept. 11, 2001, and because his father, Darrel, served in Vietnam.

“The whole family is in the trucking business, but Cody wasn’t interested in that,” Lee said. “I think being in the army was a way to make his dad proud.”

Pam said Cody was very much a single man who had not yet decided if one of his girlfriends would become his wife.

“I asked him at Valentine’s Day if there was anyone he wanted me to send flowers to,” she said. “He said ‘Mom, that would be too many flowers. You couldn’t afford it.’”

**FUTILE EXERCISE:
ONLY 80,000 MORE TRUCKS TO GO:
COME ON HOME NOW!**



U.S. Army troops at a vehicle checkpoint, waded through empty bottles after searching the Red Crescent truck on its way to deliver the water canisters to the Amariyah neighborhood in west Baghdad Sept. 2, 2007. (AP Photo/Wisam Samy)

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TROOP NEWS

Iraq Veteran Says “This Protest Is Not A Plea To Our Leaders To End The War Because We Don’t Like It” “It’s A Plea To Our Fellow Americans To Get More Organized, Because Organized People Are What Change Society”



[Thanks to Frank Millspaugh, who sent this in.]

Nov. 6, 2007 Melinda Tuhus, *Between The Lines* [Excerpts]

Marine Sgt. Liam Madden was serving in the Marine Corps when he helped organize the Appeal for Redress, a petition to members of Congress opposing the war.

He was honorably discharged and now serves on the board of directors of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

LIAM MADDEN: I was honorably discharged in January of 2007 and I’m actually still in the inactive Reserves.

BETWEEN THE LINES: Could you be called back?

LIAM MADDEN: Yes.

BETWEEN THE LINES: Would you go?

LIAM MADDEN: It’s actually the obligation of service members who swear an oath to defend the Constitution from all enemies, foreign and domestic, to disobey illegal orders.

Iraq is an illegal order, and my conscience will not allow me to go.

I'm not a pacifist; there are things worth fighting for, but lies and oil are not one of them.

BETWEEN THE LINES: Can I ask how old you are?

LIAM MADDEN: I'm 23 years old.

BETWEEN THE LINES: I was talking to Nancy Lessin; she was telling me there's now 2,700 member families of Military Families Speak Out. What's the membership of Iraq Veterans Against the War now?

LIAM MADDEN: It's between 600 and 700; we get about 10 new members every week.

BETWEEN THE LINES: It took awhile to take off, but it seems now...

LIAM MADDEN: We're definitely getting our feet underneath us. We're still a young organization, inexperienced in organizing, and we're learning as we go. And we all have, for the most part, other jobs. We're dedicated, but there's only so much we can do at first, but we're growing.

BETWEEN THE LINES: Where are you from?

LIAM MADDEN: I'm from Vermont, and I live in Boston because I'm going to Northeastern University.

BETWEEN THE LINES: Can you just tell me, when did you join the Marines? Was it right out of high school?

LIAM MADDEN: I was 18; it was a couple months after I got out of high school, and I signed the contract in August 2002; I went to boot camp in January 2003 and in March of that year the U.S. invaded Iraq. I served in Iraq from September 2004 to February 2005. I was opposed, I would say, right from the beginning.

BETWEEN THE LINES: But when you joined, there was actually talk back then about what might come to pass. Did that give you any pause? Did you join for the benefits, basically?

LIAM MADDEN: I joined because I wanted personal growth. I knew I was not ready for college. There was no other option for me, and it was important to be challenged, to mature in what I thought was a constructive environment. And looking back on the Marine Corps, if I knew everything then that I know now, I'd still do it, but not if I knew there was going to be a war.

BETWEEN THE LINES: Is your sense from talking to other people in the military, has it gotten better or worse, or does it depend on where you're posted?

LIAM MADDEN: I think very, very, very few people could say they've seen actual progress in Iraq. I think it's gotten worse, and the Iraqi people are certainly in no better position than they were before we invaded.

BETWEEN THE LINES: They were hoping with 11 decentralized protests, it would pull out more than the total of who would have gone to a big demonstration in Washington, which we don't know until we see what the count is for all 11. There's people here, I don't really have a good sense of how many – it's not huge or anything. So what's the value of this? We know the Bush administration is not listening. Is this directed to Congress? Is this directed to fellow Americans?

LIAM MADDEN: This protest is not a plea to our leaders to end the war because we don't like it.

It's a plea to our fellow Americans to get more organized, because organized people are what change society.

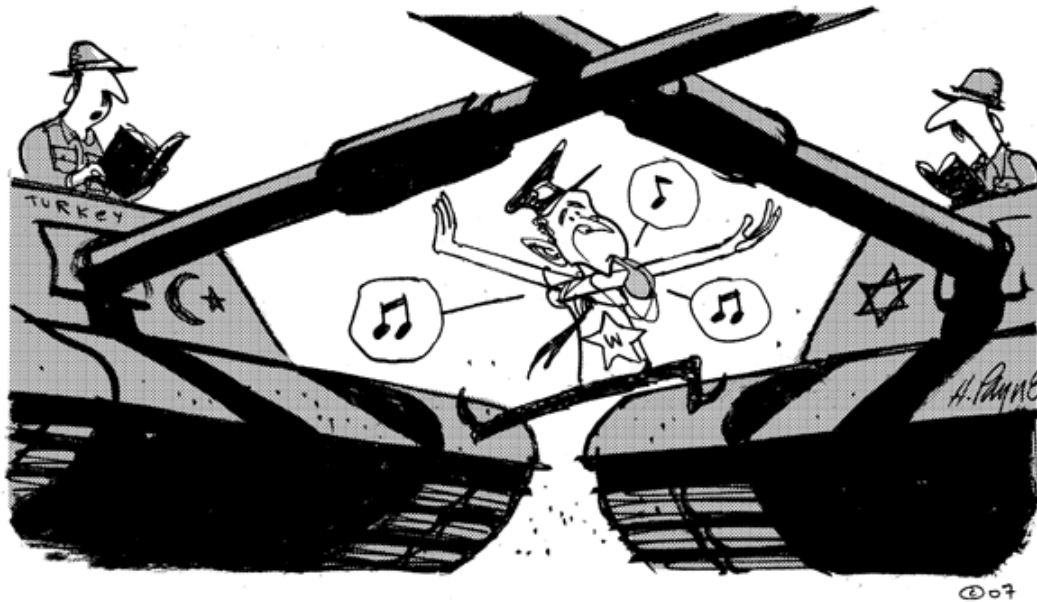
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Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance 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

**NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



A horse-drawn caisson carries the casket for a group burial at Arlington National Cemetery October 12, 2007, for 12 U.S. soldiers killed when their UH-60 Black Hawk helicopter crashed in Iraq on January 20, 2007. The single casket holds the remains of all 12 soldiers. REUTERS/Jonathan Ernst



“Reading International Traffic Signs: ‘STOP’ means no cross-border invasions to nab terrorists unless you’re Israel, in which case ‘GO’ unless the border involves a nation the U.S. has invaded, in which case ‘STOP!’”

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. Frederick Douglas, 1852

“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.

"The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!"
--Camille Desmoulins

It Is All Backing Up



From: Richard Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: November 07, 2007
Subject: It Is All Backing Up

It Is All Backing Up

The United States Government is a sewer system running under the entire Middle East, and it is all backing up into the homes of every American.

**Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
November 7, 2007**

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

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

Comment On Poem “A Jew To Zionist Fighters” “Brave Citizens Of Israel...Continue To Advocate For Peace And For Solidarity With Their Brothers And Sisters From Palestine”

From: Vargo, Steve [Vietnam Veteran]
To: GI Special
Sent: November 07, 2007
Subject: Comment on poem “A Jew To Zionist Fighters”

X-cellent!

A year ago a group of people traveling across the country in a bus for peace stopped into visit with us at a chapter meeting of World Can't Wait. I apologize for forgetting their names.

But, some of them had been to Palestine many times; one brave gal (tough enough to have been a good Viet Cong freedom fighter), had many times acted as a ‘human shield’ during ride-a-longs in Palestinian ambulances carrying the wounded.

She told us gripping stories of the brave citizens of Israel who stand up, unreported, every day, against the Zionist agenda of aggression against the people of Palestine.

She spoke of demonstrations in support of the Palestinian right of/to return. And that these demonstrations were usually met by heavy handed police and/or military response. The demonstrators would be arrested and jailed, sometimes for long periods.

Some of the Israelis arrested WOULD ALSO LOSE BASIC RIGHT AFFORDED OTHER CITIZENS OF ISRAEL, SUCH AS HOUSING!

That is one hell of a price to pay.

But, yet, she said they continue to advocate for peace and for solidarity with their brothers and sisters from Palestine. The poem serves as a good message to readers that not all Jews are Zionists.

**November 8, 1892:
Magnificent Anniversary
“Thirty Thousand Black And White
Workers Factory And Dock Staged A
General Strike In New Orleans”**

Carl Bunin Peace History November 5-11

Thirty thousand black and white workers factory and dock staged a general strike in New Orleans, demanding union recognition, closed shops (where all co-workers join the union), and hour and wage gains.

They were joined by non-industrial laborers, such as musicians, clothing workers, clerks, utility workers, streetcar drivers, and printers.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

**After 21 Years Of Torment, U.S.
Government Drops Effort To Deport
Palestinian Activists:
“The Government Was Wrong For
Twenty One Years. They Robbed Us,
And Our Families, Of The Best And Most
Productive Years Of Our Lives”**

2007-10-31 Afterdowningstreet.org

LOS ANGELES - The 20-year effort to deport two men over their alleged political support of Palestinian self-determination officially came to an end today when the nation's highest administrative body overseeing immigration cases dismissed all charges against Khader Hamide and Michel Shehadeh, members of a group of Palestinian student activists arrested in January 1987, who became known as the LA8.

The action by the Board of Immigration Appeals (BIA) closes one of the nation's longest-running and most controversial deportation cases, one that tested whether immigrants have the same First Amendment rights as citizens.

Hamide and Shehadeh expressed both relief and happiness that the case is finally over but also anger over what they believed to be a politically motivated, baseless prosecution.

"My family and I feel a tremendous amount of relief today," said Hamide.

"After 20 years, the nightmare is finally over. I feel vindicated at long last. This is a victory not only for us, but for the First Amendment of the Constitution and for the rights of all immigrants."

Shehadeh agreed.

"I am extremely happy but do have mixed emotions," Shehadeh added.

"The government was wrong for twenty one years. They robbed us, and our families, of the best and most productive years of our lives.

"We are now free to continue living our lives, acting on our beliefs; raising our families, supporting our communities, loving our country, defending justice and the Constitution, and prospering as good citizens."

The case against the pair began in January, 1987, when the government arrested them and six others, who collectively came to be known as the LA 8, placed them in maximum security prison, and accused them of having ties to a faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The government alleged that Hamide and Shehadeh distributed newspapers, held demonstrations and organized humanitarian aid fundraisers for Palestinians, and that because these actions supported the PLO faction, they should be deported.

The men were initially charged with being associated with a Communist organization, but when a court declared those charges unconstitutional, the government filed new charges of material support for a terrorist group.

The case went before the US Court of Appeals four times, the Supreme Court once, and the Board of Immigration Appeals multiple times.

The BIA dismissed the case at the request of the government, which agreed in a settlement to drop all charges and not to seek removal of either of the men in the future based on any of the political activities or associations at issue in the case.

Hamide and Shehadeh agreed not to apply for citizenship for three years, and to have several judicial orders in the case vacated as moot.

Attorneys for the two hailed the government's decision to drop the case as a victory the First Amendment rights of all immigrants and a vindication of their clients' actions.

"This is a monumental victory for all immigrants who want to be able to express their political views and support the lawful activities of organizations in their home countries fighting for social or political change," said Marc Van Der Hout, of the National Lawyers Guild.

"Hamide and Shehadeh did nothing more than advocate for Palestinians' right to a homeland and support charitable causes and other legal activities in the Occupied Territories.

"That should never have been cause for deportation charges in the first place. The government's attempt to deport them all these years marks another shameful period in our government's history of targeting certain groups of immigrants for their political beliefs and activities."

"We are overjoyed for our clients, who have spent twenty years fighting for the right to stay in this country and speak and associate freely," said David Cole, a professor at Georgetown University Law School and volunteer attorney for the Center for Constitutional rights. "And we commend the administration for recognizing that federal anti-terrorism resources can be far better spent on other endeavors."

The tipping point came in January 2007, when Immigration Judge Bruce J. Einhorn dismissed the case finding that the government's refusal to turn over evidence favorable to the men violated the pair's right to due process.

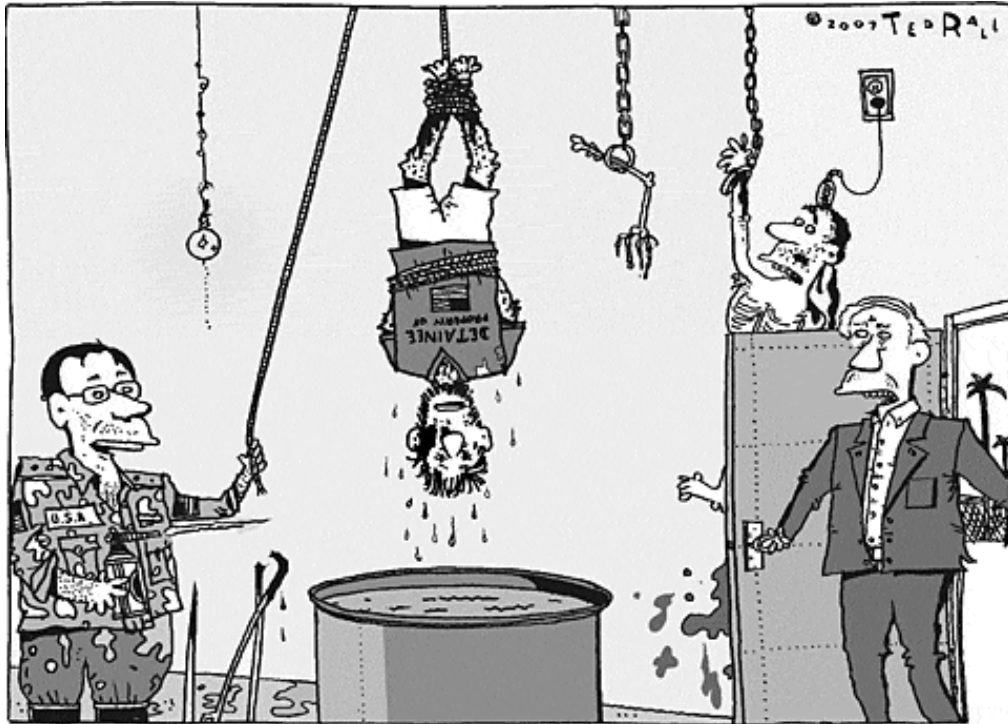
The government's refusal to comply with his disclosure order, Einhorn wrote, is "a festering wound on the body of respondents and an embarrassment to the rule of law."

The case originally involved seven Palestinians and a Kenyan, the wife of Khader Hamide. Late last year, Aiad Barakat, one of the eight, was sworn in as a U.S. citizen in Los Angeles after federal judge Stephen Wilson rejected the government's contentions that he should be denied citizenship for his political associations. All of the others have either been granted permanent residency or are on track to becoming permanent residents.

Van Der Hout and Cole have been representing the immigrants since the case began in 1987 along with Leonard Weinglass of Chicago Seven fame and investigator Phyllis Bennis of the National Lawyers' Guild.

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.



"It's not what it looks like."

A Message For A Military Dictator



Pakistani activists during a demonstration in Islamabad against military dictator General Musharraf. (AFP/Aamir Qureshi)



**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

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

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