

## GI SPECIAL 6J7:

The News from Home



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

# Afghanistan:Dying In Vain

“Presidential Candidates John  
McCain And Barack Obama Favor  
Sending More Forces”

# **“I Would Suggest That Two Or Three Additional Brigades Beg The Question Of, ‘To Do What?’” “Before We Say We Need Three To Five Brigades, We’ve Got To Figure Out What The Hell We’re Doing,” Says A Senior U.S. Military Official In Kabul**

**“We have used it as a crutch,” says the senior U.S. military official in Kabul, who adds that NATO partners need more training on how to call in airstrikes. “There are a lot of bombs being dropped in support of the coalition. Yeah, we dropped it, but you guys asked for it, and you didn’t know what you were asking for,” the official adds.**

October 13, 2008 Anna Mulrine, U.S. News & World Report [Excerpts]

The NATO commander in Afghanistan, U.S. Gen. David McKiernan, has made unusually public appeals for 15,000 more troops “as quickly as possible” to bolster the current 33,000 U.S. troops on the ground.

Presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama favor sending more forces.

“We could, to some extent, buy ourselves out of our problems in Iraq. We can’t do that in Afghanistan,” says one senior U.S. official, who adds that he was “always convinced” that America could win in Iraq. In Afghanistan, he says, “I’m not so sure.”

This lends a sense of urgency to new strategic reviews of the war currently underway at both the White House and the Pentagon. Military officials note that these reviews need to revisit some very basic matters: “The first-order question is, ‘What are we trying to do in Afghanistan?’” says Nathaniel Fick, a former Marine officer who is now a fellow at the Center for a New American Security.

He says he has spoken with senior officials who share his view that “there doesn’t seem to be a strategic end state that every player agrees upon.”

**More troops are expected to reinforce 71,000 American and NATO comrades already there. But, says Fick, “I would suggest that two or three additional brigades beg the question of, ‘To do what?’”**

It is, senior defense officials concede, a fair question. “Before we say we need three to five brigades, we’ve got to figure out what the hell we’re doing,” says a senior U.S. military official in Kabul.

In order to work, such experts need some measure of security and local goodwill. But that is eroding throughout the country.

Stepped-up fighting and too few troops have forced NATO to rely more heavily on air power, sometimes with the devastating consequence of civilian casualties that fuel antigovernment, anti-American anger.

“We have used it as a crutch,” says the senior U.S. military official in Kabul, who adds that NATO partners need more training on how to call in airstrikes. “There are a lot of bombs being dropped in support of the coalition. Yeah, we dropped it, but you guys asked for it, and you didn’t know what you were asking for,” the official adds.

**MORE:**

**Killed on Fourth Tour in  
Afghanistan, A Soldier’s Idealism  
Sent Him Back To The Fight:  
‘Even Though He Thought Much Of  
The War Was Being Fought Over  
Money, He Believed He Could Still Go  
Over There And Straighten Out Some  
Of The Bad Parts’  
“No Man Who Is Married With Children  
Should Be Forced To Go More Than  
Three Times. If He Hadn’t, He Would Be  
Alive”**

October 1, 2008 By HALLE STOCKTON, Herald Tribune

BRADENTON -

Army Sgt. William E. Hasenflu felt he could make a difference as a soldier.

idealism, his mother said, was a major reason Hasenflu enlisted in the Army after a career in the Navy.

Hasenflu, whose mother lives in Bradenton and his father in Sarasota, was in his fourth tour in Afghanistan when he was killed in action Sunday, officials said.

Hasenflu was due back in Fort Campbell, Ky., on Oct. 15, where he would have been reunited with his wife of 17 years and their three daughters, said his mother, Jane Mann.

Hasenflu, who lived in Bradenton for many years before moving to Kentucky, was killed in an ambush on his unit in the Jaji District Center in Afghanistan, the Department of Defense reported. He would have turned 39 on Monday.

The decorated career military man was fatally wounded by small arms fire as he was taking detainees into custody, according to an Army statement.

Mann said her son had tired recently of serving so much combat duty in the Afghan conflict.

He did not want to leave his family again, but his belief that he could help his country prompted him to keep fighting, Mann said Tuesday.

Hasenflu had spent nearly an entire year away from his family during his latest tour.

“My son was frustrated with going over for a fourth time,” said Mann. “But even though he thought much of the war was being fought over money, he believed he could still go over there and straighten out some of the bad parts.”

Hasenflu’s father, Earl Hasenflu, could not be reached Tuesday.

William Hasenflu served in the Navy, the Navy Reserves and the National Guard before joining the Army in May 2005, his family said.

Hasenflu enlisted in the Navy as soon as he graduated from high school in Meadville, Pa., where he grew up, Mann said.

She remembers when her eager teenage son came home to deliver the news of his enlistment.

“I didn’t know about it and I had a fit, but he had decided that is what he wanted to do,” she said.

Hasenflu met his wife during military basic training in Orlando. They dated a year and a half before marrying, Mann added.

His wife, Judith Corbeau-Hasenflu, lives in Cadiz, Ky., with the couple’s three daughters, Savannah, 16, Ashley, 15, and Veronica, 4, Mann said.

Hasenflu and his wife were “bookends holding the family together,” Mann said. They home-schooled the girls, always vacationed as a family and loved singing old-time Christmas carols together, she said.

Hasenflu also studied martial arts -- anything to be a “lean, mean fighting machine,” he would say to his mother.

The loss of her son is only now sinking in. "I'm basically a mess ... just a basket case over this," Mann said as she stifled tears while looking at pictures of her son in her west Bradenton home Tuesday. "Judith is just devastated. She said she's just totally falling apart."

Michael Mendoza of Bradenton, one of Hasenflu's best friends, said Hasenflu stood "side by side" with Mendoza as he rehabilitated from a traumatic head injury sustained in a military training exercise in 1993.

Mendoza spent years relearning common activities and finding another way to put food on the table, and Hasenflu was there throughout to help, he said.

"Bill helped tutor me during my community re-entry programs and years of life coaching," said Mendoza, 36, a disabled Army combat paramedic. "He always helped people focus on what they could do and not what they couldn't do."

Mann plans to visit her daughter-in-law and grandchildren soon; however, she is upset that the military is only funding a four-day trip for her. She said she cannot afford to stay longer because of mounting medical bills and being unemployed since recently learning she has Parkinson's disease.

However, that is not where Mann's disappointment with the Army ends.

"My son was on his fourth tour of duty, always over there for at least a year or more," she said. "No man who is married with children should be forced to go more than three times. If he hadn't, he would be alive."

Mann intends to write a letter of protest to the Florida House and Senate, she said.

### **MORE:**

## **While U.S. Troops Die, Afghan Government Has A Nice, Friendly Dinner With The Taliban: "All Parties Talked Socially With One Another Over The Dinner But They Did Not Discuss Any Issue Involving Afghanistan" "It's A Kind Of A Guest Celebration"**

October 7, 2008 By Jason Straziuso, Associated Press [Excerpts]

KABUL, Afghanistan - A former Taliban ambassador said yesterday that the hard-line militants sat with Afghan officials and Saudi King Abdullah over an important religious meal in Saudi Arabia late last month as the insurgency raged back home.

Abdul Salam Zaeef, the Taliban's former ambassador to Pakistan, denied that the get-together could be construed as peace talks.

But Zaeef said he was invited by Saudi King Abdullah to share Iftar - the meal that breaks the daily fast during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

Taliban representatives, Afghan government officials and a representative for powerful warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar were also at the meal, he said.

He said all parties talked socially with one another over the dinner but that they did not discuss any issue involving Afghanistan.

"This is not new; it's a kind of a guest celebration," Zaeef said, playing down the event's importance and implying that Abdullah hosts visitors all the time.

#### **Troops Invited:**

**Comments, arguments, articles, and letters 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](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057**

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **U.S. Soldier Killed In Mosul**

Oct. 7, 2008 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20081007-02 & Reuters

MOSUL, Iraq – A Multi-National Division - North Soldier died of wounds sustained from a small-arms fire attack in Mosul, Oct. 7.

One U.S. soldier and one Iraqi policeman were killed in a shootout overnight on Tuesday in the Hay Domiz neighbourhood of southeastern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, Iraqi police and the U.S. military said.

The IPs established a cordon around the home and Coalition forces arrived shortly after to provide additional support.

The IP and CF Soldiers approached the house again and began taking small-arms fire from the house. Air support was called in and all local citizens were cleared in the surrounding area before CF dropped an ordnance on the home destroying it. Structural fires were observed and local Iraqi fire department was on scene.

One IP officer and an AQI member were killed during the attack.

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## Bush Rat Welcomed With Bombs



The common Bush rat: [baladeornithologique.com]

10.7.08 (AFP)

During a press conference with visiting US Deputy Secretary of State John Negroponte, two bombs went off just outside the Green Zone, leaving at least one Iraqi soldier injured.

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## Check Out The “Progress” In Occupied Samarra

October 2, 2008 By ERICA GOODE and MOHAMMED HUSSEIN, New York Times  
[Excerpts]

Bombs go off infrequently now in Samarra, and they are mostly small, nothing like the massive explosion that two years ago toppled the golden dome of the famous Askariya Shrine in this ancient city, setting off a wave of sectarian bloodletting across Iraq.

And to stray outside the nine “safe” neighborhoods that American military officials say have been secured by the Awakening guards is still to invite violent death.

One of Iraq’s most famous historical sites, a spiral minaret built in the ninth century known as Malwiya, remains off limits because snipers can too easily pick off anyone who climbs the tower.

And two Westerners and several Iraqis from Baghdad who traveled to Samarra this week were not allowed to enter the downtown area without an escort from the Iraqi security forces.

“Progress has been made, some of it has been significant, some of it has been slow, some of it has been mixed,” said Lt. Col. J. P. McGee, commander of the Second Battalion, 327th Infantry stationed in the area, who added that there had been a “complete security transformation” in Samarra.

Residents complain that there are few jobs available, that the water is not potable, that the electricity is intermittent at best, that they have not received their pensions and that there are shortages of medicine.

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## **THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH; ALL HOME, NOW**



U.S. soldiers in a village in Baiji, 180 km (112 miles) north of Baghdad, June 19, 2008.  
REUTERS/Sabah al-Bazee

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **3 Fort Bragg Soldiers Killed At Yakchal**

Oct 3, 2008 The Associated Press



FORT BRAGG, N.C. — The military says three Green Berets from Fort Bragg were killed this week when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in Afghanistan.

The Army Special Operations Command said Wednesday that the deaths occurred Monday in Helmand province at the village of Yakchal. The soldiers were assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group.

The soldiers were identified as Capt. Richard G. Cliff Jr., 29, of Mount Pleasant, S.C.; Sgt. 1st Class Jamie S. Nicholas, 32, of Maysel, W.Va.; and Sgt. 1st Class Gary J. Vasquez, 33, of Round Lake, Ill.

Cliff was a Special Forces team commander and received his commission in 2002 after graduating from Appalachian State University. He joined the Special Forces in July.

Nicholas was a team weapons specialist who joined the Army in 1994 and joined the Special Forces in 2006.

Vasquez was a team engineer who joined the Army in 2000 and became a Green Beret in 2004.

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## **New Zealand Patrol Hit By IED**

8 October 2008 Radio New Zealand

One soldier suffered a minor cut to the face and a vehicle was damaged. The injured patrol member has returned to active duty.

The device went off at 3.30pm on Tuesday (local time) in the same area where another New Zealand patrol was hit in March.

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## **U.S.-Allied Afghan Police & Soldiers Hooked On Heroin: “You Hear Of Checkpoints Getting Entirely Wiped Out”**

October 5, 2008 Kim Barker, McClatchy-Tribune Information Services

KABUL, Afghanistan - If his job doesn't kill him, the heroin might.

Mohammad Akbar is a first lieutenant in the highly touted Afghan National Army, considered crucial to the future of this war-torn country. But for three years, Akbar has

also been a junkie, shooting up heroin with hundreds of other addicts in a bombed-out building in Kabul littered with disposable needle wrappers and human waste.

“I come here because of the pressure,” said Akbar, 25, who is married and has a daughter. “Pressure made me an addict. Otherwise, life is too difficult.”

Drug abuse is an increasing problem not just for Afghanistan, which produces most of the world’s heroin and opium, but for the very men charged with protecting the country and enforcing the nation’s drug laws as a Taliban-led insurgency escalates.

Police and army soldiers are using opium and heroin even as they are supposed to stop drug traffickers, who often smuggle drugs out of Afghanistan through police and army checkpoints, according to government and Western officials.

Many Afghans blame the police especially for corruption and involvement in the drug trade.

But rehabilitation experts say the problem also exists in the army, and soldiers themselves confirm it, even though drug use in the security forces has long been a taboo subject for the government.

That’s changing. Recent tests show as many as 1 in 3 of the tested police and police recruits use drugs.

The army has not yet systematically screened soldiers for drugs.

“This is a new issue,” said Tariq Suliman, the executive director of the Nejat Drug Rehabilitation Center, which has treated army soldiers and police for addiction in Kabul. “It’s a hidden problem. This is important, because the police and army are supposed to support and improve society, not use drugs.”

At the bombed-out former Russian Cultural Center, where addicts get high then sleep in the concrete rubble, men in army uniforms come to use heroin and opium.

“They are here all the time,” said self-described addict Mohammad Mukhtar, 22, who used to be in the army, standing next to another admitted addict who is in the police academy.

A man in an army uniform injected heroin and walked into the street. He passed a sober army soldier, who happened to be passing by. “What should we do with them?” asked the soldier, grimacing. “There are so many of them now.”

“Three years ago, I knew there were addicts among the police,” said Abdul Rahman Athar, the executive director of the Shahamat Health and Rehabilitation Organization, who works with the pilot program in Herat and is responsible for administering the drug tests.

“But it’s a sensitive issue, and the police didn’t want to admit it. It’s an embarrassing issue.”

Drug use is thought to be worse in the south and west, where it's tough to recruit police and where militants are strongest.

"They need them to have the courage" to fight militants, said a British Embassy official who is working to help get the police off drugs.

"But it's also one of the reasons they get killed. You hear of checkpoints getting entirely wiped out."

Throughout the country, hashish is not considered to be a drug and is often thought of as much more acceptable than alcohol.

It's not uncommon to show up at a remote police station and be greeted by a cloud of marijuana smoke and police with red eyes.

The army does not yet have a comprehensive anti-drugs policy.

Gen. Zaher Azimi, the spokesman for the Defense Ministry, said known addicts are treated at army hospitals.

He blamed any drug use in the army on the fact that soldiers are being relied on for non-army duties. "If you put an army soldier at a checkpoint on the side of the road, what do you think will happen?" Azimi asked.

He also said most Afghans did not consider marijuana to be a drug.

"We can hardly find anyone who hasn't smoked hashish in Afghanistan," Azimi said.

**MORE:**

**What An Amazing  
Coincidence!!  
Afghan President's Brother Is A  
Big Time Heroin Dealer:  
Senior Officials Complained That The  
White House Favored A Hands-Off  
Approach:  
"Narco-Corruption Went To The Top Of  
The Afghan Government"**

October 5, 2008 By JAMES RISEN, The New York Times Company. Carlotta Gall contributed reporting from Kabul, Afghanistan [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON — When Afghan security forces found an enormous cache of heroin hidden beneath concrete blocks in a tractor-trailer outside Kandahar in 2004, the local Afghan commander quickly impounded the truck and notified his boss.

**Before long, the commander, Habibullah Jan, received a telephone call from Ahmed Wali Karzai, the brother of President Hamid Karzai, asking him to release the vehicle and the drugs, Mr. Jan later told American investigators, according to notes from the debriefing obtained by The New York Times.**

**He said he complied after getting a phone call from an aide to President Karzai directing him to release the truck.**

Two years later, American and Afghan counternarcotics forces stopped another truck, this time near Kabul, finding more than 110 pounds of heroin. Soon after the seizure, United States investigators told other American officials that they had discovered links between the drug shipment and a bodyguard believed to be an intermediary for Ahmed Wali Karzai, according to a participant in the briefing.

The assertions about the involvement of the president's brother in the incidents were never investigated, according to American and Afghan officials, even though allegations that he has benefited from narcotics trafficking have circulated widely in Afghanistan.

But the assertions about him have deeply worried top American officials in Kabul and in Washington.

What appears to be a fairly common Afghan public perception of corruption inside their government is a tremendously corrosive element working against establishing long-term confidence in that government — a very serious matter,” said Lt. Gen. David W. Barno, who was commander of coalition military forces in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2005 and is now retired. “That could be problematic strategically for the United States.”

**The White House says it believes that Ahmed Wali Karzai is involved in drug trafficking, and American officials have repeatedly warned President Karzai that his brother is a political liability, two senior Bush administration officials said in interviews last week.**

Numerous reports link Ahmed Wali Karzai to the drug trade, according to current and former officials from the White House, the State Department and the United States Embassy in Afghanistan, who would speak only on the condition of anonymity.

In meetings with President Karzai, including a 2006 session with the United States ambassador, the Central Intelligence Agency's station chief and their British counterparts, American officials have talked about the allegations in hopes that the president might move his brother out of the country, said several people who took part in or were briefed on the talks.

“We thought the concern expressed to Karzai might be enough to get him out of there,” one official said. But President Karzai has resisted, demanding clear-cut evidence of wrongdoing, several officials said. “We don’t have the kind of hard, direct evidence that you could take to get a criminal indictment,” a White House official said. “That allows Karzai to say, ‘where’s your proof?’ “

**Neither the Drug Enforcement Administration, which conducts counternarcotics efforts in Afghanistan, nor the fledgling Afghan anti-drug agency has pursued investigations into the accusations against the president’s brother.**

**Several American investigators said senior officials at the D.E.A. and the office of the Director of National Intelligence complained to them that the White House favored a hands-off approach toward Ahmed Wali Karzai because of the political delicacy of the matter.**

The concerns about Ahmed Wali Karzai have surfaced recently because of the imprisonment of an informant who tipped off American and Afghan investigators to the drug-filled truck outside Kabul in 2006.

The informant, Hajji Aman Kheri, was arrested a year later on charges of plotting to kill an Afghan vice president in 2002.

The Afghan Supreme Court recently ordered him freed for lack of evidence, but he has not been released. Nearly 100 political leaders in his home region protested his continued incarceration last month.

Mr. Kheri, in a phone interview from jail in Kabul, said he had been an informant for the Drug Enforcement Administration and United States intelligence agencies, an assertion confirmed by American counternarcotics and intelligence officials.

Several of those officials, frustrated that the Bush administration was not pressing for Mr. Kheri’s release, came forward to disclose his role in the drug seizure.

**Thomas Schweich, a former senior State Department counternarcotics official, wrote in The New York Times Magazine in July that drug traffickers were buying off hundreds of police chiefs, judges and other officials.**

**“Narco-corruption went to the top of the Afghan government,” he said.**

Of the suspicions about Ahmed Wali Karzai, Representative Mark Steven Kirk, an Illinois Republican who has focused on the Afghan drug problem in Congress, said, “I would ask people in the Bush administration and the D.E.A. about him, and they would say, ‘We think he’s dirty.’ “

In the two drug seizures in 2004 and 2006, millions of dollars’ worth of heroin was found. In April 2006, Mr. Jan, by then a member of the Afghan Parliament, met with American investigators at a D.E.A. safe house in Kabul and was asked to describe the events surrounding the 2004 drug discovery, according to notes from the debriefing session.

He told the Americans that after impounding the truck, he received calls from Ahmed Wali Karzai and Shaida Mohammad, an aide to President Karzai, according to the notes.

**Mr. Jan later became a political opponent of President Karzai, and in a 2007 speech in Parliament he accused Ahmed Wali Karzai of involvement in the drug trade.**

**Mr. Jan was shot to death in July as he drove from a guesthouse to his main residence in Kandahar Province.**

But Khan Mohammad, the former Afghan commander in Kandahar who was Mr. Jan's superior in 2004, said in a recent interview that Mr. Jan reported at the time that he had received a call from the Karzai aide ordering him to release the drug cache. Khan Mohammad recalled that Mr. Jan believed that the call had been instigated by Ahmed Wali Karzai, not the president.

"This was a very heavy issue," Mr. Mohammad said.

He provided the same account in an October 2004 interview with The Christian Science Monitor.

**Mr. Mohammad said that after a subordinate captured a large shipment of heroin about two months earlier, the official received repeated telephone calls from Ahmed Wali Karzai. "He was saying, 'This heroin belongs to me, you should release it,' " the newspaper quoted Mr. Mohammad as saying.**

In 2006, Mr. Kheri, the Afghan informant, tipped off American counternarcotics agents to another drug shipment. Mr. Kheri, who had proved so valuable to the United States that his family had been resettled in Virginia in 2004, briefly returned to Afghanistan in 2006.

The heroin in the truck that was seized was to be delivered to Ahmed Wali Karzai's bodyguard in the village of Maidan Shahr, and then transported to Kandahar, one of the Afghans involved in the deal later told American investigators, according to notes of his debriefing.

Several Afghans — the drivers and the truck's owner — were arrested by Afghan authorities, but no action was taken against Mr. Karzai or his bodyguard, who investigators believe serves as a middleman, the American officials said.

In 2007, Mr. Kheri visited Afghanistan again, once again serving as an American informant, the officials said. This time, however, he was arrested by the Karzai government and charged in the 2002 assassination of Hajji Abdul Qadir, an Afghan vice president, who had been a political rival of Mr. Kheri's brother, Hajji Zaman, a former militia commander and a powerful figure in eastern Afghanistan.

Mr. Kheri, in the phone interview from Kabul, denied any involvement in the killing and said his arrest was politically motivated. He maintained that the president's brother was involved in the heroin trade.

**"It's no secret about Wali Karzai and drugs," said Mr. Kheri, who speaks English. "A lot of people in the Afghan government are involved in drug trafficking."**

Mr. Kheri's continued detention, despite the Afghan court's order to release him, has frustrated some of the American investigators who worked with him.

In recent months, they have met with officials at the State Department and the office of the Director of National Intelligence seeking to persuade the Bush administration to intervene with the Karzai government to release Mr. Kheri.

"We have just left a really valuable informant sitting in jail to rot," one investigator said.

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## Army Commander Says Afghan Military Maps A Deadly Joke

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

**Had he known the patrol was going out, he said, he would have refused permission because of the risk. But radio batteries were so scarce he could only make an hourly check call to the men's position.**

October 07, 2008 Goeff Meade, Defence correspondent; Sky News

An army commander has told an inquest that inaccurate and outdated military maps of Afghanistan were considered a joke.

Sergeant Paul McMellon, of the Parachute Regiment's 3rd Battalion, was in command on the day a patrol stumbled into a minefield in Afghanistan.

He was giving evidence at the inquest into the death of Corporal Mark Wright. The 27 year-old was awarded a posthumous George Cross for helping wounded comrades to safety before stepping on a landmine himself in Kajaki, Afghanistan.

But because of a shortage of appropriately equipped helicopters, it took more than three hours before Cpl Wright could be winched out of danger.

He died of wounds on the flight to hospital.

Three other soldiers lost legs after stepping on mines.

Sgt McMellon told the hearing in Oxford that Cpl Wright's patrol should not have been in the area at the time. The danger from mines was well known and troops had been advised to stick to marked tracks.

But he said there were no up-to-date maps indicating the exact areas to avoid.

**The only chart showed just a small area believed to be deadly. "It was a standing joke," he told the Coroner. "The red circle marked on the map was the only place where there actually weren't any mines."**

**Had he known the patrol was going out, he said, he would have refused permission because of the risk.**

**But radio batteries were so scarce he could only make an hourly check call to the men's position.**

Soldiers were told to fire into the air if they needed to attract his attention, a method as old as firearms themselves.

On Monday, their lawyers announced that the MoD had agreed to work towards an out-of-court settlement of a multi-million-pound compensation claim.

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

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

## **TROOP NEWS**

**“The Northeast Regional Coordinator For IVAW, Says He Hopes The Event Inspires More People To Join The Anti-War Effort”**



October 5, 2008 Stephanie Veale, Staff writer; Democrat and Chronicle [Excerpts]



War protesters filled the streets — and blocked traffic — Saturday evening during a march from the Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic on Westfall Road to the campus of Monroe Community College.

The march topped off North East Winter Soldier, a day of anti-war activities organized by Iraq Veterans Against the War.

Fifteen veterans of Iraq, Afghanistan and Vietnam told their stories, and a rally in front of the V.A. clinic drew attention to what protesters say are limited hours. The clinic is not open on Saturdays.

“The pain of our veterans does not stop on weekends or federal holidays,” said Iraq veteran Bryan Casler, president of the Rochester chapter of IVAW.

Kelli Large, 23, made the two-hour trip to Rochester from Moravia, Cayuga County, to support the event. Her 21-year-old brother, Johnny Jackson, is serving in the Army in Afghanistan now.

**Large’s husband, Mitchell Large, 32, says it will be hard for him to vote in the November election because neither major-party candidate supports the immediate withdrawal of troops.**

More than 100 people attended North East Winter Soldier, including dozens of students from the Campus Anti-war Network.

Hearing the veterans’ testimonies reminded Cornell University sophomore Malcolm Sanborn-Hum, 19, of Westchester County, of the seriousness of the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan. “It’s not this romanticized, black-and-white kind of story of us bringing democracy and freedom to another country,” Sanborn-Hum said. “It’s more nuanced. There’s lots of suffering.”

Iraq veteran Mike Totten, 26, was at Saturday’s event to help veterans who needed support after telling their stories.

Totten is part of Homefront Battle Buddies, an IVAW program that trains veterans to help other veterans sort through the aftermath of war.

“Our message is, ‘You are not alone,’” Totten said.

Totten reiterated the importance of demanding better health care for returning veterans. He says the V.A. has vastly underestimated the number of veterans coming home with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Casler, who also serves as the northeast regional coordinator for IVAW, says he hopes the event inspires more people to join the anti-war effort.

He told his own war story Saturday. Speaking in public about his experience is easier than it used to be, he said, adding that hearing other veterans’ stories is part the healing process.

"I never feel better than after hanging out with my Iraq and Afghanistan buddies," he said.

## **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 wars, 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. Phone: 917.677.8057

# **Ithaca Town Council Committee Proposes That "Residents Support Lawfully And Proactively Military Personnel And Veterans Who Are Organizing To Stop The Wars"**

September 17, 2008 By Krisy Gashler, Journal Staff, The Ithaca Journal & Oct 7, 2008 N Sabet

ITHACA — A Common Council committee voted unanimously Tuesday night to declare Ithaca a "Community of Sanctuary" thus respecting the rights of its residents to support lawfully and proactively military personnel and veterans who are organizing to stop the wars in and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan."

Before the City Council voted unanimously to pass the resolution, city residents and members from IVAW presented compelling statements in its support.

The sanctuary resolution was written and submitted by Peace Now Ithaca, which staged a march to Fort Drum in May with members of the Fort Drum chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

Veterans who participated in the march "lamented about the suppression and intimidation they experienced" in protesting the wars, said Alexis Alexander, a member of Peace Now Ithaca.

**Alderman J.R. Clairborne, D-2nd, and chairman of the Community and Organizational Issues committee, said he is a Navy veteran and said he understands the need to tell members of the military that they can protest.**

**Clairborne said when he was in boot camp, sailors were told to stay away from protests, especially if they were in uniform.**

**“It (the resolution) is telling active military in the area that you are welcome to attend and let your voice be heard,” Clairborne said.**

Alderman Eric Rosario, I-2nd, asked whether the resolution should also confirm the city’s support for all protestors, including those who may favor the wars.

“As I read this, it’s explicitly stating who we’ll protect,” Rosario said. “However wrong we think they are, they need to know that they’ll have the same rights and protections as long as they’re lawfully protesting.”

The other members of Common Council disagreed.

Alderwoman Maria Coles, D-1st, responded that “what Eric has suggested might sound even-handed and fair. But what is the reality?”

Everyone has the right to protest under the First Amendment, but enlisted military personnel take great risk in speaking in opposition to military operations, she said.

“My sense is that by including people who might stage a counter-demonstration might take away some of the impetus for what is being done here,” Coles said. “I really believe that will water it down and take away its moral power.”



**Groper On The Loose At The  
Miami VA Hospital:  
Complaints Going Back 17 Years  
Ignored;  
“There Are Signs All Over VA Hospitals -  
- ‘We Put Patients First’ -- But I Didn’t  
See Anything Like That”**

10.05.08 BY JOHN DORSCHNER, The Miami Herald [Excerpts]

Three patients and an intern have accused a nurse practitioner at the Miami VA hospital of inappropriate sexual behavior, going back to 1991.

He remains employed.

When Ron Wolff, a disabled Army veteran, walked into the examining room at the VA Hospital in Miami three years ago, he says he found it unsettling that nurse practitioner

Andres Irizarry began talking about how he enjoyed going to sadomasochism conventions.

As he later stated in sworn testimony, Wolff says the nurse ordered him to drop his pants and began fondling him in a way that felt distinctly sexual, not medical.

For almost three years, Wolff tried to complain about the incident, first to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, then to the Florida Department of Health.

However, a VA investigation, which began more than two years after Wolff first complained, found that at least two other patients and an intern had made similar complaints about Irizarry, going back to the early 1990s.

Written in July, the report concluded there had been “a long-standing pattern of inappropriate behavior to vulnerable individuals by Mr. Andres Irizarry dating back to at least 1991.” It recommended the hospital consider some kind of disciplinary action.

“Why didn’t the VA do anything before?” asks Tonia Werner, a forensic psychiatrist at the University of Florida who specializes in legal issues involving behavior, including sexual abuse. “Why are there four reports and he’s still there?”

Irizarry retains a clear/active license in Florida as an advanced nurse practitioner.

Wolff says he complained to the state several months ago but an investigator didn’t see him until Wednesday.

Raised in Iowa, Wolff joined the Army when he was 17. He has been in the VA system for years, with a life-threatening illness that he asks not be revealed, plus high blood pressure, diabetes, heart arrhythmia and anxiety and panic disorders.

Completely disabled because of his medical conditions, he gets \$1,502 a month from the VA and Social Security. He receives all his care and medications from the VA without charge.

In December 2005, after moving here from San Diego, Wolff went to the Miami Veterans’ Administration Hospital, where he was seen by Irizarry. As he later testified under oath: “The first step to this physical examination was laying on my back on the examination table and lowering my jeans . . . and my underwear, and him touching my penis. And it went on for a while. . . .”

“By the time it was over, any ambiguity as to what was going on had left my mind that this was not a physical examination, that it was something else.”

In an interview, Wolff said: “It seemed to go on forever. I was afraid to say anything. I was out of my meds. I needed my meds. It was like a life-or-death situation.”

Werner, the UF psychiatrist, says many patients are reluctant to report inappropriate behavior by healthcare professionals. ‘The biggest factor is people’s trust in healthcare in general. ‘Do what the doctor says.’ And that same thing would apply to an advanced nurse practitioner.”

Saying he hated to return to the Miami VA Hospital, Wolff moved back to San Diego. He says a friend urged him to complain. 'He told me: 'If this happened to you, maybe it has happened to other people, and that there was a responsibility to speak up.' "

Wolff says he saw a VA patient advocate in San Diego. He later testified: "He told me that I needed to understand the consequences of going forward with a complaint of this nature. And the consequences could possibly be that it's going to be he said/he said, and you won't get anywhere. . . . And the consequences might be that your benefits will be jeopardized."

Cindy Butler, a VA spokeswoman in San Diego, says the Patient Advocate's program "has no record of ever seeing" Wolff.

Wolff decided not to pursue his complaint, but in July 2007, he responded to a mail survey sent out by University of Miami President Donna Shalala and former U.S. Sen. Bob Dole, who had been appointed by President Bush to look into the VA system after a scathing Washington Post series on wretched conditions at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

Wolff detailed what happened in Miami and at the Patient Advocate's office in San Diego. He then got a call from two California VA administrators who questioned him about the patient advocate but not about the Miami incident.

One California supervisor called him back and said she had counseled the Patient Advocate employee who talked to Wolff and told him his behavior was not appropriate, Wolff says. But, he says, the supervisors showed no interest in the nurse practitioner's behavior.

In November, Wolff complained to the VA inspector general in an e-mail: "I am more than willing to be polygraphed about any of these issues. . . . I believe the VA should compensate me for this misconduct."

VA records show the complaint was forwarded to the Miami hospital three months later. Another three months went by before the Miami VA contacted him. In June, he testified before a three-member Administrative Investigative Board. In July, the board issued a six-page memo.

The copy sent to Wolff is redacted, with the names of other patients and employees blacked out. It reports that a person Irizarry worked with from 1991 to 1994 "felt sexually pressured by Mr. Irizarry on two occasions." Someone complained to the chief of psychology but "no appropriate action was taken," the report states.

Sometime "prior to 2006," another patient made a complaint about "inappropriate touching during a physical exam." Irizarry was given "verbal counseling" about such behavior, the report said.

A third patient, who saw Irizarry at the Oakland Park VA clinic four times, complained that he was "feeling sexually pressured" by the nurse practitioner during medical examinations.

Werner, the UF psychiatrist, says that, given how reluctant patients are to come forward, "It's possible there are many more victims out there."

Three months later, the VA is still deciding what to do with him.

On Tuesday, a week after The Herald asked the VA about the case, Wolff said he was visited by two investigators from the VA's Office of Inspector General Criminal Investigations Division.

Now 60, Wolff remains upset about the slowness of the investigation. 'The VA has become as much a part of the problem as the incident itself. . . . There are signs all over VA hospitals -- 'We Put Patients First' -- but I didn't see anything like that.'

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## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

# Rage Against The Machine



From: Mike Hastie  
To: GI Special  
Sent: September 30, 2008  
Subject: Rage Against The Machine

**Rage Against The Machine**

Sometimes having PTSD is like riding in an old pickup truck over a very bumpy road, while holding a cocked pistol to your head. You never know what could set your finger off. I believe in most cases, it is the rage of betrayal that pulls the trigger.

Mike Hastie  
Vietnam Veteran  
Sept. 29, 2008

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](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T)

## OCCUPATION PALESTINE

**Zionist Neo-Nazi Settler Filth  
Out Of Control:  
Openly Attacking “Palestinians,  
Israeli Soldiers, Police And Left-  
Wing Activists”  
Offering \$300,000 Reward For Killing  
Members Of Peace Now  
[And The Government Lets It Go On, Of  
Course]**

‘When Palestinians attack Israelis, the authorities invoke all means at their disposal to arrest the suspects. “When Israeli civilians attack Palestinians, the Israeli authorities employ an undeclared policy of leniency and compromise toward the perpetrators.’

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

October 5 2008 Toni O’Loughlin in Jerusalem, The Observer

A growing number of ultra-nationalist [translation: outright fascist filth] Jewish settlers in the Palestinian West Bank are threatening Israel's security, according to the military chief responsible for their protection in the occupied territory.

Major-General Gadi Shamni, whose role includes stopping Palestinian attacks and protecting Jewish settlements in the West Bank, said the rising level of violence from militant settlers is 'impairing our ability to carry out missions in the territories'.

**He said that the number of extremists who attack Palestinians, Israeli soldiers, police and left-wing activists had grown from a core of a 'few dozen' troublemakers to at least several hundred.**

'We are forced to divert our attention elsewhere,' said Shamni in an interview published in Haaretz newspaper.

**'These are fringe elements that are gaining support because of the tail wind they enjoy and the backing afforded by certain parts of the leadership, both rabbinical and public, whether in explicit statements or tacitly.'**

**His comments follow the attack on a high-profile critic of the settlements, Professor Zeev Sternhell, a Holocaust survivor and expert on fascism.**

**Sternhell was injured a week ago after a pipe bomb exploded at the entrance to his house in Jerusalem.**

**Police found posters in Sternhell's neighbourhood offering a 1.1m shekel [\$316,000] reward to anyone who killed a member of Peace Now, an Israeli group that campaigns against settlements in the West Bank.**

A recent UN report documented 222 attacks in the first half of this year, against a total of 291 for the whole of last year.

On Friday, the former mayor of a West Bank settlement, Daniella Weiss, was charged with assaulting police officers. She allegedly hit police who had arrived at her house to search for suspects accused of setting fire to a Palestinian-owned olive grove.

**Tactics such as burning orchards, blocking roads, rioting and stoning have become a routine part of the settlers' arsenal in their attacks on Palestinians.**

Police and soldiers are also being targeted amid lingering bitterness after clashes between the settlers and security forces when Israel removed its settlements from Gaza in 2005.

Elyakim Haetzni, a founding father of the settler movement, warned of civil war if Israel attempted to remove more settlements from the West Bank. He said that about 100,000 Israelis were ready to fight for the land.

'Every clash between the settlers and the police, the police get a beating and the army doesn't want to be involved any more. A great number of them are religious,' he said.



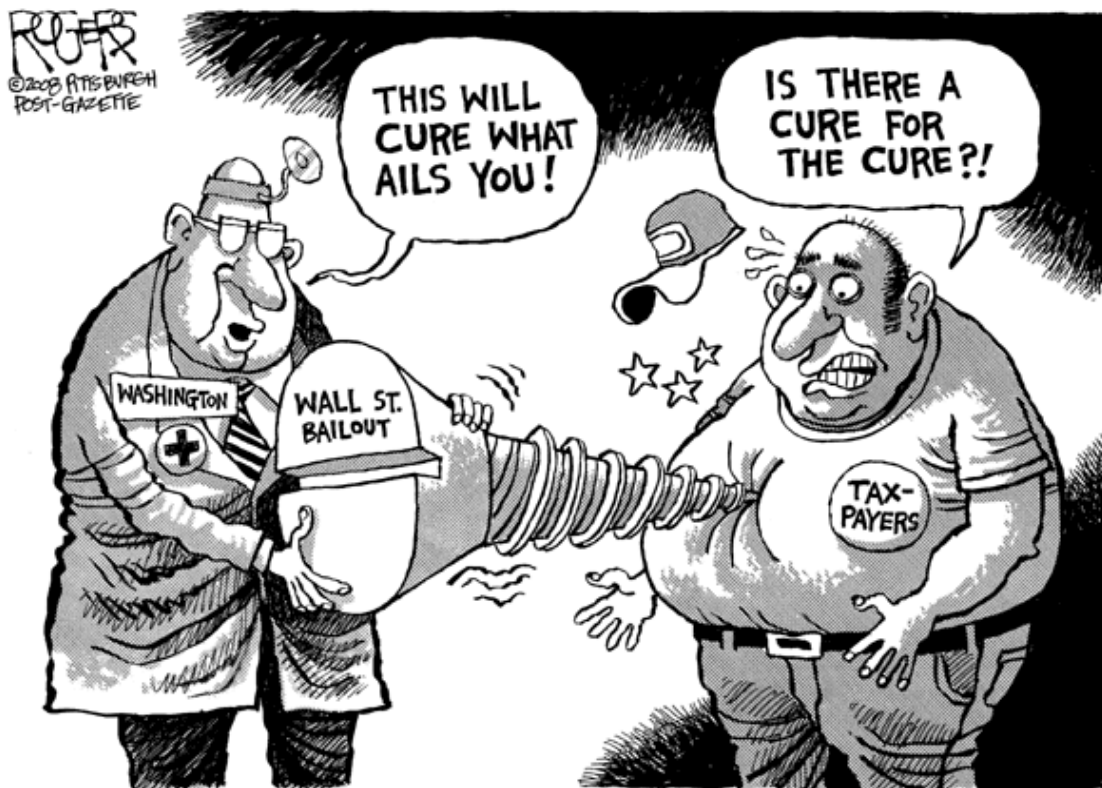
B'Tselem, another Israeli human rights group to raise concerns about growing settler violence this year, said: 'When Palestinians attack Israelis, the authorities invoke all means at their disposal to arrest the suspects.

“When Israeli civilians attack Palestinians, the Israeli authorities employ an undeclared policy of leniency and compromise toward the perpetrators.’

Sternhell, who won this year’s Israel Prize, an annual award to mark the country’s independence day, despite a High Court challenge by settlers, says that Israel’s ‘politicians must declare war on the extreme right and occupation’.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: [www.rafahtoday.org](http://www.rafahtoday.org) The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves “Israeli.”]

## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT  
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WARS**

**CLASS WAR REPORTS**



**Capitalism At Work #1:**

**After The Fed Spent \$85 Billion To Bail Out AIG, Executives Went For A Week At Luxury Resort;  
"\$440,000 For The Retreat, \$200,000 For Rooms, \$150,000 For Meals And \$23,000 In Spa Charges"**



St. Regis Resort in Monarch Beach, California [images.travelnow.com]

October 7, 2008 By Brian Ross and Tom Shine, ABC News

Less than a week after the federal government committed \$85 billion to bail out AIG, executives of the giant AIG insurance company headed for a week-long retreat at a luxury resort and spa, the St. Regis Resort in Monarch Beach, California, Congressional investigators revealed today.

“Rooms at this resort can cost over \$1,000 a night,” Congressman Henry Waxman (D-CA) said this morning as his committee continued its investigation of Wall Street and its CEOs.

AIG documents obtained by Waxman’s investigators show the company paid more than \$440,000 for the retreat, including nearly \$200,000 for rooms, \$150,000 for meals and \$23,000 in spa charges.

“They’re getting their pedicures and their manicures and the American people are paying for that,” said Cong. Elijah Cummings (D-MD).

“This unbridled greed,” said Cong. Mark Souder (R-IN), “it’s an insensitivity to how people are spending our dollars.”

Appearing before the committee, Martin Sullivan, the AIG CEO until June, said the company was overwhelmed by a “financial global tsunami,” and that “no simple or single cause” was to blame.

“I am heartbroken at what has happened,” Sullivan said.

Sullivan was given a \$15 million “golden parachute” payment after being replaced as CEO in June.

MORE:

## **Capitalism At Work #2:**

# **September Increase In Unemployment “The Largest Since March 2003”**

October 6 2008 By James Politi in Washington, The Financial Times Ltd

JPMorgan economists have compared the US labour market with a boat sailing through rough seas over the past few months. The July data showed it “was taking on more water, but has not yet capsized”.

By August, the boat had indeed capsized, and in September there were “159,000 men and women overboard”, according to figures released at the end of last week.

Last month’s decline in non-farm payrolls was the largest since March 2003, and one of the clearest signs yet that turmoil on Wall Street and the US banking industry is spilling over into the broader economy: manufacturers cut 51,000 jobs; retailers shed 40,000; construction companies lost 35,000; and financial services groups slashed 17,000.

Beyond an accelerating pace of job losses, the non-farm payroll report also exposed worsening conditions for workers who are still employed.

The average work week declined to 33.6 hours from 33.7 hours between August and September and the index of private sector hours worked dropped by 0.5 per cent - the largest monthly fall since 2003.

To cap it off, the Department of Labor said that 337,000 Americans began working part time because they were unable to find full-time jobs. That category has swelled by 1.6m during the past 12 months to just over 6m people.

### **GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out**

**GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .**

**The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:**

<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/2008/index.html>;

[http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi\\_special/](http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/);

<http://www.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res1&mod=gis&rep=gis>

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