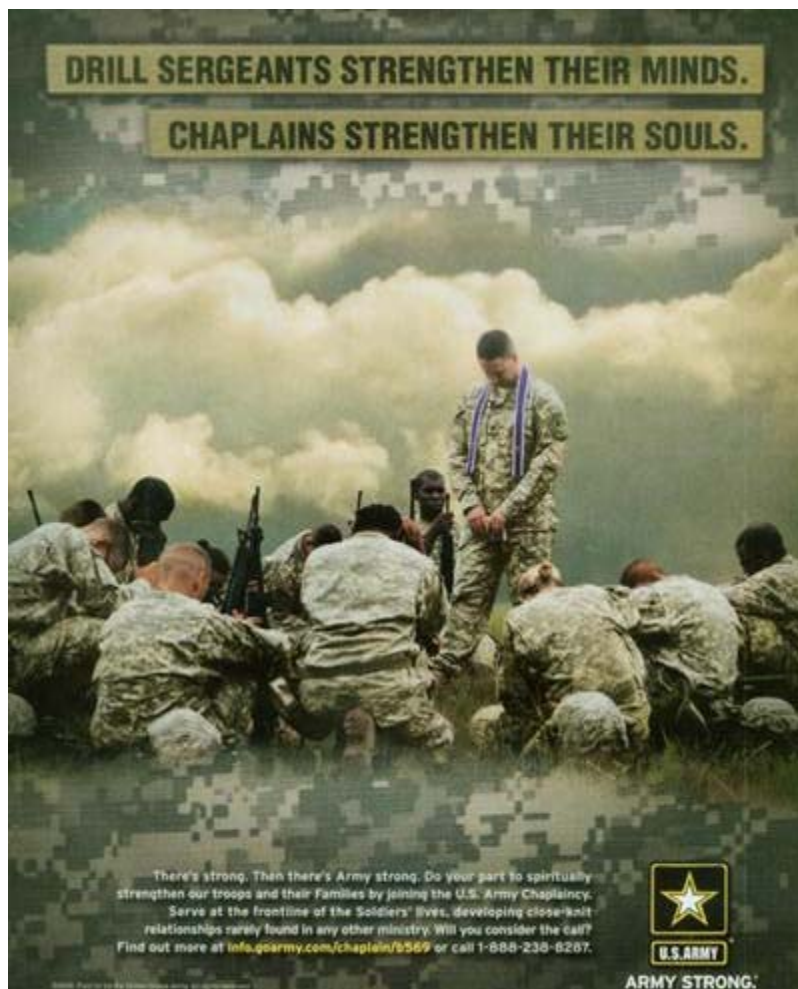


GI SPECIAL 6K14:

**“Oh Lord, Do Not Let Them Go
Back To Those Shitholes For A 5th
Tour”**

**“We Pray You Send The Scum In
Congress To Iraq Or Afghanistan
Instead”**

**“Every Last One Of Them, Forever And Ever,
Amen”**



[Thanks to Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace

ACTION REPORTS

Face To Face With The New York National Guard

From: Miriam A., The Military Project
To: GI Special
Sent: November 18, 2008
Subject: Outreach To New York National Guard

The weather reported rain, but it turned out to be foggy and warm for outreach at the [XXXXX] National Guard Armory on Friday, November 14th.

The Friday evening musters are for the months that detachments of soldiers in BDU go by bus on weekend training exercises in the upstate woods. In-town monthly musters are Saturday mornings.

A large proportion of these Guard soldiers are Iraq combat veterans.

Four members of the Military Project came with baggies of cookies and brownies, copies of Sir No Sir, a one page handout on GI Rights, a two page handout on the Military Families campaign to de-federalize the New York National Guard and keep them home, and information on how to back up the fifteen members of Iraq Veterans Against the war and civilian supports, including other veterans, who were brutalized by the police while protesting at the last presidential debate at Hofstra University in Long Island.

A National Guard issue of GI Special produced for this outreach was included with the other information, all packaged in a sealed-top 9 x 12 plastic food storage bag for ease of handling and to protect against the rain.

About 80 packs were given out.

Soldiers who were especially interested were also given copies of the Sir No Sir DVD. One soldier said that he had gotten a copy at a previous outreach and he and some other soldiers got together to watch it.

Most of the military personnel that we encountered took information packages, and a large number stopped for conversation to learn about the Military Project and our work to support the troops resisting the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Those who stopped to talk said they ALL shared our political views.

A small number of individuals refused to take our materials or even get within two feet.

When asked why, the overall response was that their commanding officers told them not take political or propagandistic materials. Some probably did not know Department of Defense Directive 1325.6 which stipulates that any member of the military has the right to read and possess one copy of any publication they wish to read that is lawful for a civilian to possess.

This was my second time out on the field and I was comfortable, with the support of another Military Project member, distributing materials and engaging soldiers in conversation to ask them about their political views.

The soldiers do not object that none of us are Iraq/Afghanistan war veterans. To the contrary, many have expressed appreciation that civilians care enough to show up and do this work.

And a Vietnam Veteran who comes to the outreach occasions at this Guard unit makes outstanding connection with today's' soldiers.

He wears his Vietnam dog tag. Enough said.

There were also some snafus that we have learned from. Traveling Soldier, and Why We Are Here, publications that are usually distributed along with the other materials were not copied in time for this outreach due to screw ups.

Lesson learned: prepare copies of materials more than the day before!

The armory has three entrances, but this outing we were only able to cover two. Need a better participation next time, also set up well in advance.

MORE:

MORE ACTION REPORTS WANTED: FROM YOU!

An effective way to encourage others to support members of the armed forces organizing to resist the Imperial war is to report what you do.

If you've carried out organized contact with troops on active duty, at base gates, airports, or anywhere else, send a report in to GI Special for the Action Reports section.

Same for contact with National Guard and/or Reserve components.

They don't have to be long. Just clear, and direct action reports about what work was done and how.

If there were favorable responses, say so. If there were unfavorable responses or problems, don't leave them out.

If you are not planning or engaging in outreach to the troops, you have nothing to report.

NOTE WELL:

Do not make public any information that could compromise the work.

Whether you are serving in the armed forces or not, do not in any way identify members of the armed forces organizing to stop the war.

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

The sole exception: occasions when a member of the armed services explicitly directs his or her name be listed as reporting on the action.

**DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE
MILITARY?**

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**Buellton Marine, 24, Killed By Bomb In
Iraq**

November 18, 2008 BUELLTON, Calif. (AP)

Aaron Allen and his childhood buddies had a special tattoo on their biceps: the Chinese symbol for "warrior."

And despite his mother's wishes, Allen, 24, had decided by 16 that he would join the Marines.

"I wanted nothing to do with it. There was no way I could talk him out of it," Cathy Allen said. "At one point when he was going overseas, I told him I had the right - since he was

my only son - to stop this. He begged me not to. He said he had trained for this, he wanted to do it.”

On Nov. 14, Cpl. Allen was killed by an improvised bomb in Faris, about 10 miles south of Falluja. It was his second tour of duty in Iraq.

He had been scheduled to return to the United States in five weeks. After his enlistment ended next March he planned to attend a fire academy, his relatives said.

The Buellton native joined the Marines in March 2004 and served with the security forces of the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines.

“He was the most caring, loving person,” said his sister Amy, 27. “He opened his house, his arms and his heart to everybody. He was my everything. He was my brother, he was my best friend, he was my dad. He was my little big brother.”

He also was “probably the best dancer you’ve ever seen,” she said.

She, her mother and Allen’s girlfriend saw him off when he left Camp Pendleton in San Diego County to go overseas on Oct. 5.

“I always told him, ‘Remember, you are not invincible,’” she said.

Allen was a 2002 graduate of Santa Ynez Valley High School, where he was on the football, baseball and wrestling teams.

He sent orange tulips to his girlfriend, Kelly Zajac, and they arrived the day before he died. He called that night to talk to her.

Had she realized it was her last call, “there are millions of things I would have said,” Zajac said.

Allen had planned to propose on her birthday in January.

Marine Iraqi veteran Brian Bull said he had been confident his lifelong friend would return.

“I never had to worry much about him,” Bull said. “He knew how to do his job

Allen also is also survived by his father, Michael Allen of Highland, and his grandmother, Linda Fenton of Indio.

His friends have established the Aaron Allen YFL Scholarship Fund to help pay youth football registration fees for local children.

**NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1:
PACK UP
GO HOME**



U.S. soldiers patrol in Baquba, Diyala province October 31, 2008. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two U.S. Soldiers Wounded By Khost Car Bomb

November 20, 2008 KHOST, Afghanistan (Reuters)

A car-bomber killed nine people and wounded 16, including two U.S. soldiers, in an attack on Thursday on a government compound in eastern Afghanistan, a government official said.

The bomber blew himself up at the gate of a district government center in Khost province.

District government chief Abdul Qayoum said nine people were killed, five of them police

Afghan Resistance “Setting Up Courts And Other Local-Government

Institutions Across Southern Afghanistan”

“A Parallel Government Independent Of Kabul”

“In a very real sense, the Taliban has become engaged in competitive state-building with the Afghan government and NATO -- though focusing more on security and justice than reconstruction,” said Rand Corp. expert Seth Jones in an email from Afghanistan.

November 19, 2008 YOCHI J. DREAZEN and SIOBHAN GORMAN, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON -- The Taliban are setting up courts and other local-government institutions across southern Afghanistan, challenging U.S. efforts to pacify the country and bolster the authority of the central government in Kabul.

Senior American military officials said the Taliban run roughly two dozen law courts in southern Afghanistan, one of the armed Islamist group’s main strongholds. Drawing on a fundamentalist interpretation of Islamic law, the courts work to resolve conflicts over property, grazing rights and inheritances, the officials said.

The Taliban have also appointed unofficial governors and mayors to exercise day-to-day control over remote areas, amounting to a parallel government independent of Kabul, according to the U.S. officials.

There are thousands of U.S. and British troops in southern Afghanistan, but American commanders say they don’t have enough forces to prevent the Taliban from controlling territory there.

Afghanistan’s ambassador to the U.S., Said Tayeb Jawad, said in an interview that the Taliban is expanding its reach into Afghans’ daily lives.

Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told reporters Monday that Taliban activity at the local-government level appears to be rising.

The first indications that the Taliban were taking on government functions appeared more than a year ago and picked up this summer, said Henry Crumpton, a former senior CIA and State Department counterterrorism official.

He said the functions include running courts and collecting taxes.

Two senior U.S. military officials in Afghanistan said the Taliban created their courts by abolishing the tribal judicial systems that have long settled disputes in poor, conservative regions.

The Taliban used a similar approach in the 1990s, when they rose to power by using force to bring a measure of order to unstable regions of the country. The officers said the militants threatened tribal leaders in villages and killed those who refused to step aside.

The Taliban shadow governments now handle everything from land disputes to divorces, the officers said.

In the south, Taliban militants are extorting money -- which they describe as a tax [Success! The occupation really is teaching the American way of life!] -- from truckers and other merchants who ferry products across provincial boundaries, according to U.S. officials.

"In a very real sense, the Taliban has become engaged in competitive state-building with the Afghan government and NATO -- though focusing more on security and justice than reconstruction," said Rand Corp. expert Seth Jones in an email from Afghanistan.

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

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

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

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

TROOP NEWS

**Troops In Iraq Sentenced To
Agonizing Death By KBR:**

Managers Knew Deadly Sodium Dichromate Poison Was In AO And Covered It Up:

“Hundreds Of U.S. Troops May Not Even Know Of Their Exposure That Could One Day Result In A Horrible Disease, Cancers And Death”

“A Day’s Exposure Could Write You A Death Warrant”

“When The Issues Came Up, It Was Denial And Intimidation To Keep It Quiet”



Sergeant First Class David Moore died in 2008 from a mysterious illness after returning from Iraq.

“If a company - because they wanted to make a quick buck, intentionally exposed Indiana Guardsmen and women to a cancer-causing chemical, if that’s proven, they ought to go to jail,” says Senator Bayh. (Watch a longer interview with Bayh.)

[Thanks to SSG N (ret’d) who sent this in. She writes: Here we go again. I’m getting sick of all these stories about poisoning people and the planet in the name of greed.]

Nov 17, 2008 By Scott Swan, Eyewitness News, WTHR

David Moore’s death certificate reads chronic interstitial lung disease.

But Moore’s family still considers it a mystery.

However, there is a man in rural Arkansas who believes he has solved the issue.

71-year-old Ed Blacke spent several months in Iraq working alongside the Indiana National Guard soldiers.

He thinks the answer to Moore's death might be written on a tank at the Qarmat Ali Water Treatment Plant in Iraq. Blacke has pictures on his home computer and points to the words on one tank.

"That says very plainly Sodium Dichromate.

"A day's exposure could write you a death warrant. Just one day's exposure," says Blacke.

Blacke was the Health, Safety and Environmental Coordinator at the Qarmat Ali water treatment plant near Basra, Iraq. Blacke arrived in June of 2003 and remained through the middle of August 2003.

His Houston-based company, Kellogg Brown & Root (KBR) was contracted to rebuild the facility after the United States invaded Iraq in 2003 and toppled Saddam's regime. The soldiers guarding the plant were from Indiana.

Blacke says he was warned about grenades in the equipment. "The area was heavily booby-trapped," says Blacke.

But Blacke says he was not told another enemy was hiding - a chemical that can cause cancer.

"The very subtle sabotage was the chemicals that we were not aware of," says Blacke.

The former KBR worker says his Iraqi interpreter told him the Iraqi Baath party sabotaged the facility prior to the U.S. invasion by opening bags of sodium dichromate and spreading the chemical around the plant.

The chemical had been used at the plant to prevent rust and fungus in the pipes.

But the chemical is dangerous.

Dr. Max Costa is the professor and chairman at the Department of Environmental Medicine at New York University School of Medicine.

At NYU, Dr. Costa is in charge of a large department that conducts research and instruction on how chemical and physical agents in the environment injure humans.

His area of expertise is heavy metals, such as hexavalent chromium which is present in sodium dichromate. He studies how these agents cause cancer in humans.

He served as an expert witness in the Erin Brockovich case and is known as one of the nation's leading experts on sodium dichromate.

"It's one of the most potent carcinogens known to man," says Dr. Costa.

Back in Arkansas, Blacke looks at another picture that he took while working at the Iraqi plant.



Blacke: "That is another one of the drainage ditches, and you can see it's just full of sodium dichromate solution by the coloring."

"That is another one of the drainage ditches, and you can see it's just full of sodium dichromate solution by the coloring. The chemical was quite obvious. The broken bags were obvious. The chemical mixed in with water in the drainage ditch was obvious," says Blacke.

Blacke described the chemical he saw at the plant.

"It was like a coarse, granular sand. Orange, reddish in color," says Blacke.

Blacke says when many of the soldiers and workers began having nose bleeds and difficulty breathing, he sounded the alarm bells.

"When I saw the medical symptoms and signs increasing in the fellas, that's when I looked, did the research, brought it up to my management, and my management told me I was being a troublemaker," says Blacke.

"When the issues came up, it was denial and intimidation to keep it quiet.

"And people were getting hurt," added Blacke.

"They (KBR) told the men that they had looked at it, it was a mild irritant. That we were making a lot to do about nothing. A mountain out of a mole hill."

"Judging from their symptoms, the nasal bleeding, the nasal symptoms, those are all pretty good signs of hexavalent chromium exposure," says Dr. Costa.

"I would say they had a pretty severe exposure over several months that they worked there," added Dr. Costa.

Ed Blacke claims KBR knew sodium dichromate was at the plant.

"They knew about this in May," says Blacke. "Everything seemed to be focused on we made a commitment, we're going to get this done, we're going to get it done in this time frame, hell or high water, we're gonna get it done," added Blacke.

“They (KBR) just had an attitude - they were focused on that finish line and they didn’t care how they got there.”

The “Erin Brockovich” movie is where most people learned about sodium dichromate. People in that case became sick after drinking the chemical in water.

In Iraq the exposure was different.

“They were standing out in it, patrolling in it, working in it,” Blacke says of the Indiana National Guard members.

“The poor soldiers, they were outside a lot of the times. I’d say 90 percent of the time, they were outside.”

Blacke says the soldiers were outside for hours over the course of several weeks, even during windstorms when the chemical was getting blown around.

“It got into our clothing, it was on our skin,” says Blacke. “We had no benches, no tables. We sat on the ground, so we were sitting in it. It was there. So, you couldn’t help but inhale it and ingest it,” added Blacke.

“The environment we were required to take our meals in, to work in, it was just saturated with sodium dichromate.”

Blacke says KBR was negligent by not giving the Indiana National Guard soldiers protective gear.

“I’d say grossly negligent,” says Blacke. “It would have been so simple just to say, we made a mistake, we didn’t realize this was here. Here’s what we’re going to do.”

Blacke went one step further when testifying before the U.S. Senate Democratic Policy committee investigating the issue. The committee submits information to the defense department, state department and other agencies.

“I do feel it was criminally negligent of KBR to make a decision to continue to expose my colleagues to sodium dichromate poisoning at Qarmat Ali water treatment plant, particularly when they knew the exposure, they knew of the absence of any personal protective gear whatsoever,” Blacke told the committee.”

Blacke testified that people took air and soil samples of the plant.

“The soil samples showed extremely high levels of sodium dichromate,” says Blacke.

“The air samples showed very low levels. Now, this is misleading because they were taken in no wind conditions. We often had high winds,” added Blacke.

“KBR management focused on the air samples in an attempt to continue operations at the plant without personal protective equipment and without the contamination being cleaned up.”

“The effects of the chemical are long lasting and potentially deadly,” says committee chairman Senator Byron Dorgan (D-North Dakota).

“Hundreds of U.S. troops may not even know of their exposure to sodium dichromate that could one day result in a horrible disease, cancers and death,” added Senator Dorgan.

“Rather than accepting responsibility, the Kellogg Brown and Root (KBR) Corporation is seeking in an aggressive way to escape accountability for its actions,” said Senator Dorgan.

The Senate committee produced an internal document from a KBR meeting that took place in Kuwait City in August of 2003.

In the memo, KBR wrote “serious problem at water treatment plant with a chemical called sodium dichromate...the problem seems worse than considered.. almost 60% of the people now exhibit the symptoms.”

“The chemical has been on the ground since day one...wind is blowing the chemical that is lying on the ground...people are potentially exposed to something that may be very dangerous,” according to the internal report assessment.

“If you had a site that was assessed by the United Nations beforehand and the UN assessed this site, found sodium dichromate, the corporation sends its workers there, U.S. soldiers are there to provide security, British soldiers are there to provide security, Iraqi workers are there, the wind is blowing, you’ve got this orange chemical - this deadly chemical flying around - you’ve got the company itself saying 60% of the employees exhibiting these symptoms, and these are symptoms of a deadly problem, why would the company not have said ‘wait a second, this has to stop,’” says Senator Dorgan.

“When you see something like that, you shouldn’t let people continue to go to work there,” says Dr. Costa. “You should shut it down and remediate it, cover with rocks and plastic and prevent human exposure.”

Dr. Costa says sodium dichromate causes cancer, other diseases and infections.

I asked Dr. Costa if it is possible or even likely that David Moore’s chronic interstitial lung disease was triggered by exposure to sodium dichromate.

“If he got into an area with high concentrations and he was outside a lot and breathed very small particles of it, it’s possible it could have caused this,” says Dr. Costa.

The Indiana National Guard confirmed that Sgt. First Classic David Moore visited the Qarmat Ali Water Treatment Plant twice and spent four to five hours at the site.

Blacke described the impact of sodium dichromate. “The joker in the deck is you. What’s your genetic background? What is your weaknesses? If you have weaknesses in lungs normally, it’s going to take you down very hard.”

Blacke testified before the Senate committee that he has entered the chronic phase of sodium dichromate poisoning, including failure of his thyroid function.

Indiana Senator Evan Bayh called on the US Army to investigate. According to Bayh, Army Secretary Pete Geren agreed to launch a 60-day senior-level Army Review Panel to evaluate the steps taken to identify, inform and treat members exposed to the sodium dichromate.

"If a company - because they wanted to make a quick buck, intentionally exposed Indiana Guardsmen and women to a cancer-causing chemical, if that's proven, they ought to go to jail," says Senator Bayh.

Bayh is proposing legislation that would create a registry for soldiers exposed to dangerous chemicals, giving them access to best medical care.

Bayh said he is thinking of David Moore's family, especially Moore's daughter Rylee.

"These 139 guys, that was their mission. And they were just doing their job," says Maj. Gen. R. Martin Umbarger of the Indiana National Guard which held town hall meetings and wrote letters in an effort to notify 656 soldiers in the battalion about the exposure and have them tested.

As of this writing, the Guard is still trying to contact 46 soldiers. Umbarger wants those soldiers to call 1-800-237-2850 ext. 3128.

"We owe every one who laid down their lives and willing to serve - and volunteered to serve for us - that we medically take care of them if there is a problem with their health," says Umbarger.

Texas resident Danny Langford is a former KBR employee who worked at the Qarmat Ali water treatment plant in 2003 where he repaired pumps. Langford told the U.S. Senate Democratic Policy committee much of the plant was covered with orange dust.

"It was everywhere," testified Langford.

Langford said he began having a bad sore throat, a hacking cough and irritated eyes.

"I had nose bleeds and began spitting blood," says Langford.

"It was everywhere," says Langford. "We had no breathing mask or any other type of personal protective equipment that would have kept this stuff out of our nose, throats, lungs or off any part of our bodies," added Langford. "During the initial two-week period, at the end of every working day, my boots, my pants, my clothing, were caked with this orange colored material."

Langford said in late July of 2003, two KBR supervisors held a meeting to talk about the concerns.

"At that meeting, these men told us the plant was safe, that this plant had been checked out and it was ok for us to go back to work," Langford testified.

"When asked specifically about chromium contamination, they said 'at most, it was a mild irritant and the exposure would not pose any serious health risk.'"

Langford testified he continued working at the plant.

“KBR kept insisting that nothing on this jobsite was harmful, keep on working,” says Langford.

“In mid-August, we were sent to Kuwait to give blood so we could test for chromium and other heavy metals,” added Langford. “Within a week or two after they drew our blood, KBR called us back to Kuwait and said they were shutting the plant down to clean it up,” Lanford told the Senate committee.

Langford said the blood tests showed high levels of chromium and other heavy metals.

Dr. Costa questions the testing method.

“There are two forms of chromium. The trivalent form which is not that dangerous and the hexavalent form,” Dr. Costa explained to the U.S. Senate Democratic Policy Committee.

“And the problem is we have a lot of trivalent in our blood, but only in our red blood cell do we have the hexavalent form. So, the proper test for hexavalent chromium exposure is to take out the red blood cell and measure it in the red blood cell,” added Dr. Costa.

“There are not many labs that do that type of thing and I doubt this was done in their case,” says Dr. Costa.

“KBR said after they got the plant cleaned up, we would not be forced to go back to the job site, that we could be placed in other positions in Iraq,” says Langford.

“I was in good health when I went to work for KBR in Iraq,” says Langford.

“I had extremely high elevated blood pressure and high levels of chromium in my blood after working at the plant for three months.”

Langford said he suffered short-term memory loss, severe sinus, congestion problems and a chronic cough.

“It was wrong KBR exposed us to a poisonous contaminant such as sodium dichromate,” Langford testified.

David Moore’s daughter and family are grieving and questioning. Was there an enemy in Iraq David was not armed to fight?

“She wants answers. She wants to know why her daddy’s not here,” says Audrey Weisheit. “He went over a very healthy man and he came back very sick,” added Weisheit.

“Rylee was granted benefits from the VA and Dave’s death has been ruled service related,” wrote Weisheit in an email to Channel 13.



His daughter Rylee hugs a teddy bear with her father's picture on it. She says she misses her father's smile a lot.

Blacke is haunted by what happened in Iraq. He believes exposure to sodium dichromate may kill him. He feels badly for the Indiana National Guard soldiers.

"They were led down a primrose path. Those men were my duty to protect," says Blacke. "I was a steward for those folks and I missed it."

Asked what he would tell the guard members exposed to sodium dichromate, Blacke responded this way. "Don't go out buying a gravestone. Some of them will be very ill. Some could die."

The Indiana National Guard has a number for soldiers exposed to sodium dichromate. Call 1-800-237-2850 ext. 3128.

"I Oppose The Wars In Both Iraq And Afghanistan"

"In That Sense, I Don't Agree With Either Candidate"



October 22, 2008 By NICK SCHOU, Orange County Weekly [Excerpts]

On Oct. 18, Vietnam veteran and paraplegic peace activist Ron Kovic made a special appearance at the Orange County Center for Contemporary Art's unveiling of a political art show titled "How Does a Patriot Act?"

Kovic read from portions of his best-selling memoir *Born on the Fourth of July*, which tells of his transformation from a gung-ho patriot who volunteered for two tours of duty in Vietnam into a different kind of patriot—an ardent opponent of war.

Last week, Kovic took a break from his busy schedule of speaking engagements to talk about his history of protesting in Orange County, the upcoming U.S. presidential election and what's at stake.

As a Vietnam veteran and anti-war protester, what's your view of the Nov. 4 presidential election? Is there an anti-war candidate?

Not since the Vietnam War has there been an election as crucial as this one or as profoundly important. We're at a crossroads in our history. A great deal is at stake: not just the lives of our young men and women, but the innocents of Afghanistan and Iraq.

I think we are headed in the wrong direction.

I feel uncomfortable with both candidates in regard to our foreign policy. I learned some important lessons in Vietnam, and the lessons I learned are different than those learned by John McCain, who served very honorably, but also different than Barack Obama.

I wonder when the American people are going to listen to those who came home from that war, and recognize the way our government is behaving around the world is creating a great deal of problems.

I respect both men, but I don't know if either candidate is going to make the changes I feel this country really needs right now. We need sweeping changes right now, and for them to occur peacefully and not through hatred.

If these candidates do not change this country and foreign policy then I believe the American people will have to change this country and millions of Americans will have to go to the streets the way they did in South Africa and Eastern Europe and the Philippines to move us in a direction that will bring about security and a more peaceful and cooperative foreign policy.

I take it you oppose the war in Iraq?

I oppose the wars in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

In that sense, I don't agree with either candidate.

I can't believe Sarah Palin when she says we have to win in Afghanistan and Iraq. This is a war that will last for decades and will not only drain our economy and force us deeper into debt but will wound even deeper the soul of this country, with vets coming back with wounds beyond imagination.

What lessons did you learn in Vietnam?

The lesson I learned was of the deep immorality of that war.

We were misled into that war, not to mention the way my brothers and I were treated upon our return home from the war, especially the hospitals, which were overcrowded, infested with rats and understaffed.

Our government was spending millions on the most technically advanced methods of killing people, but weren't able to take care of the wounded.

Now, when our young men and wounded come back from Iraq they are facing similarly slum conditions.

Without shock and awe, without bombing, we have to find an alternative or we are going to have more and more problems. We need to change this policy.

We need to seriously look at the way our government is behaving in our name. I take it very personally. I made a promise never to let what happened to me happen to anyone else again.

I hope Barack Obama recognizes that sending more troops to Afghanistan is counter-productive.

How many more Americans have to die for this failed foreign policy or come home in wheelchairs like myself?

It will only get worse if we continue along the same path.

Troops Invited:

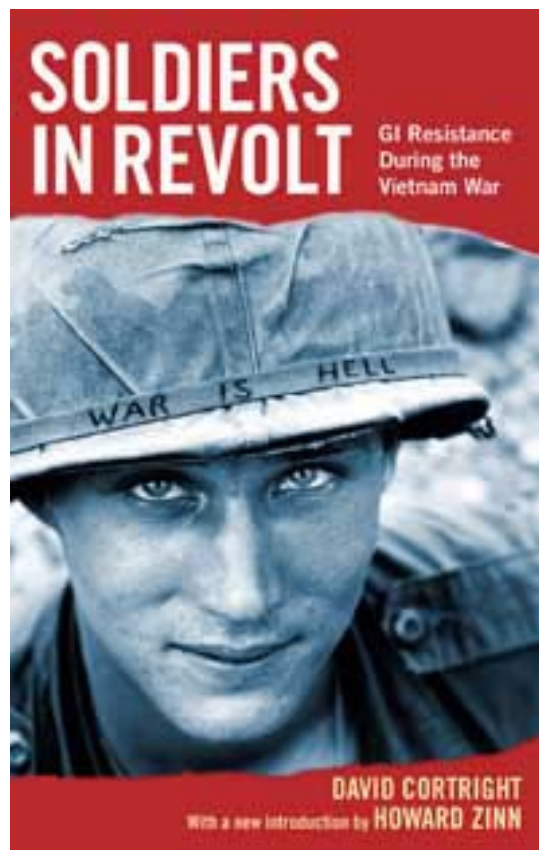
Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

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

“When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, “No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country.”
-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq

Marines Ranks Elect Councils “To Defend Themselves Against Command Reprisals And Continued Racial Abuse”



From: SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975. Now available in paperback from Haymarket Books.

Perhaps the most tragic uprising of recent years took place on July 20, 1969, at Camp Lejeune.

Occurring a few days prior to a scheduled embarkation of the 2nd Marine Division to the Mediterranean, the fighting left fourteen injured and resulted in the death of one white Marine, Corporal Ed Bankston of Picayune, Mississippi.

Arising out of a dispute over discrimination at a base enlisted men's club, the brawl soon turned into a black-versus-white melee near the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines, barracks area. Black and Puerto Rican GIs involved, most of them Vietnam veterans, later laid the blame for the incident not on anyone particular act but on the accumulated frustrations of months of command harassment.

Their interpretation was corroborated by the division's "Ad Hoc Committee on Equal Treatment and Opportunity," which had issued its findings months before the July 20 outburst. Obtained by the New York Times several weeks after the riot, the report contained the warning, apparently unheeded, that "an explosive situation of major proportions" existed on post.

Although the committee was composed of seven officers and had been appointed by the base commanding officer, it found that "many white officers and NCOs retain prejudices and deliberately practice them"; the report verified that many off-base facilities were segregated and that black recruits were subjected to excessive harassment from MPs.

The differing responses to the Camp Lejeune riot, by the Marine Corps on the one hand and the black enlisted men on the other, is instructive of the gap separating the two groups in a supposedly homogeneous military organization, and helps explain why black GIs and white commanders remained at odds -- despite official claims of improved relations.

In a frantic law-and-order crackdown, the Camp Lejeune command installed huge bright lights and armed sentries along troop paths between barracks; three reaction forces were also created -- equipped with tear gas, walkie-talkies, and loaded guns.

Twenty-six Marines involved in the July 20 incident were flown back to the States from the Atlantic cruise for criminal action -- twenty-four black and two Spanish-speaking men, but no whites.

The blacks, meanwhile, apparently assuming that little if any satisfaction would come from official quarters, set up their own organization, the "Council of Concerned Marines," to defend themselves against command reprisals and continued racial abuse.

Among the Council's activities were a petition campaign to free those arrested for the riot and an effort to form a network of elected representatives from the black minority within each company.

At the same time, Marines aboard the U.S.S. LaSalle on cruise off the coast of Spain also organized to defend themselves. An organization was formed to work

as an independent shore patrol for blacks (as protection from abuse by white MPs) and to press for more black representation in shipboard affairs.

In the 2nd Marine Division, as in so many military units, a virtual state of war raged between minority servicemen and their white superiors. ‘

Iraq Detention Imams Work for \$2 Billion Private Equity Fund; [Anatomy Of A War Profiteer]

14 November 2008 By Nick Mottern and Bill Rau, Truthout Report [Excerpts]

Nick Mottern is director of ConsumersforPeace.org. Bill Rau is a researcher on development issues based in Washington, DC, and the author of “Feast to Famine: Official Cures and Grassroots Remedies to Africa’s Food Crisis.”

When Iraqi imams sit down with prisoners at a US detention center in Iraq to discuss Islam, they are working for a subsidiary of Global Innovation (GI) Partners LLP, a California- and London-based private equity firm that claims to have “\$2 billion in capital under management.”

GI Partners sells, among other things: base maintenance for US military forces in Iraq; psychiatric care in the United Kingdom; in-room television and movies for hotels; wine, movie production studios and pubs.

The imams join the GI Partners world when they go to work for Russian and East European Partnerships (REEP) Inc., the GI Partners subsidiary hired by the US military to run Islamic discussion, civics and vocational programs in its Iraq detention centers. These centers now hold about 16,600 Iraqis and are under the command of Multi-National Force - Iraq’s Task Force 134 (MNF-I/TF-134).

REEP, which does business under the trade name Operational Support and Services (OSS), “advises DoD (Department of Defense) personnel on all local nationals (Imams and Social Workers) who may be hired to work in TF-134 programs,” according to a TF-134 spokesman.

As will be discussed in greater detail later, the work of the imams, which is shrouded in secrecy, appears to violate international principles protecting religious freedom.

It is work that may be unwelcome news to GI Partners investors, such as public employee pension funds reeling from the economic downturn that is traceable in significant measure to the Iraq war.

“Will Not Be Disclosed”

The Islamic Discussion Program operated by REEP - IDP in military parlance - employs about 60 Iraqi imams, according to a TF-134 spokesman. In a command briefing paper, TF-134 describes the Iraqi religious leaders working in its facilities as “certified, trusted and moderate Islamic clerics” offering detainees “a broader understanding of Islam.”

The imams work in a “counter-insurgency” program that is apparently intended to undermine religious arguments that have provided underpinning for armed resistance to the US invasion and occupation of Iraq and to the US-Iraqi government.

While the US program is known in general terms, the heart of the program - its religious arguments, discussion outlines and methods of persuasion - is secret.

The TF-134 spokesperson denied a request for information on the salaries of REEP’s Iraqi employees and for copies of REEP’s religious discussion and educational curriculum or outlines, saying: “Issues regarding salary and materials used in the programs are proprietary and will not be disclosed, per contractual agreements with OSS.”

We attempted to interview REEP employees on the work of the imams, but they also declined to provide salary and curriculum information, citing contractual agreements that prevent the company from providing any information on the IDP or other activities without the permission of the US military.

One REEP official said that a reason for the secrecy about REEP’s work in the detention centers is because the detention centers are confining “a lot of difficult, bad people” and information must be withheld “for our employees’ safety.”

Kristen Mary, director of investor relations for GI Partners, when asked about the REEP detention work, provided only excerpts of contract documents calling for nondisclosure and said: “We are bound by confidentiality agreements with the US government.”

The purposes of REEP’s military contracts are described in only the most general way in contract award announcements and listings.

For example, a 2006 notice of a \$41.2 million dollar contract to REEP says simply that it is for “bilingual bicultural adviser/subject matter expert services” in Iraq, a description of work that would include hiring of the imams.

A federal official familiar with such Department of Defense contracts said that we would have to use Freedom of Information requests to view the actual contracts, and that we might wait a year or more for a response.

“REEPing” War Profits

REEP was founded in 1993 by Kenneth Fortune, Lawrence P. Costa and Alan G. Prince, according to its incorporation papers, apparently to provide Russian language training for Westerners headed for Russia and Eastern Europe after the Soviet Union dissolved.

Both Mr. Fortune and Mr. Costa had been members of the US Special Forces.

Mr. Costa went on to open Worldwide Languages Resources two years later. Calls to Mr. Fortune to learn about the origins of REEP and its work in Iraq have not been returned. Mr. Prince declined to discuss REEP's work in Iraq in an initial call and has not returned follow-up calls.

REEP expanded to provide training in a number of languages for private and government entities, particularly the military, and, according to the REEP/OSS Web site, offers "intelligence support operations." A REEP Inc. Web site announced in August 2008, for example: "Counter Intelligence Agents - Urgently needed. - There is a unique opportunity to serve the United States as an interrogator and Counter Intelligence Agent as part of a rebuilding effort in Iraq."

(This REEP Web site has been taken down since we asked a REEP official about the ad in August, and the REEP web address now transfers visitors to a combined REEP/OSS Web site.)

"OSS is military-centric," says the REEP/OSS Web site. "OSS employs many military retirees, former military and military spouses from the Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force and Army."

A REEP official declined to give specifics on the totality of the firm's work in Iraq, saying only that it employs about 800 people there, Iraqis and Americans, whose work is concentrated in Camp Victory, which houses the MNF-I headquarters, and the Green Zone, which includes offices of the Iraqi government and the US and other embassies.

An employee at Worldwide Language Resources Inc., a competitor of REEP, said: "You will never get the complete picture of the contract work being done, only snapshots."

Mr. Fortune received an award for "meritorious" service from Armed Forces Comptroller magazine in June 2004, for REEP's work in preparing US forces for the invasion of Iraq:

"He successfully responded to a short-term solicitation to ensure that all deploying soldiers received cultural awareness training. Within two days, Mr. Fortune pulled together a quality team that began training despite minimal guidance. In short order, Mr. Fortune's firm was providing thousands of hours of linguistic support simultaneously at Fort Drum, Fort Stewart, Fort Bragg and Camp Blanding. Mr. Fortune and his company worked daily to provide quality training to soldiers deploying to a hostile environment. His efforts exemplify the true partnership between the military and contractor organizations. The government received an excellent value and the potential to save military and Iraqi civilian lives."

According to GovernmentContractsWon.com, REEP was awarded \$97.5 million in Defense Department contracts from 2000 to 2007. The sizes of the contracts have grown with the invasion of Iraq and the deepening of the war and the US occupation, rising from \$1.7 million in 2001 to a one-year peak of \$64.2 million.

REEP came into the GI Partners complex of companies when it was purchased in 2007 by Linc Facility Services (LFS), a subsidiary of The Linc Group (TLG), a privately held company that concentrates on providing building maintenance and management services for major facilities such as commercial buildings, hospitals and airports.

From 2000 to the first quarter of 2008, according to FedSpending.org, TLG has received over \$400 million from Pentagon facilities management and service contracts (not including any income from REEP). TLG anticipates grossing \$600 million in 2008, according to SmartBusiness (sbnonline.com).

TLG's executive vice president and chief operating officer, and the firm's apparent guide to Pentagon contracts, is retired Army Maj. Gen. David Whaley, whose military duties included, according the TLG Web site:

"Assistant Chief of Staff for Installation Management, Headquarters, Department of the Army. In this assignment, he functioned essentially as the Army's Real Estate or Property Manager developing and defending before Congress a \$9 billion annual budget and was responsible for the operations and maintenance functions of all 264 Army installations worldwide representing 12.8 million acres, 169,000 buildings, 1.1 billion square feet of family housing, 70,000 miles of road, 13,700 miles of waterway, and 2,600 miles of railway. Additionally, he was responsible for the development and execution of the Army's Outsourcing and Privatization Program, Base Realignment and Closure ("BRAC") Programs, Environmental Restoration, Military Construction and Barracks renewal programs and the Army's Residential Community Initiative."

Tracy K. Price, CEO of TLG, has contributed \$36,872 to Republican candidates and organizations since 2002, including support for the presidential efforts of Mitt Romney (\$2,300), Rudy Giuliani (\$4,600) and Mike Huckabee (\$500), according to CampaignMoney.com

The purchase of REEP "increases Linc's worldwide footprint and easily facilitates base operations and government business for Linc in the US, Europe, the Middle East, Africa, and the Far East," said a press release announcing the REEP purchase.

GIworld

The Linc Group became part of GI Partners in 2003 when GI Partners bought it out of the Enron Corporation bankruptcy, coming to the aid - according to press reports - of managers of Enron's ServiceCo branch, led by Price, who wanted to save ServiceCo's facilities maintenance business.

Table 1 shows the other holdings of GI Partners in addition to The Linc Group.

Table 1 - Global Partners LLP Holdings

Acentic - provides TV, film and Internet (access) to 235,000 hotel rooms throughout Europe, generating "predictable cash flows" from in-room movie rentals, hardware rental and installation and wholesaling the hardware.

Cambian Group - provides care for people with special needs in the UK; runs 10 hospitals providing "intensive psychiatric rehabilitation"; provides residential care and training for youngsters with autism. "All our clients are currently funded by the UK Government."

Digital Realty Trust - buys and manages "technology-related real estate, primarily data centers" that generate \$96.9 million a year in rental income.

Duckhorn Wine Company - owns vineyards in northern California and produces wine under the labels: Duckhorn Vineyards, Goldeneye and Paraduxx.

Orchid Pubs - manages 311 pubs, bars, pub-restaurants and bar restaurants in the UK.

Park Resorts - operates 35 campgrounds in the UK.

PC Helps - works with businesses to assist workers in resolving software problems.

Sunset Gower Studios - provides facilities in California for television, advertising, movie and music productions.

Telx Group - provides telecommunications networking.

The Planet - provides computer servers for business.

Yates Ltd. - operates 153 pubs and restaurants in the UK, including "London's highest-volume pub."

Source: GI Partners

GI Partners has also created

California Public Employees Retirement System (CalPERS) - \$1.2 billion. * California State Teachers Retirement System (CalSTRS) - \$289 million. * Oregon Public Employees Retirement Fund (OPERF) - \$ 99.9 million.

Religion and International Law

The process of attempting to modify the religious thinking of detainees that is underway in the US detention system in Iraq appears to violate international law, specifically Article 18 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which says:

"No one shall be subject to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice."

TF-134 says, as noted in a previous detention article (Truthout October 14, 2008), that a number of detainees, having been taught in detention to read, often discern another, more moderate interpretation of Islam than what they have been given by resistance leaders.

The reality in the detention system is that, according to TF-134, participation in the Islamic Discussion Program and other courses is likely to help speed a prisoner's release. Religious discussion with and "education" of a person who is a prisoner and whose resistance has a religious base can be described as a form of coercion.

The use of a private contractor for religious work in US detention facilities, says international human rights lawyer Karen Parker, provides the US government with a layer of protection against charges of human rights violations: "They try to hide behind yet another wall."

"... A Very Small Percentage ..."

We asked spokespeople for three public employee pension funds deriving income from GI Partners investment funds whether the work of REEP/OSS in US detention facilities in Iraq presents their funds with any ethical concerns.

Here is the response from CalPERS, which manages \$239 billion in investments:

"For your article, you asked if the connection of GI Partners to OSS (operating programs for Iraqi detention facilities) might present any ethical concerns for CalPERS in doing business with GI Partners. We have forwarded your question to our real estate staff and to our partner. Here is our response:

"Our investment in the The Linc Group is in GI Partners Fund I, and CalPERS is the sole investor. Our partner is precluded by a contract with the U.S. government to disclose specifics with regards to the The Linc Group, but the company's activities in Iraq focus on the operation of hospitals as well as training and education of the local Iraqi people in areas such as high school equivalency and more advanced subjects such as engineering and law. Many of the actual instructors are bilingual/bicultural Iraq ex-patriots holding advanced degrees. These operations are a very small percentage of the company's overall activities, which focus on facilities management in the United States."

A spokesperson for OPERF, which has \$53.3 billion in assets, wrote:

"For the retirement fund, the sole statutory mandate is to invest the funds to achieve the highest possible return for the beneficiaries, subject to prudence and productivity standards."

Oregon has a Sudan divestment law related to the conflict in Darfur, but the state "has not elected to place any other screens or considerations on investment," the spokesperson said.

A spokesperson for the \$162 billion CalPERS fund said with respect to the ethical question: "I really have nothing for you on that aspect." Asked if that meant that the fund wished not to comment, he said, "I think you're right on that."

The spokespersons for all three state pension funds said that the GI Partners funds in which they participate have been profitable. A suggestion that any of these pension funds might review their investment in any profitable fund comes at a particularly unwelcome moment given the current economic environment.

CalPERS, for example, lost the value of 2.3 million shares in Lehman Brothers when the firm went bankrupt. These shares would have been worth about \$102 million in May of 2008.

The Los Angeles Times reported in July 2008 that CalPERS reported a loss of about 2.4 percent as of June 30, 2008, fiscal year and that CalSTRS reported a 3.7 percent loss to its \$162 billion fund for that period. OPERF took a \$124 million hit with the Lehman collapse, according to the Portland (OR) Business Journal. The OPERF total assets were valued at \$53.3 billion in September 2008, down from \$63.3 billion in December 2007, a spokesperson said.

The economic downturn that is threatening the pension funds can be traced in a significant measure to the Iraq war.

Professor Joseph Stiglitz, Noble Laureate in economics, and public finance expert Linda Bilmes have pointed out in “The Three Trillion Dollar War” not only that the Iraq war is costing the US \$16 billion a month, but that the war has been a major factor in high oil prices that have drained away money from US consumers.

In a Reuters article in March 2008, he said that in order to keep the US economy pumped up, the Federal Reserve injected more money into the system, “and the regulators looked the other way when very imprudent lending was going on.”

Now the marketplace may be passing judgment on the ethical wisdom of public and private investment in the US strategy to control Iraq.

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Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> **And join with Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)**

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**The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:
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http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/;

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



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