

GI SPECIAL 6K19:



Victory In Iraq Day?

“I Guess We Didn’t Get The Memo”

“People Are Still Walking The Beat Right Now In Full Kit With Mags In Condition Red; It’s Not Over Yet”

“Stars And Stripes (Deployed Newspaper Propaganda) Has The Names Of Dead People In It Everyday, So I’m Not Sure How We Achieved Victory When People Are Still Dying”

By Joe; Fobbits Need Ice Cream Too; kbrsecurity.blogspot.com/

Age: 23

Gender: Male

Industry: Military

Occupation: Ice Cream Man

Location: An Nasiriyah, Scania, BIAP, TQ, Taji, Balad, Mosul, Baqubah: Iraq

Sunday, November 23, 2008

So yesterday was apparently Victory in Iraq day.

I guess we didn't get the memo.

Stars and Stripes (deployed newspaper propaganda) has the names of dead people in it everyday, so I'm not sure how we achieved victory when people are still dying.

Did al-Qaeda sign a treaty? Did all the foreign jihadists go home?

Have major combat operations stopped for the second time?

People are still walking the beat right now in full kit with mags in condition red; it's not over yet.

All of my gear is turned in now except for a few things. I still have my gas mask, my 9mm pistol with 30rds of ammo, my side armor plates and my vest itself.

Everything is clean and my vest looks really nice after a couple spins in the washing machine; a year of blood, oil, sand, mud and gun lube gone in a few hours.

ShittyDriver still haunts me after doing his job for him almost the entire year while he sits stateside collecting disability pay and being promoted as he hasn't been discharged yet. I have had to clean and inventory his gear as well as count his ammo.

I have taken the opportunity to give most of his gear away, however, so when he is finally discharged he will be a few hundred dollars short on his next disability check.

ShittyPSG scolded me for turning my shit in before our platoon's "slot." I asked when our slot was, because I had never heard of such a thing, and was scolded for not talking to my team leader or squad leader.

Granted, a Joe should never have to talk to the PSG or PL except to say hello at the chow hall or something, but the team leaders and squad leaders are still on the road evaluating the replacement crews, so the chain of command goes from Joe to PSG as it stands.

Because the majority of the company failed the PT test, whether on purpose or after actually trying, remedial PT starts tomorrow.

I called this shit awhile ago when a lot of the guys were sure they'd give us our last week or two here to cooldown.

PT for our platoon will be led by the senior-most Joe in each of our 4 Joe tents because our PSG and team leaders never do PT because they are lazy.

Only one team leader out of 9 does PT, SGT 300, and does shit that most people are not interested in doing. He got a 378 on his PT test which meant he went over 100% in each category (push-ups, sit-ups, run) by Army standards. Running 6 miles with a 45lb ruck is great for him because he came from our state's LRS (long-range recon) unit.

For this company, however, just passing the test is an issue and focusing on the basics is what we need, not rucking or squatting 500lbs.

The senior most joe in my tent is Misfit, who is 5'10" and 108lbs. He doesn't do PT and gets a 180 on every test (60% in each category; the bare minimum) which is good enough for him. His competence on the road as our gunner is negated by his anti-establishment attitude that gets old after awhile.

His PT plan is "Fuck that" which has led me to make my own plan and go everyday at 0800 on my own, whether or not anyone goes with me.

The remedial PT plan set down by the company commander has a "profiles" included stipulation which excites me, because I cannot wait to see some dude on profile get majorly fucked up so that the chain of command gets in more trouble.

When this was put down at a formation, someone in the back of one of the other platoons yelled "why can't we just write down passing scores like the 1SG did?" I lol'd.

MORE:

**What A Big Surprise:
[For Fools]
"While An Iraqi Government
Spokesman Stated Last Week That
The Agreement Would Ensure
That All American Troops Leave
By December 2011, American
Commanders Said Otherwise"
"U.S. Will Defend Iraq Against
'Internal Danger'"**

“One Clause States That, According To Joint Decisions, The US May Respond Militarily To ‘Security Threats’ Against Iraq”

28 November 2008 Maya Schenwar, Truthout Report & By GINA CHON, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

Polls in Iraqi media have shown that most Iraqis oppose the pact’s three-year time frame.

The SOFA has gotten as far as it has largely because the government’s executive branch, led by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and backed by the Bush administration, has pushed ardently for its passage, and itself approved the agreement almost unanimously two weeks ago.

“The vast majority of Iraqis are against it,” Ali al-Fadhily, an independent correspondent living in Baghdad, told Truthout.

“But those in power realize that it is the US existence in Iraq that keeps them in power, and so they (were) keen on signing it as soon as possible regardless of its conflict with the interests of Iraq and its people.”

On the US side, negotiations on the pact have been cloaked in secrecy. The official English version of the final agreement was withheld - from the public and from Congress - throughout most of the past few weeks’ negotiations.

Congressman Bill Delahunt, chairman of the subcommittee, criticized the administration’s covert handling of the pact. “We must not forget that this agreement has just been provided to Congress – and that there has been no time to conduct the analysis required by such a significant document,” Delahunt said at the hearing.

“Even now, the National Security Council has requested that we do not show this document to our witnesses or release it to the public – a public that for over five years has paid so dearly with blood and treasure ... “But this is typical of the Bush administration and its unhealthy and undemocratic obsession with secrecy.”

Discrepancies also exist between the US and Iraqi interpretations of the pact: While an Iraqi government spokesman stated last week that the agreement would ensure that all American troops leave by December 2011, American commanders said otherwise.

“Three years is a long time. Conditions could change in that period of time,” Adm. Michael Mullen, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, stated at a Defense Department briefing last week.

When asked whether the agreement's absolute 2011 deadline could be extended, Mullen replied, "Well, clearly that's theoretically possible."

The language of the agreement is vague enough that it could be bent to allow such "possibilities."

One clause states that, according to joint decisions, the US may respond militarily to "security threats" against Iraq, and will continue its "close collaboration" in supporting, training and maintaining the Iraqi army - all of which could keep US troops in Iraq beyond 2011.

Moreover, some of the pact's security commitments are surprisingly broad and vague, according to Leaver.

It states that the US will defend Iraq against "external or internal danger ... against Iraq or an aggression upon ... its sovereignty, its political stability, the unity of its land, water, and airspace ... (and) its democratic system or its elected establishments."

As part of the compromises between the U.S. and Iraq, the security pact no longer states specific conditions under which the Iraqi government could ask U.S. troops to stay longer.

But in practice, Iraq could still do so, particularly for logistical support and training, and several Iraqi officials privately acknowledge that they will probably have to ask certain U.S. forces to stay longer.

MORE:

"It Is A Long-Term Occupation For This Oppressed Country"



Demonstrators march in Kufa, 120 km (75 miles) south of Baghdad November 28, 2008. Thousands Iraqis held protests in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities after parliament passed a pact allowing U.S. occupation troops to remain through 2011. REUTERS/Ali Abu Shish

November 27, 2008 Inside Iraq [Excerpts]

Ismael al Basri of Basra:

I reject this pact totally and the parliament today made a great mistake by approving it.

Deals have been done under the parliament building. We know that thousands of people reject this treaty.

The American benefits are achieved by this pact and I don't see any benefits for the Iraqi people.

It is a long-term occupation for this oppressed country.

Sabah al Shejiri, 34, a Baghdad taxi driver:

I'm not really happy with the approval of the (security agreement).

In fact I'm really sad because we signed on the occupation.

I don't believe the (security agreement) will be good for Iraq. The political blocs signed it just for their own interests. The agreement has no interest for the future of Iraq.



Demonstrators march in Sadr city, Baghdad, November 28, 2008. Thousands Iraqis held protests in Baghdad and other Iraqi cities after parliament passed a pact allowing U.S. occupation troops to remain through 2011. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Newton Resident Killed In Iraq

November 18, 2008 By Lance Griffin, Dothan Eagle

When the economy soured and our wallets were threatened, the war faded into the background for many.

It disappeared from the front page and the top of the evening news, and lost its place as the most important issue to presidential election voters.

But the war goes on and families still jump when the phone rings. Saturday, Newton resident Jamie Clark got the phone call.

Her husband, CW3 Donald V. Clark, 37, died from injuries suffered in a helicopter crash in Mosul, Iraq. A release from the Department of Defense did not indicate if the crash was combat-related. DoD said the incident remains under investigation. Also killed in the crash was Chief Warrant Officer Christian P. Humphreys, 28, of Fallon, Nev. They were assigned to the 6th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force 49, U.S. Army Alaska, Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

Earlier this year, CW3 Clark e-mailed the Dothan Eagle to let the newspaper know about Jamie, who had written an original song about her experience as a military wife.

She titled it "Soldiers Left Behind."

"It is the story of her life and what she endures every day while waiting for me to return. Beyond that, it is the story of thousands of spouses that wait while the one they love is off to war," he wrote in an e-mail sent from Iraq in August. "It's a great song and it is about something real."

The song describes the challenges military wives face:

The days drag by and sometimes we cry
We don't understand the fight, but we know why
We are warriors of a very different kind
Proud to be "The Soldiers Left Behind"

Clark said her song sums up a myriad of emotions wives feel when their husbands are at war — pride, fear, loneliness, confusion, sadness.

Donald Clark was in the Navy when he met and married Jamie in Memphis in 1991, but he always talked about flying. He made the switch to the Army a few years later. He wanted to retire from the Army soon and become an instructor pilot at Fort Rucker.

The Clarks temporarily opened a feed and tack store in Newton. That's how Newton resident Robert Smith became familiar with Clark.

"He was a friendly guy. Easy to talk with," Smith said.

According to a database compiled by the Washington Post, other Iraq casualties from Wiregrass towns since the war began include Spec. Curtis E. Glawson Jr., Daleville; CW2 Brian D. Hazelgrove, Fort Rucker; Sgt. Edmund J. Jeffers, Daleville; Capt. Robert C. Scheetz Jr., Dothan; CW5 Jamie D. Weeks, Daleville; Pvt. Justin R. Yoemans, Eufaula; Lance Cpl. Carl L. Raines II, Enterprise; CW Mark S. O'Steen, Ozark; Sgt. Jason D. Jordan, Elba; Sgt. Timothy M. Conneway, Enterprise; Pfc. John E. Brown, Troy.

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPREHENSIBLE
REASON TO BE IN THIS EXTREMELY HIGH RISK
LOCATION AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT THAT A PACK
OF TRAITORS IN D.C. WANT YOU THERE
That is not a good enough reason.**



A U.S. soldier in Baquba, Diyala province, October 22, 2008. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

**Attack On Green Zone Kills Three;
14 Wounded**

November 29, 2008 (AP)

A United Nations official says a rocket attack against a U.N. compound in Baghdad has killed three foreigners and wounded 14.

The United Nations says the victims were working for a catering company that provides services for the U.N. Their nationalities have not been released.

The U.N. official says the missile fell Saturday near a U.N. compound in the U.S.-protected Green Zone.

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Ethiopia Has Announced Plans To Withdraw All Troops From Somalia By The End Of Year: “The U.S. Is Terrified Of A Somali Islamic State And May Persuade Ethiopia To Stay With A Promise Of Assistance”

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

November 29 2008 Xan Rice in Nairobi, Guardian News and Media Limited

Ethiopia has announced plans to withdraw all of its troops from Somalia by the end of year, raising the possibility of a complete takeover of the country by Islamist groups.

Thousands of Ethiopian soldiers were sent into Somalia two years ago to back the weak interim government [translation: by the Bush regime to overthrow the Islamic government and occupy Somalia].

But after ousting the Islamic Courts Union, which controlled the capital Mogadishu, the army has become bogged down in a guerilla war that has claimed more than 10,000 lives.

“Regardless of what happens, we have decided to withdraw our troops from Somalia at the end of the year,” Wahide Belay, a spokesman for the Ethiopian foreign ministry, said yesterday.

Ethiopia only retains a significant military presence in parts of Mogadishu and the parliamentary seat, Baidoa. Islamist groups control the rest of south and central Somalia.

Ethiopia has expressed repeated frustration at the inability of President Abdullahi Yusuf's government to end its infighting and establish credible state institutions.

Only the US offered strong support for Ethiopia's initial deployment of troops into Somalia in December 2006, sharing concerns that the Islamic Courts Union had links to terror organisations.

Many other countries believed that engagement with the Islamists, whose leaders included both moderates and hardliners, offered Somalia the best chance of peace since the onset of anarchy in 1991.

Some western diplomats based in the Kenyan capital, Nairobi, who have been following the situation in Somalia, remain sceptical as to whether Ethiopia will leave as planned, and say the withdrawal threat may be designed to try and secure funds to enable the country's troops to stay on.

"I am not sure this is not a bluff along the lines of 'Pay us to stay or we are off'," said one diplomat.

"The US is terrified of a Somali Islamic state and may persuade Ethiopia to stay with a promise of assistance and a new push for UN peacekeepers".

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Marine Tony Evans And Marine Georgie Sparks Killed Near Lashkar Gah

28 Nov 08 Ministry of Defence

It is with deep regret that the Ministry of Defence must confirm the deaths of Marine Tony Evans and Marine Georgie Sparks, both of J Company, 42 Commando Royal Marines, on Thursday 27th November 2008.

The men had been conducting a foot patrol to the north-west of Lashkar Gah in Helmand province. Marines Evans and Sparks had moved on to the roof of a compound when, at around 0900 hours, there was an attack by insurgents armed with rocket-propelled grenades and they were badly wounded.

Both received immediate medical attention and were moved to a secure location before being put on a helicopter to be transferred back to Camp Bastion. However, both sadly died from their injuries during the flight.

Battalion Strength Resistance Attack Wipes Out Supply Convoy

November 28, 2008 CBC News & BBC & By Amir Shah And Fisnik Abrashi, Associated Press Writers

Taliban insurgents killed 13 Afghan troops in an ambush of their convoy in northwestern Afghanistan.

More than 300 militants attacked the Afghan convoy, which was transporting 47 vehicles for units in Bala Murghab district of Badghis province late Thursday, said Naeem Khan, a border police official.

In a several-hour battle, 13 Afghan soldiers and policemen were killed and 11 others were wounded, said Abdul Ghani Sabri, the deputy provincial governor.

Sixteen other Afghan troops were captured by the militants, who also took most of the 47 vehicles being transported in the convoy, Khan said.

Analysts said the ambush was one of the Taleban's most audacious.

Insurgent attacks in Afghanistan are up 40 percent from 2007, military officials say.

“Death To Bush” Afghans In Kabul Riot After Occupation Troops Kill More Civilians

29 November 2008 Reuters & Pak Tribune

Dozens of angry Afghans have thrown stones at police after a convoy of foreign troops killed at least two civilians and wounded four more in the capital, Kabul.

Witnesses said the dead were a man who had been in a minivan and a young boy at a butcher. “I was putting meat for him in a plastic bag... he was killed on the spot,” said a 28-year-old butcher who gave his name only as Zalgai.

Seething resentment against the presence of some 65,000 foreign troops is growing in Afghanistan after scores of Afghan civilians have been killed in a series of mistaken air strikes this year.

A convoy of British troops killed a man and boy and wounded three more after a “misunderstanding”, Kabul police chief Mohammad Ayoub Salangi said.

An American armoured vehicle, travelling along the Jalalabad road in the Hotkhail neighbourhood, struck a minibus packed with Afghans on Friday morning.

American troops shot at the car, thereby causing the incident.

According to eye witnesses, the American convoy sped off as the minibus lost control and smashed into a butcher's shop.

Shara Jan, a resident of Hotkhail, told Quqnoos that his 12 year old son was killed in the ensuing panic.

A convoy of foreign contractors travelling behind the American convoy was rapidly surrounded by an angry crowd.

A detachment of British Royal Marines were then sent to rescue the civilian contractors.

The large crowd, shouting 'death to Bush' and throwing bottles, eventually backed off.

However, Kabul police chief Mohammad Ayoub Salangi said: "The troops opened fire and killed one civilian and wounded three more."

Karzai Wishes He Could Knock Down U.S. Planes

November 27, 2008 Sayed Salahuddin REUTERS NEWS AGENCY

Afghan President Hamid Karzai said Wednesday that he would bring down U.S. planes bombing villages if he could, in a sign of growing tension between Afghanistan and its Western backers as the Taliban insurgency grows in strength.

"We have no other choice, we have no power to stop the planes, if we could, if I could ... we would stop them and bring them down," Mr. Karzai told a news conference.

He said that if he had something like the rock attached to a piece of string, known as a chelak in Dari, used to bring down kites in Afghanistan, he would use it.

"If we had a chelak, we would throw it and stop the American aircraft. We have no radar to stop them in the sky, we have no planes," he said. "I wish I could intercept the planes that are going to bomb Afghan villages, but that's not in my hands."

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

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE

END THE OCCUPATIONS

TROOP NEWS

**THREE YEARS?
BULLSHIT:
NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



The funeral procession for Sgt. Jose Regalado heads east on the San Bernardino Freeway in West Covina, Calif., enroute to burial at Holy Cross Cemetery in Pomona, Calif., Nov. 22, 2008. Sgt. Jose, 23, of Los Angeles, was one of two soldiers killed in Mosul, Iraq, when an Iraqi Army soldier wearing a uniform approached the men and opened fire on Nov. 12. (AP Photo/Reed Saxon)

Change You Really Can Believe In!

Obama Pushing 52,000 U.S. Troops To Afghanistan

NOVEMBER 26, 2008 By YOCHI J. DREAZEN, Wall St. Journal [Excerpt]

The top American commander in Afghanistan, Gen. David McKiernan, has asked for at least 20,000 additional forces, and the incoming Obama administration has signaled that it will send the reinforcements sometime next year.

The influx will push U.S. troop levels there to more than 52,000, a record.

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

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

**“I Was Blown Up Twice In Iraq,
And My Injuries Weren't Combat-
Related?” Dixon Said. “It's The
Most Imbecile Thing I've Ever
Seen”**

**Pentagon Filth Deliberately Break
The Law To Deny Wounded Combat
Veterans Their Disability Pay:
“Narrowing The Definition Of Combat-
Related Disabilities To Save Money”**

The Pentagon, in establishing an internal policy based on the legislation, in March unlawfully stripped those criteria from the legislation, the Disabled American Veterans said.

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

November 25, 2008 By David Zucchino, Los Angeles Times [Excerpts]

Marine Cpl. James Dixon was wounded twice in Iraq -- by a roadside bomb and a land mine. He suffered a traumatic brain injury, a concussion, a dislocated hip and hearing loss. He was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

Army Sgt. Lori Meshell shattered a hip and crushed her back and knees while diving for cover during a mortar attack in Iraq. She has undergone a hip replacement and knee reconstruction and needs at least three more surgeries.

In each case, the Pentagon ruled that their disabilities were not combat-related.

In a little-noticed regulation change in March, the military's definition of combat-related disabilities was narrowed, costing some injured veterans thousands of dollars in lost benefits -- and triggering outrage from veterans' advocacy groups.

Narrowing the combat-related definition was necessary to preserve the "special distinction for those who incur disabilities while participating in the risk of combat, in contrast with those injured otherwise," William J. Carr, deputy undersecretary of Defense, wrote in a letter to the 1.3-million-member Disabled American Veterans.

The group, which has called the policy revision a "shocking level of disrespect for those who stood in harm's way," is lobbying to have the change rescinded.

Pentagon officials argue that benefits should be greater for veterans wounded in combat than for "members with disabilities incurred in other situations (e.g., simulation of war, instrumentality of war, or participation in hazardous duties, not related to combat)," Carr wrote.

But veterans like Dixon and Meshell said their disabilities were a direct result of wounds suffered in combat.

Dixon said he was denied at least \$16,000 in benefits before he fought the Pentagon and won a reversal of his noncombat-related designation.

"I was blown up twice in Iraq, and my injuries weren't combat-related?" Dixon said. "It's the most imbecile thing I've ever seen."

Meshell, who is appealing her status, estimates she is losing at least \$1,200 a month in benefits. Despite being injured in a combat zone during an enemy mortar attack, she said, her wounds would be considered combat-related only if she had been struck by shrapnel.

Meshell said the military had suggested that at least some of her disability was caused by preexisting joint deterioration.

"Before I went over there, I was fine -- I was perfectly healthy," Meshell said. "This whole thing is causing me a lot of heartache."

Kerry Baker, associate legislative director of Disabled American Veterans, has accused the Pentagon of narrowing the definition of combat-related disabilities to save money.

He said the change would reduce payments for tens of thousands of veterans -- those already wounded and those injured in the future.

"This is going to hurt a lot of people," Baker said. "It's one of those things that when you first look at it, you think: 'Wow. How can this be?'"

In a letter to members of Congress, the Disabled American Veterans accused the Pentagon of "mutilating" the statutory definitions of combat-related disabilities as part of a "deliberate manipulation of the law."

The January legislation was aimed at allowing troops wounded in combat and combat-related operations to collect disability severance from the military and disability compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Disability severance is based on past service. Disability compensation is based on future loss of earning potential. Previously, veterans with combat-related disabilities received reduced monthly VA compensation until their severance money was recouped. That is still the case for those whose injuries are not deemed combat-related.

Years ago, Congress adopted a detailed definition of combat-related disabilities. It included such criteria as hazardous service, conditions simulating war and disability caused by an "instrumentality of war."

Those criteria were not altered in the January legislation.

The Pentagon, in establishing an internal policy based on the legislation, in March unlawfully stripped those criteria from the legislation, the Disabled American Veterans said.

"We do not view this as an oversight," Baker testified before Congress in June. "We view this as an intentional effort to conserve monetary resources at the expense of disabled veterans."

In many cases, veterans say, they are not told why their disabilities are not considered combat-related.

Dixon said he did not realize he had been put in a noncombat-related category until he began questioning his disability payments. It took more than six months of phone calls, letters and appeals -- plus help from the Disabled American Veterans and a member of Congress -- to overturn his designation.

Navigating the Pentagon's bureaucracy was made more difficult because Dixon's brain injury resulted in short-term memory loss. He had to write everything down in notebooks and calendars.

"It was a nightmare," Dixon said. "Most veterans don't know how the system works, or how to fight it. They don't realize all the obstacles they put in your way to keep you from getting what you deserve."

Meshell said the military disability system was so complex that few veterans were equipped to navigate it.

"I'm a college graduate. I'm not a dumb person. But honestly, I can't begin to explain some of this stuff," she said.

After five years of active duty, a combat tour in Iraq and 12 years in the National Guard and Reserves, she thinks she deserves the full disability benefits authorized by Congress for veterans injured in combat.

"I earned them," she said. "I went to Iraq. I was in combat. I got injured."

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

“941 Wyoming Army National Guard Members Scheduled To Leave In April, The Largest Single-Unit Deployment In The Wyoming Guard’s History”

“Guardsmen Across Wyoming Will Be Going Through Similar Preparations For The Deployment, Many Of Them For The Second Or Third Time”

“Knowlton Said He Doesn’t Expect The Deployment To Be Influenced By Barack Obama’s Inauguration As President”



Wyoming Army National Guard Master Sgt. Debra Griffin, of Cheyenne, Wyo., stands in front of Laramie County Community College in Cheyenne, Wyo., Dec. 21, 2008. Griffin is one of 941 Wyoming Army National Guard members scheduled to deploy to Kuwait in April. It's the largest single-unit deployment in the Wyoming National Guard's history. [Associated Press]

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

11.28.08 By The Associated Press

CHEYENNE - Master Sgt. Debra Griffin keeps two calendars: one for routine obligations and the other a “deployment calendar” listing the activities and requirements of preparing for a yearlong assignment in Kuwait.

“Your brain kind of goes in two different directions, because you’re trying to manage this part, but you’re already shifting to serious soldier mode,” Griffin said. “It’s an interesting balance before we go.”

Griffin is one of 941 Wyoming Army National Guard members scheduled to leave in April, the largest single-unit deployment in the Wyoming Guard's history.

After training at Fort Hood, Texas, the 115th Fires Brigade will be stationed in Kuwait with a range of missions.

For Griffin, the necessities of preparing to leave her family, home and dog range from the relatively mundane - like getting an extra pair of glasses - to the vitally important - like making sure her will and finances are in order. She's also working with her employer, Laramie County Community College, to cover for her absence as manager of the school's homeland security curriculum.

"You have to think about everything from your job to your friends, to your family to your extended family to your personal life, to your home, to your car," said Griffin, who handles the human resources section of the brigade.

"All these details - things you have to take care of before you go."

Guardsmen across Wyoming will be going through similar preparations for the deployment, many of them for the second or third time.

Along with the Cheyenne-based 115th, other units ordered to deploy were the Casper-based 960th Brigade Support Battalion, the Laramie-based 148th Signal Company, the Lovell-based 920th Forward Support Company, and the Sheridan-based 2nd Battalion, 300th Field Artillery, Guard spokeswoman Deidre Forster said.

It's the largest Wyoming Army National Guard deployment since 1950, when 387 soldiers were sent to the Korean War. Back in 2001, the Wyoming Air National Guard had its largest activation when more than 500 airmen deployed for the war in Afghanistan.

Col. Rich Knowlton, commander of the 115th Fires Brigade, said the unit will be overseeing six battalions from states including Wyoming, Minnesota, South Dakota, Alabama and Colorado. In preparation, Knowlton has been traveling around Wyoming meeting with families and community groups to help them prepare for the soldiers' departure.

"When you mobilize a Guard unit, you're really mobilizing that community," Knowlton said.

The Wyoming National Guard provides support programs for families coping with the absence of a soldier and for employers navigating the laws that protect guardsmen's jobs when they return.

"There's a lot of things the communities can do as well to support the families and soldiers and make sure this experience is a good experience for everybody all around," Knowlton said. "And (to make sure) once the soldiers come back to their families and their employers after a year being gone, that they can continue that relationship and move forward with their lives and be productive parts of the community."

Of the 2,400 soldiers who will be under the 115th Fires Brigade, some will be assigned to run operating bases in Kuwait, others will provide convoy security for trucks moving in and out of Iraq, and others will be doing security missions in Iraq, Knowlton said.

"This is a mission that's diverse. We have something for the guy that sits in the office and processes support requests, and we have something for the guy that's on the gun truck and is riding the roads protecting soldiers," Knowlton said.

Knowlton said he doesn't expect the deployment to be influenced by Barack Obama's inauguration as president. Obama ran on a platform of pulling American troops out of Iraq.

Knowlton said the support bases in Kuwait will be kept open whether American soldiers or entering or leaving Iraq.

"So the need, whether we're going in or going out or just staying, is the same. I don't anticipate a change in mission," he said.

Griffin said she wasn't surprised when she was notified of the mobilization earlier this year. This will be her first lengthy deployment in her 27 years in the Armed Services, including 18 years in the Guard.

"Especially with the operational tempo over the last few years, I think each of us was always under the expectation at that point there will be a time when you will be called to go," Griffin said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

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

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

**"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**

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

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

The Bloody Gold Of Porgera: “My Arm?” “It Was Broken By The Goons Of The Barrick Gold Mine. They Were Aiming At My Head”

From: Max Watts
To: GI Special
Sent: November 25, 2008
Subject: BLOODY GOLD IN PORGERA

By MAX WATTS, ANNANDALE, AUSTRALIA

[The Porgera Gold Mine is a large gold mining operation located in Enga province, Papua New Guinea. From Max Watts, who began helping GIs resisting the Vietnam War in the 1960's, and has never stopped helping soldiers resisting Imperial wars.]

A SECOND BOUGAINVILLE? JUST WHAT I NEEDED!

A few weeks back my old friend Rosemarie Warathah Gillespie telephoned me: “You must, absolutely, talk to this Jethro Tulin. It’s very important! Just like Bougainville!”

I sighed and remembered a similar call, sixteen years ago. Then Rosemarie - I see her as an Australian Joan of Arc, although surely no virgin - got me into the Bougainville war. Then she wanted that I accompany her through the (very dangerous) blockade to this, almost unknown, war-torn island.

“You will be the only journalist who can report, from the inside, about this secret Australian Vietnam”.

For reasons of intelligence, age, finance, and particularly cowardice I refused her attractive offer, but promised that if she did survive her trip to Bougainville, and was able

to find a working radio there, I would be happy to receive her news direct from the battlefield, and would write about them.

And I did, too.

I soon had some interesting experiences with the (non-existing?) Australian censorship, which wanted to kill all news about this secret conflict, although on the very doorstep of Australia Australian pilots, officers, helicopters and patrol boats were fighting a long, complicated, murderous, war against the Bougainvillians. And, after eight years, losing it.

I wrote about it and lost my good relations with Establishment media bosses.

15,000 Bougainvillians lost their lives, but eventually won their war.

The main cause of the war, the enormous Panguna Copper mine, is, today, no longer, working, no longer in the hands of Rio Tinto, but, silent, in those of the inhabitants.

I, in the meantime, have become older, and was no way sure that I wanted, once again, to get involved in such a “story”.

A few days later this Jethro Tulin telephoned me. We met.

He was a forty-year old, stocky, solid, Black man, with his right forearm in a plaster, a sling. “My arm?

It was broken by the goons of the Barrick Gold mine. They were aiming at my head. Told me: “You won’t go to Canada again”.

I listened.

In the middle of the New Guinea Highlands there is a very big Gold mine: Porgera. Opened in 1989. Since some years it has belonged to Barrick Gold, the biggest gold mining company in the world. Barrick digs for gold in many countries, in Australia as well. The company headquarters are in Toronto, Canada.

Jethro comes from the mine country.

Until 1938 his father had never seen a white man. The Ipili people there then knew nothing of the outside world. They lived without metal, with highly developed stone tools. They hunted, and had a very productive garden agriculture. The Ipili knew that there was plenty of gold in their brooks and rivers, but considered it useless. Left it lie.

Once the Australians arrived this changed quickly.

Particularly in 1989.

Papua New Guinea, independent (previously it had “belonged” to Australia) that year lost its biggest source of hard currency, the giant Panguna copper mine, on Bougainville.

The Bougainvillians had had enough of river and land pollution from the Mine tailings. They closed Panguna. And - despite some 15,000 Bougainvillians killed - to teach them that they could not mistreat the property of Rio Tinto this way - this dollar source remains dry.

To compensate for this calamity the PNG government, advised by Canberra, quickly made a special mining agreement to bring the new Porgera gold mine into production. The Ipili people, who lived there, received many promises, contracts, agreements. The company, the government, wanted to avoid a second Bougainville.

Work on the mine, the installations, was partly carried out by local workers, organised in a new union.

Jethro Tulin, then still very young, was a founder, a leader, of the union. Later he was sent to study - by PNG and Australian trade unions - to Ruskin (Union) college in English Oxford. He also went to West Germany, to Israel. He learned much.

What later happened in Porgera appeared to Tulin and other Ipili as breaches of their agreement.

The land, the gardens, the rivers, were poisoned by the mine tailings.

The mine grew far beyond its initial size. There was more gold than had, at first, been expected.

Good for Barrick (the Canadian Barrick Gold Company had, around 2005, bought out the earlier part-owner: Placer Dome) - shares and profits grew mightily).

Less for the Ipili.

It became “necessary” to shoot many of the local inhabitants when they mined alluvial gold “on their own” and interfered with the mine. A heavily armed, 500 man-strong, mine police tried to discourage them. These policemen sometimes also raped local women and caused further trouble.

In May 2008 Jethro Tulin came to the AGM (Annual General Meeting) of the Barrick Gold Company in Toronto. Some friends had lent him a share. He spoke about the situation in Porgera and soon became very unpopular with the Company directors.

When he returned to his village he was attacked by three men with Machetes and badly injured.

“You won’t go to Canada again”, they told him. PNG and Australian Unions, Environmental Organisations, brought the wounded Tulin to Sydney’s RPA hospital. A leading surgeon treated him “pro bono” and set a steel rod into his arm to replace the shattered bone.

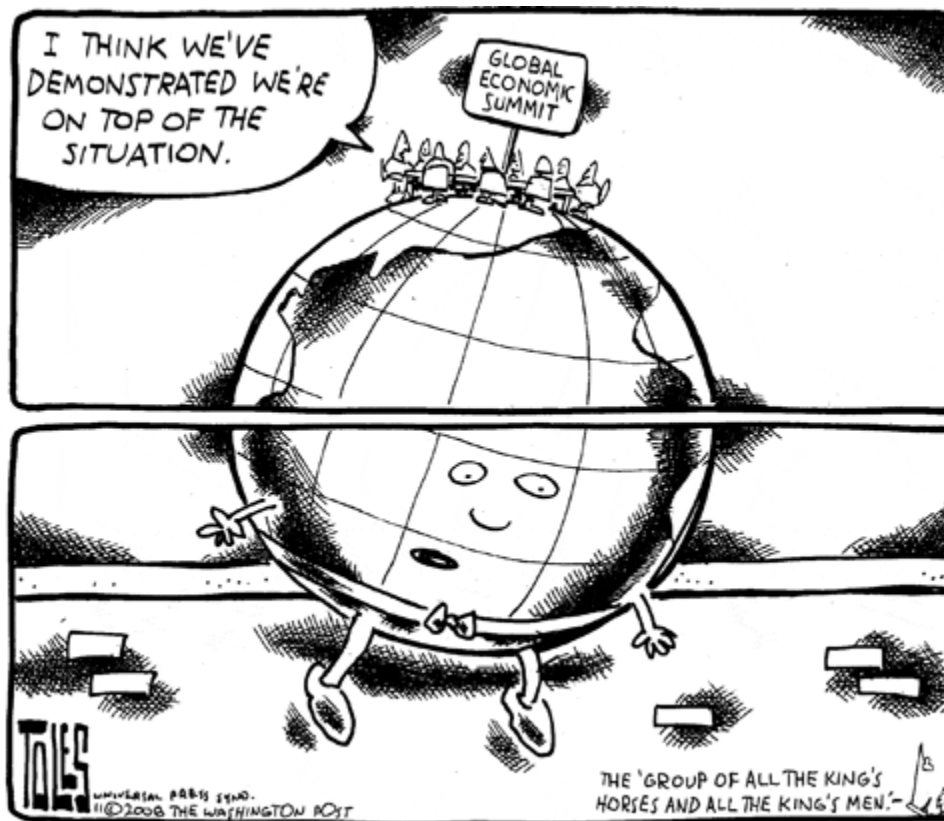
We met while he was in treatment. He wanted to know if we could help him with publicity, public relations.

When I told him about the law suit which the Bougainvillians from Panguna have been leading for the last ten years against Rio Tinto in American courts because of environmental damages and genocide, Tulin asked whether something like this could not be done for his people, because of Porgera.

We have begun to try this - in the USA, in Canada.

[To be continued.]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

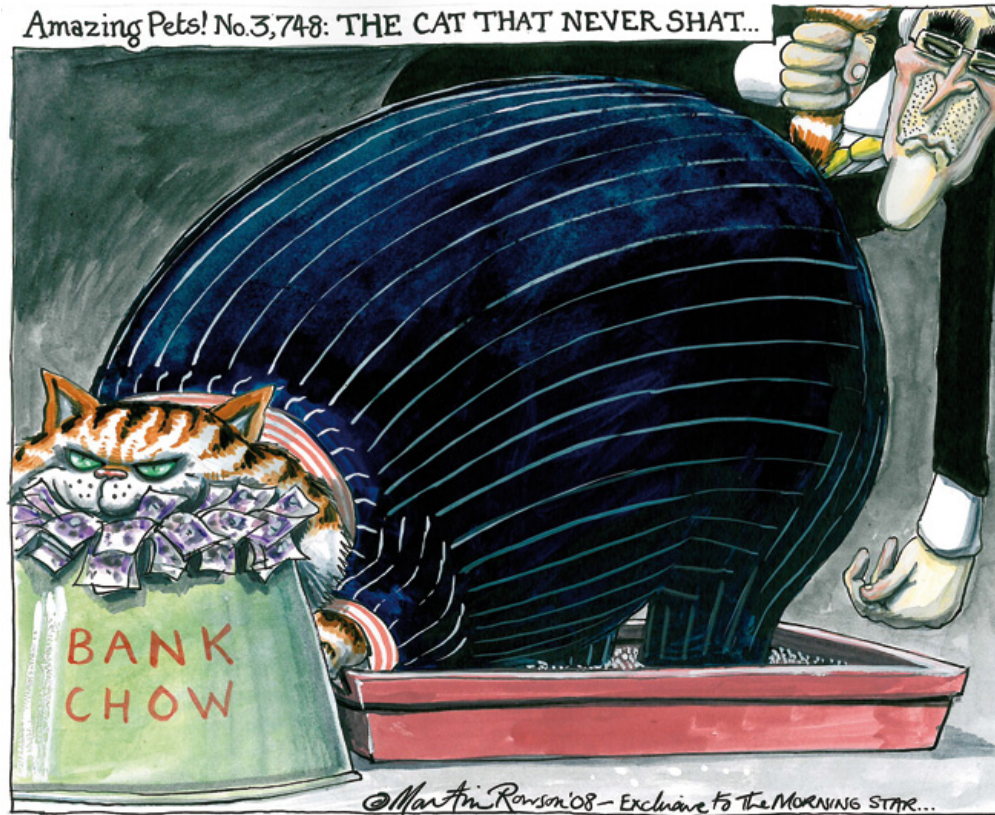


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CLASS WAR REPORTS



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

RECEIVED

“The Rich Getting Richer And The Poor Getting Poorer Will Have To Be Ended One Way Or The Other”

From: JM
To: GI Special
Sent: November 27, 2008
Subject: The poverty stricken auto industry

I'm reading about the troubled auto industry in GI Special 6k18. My thoughts that follow may be unsettling but in a democratic society they can be voiced.

I read that Obama wanted Bush to bail out the auto industry in order to avoid mass unemployment. The problem is that the executives arrived in private jets to plead poverty and beg for a bail-out.

No one has suggested that redistribution of wages should be part of such a bail out. No one suggests that those who have made their fortune, from the industry, should plough money back to save it.

The whole system needs a shakeup to end skyrocketing top salaries, golden hand shakes, and numerous other type perks.

No one is worth the money raked in for top jobs.

I believe the best type of bail-out is one where the money is obtained from the super rich - not the ordinary tax payer.

The over paying of executives is a growing symptom in rich societies and it's one that has to be halted.

A democracy that is real should be able to manage this - if not maybe a revolution will eventually happen.

The rich getting richer and the poor getting poorer will have to be ended one way or the other.



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