

GI SPECIAL 6L1:



**“Seeing The Truth For
Themselves”**

**“Shortly Before His Second
Deployment To Iraq, Casey
Became A Member Of Iraq
Veterans Against The War (IVAW)**

And Helped Found Its Fort Hood Chapter”

“I Know That I Am Not The Only Soldier Who Feels This Way About The Continued Occupation Of Iraq”

“Whether They’re Soldiers Who Have Been Stop-Lossed Or This Is Their First Time Over Here -- They Are Seeing The Truth For Themselves”



November 17, 2008 By Jennifer Fenton, The Wip [Excerpts]

“We have an entire generation of people in their twenties and thirties who have never gone through a war ... the media and government have gotten so good at the creation of messages, people don’t know the reality” -- Casey J. Porter

Army Sergeant Casey J. Porter has many battles to fight, and unlike the dramatizations of politicians and media commentators, his battles are concrete, real, and hard fought.

During his time as an enlisted soldier deployed in Iraq, Casey has undergone an evolutionary process, one that has taken him from warrior to peace activist.

His talent and passion for filmmaking have given him the perfect medium for his personal expression. Utilizing his current circumstances and natural talent as a filmmaker to speak out against the war, Casey’s films have turned the heads of people like Amy Goodman of Democracy Now! and filmmaker Michael Moore.

I was fortunate enough to spend some time with Casey recently.

Phoning from Iraq, his soft-spoken voice was not quite what I expected -- his intellect, courage, and tenacity are apparent, even from three thousand miles away.

“Most Americans are not affected on a daily basis by this war; it is not personal for them ... I can tell you for example, that what is happening in Iraq is always in the daily thoughts of my mother.”

After serving one tour of duty in Iraq, and completing his voluntary commitment to the military, Casey found himself entangled in the controversial military policy, “stop-loss.”

The “Backdoor Draft” as some have called it, is the means by which the United States Military may extend the terms of service of a United States soldier to retain them longer than the period for which they volunteered.

Shortly before his second deployment to Iraq, Casey became a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) and helped found its Fort Hood chapter.

For Casey, the decision to join the anti-war group was natural.

As he experienced the plight of the Iraqi people and the injury and loss of friends who served, his opposition and activism grew into an all out personal mission.

Casey has taken his misfortune as a “stop-loss” soldier and turned it into an opportunity to make a difference in how the occupation of Iraq is perceived by Americans.

While discussing his films, Casey says, “most importantly, this is not about me at all, but the soldiers around me and those who continue to deploy year after year. This has been, and will always be about them.”

To watch his films, *What War Looks Like* and *Deconstructed* (see below), one cannot help but feel an intimate connection to the reality in Iraq.

Images of dead bodies, blown-out Humvees, and services for soldiers who have lost their lives challenge the myths, sound bites, talking points, and infotainment created by politicians and media pundits.

“The photos you see of soldiers’ services in *What War Looks Like* were taken by me,” Casey explains.

“Standing there and watching fellow soldiers experience such loss changes you. Watching Iraqi children dig through landfills for food changes you. Seeing the senselessness of it all compels me to speak out ...

“I know that I am not the only soldier who feels this way about the continued occupation of Iraq. Whether they’re soldiers who have been stop-lossed or this is their first time over here -- they are seeing the truth for themselves.”

Casey cites the stark contrast between his daily experiences in Iraq and what is reported in US media as an important reason for taking action.

Crucial details are kept from view -- details that dramatically influence the daily lives of thousands of Americans and their families.

The hardship of these families, which goes largely unrecognized except for the splattering of yellow ribbon magnets on cars, is the main reason Casey finds himself motivated to act.

“I could not live with myself if I kept my head down and went into another deployment without taking any action ... the hardest stand to take is from within,” he says.

After the creation of *What War Looks Like* and the subsequent Internet stir it caused, Casey realized the potential he had to make a difference with what he calls “guerrilla-style filmmaking.”

Casey’s vision for telling the truth and reaching large audiences is slowly gaining momentum on YouTube; his short films continue to garner support from thousands of activists, fellow soldiers, and concerned Americans.

Before we hung up, I asked Casey to comment on the recent lull in the violence in Iraq, which has been credited to “the surge” of forces injected by the Bush Administration in 2007.

Casey points to the stifling heat, the re-organization of resistance fighters and the continued construction of walls throughout Iraq’s cities.

The effects of walls and checkpoints, he notes, rarely make it into US media headlines or political talking points.

But one recent report by AP writer Hamza Hendawi supports Casey’s assertion: similar to the walls and checkpoints constructed by Israel throughout the West Bank, Baghdad’s walls lead to gridlock, rising prices for food and homes, and complaints about living in what feels like a prison.

“The look on the faces of the Iraqi people shows just how angry and worn out they feel ... and I apologize every chance I get.”

As long as these walls and checkpoints remain, Casey says Iraqis have no real hope of rebuilding a strong stable economy. This is hardly the free and democratic society promised by the Bush administration.

The continued contradiction between the reality of the war and deliberately inaccurate rhetoric has compelled this soldier to turn his personal misfortune into a source of hope.

Casey believes a populace armed with knowledge will act to end the unjustified occupation of Iraq. It is here that Casey has placed his hope for a safe return and an end to this war. And it is in Casey that many have placed their hope for humanity.

The films by Sergeant Casey J. Porter:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4iWGYWLV7-Y>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yxtNeSm0NHo>

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

Pentagon Confirms No End To Iraq War:

Status Of Forces Agreement “Provides U.S. Forces With The Authority To Continue To Go After Insurgents” [Especially For The Civilians Yapping About How It's Over]

Nov 19, 2008 By Lolita C. Baldor, The Associated Press [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON — The security agreement between U.S. and Iraq provides both the time and authority needed for American troops to train Iraqi forces and pursue terrorists, senior Bush administration officials said Wednesday.

[Pentagon, spokesman Geoff Morrell] said officials believe the agreement both respects Iraqi sovereignty and provides U.S. forces with the authority to continue to go after insurgents, while still giving the Iraqis the training and equipment they need to take over security of their own country.

1998 Alamogordo High School Grad Dies After Helicopter Crashes

11/19/2008 By Steve Ranson, Lahontan Valley News

Colleagues of a killed U.S. Army pilot from Alamogordo remembered him on Tuesday as a funny guy who could brighten up the day, but at the same time, possess the professionalism needed for dangerous search and rescue work.

According to Chuck Canterbury, a spokesman at Ft. Richardson, Ala., Warrant Officer 2 Christian P. Humphreys, 28, of Fallon, Nev., and another pilot, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Donald V. Clark, 37, of Memphis, Tenn., died Saturday from injuries when their OH 58 Kiowa helicopter crashed near Mosul, Iraq. They were the only two soldiers on the craft.

The Army said the crash is under investigation. Their unit will have a memorial service Thursday in Iraq.

Humphreys flew with the Fallon Naval Air Station Search and Rescue Longhorns from June 6, 2004, to May 5, 2006. He left the Navy and joined the Army as part of the Blue to Green program to become a helicopter pilot. Humphreys listed his home of record as Fallon.

He completed his flight training at Ft. Rucker, Ala., and was then assigned to Ft. Wainwright, Alaska, near Fairbanks.

Both soldiers were assigned to the 6th Squadron, 17th Cavalry Regiment, Task Force 49, U. S Army Alaska. Humphreys' wife, Christina, and his parents, currently live in Alamogordo where he grew up. He graduated from Alamogordo High School in 1998.

Funeral arrangements are pending in New Mexico.

"He was a great guy, always happy and had a joke," said HM2 Sean Whitney, a flight medic.

He said Humphreys lived in a rented house on Soda Lake Road.

"We used to play with our paintball guns in the cornfields behind his house," Whitney said.

The medic also said Humphreys helped him receive his initial flight certification.

Whitney remembers when Humphreys married Christina Williams in fall 2004. He recollected how they were trying to make a better life for themselves while stationed in Fallon.

Petty Officer Second Class Justin Schmidt knew Humphreys during the entire time he was assigned to the Longhorns.

“He was a funny guy, a nice guy, a lot of character,” Schmidt said. “Some of the guys here still remember him. The guy was always entertaining, always had something to say, but like everyone here, he displayed the professionalism in saving lives.”

Once Humphreys’ tour ended in Fallon, he joined the Army, a move that did not shock his Navy buddies.

“I was not surprised,” Schmidt said. “This is one guy who loved to fly. He wanted to fly in the front seat.”

As a rescue crew chief, Humphreys was in charge of the operation behind the pilots. Schmidt said Humphreys made the decisions when to deploy rescue crews out of the helicopter to assist injured people, and he also took care of the equipment.

Schmidt said the last time the local NAS Fallon Search and Rescue team saw Humphreys was earlier this year when he passed through on his way to Ft. Wainwright.

“We told him to go have fun in Alaska,” Schmidt said. “We all told him he was a lucky son of a gun to be stationed there during a time of war.”

That sense of security, though, was shattered two days ago when Schmidt said he and rest of the Longhorns were notified of Humphreys’ death.

Day Shift: “I’m Really Honored”

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

Thursday, November 27, 2008

Day Shift

Well, the company is now on a day shift. And by company, I mean our squad.

The other squads in the platoon sleep peacefully, unbothered by micromanaging NCOs. SGT 300 has a schedule for us starting at 0600. If there is no PT, like today, wakeup is 0700. He comes in, turns the lights on and yells at us to wake up. Then we sit here until 2200 or so until it’s time to go to sleep again.

ShittyTC comes in and informs me that I owe \$13 for a company t-shirt. I was not aware I agreed to buy a company t-shirt.

Unit shirts are usually worn in place of the PT shirt in PT gear, but ours is not authorized, so it is just a civilian t-shirt.

I inform ShittyTC that I have no use for a unit t-shirt and he screams in my face doing the drill sergeant bit about how he has better things to do then track down money for company t-shirts.

I smile.

Isn't this why NCOs make more money, because they are given more authority and responsibility for things like tracking down money for company t-shirts?

I pay my money and then ask for my shirt. Problem; shirts haven't been made yet. They are being made at another base in Kuwait and will be handed out as soon as we take a PT test, which I've already taken.

At this point, I assume that I will never see that \$13 again, just as the guys who bought extras assuming we could wear them with PT shorts paid \$52 for 4 and their receipts "got lost."

Here in theater, instead of actual change, they give out "pogs" which are money amounts on a cardboard disc that says "5 cents" or "25 cents." I've collected mine this past year while most guys have thrown them away.

I have around \$300 in a ziploc bag.

ShittyPSG saw it on my desk and told me the company is collecting pogs to make a "beer fund" for once we get to our de-mobilization station.

I'm not sure what it is about me that projects an aura that makes people think I'm a retard.

I mean really, this company owes me thousands of dollars and they expect me to donate \$300 for a "beer fund"?

General Order #1 still applies until we return to our home state and come off Title 10 status. Maybe it's the goofy mustache or the military-issued glasses, who knows.

Today at the chow hall they had Thanksgiving dinner, including an alligator made out of pineapples. I'm not sure what alligators or pineapples have to do with Thanksgiving, but whatever.

The squadron CSM was serving chow without gloves and kept wiping his brow, so I changed my mind and had Taco Bell instead.

Was also informed that our company has the "honor" of escorting the buses full of cav troopers from our base to the airport to go home.

We get to stay 15 extra days and have the "honor" of driving around in SUVs all day until the last of the troopers are on the plane.

I'm really honored.

MORE:

Awards: “It’s Like I’m Taking Crazy Pills Or Something”

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

Saturday, November 29, 2008

Awards

Today we had a battallion (squadron) formation. Our company was inducted into the Order of the Golden Spur, authorizing us to wear golden spurs on our ACUs or Class A footwear while attending a Cav function or while attached to a Cav unit. We can also wear Stetsons (the Civil War era cowboy hats).

I was awarded an Army Achievement Medal and an Army Commendation Medal as well as a Squadron and Company coin. Shit like this used to excite me but it doesn't anymore.

Last night ShittyTC came in and told me I had to run a PT test re-take for some of the failures.

I tried to argue the fact that I am not an NCO and am not authorized to oversee a PT test or sign the scorecards, but was yelled at until I agreed to do it.

I gave the test last night with other Joes as graders. Just like I said, when I turned the scorecards in, they were voided and thrown in the trash. The guys that took it will have to take it again.

It's like I'm taking crazy pills or something.

Thanks For The Good News – Not

11.25.08 By Tom Vanden Brook, USA TODAY

The number of IED attacks in Afghanistan in October was still lower than in Iraq, where there were 411 such attacks last month.

A Member Of The Armed Forces In Iraq Expresses His Opinion Of His Repeated Deployments



From: [XXXXXX] To: GI Special Sent: November 30, 2008

Occupation Command Stages Silly “Peace Concerts” But The Seats Are Empty: “Maybe Reconciliation Will Be More When They Leave” [This Is Not A Satire]

November 20, 2008 By Mary Beth Sheridan, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD, Nov. 19 -- It was billed as a peace concert in war-scarred Baghdad.

But after 30 minutes of poetry and patriotic songs, only a scattering of tribal leaders and dark-suited bureaucrats were sitting in the vast expanse of white plastic chairs before a stage painted with doves.

“The idea or identity of this is American, not Iraqi,” Kassim Daoud, a former Iraqi national security minister, said of the U.S. efforts.

Although the Iraqi government has declared its support for reconciliation, he said, “it hasn’t got a real program or a map.”

The U.S. reconciliation campaign includes some major projects, but much of the American effort is decentralized, consisting of reconstruction programs, peace marches and meetings with rival tribal leaders over platters of rice and lamb. In many cases, soldiers are making up the details as they go along.

On a recent sunny Thursday, Kashmoola and Willoughby attended a detainee release ceremony on the lawn of a blue-domed mosque.

The U.S. military has made these into gala affairs, with flag-waving crowds and speeches from Muslim leaders and Iraqi army officers.

U.S. troops had envisioned the Baghdad peace concert as an event for the public to enjoy. But they organized it jointly with Iraqi officials, who are still unaccustomed to such unscripted activities.

Park officials barred most people without a government invitation from entering, resulting in scores of empty seats.

Safa Rasul Hussein, the deputy national security adviser, said the U.S. programs had been helpful, particularly on outreach to the Sunni minority.

But he noted that some Iraqi parties and armed groups refuse to talk to the American military.

“Maybe reconciliation will be more when they leave,” he said.

One of the U.S. military’s biggest reconciliation efforts involves the Sons of Iraq, once-hostile Iraqis who became American-paid neighborhood guards. The U.S. military considers the mostly Sunni guards to be a critical factor in the drop in violence over the past year.

Ghazi, 27, is one of hundreds of guards who have been accepted into the Iraqi police academy. On a recent day, he took a break from drilling on a dusty parade ground outside the facility.

The Sons of Iraq program would continue to work well “with the help and support” of the U.S. forces, he said.

But asked whether it could succeed without them, he shook his head. “No, no, no!” he cried.

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. soldier at bombing in central Baghdad Nov. 12, 2008. A parked car bomb exploded in a bustling section of downtown Baghdad in the third consecutive day of morning rush hour blasts. The blast in Baghdad occurred around 9:30 a.m. (0630 GMT) off al-Nasir Square in the heart of the city — a busy neighborhood of shops, pharmacies and photography stores. Police said that three officers were among the wounded. (AP Photo/ Khalid Mohammed)

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

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

***Good News For The Iraqi
Resistance!!***

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



A US Army soldier of 8th Infantry Regiment, searches the bedroom of an Iraqi citizens' house during an armed home invasion in Masariyah neighborhood, northwestern Mosul, Nov. 20, 2008. (AP Photo/Petros Giannakouris)

[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

[But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?]

Iraqi citizens have no right to resist home invasions by occupation soldiers from the USA. If they do, they may be arrested, wounded, or killed.

"In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit," said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay's Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday's raid. "Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead."

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Roadside Bombing Kills U.S. Security Company Employee In Kandahar

Nov. 30 (Xinhua)

Roadside bombing targeting one U.S. private security company USPI on Sunday left one Afghan employee dead and another injured in Kandahar province in southern Afghanistan, said an Afghan official.

Zalmai Ayubi, spokesman for the provincial government, told Xinhua that the incident occurred at around 11 a.m. (0630 GMT) when a vehicle laden with explosive material was blown off by remote control in the Spinboldak highway near airport and NATO military base there.

Ayubi said the blast at least killed one Afghan staff and wounded the other while the USPI convoy was passing that area.

“One USPI vehicle was also damaged,” he added. “Afghan police and NATO forces have rushed to the site and cordoned it off.”

2 Australians Wounded In Oruzgan

11.30.08 ABC AU

An Australian soldier and a defence force worker have been wounded in a roadside bomb explosion in Afghanistan.

The soldier and civilian were travelling in the same vehicle when it was struck by the bomb in Oruzgan province yesterday.

They have injuries to their limbs and the Australian Defence Force (ADF) has assessed their condition as serious, but not life-threatening.

The ADF is preparing to bring the soldier back to Australia for specialist treatment.

IED Attacks Reached An All-Time High This Summer

11.25.08 By Tom Vanden Brook, USA TODAY [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON — A congressional panel has warned that the U.S. is “falling behind” in Afghanistan in the fight against makeshift bombs, the No. 1 killer of U.S. troops there, after the attacks reached an all-time high this summer.

Improvised explosive device (IED) attacks have increased every year since 2005, according to Pentagon data. The attacks peaked at 329 in August before declining to 264 last month upon the arrival of colder weather, which usually hinders fighting in Afghanistan.

129 U.S. servicemembers were killed in Afghanistan through October this year, compared with 83 combat deaths in all of 2007.

Taliban Frees 2 Captured Journalists

11.30.08 KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)

Taliban militants who captured two Afghan journalists have released them after three days in captivity, officials said Sunday.

The two journalists freed late Saturday are Dawa Khan Menapal of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, and Aziz Popal, who worked for a local TV station in Kandahar, said Gulab Shah Alikheil, the deputy governor of Zabul province.

Militants captured the two in Ghazni province on Wednesday as they were driving on the country's main Kabul-Kandahar highway.

The Taliban's high council ordered the pair released without any condition because they were journalists, said Qari Yousef Ahmadi, a Taliban spokesman.

Resistance Action

26 Nov 2008 DPA & 11.30.08 (CNN) & DPA

Taliban militants attacked a police security post in Nad Ali district of southern Helmand province on Tuesday night, killing five police personnel, Daoud Ahmadi, spokesman for the provincial governor said.

Ahmadi said that some of the police forces in the post had links with Taliban and they had killed their comrades before fleeing the area along with attackers.

A bomber on a bicycle detonated explosives Sunday near a car from the German Embassy in Kabul, a local police official said. Alishah Ahmadzai, deputy police chief of Kabul city, said a German embassy vehicle was damaged in the blast but no diplomats

in the vehicle were killed or wounded. The attack took place in front of Habibia high school on a road close to parliament building in western part of Kabul city.

One Afghan employee of UN has been killed by unknown gunman in Surkh Rod district of Nangarhar province in eastern Afghanistan, said a UN statement released here on Sunday. "Belqis Mazloomiyar was shot dead in front of elders at a meeting on Nov. 26 of the local shura or elders' meeting at Lower Sheikh Mesri, a temporary settlement for returnees," the statement said.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATIONS

“A Government Of Thieves” “During The Taliban Rule We Never Had These Sorts Of Problems”

November 25, 2008 By Mark Sappenfield, Staff writer of The Christian Science Monitor and Anand Gopal, Correspondent of The Christian Science Monitor [Excerpts]

KABUL, AFGHANISTAN - Hajji Habib Lal is a successful businessman in the southern Afghan city of Kandahar, importing fine ceramic plates from Germany and France. He also owns an AK-47 assault rifle.

Mr. Lal's son has already been kidnapped once – returned after 13 days for a \$20,000 ransom. But Lal still gets death threats by phone, and a few days ago, thieves tried to break into his house. Only a few randomly fired shots from the AK-47 stopped them.

For the Afghans whose hearts and minds America and its allies are trying to win, the greatest enemy in many cases is not the Taliban, but criminals and the police who are often seen as being complicitous with them.

Even in areas where the government holds sway, law and order is rapidly deteriorating, stoking the frustrations that feed Afghanistan's insurgency.

The government is trying to address his concerns. Last month, the Ministry of Interior sent a commission to Herat to investigate the lawlessness and announced the creation of an antikidnapping police unit.

But many lawmakers and experts worry that the police are a significant part of the problem. Some members of parliament have accused police officials of releasing convicted criminals for bribes. In evidence of this, security officials revealed that gang members only recently released from prison kidnapped a wealthy former presidential candidate last month.

For his part, businessman Lal in Kandahar says there is much work to be done. "This (current government) is a government of thieves," he says.

"During the Taliban rule we never had these sorts of problems.... I'm not defending the Taliban movement, but we have to accept the truth that there were never any problems for civilians and businessmen."

Gates Says No Disaster Yet

November 24, 2008 Washington Post

"The notion that things are out of control in Afghanistan or that we're sliding toward a disaster, I think, is far too pessimistic," Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates said Friday during a news conference in Nova Scotia.

TROOP NEWS

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



A casket holding the body of Army Spc. Corey Shea is carried to St. Mary's church by horse drawn caisson in Mansfield, Mass., Nov. 24, 2008. Shea was killed in Mosul, Iraq on Nov. 12, 2008. (AP Photo/Stephan Savoia)

3,500 From 82nd Off To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse

Nov 18, 2008 The Associated Press

3,500 paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne Division's 3rd Brigade Fort Bragg will leave this month for a yearlong deployment to Iraq.

The departure will mark the start of a new round of Iraq deployments for 82nd Airborne paratroopers.

The Department of Defense announced earlier this year that the 82nd's 1st and 4th Brigade combat teams will also deploy to Iraq in the next year. The brigades are two of six Army combat brigades scheduled to deploy to Iraq starting this winter through next summer. The defense department said that total, about 26,000 people, would be sent to Iraq as replacement forces to maintain troop levels.

Pentagon Rats Devise Clever New Way To Fuck Over Wounded Troops:

**“Service Members Will Not Receive Back Pay For Incorrect Ratings”
“The Situation Is Maddening Because The Longer The Defense Department Takes To Set Up The New Board, The Less Back Pay It Will Have To Hand Out”**

Nov 22, 2008 By Kelly Kennedy, Staff writer, Army Times [Excerpts]

Defense Secretary Robert Gates has issued a policy stating that the military will follow a new law requiring that service members being medically retired for post-traumatic stress disorder be rated at least 50 percent disabled, a provision of the 2008 Defense Authorization Act.

But the Pentagon is ignoring another provision of the Act that requires a review board to be set up for medical evaluation cases, and has even added some pain to service

members who feel they have been wronged: Decisions by the board, whenever it is formed, will not be retroactive.

The Physical Disability Board of Review was mandated by Congress to check the fairness and accuracy of troops' disability cases. The Defense Department decided that the board will review only conditions found unfitting — which advocates for service members say leaves out any diagnosis that should have been included but wasn't.

They say it also excludes cases in which lower-rated conditions were found unfitting while higher-rated conditions were found fitting — allowing the military to spend less money on medical separation cases.

Now a new memo states that decisions of the board, which was supposed to be set up in April, will not be retroactive. The memo, posted on the Military Health System Web site, states: "Any change to the rating is effective on the date of final decision by the service secretary."

In other words, service members will not receive back pay for incorrect ratings.

Retired Army Lt. Col. Mike Parker, who has worked as an advocate for troops going through the medical retirement system, said the situation is maddening because the longer the Defense Department takes to set up the new board, the less back pay it will have to hand out.

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

**VA Document-Shredding No
Surprise:
“Veterans Have Complained For
Decades About VA Losing Or Destroying
Claims”**

Nov 19, 2008 By Rick Maze, Staff writer, Army Times

Doubts were raised Wednesday about whether the Bush administration can do anything to restore confidence in the Veterans Affairs Department following the discovery last month of almost 500 key benefits claims documents in shredding bins at regional offices.

But the problem, initially discovered by teams of auditors from the VA inspector general's office, didn't exactly shock the veterans' community.

Veterans have complained for decades about VA losing or destroying claims documents, making an already complicated process even more difficult to deal with.

Rep. Bob Filner, D-Calif., the House Veterans' Affairs Committee chairman, said the fact that a review found 41 of the 57 VA regional offices had crucial documents in shredding bins is an "intolerable situation."

"These actions completely shatter confidence in the whole VA system," Filner said.

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

The Political 12 Steps of Recovery



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: November 23, 2008
Subject: The Political 12 Steps of Recovery

The Political 12 Steps of Recovery

Step One: Don't Trust the U.S. Government
Step Two: Don't Trust the U.S. Government
Step Three: Don't Trust the U.S. Government
Step Four: Don't Trust the U.S. Government
Step Five: Don't Trust the U.S. Government
Step Six: Don't Trust the U.S. Government
Step Seven: Don't Trust the U.S. Government
Step Eight: Don't Trust the U.S. Government
Step Nine: Don't Trust the U.S. Government
Step Ten: Don't Trust the U.S. Government
Step Eleven: Don't Trust the U.S. Government
Step Twelve: Don't Trust the U.S. Government

Mike Hastie
Vietnam Veteran
November 24, 2008

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

More About Recovery

During Vietnam days, the troops that came back filled with raged by the betrayal and organized against that Imperial war found an effective way to find relief from what later got officially designated PTSD.

They had a noble cause, and they fought for it together.

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DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

Citizens Score Better Than Elected Officials On Civic Knowledge Test

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

Nov 20 (AFP) [Excerpts]

US elected officials scored abysmally on a test measuring their civic knowledge, with an average grade of just 44 percent, the group that organized the exam said Thursday.

Ordinary citizens did not fare much better, scoring just 49 percent correct on the 33 exam questions compiled by the Intercollegiate Studies Institute (ISI).

Among the questions asked of some 2,500 people who were randomly selected to take the test, including “self-identified elected officials,” was one which asked respondents to “name two countries that were our enemies during World War II.”

Sixty-nine percent of respondents correctly identified Germany and Japan. Among the incorrect answers were Britain, China, Russia, Canada, Mexico and Spain.

Forty percent of respondents, meanwhile, incorrectly believed that the US president has the power to declare war, while 54 percent correctly answered that that power rests with Congress.

Asked about the electoral college, 20 percent of elected officials incorrectly said it was established to “supervise the first televised presidential debates.”



November 28 2008 Steve Bell

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Yes

'Well, it looks like the government is going to bail out Citigroup, yet they don't want to bail out the auto companies. See, I don't think this is fair.

I mean, blue collar guys who make our cars, they don't get the bailout. But the white collar guys on Wall Street, they get the bailout.

'You know what I think we should do? I think they should work together.

I think the guys in Detroit should keep making the cars, and the guys on Wall Street should be making the license plates.'

Jay Leno
The Tonight Show
November 25, 2008



**Let Them Go Bankrupt:
\$7.4 Trillion And Counting;
The Cost Of “Rescuing” The US
Financial System**

[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Vietnam Veterans, United Auto Workers, retired, who sent this in.]

November 24, 2008 By Hamilton Nolan, Gawker.com

Hey, the government has agreed to bail out Citigroup. Surely we'll now be saved from worldwide insolvency! Right?

Or is this a profligate waste of money?

We have to level with you: this whole bailout thing has now exceeded the media's ability to critically analyze it. You've heard everyone throw around figures like \$750 billion for the earlier bailout costs. This Citigroup thing includes a guarantee of \$306 billion in assets.

But think about this: according to Bloomberg, the US government has now pledged more than \$7.4 trillion to rescue the financial system in the past 15 months.

How much is 7.4 trillion?

It is "half the value of everything produced in the nation last year," according to Bloomberg.

It's enough to cut a check for almost \$25,000 to every single citizen of the USA!

Fun with math!

If you think the US media is equipped to evaluate numbers like this precisely, you're out of your mind. Even the media outlets that are most qualified to report on money matters have a hard time putting \$1 trillion into perspective (try this: "It would take almost three decades to spend a trillion dollars at \$1,000 per second), much less \$7.4 trillion.

If it makes you feel better though: this financial crisis has actually erased \$23 trillion in corporate value. So 7.4 tril isn't too bad! (Bloomberg)

Pushing On A String

An expression not used once reporting on the current crisis in the circulation of money.

It refers to a time when the Fed makes money widely available, but the cutting of interest rates and the availability of ready cash fails to lead to an increase in business.

And things get worse.

Back in those ancient times the Fed was said to be "pushing on a string."

As in "Joseph Snott, Chairman of the Federal Reserve Bank, declined today to comment on whether the Fed was pushing on a string, as repeated cuts in the discount rate have failed to stimulate a struggling economy."

Time to bring it back?

T

Welcome To The Occupied USA: After Cops Kill Two Citizens In Detroit Chase, Reporter On Scene Charged With Five Felonies For Reporting On It; Other Scum Cops Seize Her Camera And Destroy Photos To Cover Up For Killers

[Thanks to REDVET, who sent this in.]

When I got into camera range to take the photos (not stepping through any yellow crime scene tapes), Trooper Barber screamed at me from across East Davison and immediately told me I was under arrest.

November 20, 2008 Mike Shane, Moratorium NOW! Coalition to Stop Foreclosures and Evictions.

Diane Bukowski has been a supporter of the Moratorium on foreclosures and evictions from the beginning. She has covered the Moratorium NOW! Coalition extensively. Please support her NOW. We cannot have a supporter of the foreclosure moratorium silenced for doing her job.

November 16, 2008 By Diane Bukowski

Friends, this is Diane Bukowski, who has published articles since 2000 in The Michigan Citizen regarding police brutality, killings by police, and the failure of Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy to pursue charges against Detroit police officers who kill, among numerous other issues.

I am now seeking your support.

I am being arraigned Tuesday, Nov. 18 at 1:30 p.m. in 36th District Court on FIVE FELONY COUNTS of assaulting, resisting and obstructing police officers while I was doing my job.

Needless to say, these charges are completely FALSE.

I need your support in court, as well as contributions to my legal defense fund, which is currently being set up.

I can be reached at 313-205-6718.

I was arrested Nov. 4, election day, at the scene where two white State Troopers allegedly rammed the bike of a motorcyclist whose bike then ran into a pedestrian, killing both

(SEE ARTICLE FROM THE MICHIGAN CITIZEN) [Below]

I took photos of the scene, namely of two yellow tarps which covered the body parts of the motorcyclist and his crushed motorcycle. That scene was also shown from the air by a TV 2 News helicopter. I had earlier identified myself as a reporter, showing my ID to both the arresting officer, Trooper Barber, and her superior.

When I got into camera range to take the photos (not stepping through any yellow crime scene tapes), Trooper Barber screamed at me from across East Davison and immediately told me I was under arrest.

She then seized my camera and erased the photos.

I was handcuffed and hauled into MSP headquarters on W. Grand Blvd.

The request for a warrant from the MSP appeared to have been on one count of obstruction, but it came back from Worthy's office as five felony counts, with Trooper Barber as the complainant in all five.

MORE:

Motorcyclist, Pedestrian Die In Police Chase [The News Story After The Arrest]

11.16.08 By Diane Bukowski, Special to the Michigan Citizen

DETROIT — A Detroit motorcyclist returning from the polls Nov. 4, was allegedly hit by two Michigan state troopers during a chase on the city's northeast side.

The impact of the crash pushed him into a pedestrian who was also killed, then into a pole, according to one eyewitness.

The incident happened on the city's northeast side, at East Davison and Justine. According to the Wayne County Medical Examiner's office, the cyclist's right arm and

shoulder were severed, his skull and brain shattered, all his ribs were broken, and his liver was damaged, among other injuries. The coroner ruled accidental death.

The motorcyclist was James Willingham, 42, a father of 10 children, and the pedestrian was Jeffrey Frazier, 32, an autistic young man.

Both men grew up in the neighborhood around East Davison and Justine where they died, and were known and loved by hundreds, according to their families and friends.

“I was sitting on my porch and saw the whole incident,” said a grandmother from the neighborhood who did not want to be identified. “The police rear-ended the motorcycle and the man on the motorcycle lost control and hit Jeff, then the driver flew off the motorcycle into a pole.”

This eyewitness said that the troopers’ car had no siren on.

“Kids were walking home from school”

“It was 3:30 in the afternoon, and kids were just walking home from school,” she said. The intersection was crowded with pedestrians.

Another witness separately confirmed that the state troopers’ car rammed the cyclist. Both witnesses said the troopers’ car had no siren on.

The Michigan State Police Detroit Post #29 issued the following statement:

“On Nov. 4, 2008 at 3:32 p.m., Troopers from the Michigan State Police Detroit Post attempted to conduct a traffic stop of a motorcycle for a moving violation in the area of E/B Davison and Conant. The motorcyclist slowed after emergency lights were activated then accelerated from the Troopers at a high rate of speed before running a red light and striking a pedestrian walking across the intersection. The collision resulted in fatal injuries to the pedestrian and the operator of the motorcycle. It was later reported the motorcycle was stolen out of the City of Detroit. The pursuit lasted approximately three city blocks.”

Debo, a motorcyclist who was riding with Willingham, said Willingham was not speeding.

Police also reported that the bike was stolen, but Debo believes Willingham did not steal the bike, because he was present at the purchase. Both men belonged to the Phantoms’ motorcycle club.

“We were just on our way from voting,” said Debo. “I was playing around on the Davison freeway to see what speed my bike would do. James was following behind, because his bike couldn’t go that fast.

“I noticed the police right behind me and immediately started slowing down to about 45 mph, and James caught up. I thought the troopers would pull me over and ticket me, but instead they shot around me, bumped their horn, turned on their top light, and ran up behind my brother James.”

Debo said he did not witness the actual crash because he had fallen behind and was stopped at a light.

“James worked at Chrysler for over 20 years painting cars,” said Tamika Carter, Willingham’s girl friend and mother of three of his children, ages 15, 7 and 2. He also had three children with his wife Karen Willingham.

“When his brother died in 2003, he got so depressed he went on medical and never went back,” said Carter. “He became a stay at home dad, so that I could go to school and work. He took his skills from the plant and worked on cars for friends.”

Carter said Willingham looked after his children. She said he was extremely proud of two of his older children who are in college.

Paul Broshay of the law firm of Fieger, Fieger, Kenney, Johnson & Giroux said Willingham’s family members have consulted their firm and they have an interest in the case, but that probate issues have to be resolved.

Frazier: “He was our angel”

Frazier’s family and friends said the young man, who was autistic, was known as “Tank” and loved throughout the entire neighborhood. He took his neighbor’s trash cans to the curb, and made a regular job out of collecting bottles and cans from the streets, all the way from Ryan to Mound. Merchants in the neighborhood knew exactly when he was coming to clear their areas.

“He loved doing that,” said Frazier’s mother, Charlotte Ann Frazier. “He graduated from the Burger Center in Garden City, a school for autistics. All his teachers were so proud of him. He never missed one day of school, and he never missed one Sunday in the Open Doors Baptist Church and Greater Concord church.

He was our angel.”

Frazier had three brothers and two sisters.

MORE:

Update On The Case Against Detroit Reporter

Nov 20, 2008 Metrotimes.com

About two dozen supporters accompanied Michigan Citizen Reporter Diane Bukowski to her arraignment today in 36th District Court in Detroit, where the long-time reporter said she plans a “vigorous defense” against charges she interfered at the scene of a fatal traffic accident that followed a police chase.

At her arraignment, Bukowski's attorney, John Royal, waived the maximum 14 days between arraignment and preliminary exam, saying they plan to interview several witnesses and comb through evidence. Her next hearing is scheduled for Dec. 16.

Bukowski is charged with five counts of assaulting, resisting and obstructing police, each a felony punishable by up to two years in prison and a \$2,000 fine. She pleaded not guilty and was released on \$5,000 personal bond.

Outside the courtroom, about two dozen supporters passed a red knit hat seeking donations for her legal defense. They erupted in applause as Bukowski emerged after processing.

"It was an egregious violation of the First Amendment," said Bukowski, adding that police "viciously interfered" while she was just trying to do her job.

She said she was about 50 feet away from two yellow tarps on the ground when she took pictures, but wouldn't comment about any other specifics of the crash scene.

The Citizen's Teresa Kelly said the case is about truth, justice and freedom of the press.

RECEIVED

How It Is

From: Roger L
To: GI Special
Sent: November 29, 2008
Subject: Re: GI Special 6K19: "I Guess We Didn't Get The Memo"

Re: "Did all the foreign jihadists go home?"

Nope!

The Americans are still there.

Rogue

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