

**GI SPECIAL 6L8:**



**U.S. Military Dictator In  
Iraq Says Fuck The  
Status Of Forces**

**Agreement:**

**The Traitor Odierno Says He  
Has Decided Not To Pull U.S.  
Combat Troops Out Of Cities**



(AP Photo/Efrem Lukatsky,

December 13, 2008 By LOLITA C. BALDOR, The Associated Press [Excerpts]

**Thousands of U.S. troops will remain in Iraqi cities at local security stations after the summer deadline to have combat troops out of the urban areas, the top U.S. commander in Iraq said Saturday.**

Gen. Raymond Odierno told reporters that the troops would serve as training and mentoring teams, and thus would not be included in the mandate to pull combat troops from the cities. That mandate is included in the recently approved U.S.-Iraq security agreement.

“We believe that’s part of our transition teams,” said Odierno, who was set to meet with Defense Secretary Robert Gates here at this sprawling base in central Iraq.

**He said the U.S. will leave troops at the security stations to support the Iraqis, adding “we believe we should still be inside those after the summer.”**

**While there have been suggestions that some number of troops would remain in the cities after the summer, Odierno’s comments marked the first time military leaders acknowledged that those would include forces at the security stations.**

Odierno said he will make recommendations in the coming weeks on how many of the U.S. forces can be withdrawn from Iraq early next year, but he is not ready yet to make that determination. **[For a start, how about withdrawing Odierno from Iraq, in handcuffs and leg chains? If you think he doesn’t have his eye on taking command of the U.S. government, by any means he deems necessary, when he believes he can pull it off, you are out of your mind. T]**

There are currently about 149,000 U.S. troops in Iraq — a level more than 10,000 higher than before the buildup of forces ordered by President Bush in early 2007 to stem the violence and pull Iraq back from the brink of civil war.

Odierno said that overall he believes the Iraqis will be ready, but there are a few trouble spots, including Mosul in northern Iraq.

If the Iraqis believe they need more help in Mosul after June, they can ask for assistance, Odierno said.

## **UNFIT FOR COMMAND UNWORTHY OF OBEDIENCE THIS IS THE FACE OF THE ENEMY**



The enemy domestic, up close and personal. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

### **MORE:**

**“Withdrawal Would Take Place Only  
With The Approval Of The Generals  
In The Field”**

**“Obama Is Signaling His Willingness To  
Continue The Occupation, While  
Escalating The War In Afghanistan”**

December 12, 2008 By Eric Ruder, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

THROUGHOUT THE 2008 presidential campaign, the mainstream media presented Barack Obama and John McCain as candidates whose foreign policy agendas were diametrically opposed. The story line practically wrote itself: McCain vowed to forge ahead in pursuit of victory in Iraq, while Obama would end the war.

But on December 4, the front page of the New York Times revealed a “shocking” discovery: “On the campaign trail, Senator Barack Obama offered a pledge that electrified and motivated his liberal base, vowing to “end the war” in Iraq.

“But as he moves closer to the White House, President-elect Obama is making clearer than ever that tens of thousands of American troops will be left behind in Iraq, even if he can make good on his campaign promise to pull all combat forces out within 16 months.”

Obama not only refused to rule out the continued use of private military contractors, which today outnumber actual U.S. troops in Iraq, but he also left himself an escape clause, insisting that any withdrawal would take place only with the approval of the generals in the field.

And it's little wonder that the military establishment is still ready to pursue victory, in spite of the cost in lives and money. During the Vietnam War, the Tet Offensive in 1968 made clear that the U.S. had lost--but it took seven more years, a mass antiwar movement and a revolt inside the U.S. armed forces before the generals decided to cut their losses and bring the troops home.

Obama's supporters expect him to bring the troops home and soon--yet his public statements, Cabinet appointments and the military planners he listens to all suggest a continuation of the war.

What's more, Obama has made it clear that he intends to escalate the war in Afghanistan--with devastating consequences for Afghan civilians who will be the victims of the increased bombing runs, house raids and indiscriminate detentions, and the sharpening conflict between the U.S.-backed warlords on the one hand and Taliban fighters on the other.

**In other words, millions of Americans expect an end to the war in Iraq, but Obama is signaling his willingness to continue the occupation, while escalating the war in Afghanistan.**

#### **Troops Invited:**

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

## IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**FUTILE EXERCISE:  
ONLY 2 MILLION MORE HOUSES TO GO  
ALL HOME NOW**



A U.S soldier enters an Iraqi family's home to search it in a village near Baquba, in Diyala province, October 26, 2008. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

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

## AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**Another Resistance Attack On  
Occupation Supply Line:  
“Several Containers Still Burning  
Saturday Afternoon”**

December 13, 2008 ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (CNN)

Suspected Taliban militants early Saturday staged another attack against cargo terminals in northwestern Pakistan in the country's restive tribal areas, destroying NATO supplies bound for neighboring Afghanistan, police said.

Military vehicles and food in 13 containers were thought to have been destroyed in the attacks outside the frontier city of Peshawar.

It follows at least five other attacks against NATO and U.S. supply lines in recent weeks.

Militants threw petrol bombs into the city's World Logistic Terminal and the Al Faisal Terminal, police said. The terminal holds hundreds of supply containers as well as Hummer transport vehicles bound for Afghanistan.

Several containers were still burning by Saturday afternoon.

The World Logistics Terminal was also attacked Thursday evening when several explosions sparked a fire that engulfed and destroyed at least three trucks, two cars and at least eight containers.

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

**“It Looked Like Something Out  
Of A Vietnam Movie”  
After Slaughter Of U.S. Troops  
Ordered Into An Indefensible  
Outpost By Deadly Fools In  
Command:  
[Here Comes The Big Surprise]  
Investigation Says “Actions By Leaders  
At All Levels Were Based On Sound  
Military Analysis And Risk Mitigation”**

**[Welcome to Obama's favorite war. He wants a lot more of this. If you support Obama, why aren't you fighting in Afghanistan? Shut up and ship out. T]**

12.15.08 By Michelle Tan, Army Times [Excerpts]

Not much was happening in Wanat when U.S. soldiers arrived to establish a base, said 28-year-old Staff Sgt. Jonathan Benton.

"We had been there previously to do patrols," he said. "It was pretty quiet, so our guard wasn't on the highest because it just didn't seem suspicious to us." That started to change when about 45 soldiers began to build Vehicle Patrol Base Kahler and Observation Post Top Side on July 8, 2008. The soldiers worked in shifts, the weapons atop their Humvees manned at all times.

As they worked, they were watched closely by local people who walked by or loitered in a nearby bazaar.

Six mortar men, a three-man TOW missile team and 29 para-troopers from 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, and five combat engineers from the 62nd Engineer Battalion built fortified patrol base positions, using sand-bags, Hesco barriers and concertina wire. They were joined by a two-Marine training team and 24 Afghan soldiers, bringing the force to 72 troops.

They named the base for Sgt. First Class Matthew Kahler.

An Afghan security guard who had been hired to guard an OP at nearby Combat Outpost Bella had fatally shot Kahler and then disappeared into the countryside.

OP Top Side, about 100 meters up an incline of terraces, consisted of three levels, with sandbags tied into existing rock walls.

The soldiers placed strands of concertina wire around the OP and filled several so-called dead spaces, which they could not see because of the terrain, with extra concertina wire.

**Then First Lt. Jonathan Brostrom, the platoon leader, got reports from a local elder that an attack against the Americans was imminent.**

**On July 12, 15 men were seen moving in the mountains to the west and soldiers noticed water running through an irrigation ditch into an unused field near OP Top Side; the rushing sound made it difficult to hear if anybody was approaching. [Hmmm. Sounds like what they call a clue.]**

**As the sun began to rise the next morning, shortly after 4, commanders were putting together a 120mm mortar fire mission and TOW missile engagement when the enemy hit the patrol base and OP almost simultaneously.**

Enemy fighters, some as close as 50 meters, first targeted the crew-served weapons atop the Humvees.

There was a burst of fire and rocket-propelled grenades tore into the mortar firing position, mortally wounding Spc. Sergio Abad, and striking the TOW missile position.

The third RPG to strike the TOW missile position set the soldiers' truck on fire, forcing them to abandon it.

"Initially, everybody thought it was going to be more harassing fire," said Spc. Jeffrey Scantlin. "As the fight went on we realized they were there to stay." Benton and his squad, which included Scantlin, were positioned near the eastern wall of the patrol base.

"Everybody was pretty rattled at first," Benton said, noting there were multiple RPG teams, some only 50 to 75 meters away.

The soldiers fired back, including using the Humvee-mounted MK 19. "We kept getting rocked a lot with those RPGs," he said. "They kept pushing us back." When the soldier on the MK 19 ran out of ammo, Sgt. Dylan Meyer, 25, recalled jumping into the turret, reloading and firing.

The weapon jammed a number of times and eventually its range of motion was severely restricted, but he continued to fire.

Enemy fighters were popping out from almost every nearby building, he said.

It wasn't long before soldiers started to get hit, said Scantlin, who handed his M249 squad automatic weapon to a fellow soldier and took on the role of medic.

Scantlin, 24, joined the Army through the Special Forces enlistment program, and received advanced medical training before dropping out of the program. That training became critical when the platoon medic was shot in the arm.

At the mortar firing position, the soldiers used fragmentary grenades to ward off the enemy. They fired four 120mm mortar rounds before an RPG ignited the attached ammunition supply point and forced them to return to the patrol base.

Some of the fiercest fighting was taking place at OP Top Side, where nine paratroopers were positioned.

Spc. Jason Bogar fired his M249 squad automatic weapon at enemy fighters to the east from his perch on the main position at the OP.

When the SAW jammed, Bogar placed a tourniquet on the wounded soldier next to him, while Spc. Matthew Phillips threw a grenade at approaching enemy fighters. Phillips was killed as he threw the grenade.

Spc. Jonathan Ayers and Spc. Christopher McKaig laid down massive firepower from an M240B machine gun and McKaig's M4 as they took incoming barrages.

"It was from every direction," McKaig, 34, said. "It was kind of difficult to tell what kind of explosions were which. Sandbags were exploding in front of us." About 30 minutes into the battle, Ayers told McKaig he was running low on ammunition. McKaig himself had expended 12 magazines, and his M4 was overheating.



The soldiers decided to take cover behind the sandbags and, in an effort to save ammunition, pop up and fire short bursts at the enemy every three seconds, McKaig said.

After doing that four or five times, a bullet skipped off Ayers' helmet.

"He started yelling that he got hit," McKaig said. "He said, 'I'm hit.' I started looking at his body for blood. He said, 'Look at my helmet, look at my helmet.'" The bullet had left a 3-to 4-inch gash on Ayers' helmet.

"It didn't penetrate him but it scared the both of us," McKaig said. "It was tough for us to jump up again because we knew the fire was effective. We told ourselves we had to do it otherwise we'd get overrun."

A few minutes later, Ayers was hit. "He slumped over the gun," McKaig said. "He coughed up blood and he was looking right at me. It was hard to tell but it seemed like time was slowing down." Ayers died almost instantly, and McKaig fought on, throwing four hand grenades and firing two Claymore mines.

Shortly afterward, his M4 began to seize, so he picked up Ayers' M4, but a bullet had pierced the receiver.

"I was really mad," he said. "I thought I was going to die."

### **Attacks From All Angles**

**In the first 15 to 20 minutes, all nine paratroopers at the OP were killed or injured.**

More enemy fighters moved in from the east to continue the attack on OP Top Side.

Some enemy fighters were only 5 to 10 meters away from the patrol base, firing from the village's hotel, nearby homes and surrounding treetops.

Sgt. Matthew Gobble, 25, was moving to his foxhole when he was wounded by an incoming mortar or RPG.

"I was a little dazed," he said. "I look around and I see people running to different positions." Gobble moved behind cover and was soon joined by Spc. Tyler Stafford, who had suffered shrapnel wounds all over the left side of his body.

Sgt. Ryan Pitts left Gobble's area for the other side of the OP, where there was a bunker and a radio, Gobble said.

"He sat down in between the sandbags for cover and started calling up fire missions," Gobble said.

McKaig, who had paused to find a working weapon, slid down to aid Gobble and Stafford.

"I kept yelling we need to either fall back or get more ammo," McKaig said.

McKaig decided to run to the patrol base to get ammo, so he dove through an opening and zigzagged his way to the patrol base.

“I didn’t think I was going to make it when I jumped out, but I knew I was going to die if I stayed there,” McKaig said.

When a soldier tried to fire several Claymore mines, he found that the enemy had disabled or turned them around to face the OP. By that time, the only ammunition available at the OP was a light antitank rocket, which the soldiers fired at enemy fighters who were 15 to 20 meters away.

Enemy fighters, as close as the front wire, began firing RPGs into the tree line and tossing grenades. Platoon leader Brostrom, Spc. Pruitt Rainey and Spc. Jason Hovater were the first reinforcements to arrive at the OP from the patrol base, but they were killed by enemy fire as they set up a machine gun position.

Benton continued to monitor his radio as more soldiers moved to the OP.

“I heard the OP get hit again and all of them went down,” he said.

Benton and his soldiers began to run to the OP.

“In one moment you’re focused on what’s going on,” he said. “The next moment, (I thought about how) I have a wife and three daughters. At the same time you hear more guys getting injured. The first hour was definitely the toughest, when you hear your buddies getting hit and wonder if you’re next.”

When a second group of reinforcements fought their way to the OP, they rendered medical aid to their wounded buddies but were wounded themselves when a volley of three RPGs hit the OP in quick succession.

Scantlin made his way to the OP and found chaos.

“Until I got to the OP I knew things were bad but I didn’t really know how bad,” he said. “It was one of those shocking moments.” Scantlin pushed aside his fear.

“I moved around and started to distribute ammo and water, and everywhere I went I seemed to see more bodies,” he said.

As the fight intensified, the Americans responded with indirect fire, launching the first of 96 rounds of 155mm mortars. Shortly afterward, B-1 bombers, F-15 and A-10 fighter jets arrived and began dropping the first of 38 precision-guided bombs on enemy targets, allowing the Americans to move their casualties to a staging area for medical evacuation. Also on hand were AH-64 Apache helicopters that fired rockets, missiles and 30mm cannons on the enemy. The enemy fighters dug into different positions in and around the village, including in the mosque.

### **One-Way OP Fire**

Some enemy fighters were close enough to throw rocks into the OP perimeter, mimicking grenades, according to the AR 15-6. The enemy could be overhead talking to one another on the north side of the OP, forcing the Americans to whisper into their radios as they relayed to the patrol base the locations of the enemy fighters.

Gobble said at one point he didn't hear any rounds being fired from the OP. "Any type of firing is fire that's coming in on us," he said.

An enemy fighter came in close and began throwing rocks, he said.

"We thought they were grenades because we knew they had grenades," he said. "One lands directly between Stafford's legs. He yelled, 'Grenade!' and when I turned around I saw it was a rock."

The soldiers figured the enemy was trying to fool them into jumping up so they could hit them with gunfire and decided they had to try and find their fellow soldiers.

So Gobble pulled himself up over the sandbags he had been leaning on and saw three soldiers lying on the terrace below.

They were dead.

"I couldn't figure out where everyone was," he said. "I told Stafford, 'We've got to make a decision here. Go back to the patrol base or wait for McKaig to come back with more weapons or ammo.' Stafford's telling me, 'I'm messed up real bad. I can't move. I can't fight. We should go back to the vehicle patrol base.'" They decided to use the terraces on the side of the mountain as cover and use the drainage ditch to move back to the patrol base.

"I jumped down one terrace below, and at this point I'm trying to see if anyone's still alive up there," Gobble said. "The last thing I want to do is leave someone who's still alive up there. I holler, 'Is there anybody left up here?' And nobody answered."

Moving under fire, Gobble and Stafford arrived at the patrol base and reported what they knew to the soldiers there and received medical treatment. They also learned that McKaig had not returned to their position because their commanders wouldn't let him return to the OP on his own, Gobble said.

During the battle, a quick reaction force was dispatched from Camp Blessing, about five miles away. In order to reach Patrol Base Kahler more quickly, the soldiers did not stop to clear locations along the route known for concealing improvised explosive devices. Instead, they fired their crew-served weapons into the draws along the road where IED triggermen could be hiding.

### **'You Feel Numb'**

At almost 6 a.m., more than 90 minutes after the fighting began, the first medevac helicopter arrived at the patrol base. Reinforcements of 19 paratroopers in four Humvees arrived about 15 minutes later, and they were able to push back a renewed effort by the enemy to attack the patrol base. More paratroopers and Afghan soldiers continued to

arrive at the patrol base throughout the day, and the last medevac helicopter returned to Camp Blessing at 9:55 a.m., almost six hours after the first shot was fired.

“All the bodies were pretty bad,” Scantlin said. “One of them ... I had to look at his name tag to know who he was. I couldn’t recognize him. You feel numb, and it’s very sad. They were all stellar soldiers, and it’s nothing I wish anybody to experience.” As Gobble was evacuated from the patrol base, he looked out the window of the helicopter.

**“It looked like something out of a Vietnam movie,” he said. “There were buildings on fire, one Humvee had pretty much burned to the ground, there were all kinds of trash everywhere, Humvees had numerous holes in them, I could see soldiers running. I took a look at the OP and I saw a medevac bird landing there.”**

As the troops surveyed the remnants of the battlefield, they found AK-47 shell casings and RPG boosters in numerous hidden locations along the path to the west that ringed the patrol base.

In addition, the soldiers found enemy propaganda materials and supplies to make identification cards in one home, and bloody shoes, indicating the enemy had left their shoes in order to blend in with the barefoot and sandal-clad civilian population.

“A lot of the soldiers clung on to each other,” Benton said. “If we didn’t have each other I don’t think many of us would have made it through.”

The next day, Afghan soldiers went to the local district center and disarmed the 20 Afghan policemen stationed there.

**Coalition and Afghan forces noted that the police station and district center appeared untouched by the previous day’s fighting even though the center was in view of avenues of approach used by the enemy.**

**The police also appeared to be wearing clean new uniforms, which is not typical, and the police appeared to behave as if nothing had happened the day before.**

When the Afghan soldiers searched the police station they found more than 100 firearms, thousands of rounds of ammunition, RPGs, shotguns and other weapons. The previous day’s search of the village had turned up weapons of the same model as those used by the local Afghan police.

The Americans confiscated the policemen’s weapons and left each of the 20 policemen with an AK-47 and 100 bullets.

**On the morning of July 15, commanders in Wanat were ordered to move their troops to other locations.**

**[And now, here it comes, the officers who ordered this suicide mission get a free pass to kill again:]**

The AR 15-6 concluded that while the soldiers’ relationship with the locals in Wanat ranged from hostility or indifference to friendship, the decision to move so close to the village in order to interact with and secure the population was the right one.

The investigating officer, a colonel whose name was redacted from the report along with other elements, also said actions by leaders at all levels were based on sound military analysis and risk mitigation, and that coalition forces must continue to conduct operations in and around Wanat.

“You toss and turn sometimes before you go to sleep because you relive some of it,” McKaig said. “I think that’s what made us fight so hard, too, because our platoon was so close-knit.” “The only choice you can make is fight or not fight,” he said, “... and we all decided that we’re going to fight if we’re going to die.”

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## **TROOP NEWS**

### **500 From West Virginia Guard Off To The Imperial Slaughterhouse**

More than 500 members of a Bluefield-based West Virginia National Guard unit are being deployed to Iraq.

Members of 1st Battalion, 150th Armored Reconnaissance Squadron, and 230th Forward Support Company were scheduled to leave Dec. 5.

The soldiers will undergo mobilization training at Fort Pickett, Va., before being deployed to Iraq in April. They are expected to return to West Virginia in early 2010.

It’s the unit’s second tour in Iraq. The first tour ended in October 2005.

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### **So Close Yet So Far: “Pogues In Disguise Of Senior Infantry Leaders”**

<p><b>My family has gone through mood changes of excitement, anxiety and now they are beginning to get angry because they don’t understand why we aren’t home yet and I have nothing to tell them.</b></p>
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December 11, 2008

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

So close yet so far

Our entire battalion has now arrived and is in the process of outprocessing.

I'm not sure what outprocessing consists of, although I'm fairly confident it means buying all the dip and cigarettes at the PX.

Our BC and CSM have ordered us that we can no longer wear civilian clothes and as of today, can no longer wear PTs. I'm not sure how we're supposed to accomplish our required daily PT session, I know I'm sure as shit not running in boots. I enjoy having functioning knees.

We basically have to be in uniform 24/7 now because, well because the BC and CSM say so. I really didn't miss these guys for the past year; they are pogues in disguise of senior infantry leaders.

My pay and supply issues are still unresolved but these guys can issue policy memorandums regarding uniforms the same day they arrive on the base.

Retarded.

We had the pleasure of escorting the cav squadron we were attached to to the airport last week and this week had the pleasure of seeing pictures of their homecoming ceremonies in Stars & Stripes.

My family has gone through mood changes of excitement, anxiety and now they are beginning to get angry because they don't understand why we aren't home yet and I have nothing to tell them.

All of my shit is packed and I lay on my bunk surfing the internet endlessly trying to kill the time.

The BC wrote a letter promising to have us home by Christmas and that's probably going to blow up in his face. We have to be at our demobilization site and outprocessed by a certain date because this site closes for Christmas exodus and if we don't finish in time we'll be sitting there for 2 weeks.

Good news is I got my ribbon rack to wear on my class A's. Woo.

I tried to trade it back into supply for my missing \$4000 or missing \$400 in gear. No dice.

**MORE:**

**Still Here:**

# **“The Only Way To Tell Days Apart Is When We Get Fucked With By Some Senior NCO Or Officer”**

December 14, 2008

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

Still here

Can we go home now?

I'm out of movies to watch and I'm not going to pay \$10 for a DVD like some millionaire would. I'm not sure how I will watch movies back home; \$20 for a new DVD seems like highway robbery considering they are \$1 from the bootleggers in Iraq.

Our days consist of a 0600 wakeup from ShittyPSG, because we have to maintain a typical military duty day, and then we lay here for hours talking, napping or watching movies. We do PT at 1600 and that's our day.

The only way to tell days apart is when we get fucked with by some senior NCO or officer.

Lately, it's been this Command Sergeant Major from the unit that does base security here.

A few days ago while we were running (squad based PT), he busted SPC McLuvin for having black socks on instead of regulation white socks. The PX only sells black underarmour socks. Unless you have socks mailed, if you don't want ratty socks, you have the black underarmour ones.

We were running for time but I guess that's not as important as black socks.

I'll sleep in standing water all day everyday but I can't stand garrison bullshit, especially on a deployment.

The same CSM stopped us today during a PT test on the run portion because retreat went off.

Retreat is at 1700 when they lower the base flag. They don't play it at bases in Iraq and they only play it here I think in Kuwait. They don't actually raise or lower the flag because that takes effort, but we're still supposed to stop and salute.

I am administering a PT test and the regulations clearly state that if performing a duty, you do not need to stop for retreat. I consider a PT test a duty, and tell the guys running to keep going.

The CSM (who seems to come up to where we run everyday at 1700 to get McDonald's) goes beserk. He runs over and is screaming at me an inch from my face about how the guys running need to stop because people died so this flag could be lowered everyday.

Keep in mind while I am at attention saluting, he is hopping around me screaming.

I explained the regulations to him which made him more angry I think, he yelled at me for not planning properly. I explained that since it is cold now (around 50 in the day and low 40s at night, which is absolutely freezing for us considering it was 140 here just a few months ago), 1600 is the hottest part of the day before the sun goes down.

He yelled some more and went to get McDonald's. I feel like an asshole because some guys stopped when they saw me getting yelled at and the 3-4 min bitchfest cost them time on their runs.

Also, after us being yelled at all year for not being in peak physical shape by ShittyPSG, he not only failed to pass his 2 mile run, he failed to complete even 1 mile of it.

## **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**

# **Wing Cracks Take Out Half Of A-10 Fleet: Aircraft Have Been Key In Supporting Ground Troops In Iraq And Afghanistan**

Dec 10, 2008 By Bruce Rolfsen, Army Times Staff writer [Excerpts]

Nearly half of the Air Force's A-10 Thunderbolt fleet remained grounded as of early December because of wing cracks, and Air Force officials said it will likely take six months before the attack planes are back in the sky.



As of early December, 168 of the service's 356 Warthogs remained grounded. Those planes should be repaired by June, said Air Force Maj. David Ruth, A-10 weapons system team chief at Air Combat Command headquarters, Langley Air Force Base, Va.

The grounding began Oct. 3 after inspectors at Ogden Air Logistics Center in Utah — where A-10s are sent for major overhauls and upgrades — raised concerns about wing cracks.

Inspectors found breaks in both wings near the center panels of the landing gear trunnions. The cracks were inside a portion of the wing where base-level maintainers rarely check.

Those concerns resulted in the Oct. 3 grounding order for 129 jets and a mandate to inspect other A-10s. Additional inspections and concerns about planes not covered by the Oct. 3 order pushed the total higher, reaching 191 jets in mid-November. Repairs and completed checks reduced the number of grounded jets to 168.

Although A-10s were designed to last for 8,000 flying hours, many have passed the 10,000hour mark.

The Warthogs have been workhorses in supporting ground troops in operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom.

One example of the Warthog's role was a mission during the harrowing battle at Wanat, Afghanistan, in July, when A10s, B-1 bombers, and F-15 Eagles flew into the mountain rimmed river valley at Wanat and hit enemy targets, allowing soldiers to move their casualties to a staging area for medical evacuation.

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## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**



Steve Bell

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

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

## **CLASS WAR REPORTS**



## **Chicago Factory Occupation Wins Severance Pay For Workers; “Politicians And Bankers Felt Pressured To Resolve The Issue In Workers’ Favor”**

Comment: T

The importance of this story isn't the factory occupation tactic, which, as the story notes, got this particular group of workers their severance pay before they were kicked out into the street and onto the unemployment benefits line.

**The importance of the story and what shocked the politicians and the bankers into quickly coughing up the money was the firestorm of support for the cheated workers that broke out all over the United States, and the white-hot hatred of Bank Of America that went arm and arm with it.**

**By their refusal to go quietly, the heroes at Republic Windows struck a spark that began to burn everywhere. All honor and respect to them.**

**At Bellevue Hospital, in New York City, workers and even lower level managers who talked about the seizure of the factory and the stupid greedy cruelty of Bank Of America for days began using the word “revolution,” as in “this country needs a revolution.”**

**There is a terrible and powerful pressure building up.**

**Sometime, somewhere, another spark will light another, larger working class firestorm from below. And another. And another.**

**As has been often noted, generals are always fighting the last war, after history and events have moved on. Class war generals are no different. Factory occupations, used to form industrial unions in a different world 70 years ago, are as holy for many on the left as the Bible is for a book-worshipping sectarian.**

**Stupidity would be to assume the coming storms must necessarily take this particular form again and/or that they necessarily must involve a union action. Maybe, maybe not.**

**Whatever form future outbreaks of class resistance may take, it would be prudent for allies to be ready to move, rather than blindly assume there is some imagined script to be followed about how this or that must be made to happen or be built before other action emerges.**

**Great movements from below are not linear, not do they come from a cook book.**

**“Theory is grey, but the tree of life is eternally green.” [Goethe]**

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December 12, 2008 By Lee Sustar, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

THE FULL implications of the workers' breakthrough victory at Republic Windows & Doors are still unclear, but a few lessons can already be drawn.

First, by occupying their plant, the workers--members of the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America (UE) Local 1110--gained enormous leverage over the owners and their creditors.

The action forced the company's banks to pay for severance pay legally required in a plant closure.

Overnight, a factory occupation--something usually reserved for labor history books on the 1930s and nostalgic speeches at union conventions--became a focal point for working class resistance amid a profound economic crisis.

There is, of course, an important difference with the workers' takeover of Republic and the most famous sit-down strike in U.S. history, the occupation of General Motors' main plant in Flint, Mich., in 1936-37.

Unlike GM, which kept operating during the Great Depression of those years, Republic had shut its doors.

The second key lesson of the Republic victory is the centrality of solidarity action.

**Within days--if not hours--the occupation became national and even international news.**

**By the end of the struggle, statements of support had appeared from labor organizations all over the world, including the main trade union federations in France and Japan.**

At the local level, the factory entrance was the site of a running solidarity meeting involving a wide range of union leaders, union reform caucuses, rank-and-file activists, community organizations, radicals, socialists and religious groups.

Organizers compared notes, strategized and made plans--not only to build support for Republic workers, but about other struggles as well.

**Thanks to the Republic workers' struggle, an ordinarily hostile national media focused on the fact that Republic's main creditor, Bank of America, had cut off the factory's line of credit despite the infusion of \$25 billion of taxpayer money into that bank as part of Congress' bailout of Wall Street.**

**Politicians and bankers, therefore, felt pressured to resolve the issue in workers' favor.**

**Ordinarily, workers in this situation can wait for years to receive the money due them--if they ever do.**

**But Republic workers forced Bank of America and other creditors to come up with nearly \$2 million in less than a week, even though the banks had no legal obligation to do so.**

The overwhelming majority of the Republic workforce is Latino, and most are immigrants.

Yet in an increasingly repressive atmosphere of workplace immigration raids and deportations, these workers were willing to risk arrest or worse in order to stand up for themselves.

The big marches against anti-immigrant laws played a role in boosting workers' confidence.

“We learned that we had rights,” one worker said.

Finally, the Republic struggle underscored the fact that class-struggle, social-movement unionism must be at the heart of any serious revival of the labor movement.

The victory at Republic flowed directly from the rank-and-file union democracy practiced in UE Local 1110. If the Republic workers’ win has an impact on the rest of the labor movement, it will be because more union members follow their fighting example.

**“But support for the Republic struggle went beyond the ranks of organized labor. The fightback crystallized mass anger about the \$700 billion bailout of Wall Street.”**

-- Lee Sustar, Socialist Worker, December 12, 2008

**By the time their six-day sit-in ended on Wednesday night, the 240 laid-off workers at this previously anonymous 125,000-square-foot plant had become national symbols of worker discontent amid the layoffs sweeping the country.**

**Bob Bruno, director of the labor studies program at the University of Illinois at Chicago, predicted organized labor would be emboldened by the workers’ success.**

**“If you combine some palpable street anger with organizational resources in a changing political mood,” he said, “you can begin to see more of these sort of riskier, militant adventures, and they’re more likely to succeed.”**

-- MICHAEL LUO and KAREN ANN CULLOTTA, New York Times, December 12, 2008  
[Thanks to Clancy Sigal, who sent this in.]

**“The significance of this struggle for the labor movement is that at a time when millions of American workers are facing greater and greater economic turmoil, and with it more and more instances of unfairness, there needed to be a clear symbol of resistance.**

**“What the workers at Republic are is the face of that resistance.**

**“They personify the challenge that the working class faces in today’s economy, but they also symbolize the hope that if we, as workers, stick together, if we fight together, and if we’re willing to push the limits, we can achieve incredible things.”**

--Bob Kingsley, national director of organization, United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, quoted by Lee Sustar, Socialist Worker, December 12, 2008

**MORE:**

## **Sometime, Somewhere, Another Spark Will Light Another, Larger Working Class Firestorm From Below**



Residents from both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border press their hands on the border wall to commemorate 'La Posada without borders' in Tijuana, Mexico, Dec. 13, 2008. Las Posadas are a nine-day Mexican Christmas tradition from Dec. 16 to Dec. 24 that involves the sharing of food and shelter. The tradition represents Joseph and Mary's biblical journey before Jesus was born. (AP Photo/Guillermo Arias)

### **Troops Invited:**

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

## **“Down With The Government Of Murderers”**

**“Peaceful Demonstrations Cannot  
Get A Solution To The Problem”  
“We Are Experiencing Moments Of A  
Great Social Revolution”**



People read messages left on the walls of the street in Athens where the 15-years old Alexis Grigoropoulos was killed by police. Greeks engaged in street fighting moments after vigils were held for the schoolboy victim. (AFP/Aris Messinis)



A protester gestures at police during clashes in Athens December 10, 2008. (Oleg Popov/Reuters)

December 10, 2008 George Yorgos, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

THE MURDER of a 15-year-old student by police in Greece's capital of Athens has sparked mass demonstrations and riots around the country as Socialist Worker went to press.

According to eyewitnesses, the cops went after such a group of about 30 young people, exchanging verbal insults with them. Then, one of the cops threw a stun grenade and, while the crowd was dispersing, another took aim at the group and fired three shots. One bullet hit 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos in the heart.

The murder triggered an immediate reaction. Thousands of angry young protesters fed up with continuous unpunished police violence seized the center of Athens in a matter of hours.

The murder shocked the whole country, and on December 7, there were mass protests. In Athens, about 10,000 people marched to police headquarters.

"It's not the first time," one protester told BBC News. "They always kill people--immigrants, innocent people--and without any excuse. They murdered him in cold blood. I think (the rioting) is justified.

"Peaceful demonstrations cannot get a solution to the problem."

According to a report in the Greek newspaper Eleftherotypia, 70 people have been killed by police in the last 10 years.

Despite apologies from the government and promises by authorities to meet out punishment for the murder, protesters continued to take to the streets, as even bigger demonstrations spread outside of Athens to literally every city of Greece--marking the first protests in many of them for decades.

Although the first protests were spontaneous, protests on Sunday, December 7 and Monday, December 8 were called by left-wing parties in an organized response to the violence of the cops, but also to the deep economic crisis and high unemployment that disproportionately affects young people, with devastating results.

In one Athens protest on December 8, several thousand students, teachers and blue-collar workers marched on the parliament at Syntagma Square, shouting slogans that included "Down with the government of murderers."

**Most impressive has been the participation by tens of thousands of young high school students, who angrily marched on police stations to stage die-ins and pelt them with tomatoes, eggs and stones.**

Prime Minister Karamanlis, whose center-right government has a majority of just one vote, is in a precarious position. His government is already facing crisis because of a series of financial scandals, the economic crisis, high unemployment and rising prices. Karamanlis is under immense pressure to resign.



So far, the government has refrained from unleashing a complete crackdown on the protesters, worried that doing so could possibly be the final blow that topples the Karamanlis government.

As Panagiotis Sotiri, a spokesman for Uniting Anti-Capitalist Left, a coalition of leftist groups that helped take over the Athens Law School, told Reuters, the protests are not only a result of the killing of Alexandros Grigoropoulos, but are “a struggle to overthrow the government’s policy.”

“We are experiencing moments of a great social revolution,” he said.



Protesters throw a petrol bomb and flares towards riot police officers during clashes with protesters in Athens, Saturday, Dec. 13, 2008. (AP Photo/Petros Karadjias)



Anti-government activists use a laser pointer to blind a riot police officer as they throw rocks during clashes with riot police in Athens, Dec. 13, 2008, one week after the police shot dead 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoropoulos which sparked massive anti-government protests. (AP Photo/Petros Karadjias)

**More:**

## **Greeks In Athens Attacked A Police Station, Stores And Banks And Fought Running Battles With Police**



Riot police officers are attacked with petrol bombs during fighting with protesters in central Athens, early Sunday, Dec. 14, 2008.

**Greeks in Athens attacked a police station, stores and banks and fought running battles with police late Saturday and early Sunday authorities said, as protests against a police killing continued for the eighth straight day.**

(AP Photo/Lefteris Pitarakis)

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**RECEIVED**

**A New Veterans Organization Setting Up  
Campuses And Educational Programs To Teach  
Veterans Green Collar Skills**

From: Garrett Reppenhagen  
Sent: December 08, 2008  
Subject: veterans green jobs alliance

Hello friends,

I have recently become the Program Director for Veterans Green-Jobs Alliance.

We are a new veterans organization setting up campuses and educational programs to teach veterans green collar skills such as renewable energy installation, historic building restoration, energy efficiency auditing, environmental conservation and more. The programs will earn veterans college credits and immediate job training that they can apply to one of the fastest growing markets in America.

**Please take the time to read the attached letter and feel free to contact me to learn more on how we can cooperate.**

We are looking for more allies and any veteran students that might be interested in participating.

If you can forward this out to your network that would be much appreciated. The letter is crafted toward veterans, but this will give you a good idea what VGA is about.

Garrett Reppenhagen  
Veterans Green-Jobs Alliance  
Homelake Colorado  
garrett@veteransgreenjobs.org  
(719)235-7030

## **Veterans Green-Jobs Alliance**

**“Supporting Veterans in Becoming Leaders in Green Industry and Environmental Restoration”**

POB 561  
Crestone, CO 81131  
www.VeteransGreenJobs.org  
970.846.7344

Dear Fellow Veterans,

I am writing to offer you the opportunity to help support and join the efforts of Veterans Green Jobs Alliance (VGA). VGA is an unprecedented alliance that offers creative and concrete solutions for three of the most urgent issues of our time: the rebuilding of a sustainable, green economy; deteriorating environmental conditions and climate change threats; and the return of over a million of veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan who are in need of healing and meaningful new careers. In our critical struggle to implement services that veterans genuinely need, VGA has developed a program that will offer legitimate training that can be applied to a veterans college education or immediate employment that will supply an adequate livable wage.

In a nutshell, Veterans Green Jobs Alliance will provide Green Jobs Trainings Programs, connecting skilled, disciplined and service-oriented vets with rapidly growing sectors of America's new 'Green Economy.' Green-collar jobs include renewable energy development, energy efficiency/retrofitting, sustainable building and agriculture, ecosystem restoration, and even disaster preparedness/response. Green jobs pay well, cannot be outsourced and offer a pathway to serve and protect both our people and our planet. And, as I know you will appreciate, the 'greening' of America's economy is synonymous with moving away from our dependence on oil – a prerequisite for creating true global security.

With the Obama administration already vocally promoting green jobs as a major part of the solution to our economic and environmental woes, Veterans Green Jobs Alliance is well-positioned to leverage resources to give veterans an opportunity to heal both themselves and the communities and environments to which they return.

Our vision honors veterans as a community that transcends many societal divisions around race, class, politics, etc. VGA plans to help start Veterans Green Jobs Training Programs in all 50 states, helping thousands of veterans to successfully reintegrate into civilian life and continue to serve their country by strengthening the new green economy, while preserving and restoring our natural environment.

After laying the groundwork for two years, VGA is poised to launch three Green Jobs Training Programs this coming spring. Residential training programs will be based in the San Luis Valley of Colorado – a bastion of green building and renewable energy – and the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans – where residents have yet to recover from Katrina. We are also partnering with a non-residential program, the Washington Veterans Conservation Corps in Olympia, Washington, where a focus on outdoor conservation and restoration is already transforming both people's lives and the land. All programs will be accredited through Community Colleges, enabling trainees to access GI benefits.

The impact of this work on the lives of individual veterans, their families and their communities will be huge. As a recently returned veteran, I could hardly believe that after surviving combat in Iraq and being honorably discharged from the service, I would face my real challenge – finding meaningful work.

VGA has just received a generous start-up grant that will cover roughly half of our total expenses for 2009. However, we need many, many others to come on board now. With your support, we can ensure that our national launch establishes roots and grows quickly in order to meet the ecological, economic and social demands facing this country.

Please join me by making a donation, or helping to spread awareness of Veteran Green-Jobs Alliance. Your gift will be a catalyst, garnering national visibility and support for this timely initiative. This is a terrific occasion to continue your service to your country and fellow veterans. Knowing how quickly things get buried in the flurry of the season, I hope you will not delay.

**To learn more about supporting VGA visit [www.veteransgreenjobs.org](http://www.veteransgreenjobs.org).**

If you are interested in participating please write to [training@veteransgreenjobs.org](mailto:training@veteransgreenjobs.org) and

Yours truly,

Garett Reppenhagen

## **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

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/](http://www.ivaw.org/))**

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

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

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

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

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

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

[http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi\\_special/](http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/);

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# **GI Special** [www.militaryproject.org](http://www.militaryproject.org)

*This is how Bush brings the troops home,  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.*



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