

## GI SPECIAL 7B11:

# The War Comes Home: World Press Photo Of The Year 2008:



US Economy in Crisis: Following foreclosure and eviction notice, Detective Robert Kole ensures residents have moved out of their home in Cleveland, Ohio, 26 March 2008.

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes:

["If we stopped wasting money on foreign adventures might we have enough to take care of our own people? Do the Iraqis and Afghans get kicked out of there homes because they haven't kept up on predatory mortgages? Bring the troops home NOW!"]

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This picture by US photographer Anthony Suau, for Time won the World Press Photo of the Year 2008 award, it was announced by the organisers on 13 February 2009 in Amsterdam, The Netherlands.

A picture of an armed sheriff moving through an American home after an eviction due to a mortgage foreclosure was named World Press Photo of 2008 on Friday.

Jury members said the strength of the photo by American Anthony Suau for Time magazine was in its opposites -- it looks like a classic war photograph, but is simply the eviction of people from a house.

**“Now war in its classic sense is coming into people’s houses because they can’t pay their mortgages,” jury chair MaryAnne Golon said.**

Fellow juror Akinbode Akinbiyi said: “All over the world people will be thinking: ‘This is what is happening to all of us’“

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **ENOUGH OF THIS SHIT; ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. soldiers with Alpha Company, 32nd Infantry Regiment, burn waste at Panich camp, Kunar Province, eastern Afghanistan February 14, 2009. REUTERS/Oleg Popov

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## **Royal Marine From 45 CDO Killed In Helmand On 14 February**

14 Feb 09 Ministry of Defence

It is with deepest regret that the Ministry of Defence must announce the death of a Royal Marine from 45 Commando Royal Marines today, Saturday 14 February 2009.

The Royal Marine died as a result of wounds sustained from enemy fire in an area to the south west of Sangin, in Northern Helmand.

He was part of a patrol operating in support of an Explosive Ordnance Disposal Team. Unfortunately he died of his wounds as he was being flown to the hospital.

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## **TROOP NEWS**

# **Follow The Money: While U.S. Troops Died In Iraq, Traitor Senior U.S. Officers Stuffed Their Pockets With Millions; U.S. Arms Dealer Who Complained About Their Thieving Killed Near U.S. Base; The Killing “Remains Unsolved”**

February 15, 2009 By James Glanz, C.J. Chivers and William K. Rashbaum, The International Herald Tribune [Excerpts]

The federal authorities examining the early, chaotic days of the \$125 billion U.S.-led effort to rebuild Iraq have significantly broadened their inquiry to include senior U.S. military officers who oversaw the program, according to interviews with senior government officials and court documents.

Court records show that last month investigators subpoenaed the personal bank records of Colonel Anthony Bell, who is now retired from the army but who was in charge of reconstruction contracting in Iraq in 2003 and 2004 when the small operation grew into a frenzied attempt to remake the country's broken infrastructure.

In addition, investigators are examining the activities of Lieutenant Colonel Ronald Hirtle of the Air Force, who was a senior contracting officer in Baghdad in 2004, according to two federal officials involved in the inquiry.

It is not clear what specific evidence exists against the two men, and both said they had nothing to hide from investigators. Yet officials say that several criminal cases over the past few years point to widespread corruption in the operation the men helped to run.

**As part of the inquiry, the authorities are taking a fresh look at information given to them by Dale Stoffel, an American arms dealer and contractor who was killed in Iraq in late 2004.**

**Before he was shot on a road north of Baghdad, Stoffel drew a portrait worthy of a pulp crime novel: tens of thousands of dollars stuffed into pizza boxes and delivered surreptitiously to the American contracting offices in Baghdad, and payoffs made in paper bags that were scattered in “dead drops” around the Green Zone, the nerve center of the United States government’s presence in Iraq, two senior federal officials said.**

**Stoffel, who gave investigators information about the office where Bell and Hirtle worked, was deemed credible enough that he was granted limited immunity from prosecution in exchange for his information, according to government documents obtained by The New York Times and interviews with officials and Stoffel’s lawyer, John Quinn Jr.**

The reconstruction effort, intended to improve services and convince Iraqis of American good will, largely managed to do neither.

The wider investigation raises the question of whether American corruption was a primary factor in damaging an effort whose failures have been ascribed to poor planning and unforeseen violence.

**In one case of graft from that period, Major John Cockerham of the army pleaded guilty to accepting nearly \$10 million in bribes as a contracting officer for the Iraq war and other military efforts from 2004 to 2007, when he was arrested.**

Cockerham’s wife has also pleaded guilty, as have several other contracting officers.

**In Cockerham’s private notebooks, Bell is identified as a possible recipient of an enormous bribe as recently as 2006, the two senior federal officials said.**

**When asked if Cockerham had ever offered him a bribe, Bell said by telephone, “I think we’ll end the discussion,” but stayed on the line.**

Bell’s response was equally terse when asked if he thought that Hirtle had carried out his duties properly: “No discussion on that at this time.”

The current focus on Bell is revealed in federal court papers filed in Georgia, where he has a residence and is trying to quash a subpoena of his bank records by the Special Inspector General. The papers, dated Jan. 27, indicate that Bell’s records were sought in connection with an investigation of bribery, kickbacks and fraud.

**Bell said that he sought to quash the subpoena not because he had anything to hide, but because the document contained inaccuracies. “If they clean it up, I won’t have a problem,” he said, suggesting that he would cooperate.**

**He declined to detail the inaccuracies, although his handwritten notations on the court papers indicated that the home address and the bank account number on the subpoena were incorrect.**

**Asked whether he knew why the records had been subpoenaed, he said, “That is not for me to direct what they’re going to do.”**

An extraordinary element of the current investigation is a voice from beyond the grave: that of Stoffel, who died with a British associate, Joseph Wemple, in a burst of automatic gunfire on a dangerous highway north of Baghdad in December 2004 as he returned from a business meeting at a nearby military base.

**A previously unknown Iraqi group claimed responsibility for the killings, which remain unsolved.**

On May 20, 2004, a little more than a week after Hirtle signed the Lee company’s warehouse contract, Stoffel was granted limited immunity by the Special Inspector General for what amounted to a whistle-blower’s complaint.

Copies of the immunity document were obtained from two former business associates of Stoffel.

“Fifty thousand dollars delivered in pizza boxes to secure contracts,” said a former associate, a consultant in the arms business with whom Stoffel sometimes worked in the former Eastern bloc. “Of course, it just looked like a pizza delivery.”

**It was Stoffel’s experience with Eastern bloc weaponry that helped him win a contract to refurbish Iraq’s Soviet-era tanks as part of a program to rebuild Iraq’s armed forces. Stoffel’s company remains locked in a dispute over payments it says are owed by the Iraqi government.**

**His problems with American officials were what led him to make the accusations of corruption. Stoffel, the associate said, “was trying to do this as quietly as possible, to blow the whistle.”**

**“He knew enough about what was going on, and he was getting pretty frustrated.”**

**MORE:**

**Follow The Money: #2  
[It’s Always Nice To Know Who  
You’re Dying For]**

# **U.S. War Profiteers Will Get \$5 Billion From Deal With Corrupt Scum Running The Fake “Government” Of Iraq**

February 15, 2009 Agence France-Presse

THE US military said it has struck deals with Iraq that will see Baghdad spend \$US5 billion (\$A7.7 billion) on American-made weapons, equipment and training.

The money is being spent on “military equipment, supplies and training from the US” through a foreign military sales program, it said in Baghdad.

The announcement was made following a meeting between Iraqi security officials and the US Defence Security Cooperation Agency, which reviews military sales between the two countries.

About 20 members of the Iraqi defence ministry as well as officials from the interior ministry took part in the financial review, the military said.

US Brigadier-General Charles Luckey said the defence deals would “give each nation a wide variety of training opportunities”, while an official from the security agency said they signalled “a commitment to a long-term relationship”. **[How about a look at their bank accounts? Any big deposits lately for General Fuckey?]**

## **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**

# **Pfc. Ryan Alderman, Now Deceased, Sought Medical Help From The Army: He Got A Fistful Of Powerful Drugs Instead:**

**“I Know For A Fact The Army Killed  
My Friend”**

**“I Want Something Done. The Army Is  
Killing People Left And Right And  
Nobody Cares”**



Pfc. Ryan Alderman in Iraq in an undated photo. Courtesy Tim Alderman

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

Feb. 10, 2009 By Mark Benjamin and Michael de Yoanna, Salon.com [Excerpts]

Timothy Ryan Alderman grew up in Mulberry, a central Florida town of just 3,200 people, a speck on the map 30 miles inland from Tampa. Though Florida is often thought of as a state full of transplants, Alderman, who went by his middle name, Ryan, had roots in Mulberry. His father had also been raised there, and some of Ryan's teachers had been his father's schoolmates.

Growing up, Ryan was an avid outdoorsman, hunting rabbit and squirrel and catching bass and bluegill. He was also a passionate skateboarder and surfer. Skateboarding became snowboarding when Ryan joined the Army just after his 18th birthday in 2005 and was stationed at Fort Carson.

Ryan served over a year in Iraq as an infantryman with the 1st Battalion, 9th Infantry Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, part of the 2nd Infantry Division. His tour, including service in Ramadi, site of some of the fiercest fighting in Iraq, began in October 2006. Soldiers at Fort Carson say he served on 250 missions and had 16 confirmed kills, though it is difficult to independently verify those figures.

Ryan did receive at least three battalion commander “coins for excellence.” Some units hand out the engraved, bronze-colored coins as on-the-spot awards for good performance or valor. Correspondence from Ryan’s battalion to his family shows that Ryan received one, for example, for extracting another wounded soldier under fire during an ambush.

While Ryan’s medical records show he reported no serious mental problems before Iraq, things unwound upon his return in late 2007 and got worse as time passed.

In June 2008 Ryan showed up at Fort Carson’s hospital and filled out a “behavioral health questionnaire.” He reported being “extremely bothered” by disturbing memories, nightmares, panic attacks, trying not to think about the war, emotional numbness, irritation, angry outbursts and jumpiness, among other symptoms.

**On discharge, records show, doctors had Alderman on 0.5 mg of Klonopin for anxiety three times a day; 800 mg of Neurotin, an anti-seizure medication, three times a day; 100 mg of Ultram, a narcotic-like pain reliever, three times a day; 20 mg of Geodon for bipolar disorder at noon and then another 80 mg at night; 0.1 mg of Clonidine, a blood pressure medication also used for withdrawal symptoms, three times a day; 60 mg of Remeron, for depression, once a day; and 10 mg of Prozac twice a day.**

Salon contacted an Army psychiatrist who requested anonymity and read him that list of drugs and the dosage amounts. “Oh God,” he said. “That’s shitty. That breaks all the rules. He was overmedicated. That’s bad medicine.” **[No, that’s lethal malpractice, and whoever is responsible should be inside a prison cell, or horizontal, now. T]**

Ryan’s former roommate and battle buddy blames the Army for Ryan’s death. **[No, not death, murder. The drugs prescribed represent negligent homicide.]**

“I know he didn’t commit suicide,” he told me. **[No shit.]**

“I don’t think he should have been released from the hospital. I know for a fact the Army killed my friend,” he added. “I want something done.

“The Army is killing people left and right and nobody cares.”

The Army ruled Ryan’s death a suicide, in part, because he had pinned a letter to his wall addressed to his mother who died of an illness years earlier. Tim [his father] shared the note with Salon, along with hundreds of pages of medical records.

The affectionate letter doesn’t read much like a suicide note. Ryan pledges that, “You will always be in my heart and soul.”

Tim said Ryan told him about that letter some time ago. Ryan’s medical records show he was writing similar letters to sort out his feelings.

**[Right. So whoever came up with the pathetic bullshit about it being a suicide note is either the killer who prescribed the drugs that killed him, or an accomplice. T]**



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## **Staff Sgt. Mark Waltz; His Murderer Sent To Iraq To Kill Again**

On April 30, 2007, three days after an appointment at Evans Hospital, the Fort Carson hospital, Waltz fell asleep on the couch in his Colorado Springs home. He never woke up.

Forty-year-old Waltz, a member of the 3rd Battalion, 29th Field Artillery Regiment, had overdosed on painkillers.

He needed the drugs to feel better. His body was falling apart. So was his mind. Waltz had "chronic" PTSD.

Not only had a bomb exploded near him during his second tour of duty in Iraq, he had been ordered to pick up the body parts from other soldiers killed in the same explosion, according to his wife, Renea. He struggled with thoughts of harming himself. But he didn't want to kill himself, because he didn't want to leave his family behind.

**When he died, it wasn't a suicide. Waltz lost his life after Dr. Scot Tebo, a captain at Evans' DiRaimondo clinic, prescribed methadone for Waltz's chronic back pain.**

**According to medical records, Waltz was already taking a powerful pain reliever, morphine.**

**The combination of the drugs made a lethal cocktail. The local coroner ruled Waltz's death a result of "mixed drug intoxication," a medical accident.**

**In response, Fort Carson launched a "risk management" review, but nearly two years later still refuses to release the results, including whether any health workers were disciplined, saying the findings are protected under federal health privacy law.**

**Salon has learned, however, that Tebo was deployed to Iraq in 2007 to provide care for troops.**

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## **Staff Sgt. Chad Barrett: "Barrett Was Prescribed Clonazepam And Topiramate. Both Include Warnings That Suicide Could Be An Adverse Reaction"**

Linda Helton feels the same way about the death of her son, Chad Barrett, who committed suicide on the same day as Ken Lehman. "It's just so difficult to talk about," she says, weeping. "We all loved Chad."

**Five weeks after Fort Carson sent Barrett to Iraq with the 4th Infantry Division, he swallowed a lethal combination of prescription antidepressants and sleeping pills.**

Barrett, 35, was suffering from acute PTSD, a traumatic brain injury and had trouble sleeping after two tours of Iraq, according to his medical records.

And, as a third tour loomed, it seemed, he was on his way out of the Army after 11 years of service.

**Officials had begun the process of formally retiring him because of his PTSD, according to his medical records. In 2007, he had attempted suicide. A commander wrote: “[A]ll specialists and command agree it is time for Chad to be removed from the United States Army.”**

Yet Chad’s wife, Shelby Barrett, claims her husband didn’t want to let his buddies down. So she and her husband met with commanders and convinced them to change their minds.

Doctors and commanders halted a medical evaluation process meant to determine Barrett’s level of disability for retirement -- a process that mandated Barrett receive “no assignments remote from definitive psychiatric care.” Instead, he would go to Iraq to serve as an overnight radio operator.

Before Barrett was deployed on Christmas Day, 2007, Dr. Jonathan A. Olin, an Evans hospital psychiatrist, concluded Barrett had “no suicidal intent.”

**Along with his gear, Barrett packed up eight active prescriptions, including Klonopin for his anxiety and Ambien to help him sleep.**

Only weeks after arriving in Mosul, dark thoughts crept into his mind. There were heavy losses among his comrades and he told his parents in an e-mail that he had reached the breaking point: “I can try to play tough all I want, but I know that I am not and that I need help.”

His parents encouraged him to find help, but he wrote that he wasn’t sure where to turn.

**The Army only wanted “the correct number of people on the ground ... no matter what the cost,” he wrote just hours before he killed himself, adding, “Well everyone will find out the cost soon enough.”**

After receiving the e-mail, Barrett’s family tried to reach the Red Cross to get them to intervene. It wasn’t easy; many hours passed. Finally, Helton got a message through. It was relayed to Barrett’s superiors at 7:55 a.m. on Feb. 2, 2008.

But by the time superiors tracked down Barrett at 8:30 a.m., his roommate and medics were already in the throes of trying to save his life.

“Next thing I knew I was getting a call that Chad was gone,” Helton says, adding, “Why didn’t the Army do more to watch him? They knew he had troubles when they sent him; they should have never sent him.”

Barrett’s note, on yellow legal paper, was simple. On the outside it was marked, “THOUGHTS IN MY HEAD.” On the inside, Barrett wrote a long list of one-line

statements: “Lost,” “Hopeless,” “Anger,” “Sadness,” “Wanting to cry,” “No reason or purpose in life ... Failed as a soldier ... Wanting to die ... Command will get rid of their problem soldier ...”

The Army's Criminal Investigative Division conducted an inquiry, but not to investigate whether the care system had failed Barrett, as Helton had hoped.

**Instead, in a finding that Helton calls an insult to her son's memory, investigators concluded that when Barrett killed himself, he broke military law because he did not take his medication in the prescribed dosage.**

**In other words, had Barrett lived, he could have faced a court-martial for “wrongful use of a controlled substance.”**

Helton also wonders whether some of the drugs the Army prescribed to her son made him feel suicidal.

**For example, Barrett was prescribed Clonazepam and Topiramate. Both include warnings that suicide could be an adverse reaction.**

**After his 2007 suicide attempt, Helton argued that prescription antidepressants could be the cause.**

While on the drugs, Barrett seemed confused, she says: “It didn't even sound like my son.”

**When Barrett was taken off the drugs during hospitalization at a clinic, he returned to his good-natured self, she adds.**

Still, Barrett found it tough to adjust to life after war. “He had nightmares,” Helton says. “He told me, ‘I don't know how to turn it all off.’”

Army care, particularly at Fort Carson, she says, should be investigated. But it seems that nobody cares.

“It's hard to get people involved when you are fighting an Army,” Helton says.

“The Army said it would be there for my son in his time of need. But they weren't. His life is truly a great loss.”

**MORE:**

**[What The VA And The Contemptible  
Civilian Frauds Pitching Their Own  
Fake PTSD Cures Don't Want You To  
Know:]**

# **Confirmed!**

## **“Only One Treatment Method — Exposure Therapy — Has Been Proven To Help PTSD In Studies By Objective Researchers”**

### **Previous Research Finding Confirmed By Atlanta V.A. Test Program;**

## **“81% Showing ‘Clinically Significant Improvement,’ Which Was Still At 81% Six Months Later”**

July 28, 2008 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times

Three new studies looking at combat stress have found group exposure therapy seems to work, that troops with traumatic brain injuries are more likely to have post-traumatic stress disorder, and that stress debriefings held after traumatic events don't appear to prevent PTSD.

The research comes as the Department of Veterans Affairs works to find the best treatment methods for combat veterans.

**It follows a report by Rand Corp. that showed only one treatment method — exposure therapy — has been proven to help PTSD in studies by objective researchers.**

The first study looked at a program that had been in place for four years at the Atlanta VA Medical Center. The center's Posttraumatic Stress Disorder Clinical Team began researching group-based exposure treatment.

**Past studies have shown group therapy to be ineffective on veterans with PTSD, but authors of this study, published in the April issue of the Journal of Traumatic Stress, said the amount of exposure therapy — 60 hours — in this group may be the key to why it works.**

First, nine to 11 people get to know each other and talk about their experiences before they joined the military. Then, they spend several weeks talking about their wartime experiences.

**A total of 93 Vietnam veterans, four Gulf War veterans, one Korean War veteran and two Iraq war veterans took part in the study, with 81 percent showing “clinically significant improvement,” which was still at 81 percent six months later.**

And the study found something else: VA clinicians indicated to researchers that they do not use exposure therapy out of concern for possible increases in suicide ideation, hospitalizations and dropout rates, but “we found the opposite to be true,” the study’s authors said.

**Many patients said hearing others’ traumatic experiences evoked painful recall of what had happened to them, but “none reported any negative lasting effects, and many indicated that this process helped them put their own experience into better perspective,” the study said.**

For example, one-third of the group members said they had frozen under fire. “Learning how common this was helped reduce the shame and guilt that many patients had felt for decades,” researchers said.

**MORE: From GI SPECIAL 6E15: 5.24.08:**

# **This Information Could Save Your Sanity, Or Your Life: If Somebody Tries To Drug You Or A Buddy Or Family Member, The Fact The Information Below Appeared In Army Times Can Be A Powerful Weapon Of Self-Defense**

**Comment: T**

**Because of the extreme importance of this information to every member of the armed forces, for or against the war, it is being reprinted again from a previous GI Special.**

**This news report below makes clear that there is now new evidence based research about what works and what doesn’t work for troops experiencing PTSD.**

The credibility and importance of this research -- initiated by the Department of Veterans Affairs -- is underlined by publication of the findings in Army Times, rather than appearing on some obscure web site or other as somebody or other's opinion.

The V.A. has long practiced drugging troops with all kinds of very dangerous pills as a "treatment" for PTSD. As this article documents, that's useless. And dangerous: overdoses can kill. Benzodiazepines [Valium & Librium are well known examples] are viscerously addictive and potentially deadly drugs handed out to troops like bags of popcorn.

As the article below reports, the only effective treatment for PTSD so far is "exposure therapy; reliving a traumatic experience by writing or talking about it."

A lot of quacks, including at V.A. facilities as well as privately, are hustling other bullshit phony treatments, ranging from moving your eyeballs around to eating herbs and weeds.

Excuse a personal note, but I've been working professionally with traumatic stress survivors for over 30 years, both military and civilian, both at VA and private facilities, and can testify that the research finding reported in this article is 100% right: the only effective treatment for PTSD so far is "reliving a traumatic experience by writing or talking about it."

But you don't have to believe that.

Here's the report, from Army Times.

Assuming you give a shit about whether troops live or die, send it around, word for word, and be sure to mention it comes from Army Times in case some idiot thinks you sucked it out of your thumb.

Most important, if somebody in command or at the V.A. tries to drug you or a buddy or family member, the fact this information appeared in Army Times can be a powerful weapon of self-defense:

MORE:

**“Research Has Not Shown Serotonin Re-Uptake Inhibitors, Such As Prozac, Zoloft Or Celexa, To Be Effective In Treating PTSD”**

# “Exposure Therapy -- Reliving A Traumatic Experience By Writing Or Talking About It -- Is The Only Therapy Proved Effective By Independent Research”

April 14, 2008 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]

“Problems related to getting troops adequate mental health treatment cannot be resolved unless two issues — stigma and access — are addressed,” Todd Bowers, director of government affairs for Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, told the House Veterans’ Affairs subcommittee on health on April 1.

Almost 59,000 veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have been diagnosed with PTSD by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Army post-deployment health assessments have found that 20 percent of active-duty and 40 percent of reserve-component troops had symptoms of PTSD, and some experts say the real numbers could be much higher.

But because PTSD hasn’t been addressed until fairly recently — the first scientific paper about the disorder in veterans of the 1991 Persian Gulf War didn’t come out until five years after that war ended — VA and Pentagon officials say much needs to be done to determine good screening techniques and therapies.

“This is the first war where DoD and VA recognized the psychological impact going in,” said Army Col. Charles Hoge, chief of psychiatry and neuroscience at the Walter Reed Institute of Research.

Combat vets are not sleeping, experience startle reactions and are hyper-alert.

“All of these things that we label as symptoms are things they need in combat,” Hoge said. “No sooner are they transitioned back home than they’re right back in rotation.”

At the House hearing, Hoge said an Army assessment last summer showed that the numbers of soldiers with PTSD is going up with each deployment.

“There’s a direct connection between mental health and multiple deployments,” he said, adding that troops also need more time between deployments.

**David Matcher, of the Institute of Medicine’s Committee on Treatment of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder, said a recent study found that research has not shown serotonin re-uptake inhibitors, such as Prozac, Zoloft or Celexa, to be effective in treating PTSD.**

**Exposure therapy — reliving a traumatic experience by writing or talking about it — is the only therapy proved effective by independent research, he said.**

Other treatments exist, but they have been tested mainly by the same people who developed them.

That's an important point because the Defense Department and VA use several such methods, including group and drug therapy, to treat combat veterans.

## **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

## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**



**“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.**

**“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.**

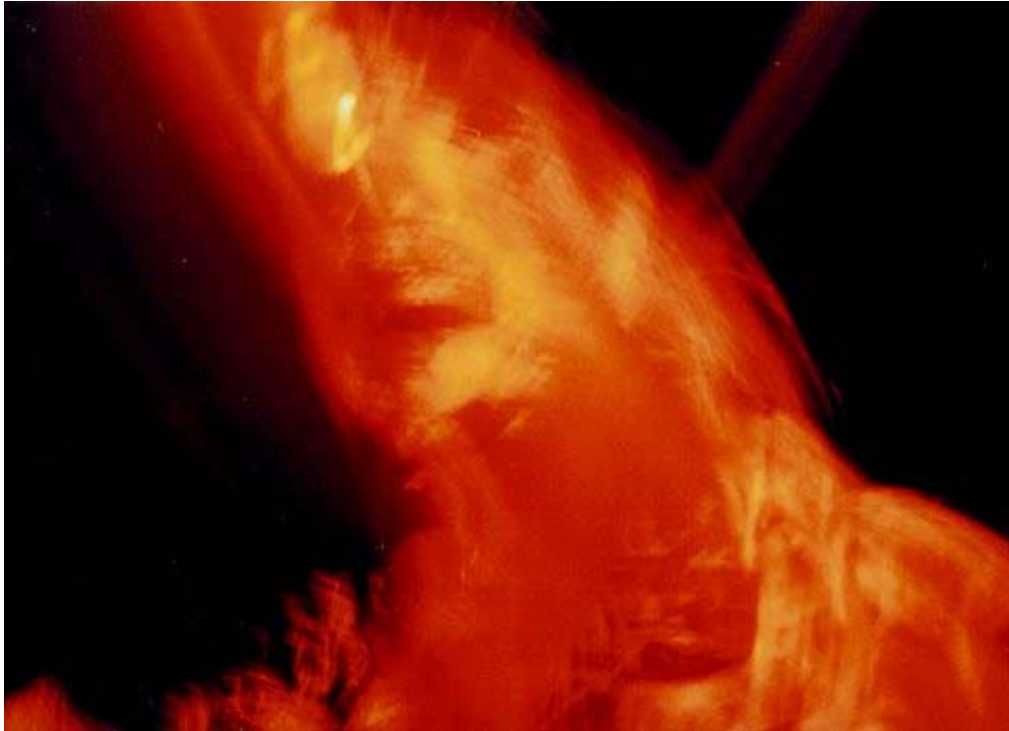


**“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”**

**Frederick Douglas, 1852**

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## **Where It All Starts**



From: Mike Hastie  
To: GI Special  
Sent: February 16, 2009  
Subject: Where It All Starts

### **Where It All Starts**

**The United States Empire is brutal and twisted. It reminds me of a deviate psychiatrist playing tricks on patients in a mental hospital. Torture is standard operating procedure. It reminds me of Guantanamo Bay, and that prison in Baghdad that no one can pronounce. Push torture to a higher level, and you get the dropping of Napalm, the spraying of Agent Orange, carpet bombing by B-52s, artillery bombardments by Navy ships, etc., etc. Thousands of Vietnam veterans have blown their brains out, rather than remember what their government did to the Vietnamese people. The vast majority of the American people do**

not know this history.

Why?

Because, educators were playing tricks on them when they were in school.

America,  
you will get away with nothing.

**Mike Hastie**  
U.S. Army Medic  
Vietnam 1970-71  
February 15, 2009

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

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

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

## The Suicide Rush

From: Kathy Sanborn  
To: GI Special  
Sent: February 14, 2009

Kathy Sanborn is an author, journalist, and recording artist with a new CD, Peaceful Sounds, now a top seller on CDBaby. Listen to clips of her songs, including "Forever War," and buy the album now at <http://cdbaby.com/cd/kathysanborn>.

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More soldiers than ever are committing suicide, and the Army apparently has no ready explanation.

The top brass are perplexed.

**One Army official said, "This is terrifying . . . We do not know what is going on." [1]**

**I can tell you what's going on.**

**American troops are sick and tired of fighting two bogus wars that seem to have no end in sight.**

Twenty-four soldiers killed themselves in January 2009, eight more than died that month from combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

**Col. Kathy Platoni, chief clinical psychologist for the Army Reserve and the National Guard, tried to explain why so many soldiers are giving up on life: “There is more hopelessness and helplessness because everything is so dreary and cold” in the long winter months.**

**Well, yeah.**

**Of course the winter months are gloomy, but if you had been in Iraq or Afghanistan for two or three deployments, you might be done in about now, too – cold or no cold.**

Platoni does admit that multiple deployments, family separations, and financial woes contribute to the stress that might push a service member over the edge.

The Army says at least 128 soldiers took their lives in 2008, the highest number since they started keeping suicide statistics twenty-nine years ago. For January 2009, the Army suicide rate was six times what it was in the same month last year – troubling, indeed.

American soldiers are exhausted, and still they are asked to do more.

They are tired of constantly being on edge and tired of patrolling the streets for nebulous insurgents. They are tired of being tired.

Back in late September 2007, Eli Wright, a medic who served in Iraq, said, “Almost all the soldiers I talk to are tired, upset, fed up.” [2]

That was about eighteen months ago, and nothing has changed. The wars rage on, and the troops continue to suffer from PTSD and other mental health issues that can lead to suicide.

The tragic story of Pfc. Timothy Ryan Alderman [3] is detailed in a Salon.com series. Infantryman Alderman, having seen ferocious fighting in Iraq, came home to experience jumpiness, panic attacks, and nightmares, among other symptoms.

Although he asked the Army for help, doctors determined that Alderman’s mental health issues were not due to his military service.

**Even an Army sergeant expressed disdain for Alderman’s request for help, according to a friend of the late soldier.**

**The sergeant snapped, “I wish you would just go ahead and kill yourself. It would save us a lot of paperwork.”**

Tragically, that's just what Alderman might have done. The Army says Alderman killed himself with an overdose of prescription drugs and other medications, but some feel that he may have accidentally overdosed.

His list of medications was staggering.

Salon.com: "Doctors had Alderman on 0.5 mg of Klonopin for anxiety three times a day; 800 mg of Neurotin, an anti-seizure medication, three times a day; 100 mg of Ultram, a narcotic-like pain reliever, three times a day; 20 mg of Geodon for bipolar disorder at noon and then another 80 mg at night; 0.1 mg of Clonidine, a blood pressure medication also used for withdrawal symptoms, three times a day; 60 mg of Remeron, for depression, once a day; and 10 mg of Prozac twice a day."

Often Alderman seemed to be out of it, slurring his words and appearing "stoned." As he wrote shortly before he died, "I am seeking help but I feel like I'm not being treated right. I mean mental help. I struggle every day with it."

### **War and the Moral Code**

War is an event that should never be undertaken lightly, as it goes against the grain of a culture's code of morality. If one is introduced to the classic example of a strong moral code, the Ten Commandments, he is taught that the act of killing is the antithesis of what it means to be a spiritual being. Treating your fellow humans with respect, à la the Golden Rule, is the moral code that has been taught and practiced in civil society for centuries – except in the theatre of war.

War challenges all the old moral and cultural rules. Taught to view "enemies" as sub-human animals, soldiers are encouraged to shoot first and ask questions later. The Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments fly out the window in wartime, and when the soldier gets home, the cognitive dissonance really begins.

Cognitive dissonance is a kind of inner tug of war between 1) what you believe to be true and 2) your thoughts or actions that conflict with the belief.

For instance, you may believe that killing is wrong, yet you might have taken the lives of innocent civilians while on tour in Iraq. The cognitive dissonance that arises due to that experience could be quite difficult to overcome without understanding where it originated.

The horrors of war can literally shock the mind. The term, "Shell Shock," was introduced during World War I to explain the psychological trauma men suffered during military service: "Symptoms varied widely in intensity, ranging from moderate panic attacks - which sometimes caused men to flee the battlefield: a crime which was invariably regarded as rank cowardice and which resulted in a court martial for desertion - to effective mental and physical paralysis." [4]

Men were not designed to fight war. Their minds are simply not equipped to deal with the act of killing other human beings, even if their own government sanctions that killing. No matter how many war video games you play, no matter how much simulation training you get, you can not fully prepare for the dreadful reality of armed conflict – to the death – against others of your own kind.

So we end up with Timothy Ryan Alderman, popping pills because he needed assistance. He was a human being in pain, asking for help from other human beings, and all he got was a pile of pills and a burial service.

**Generation after generation, the battlefield steals the best and brightest from us. Time and again, the service member's deepest wounds are hidden from view, and often we can only see them when it's too late.**

Notes:

1. <http://edition.cnn.com/2009/US/02/05/army.suicides/index.html>
2. <http://www.veteransforcommonsense.org/articleid/8542>
3. [http://www.salon.com/news/special/coming\\_home/2009/02/10/coming\\_home\\_two/index.html](http://www.salon.com/news/special/coming_home/2009/02/10/coming_home_two/index.html)
4. <http://www.firstworldwar.com/atoz/shellshock.htm>

## **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/))**

## **OCCUPATION PALESTINE**

# **Good News About The Attack On Gaza!**

# Killing Palestinians And Bombing Their Supply Tunnels Piles Up Rich Profits For Zionist And Egyptian Capitalists

February 13, 2009 by Ann Wright, CommonDreams [Excerpts]

Ann Wright is a 29 year US Army/Army Reserves veteran who retired as a Colonel and a former US diplomat who resigned in March, 2003 in opposition to the war on Iraq. She served in Nicaragua, Grenada, Somalia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Sierra Leone, Micronesia and Mongolia. In December, 2001 she was on the small team that reopened the US Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan. She is the co-author of the book "Dissent: Voices of Conscience." ([www.voicesofconscience.com](http://www.voicesofconscience.com))

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I travelled to Gaza last week with Medea Benjamin and Tighe Berry of Codepink: Women for Peace.

We were allowed by the Egyptian government to enter Gaza for only 48 hours.

In the Al Zaiton area in northern Gaza, we met with the remaining members of the al Samouni family.

The large extended family lived in many houses and some family members operated a poultry farm in the area.

**After the Israeli army invaded, Army personnel ordered 150 members of the family into one large home and then bombed the home as well as all the numerous homes and buildings of the family. 37 members of the family were killed and many were injured.**

The al Samouni family set up several large tents for the numerous visitors who come by the area to pay respects.

One tent had eight women inside. All had family members killed and wounded in the attacks.

We spoke with Ibtessana al Samouni who had two children killed and her husband and daughter seriously injured and are being treated in Saudi Arabia. One of her sons was also injured and is in a military hospital in Cairo.

She and her remaining 5 children are living with other relatives in Gaza City.

**Ibtessana had a glazed stare and kept repeating that no one in her family had done anything to the Israelis. We saw in her eyes the disbelief that some of her children were dead and that she would not see her husband and other children for months.**

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## **“Closing The Border Provides Egyptian And Israeli Businessmen A Tremendous Opportunity To Sell Goods To People In Gaza At Very High Prices.**

On the way to the Gaza border, we stopped to see a few of the 1500 tunnels that Palestinians have dug since the borders of Gaza were closed and the siege began. Palestinians have been locked into the prison called Gaza for the past sixteen months.

The tunnel area is in plain sight next to the Egyptian border. It is a surreal scene. Buildings behind the tunnel area have been bombed and are destroyed. Trucks and cars are parked under the remaining roofs of a large bombed out fresh air market--ready to move goods from the tunnel area.

Mounds of fresh sand are everywhere indicating that tunnels are still being dug.

Generators hum providing air into the tunnels and powering the cables that pull loads of every imaginable type of goods from vegetables, canned goods, bags of rice and sugar, merchandise for hardware stores, etc. through the tunnels to the surface on the Gaza side.

Every tunnel is surrounded by barriers made of light fencing covered with large plastic bags. Young men are busy hauling up goods that have been brought through the tunnel from Egypt.

The tunnel “managers” we spoke with were surprisingly open in allowing us to come into the areas and talk with them.

They said that about 900 tunnels have been destroyed or partially damaged by Israeli bombs. Most are being rebuilt, despite the almost daily bombing by Israeli war planes.

The tunnels we saw had openings about 4 feet across. The entry holes were from 50 to 65 feet deep and the tunnels were 500 to 1,000 feet long. One tunnel opening was built with concrete blocks and another opening was built with wood.

The tunnel manager said that to rebuild a tunnel that has been blown up takes about half the time to reopen and digging a new tunnel.

The tunnel areas are little cities with electricity, water, food and coffee at each tunnel entrance.

Tunnel digging is about the only employment for young men in Gaza. They earn 100 shekels (\$25) per day for digging in the tunnels.

One manager said many tunnel diggers had died when the reinforced sand tunnels collapsed during construction. But young men continue to risk the dangers as tunnel construction is one of the few jobs available to them.

**While we did not see the other end of the tunnel operation on the Rafah, Egypt side of the border, it is inconceivable that Egyptian authorities do not know where the tunnel openings are.**

**All they have to do is to follow the parade of trucks loaded with merchandise that come into Rafah, Egypt.**

After coming through the border we stopped in Rafah, Egypt to see what the smuggling town was like.

The police presence was tremendous. We had barely gotten our bags out of the taxi when a policeman was at our side asking why we were in Rafah. We replied that we were hungry and wanted to get something to eat. We stopped at a small falafel stand and for the next hour were watched by police. As one of us would go to explore the main street, police would follow in the distance.

They definitely did not want us straying off the main road and back into the houses and businesses where the tunnel entrances are.

**It is remarkable that all the tunnels haven't been bombed. With the sophisticated satellite views, cameras from drones, tethered radar and surveillance balloon and the \$32 million tunnel detection equipment provided by the U.S. government, the Israeli, Egyptian and United States' governments know exactly where the tunnels are.**

**But, closing the border provides Egyptian and Israeli businessmen a tremendous opportunity to sell goods to people in Gaza at very high prices.**

No doubt, Egyptian and Israeli government officials are paid to turn a blind eye to the tunneling and "smuggling."

**Determining who profits economically from the occupations and sieges is fascinating.**

**A new Israeli website [www.whoprofits.org](http://www.whoprofits.org) tracks who profits financially from the occupation and no doubt profits from the blockade and will profit from the rebuilding of destroyed Gaza.**

Israeli bombing of tunnels is, of course, only on the Gaza side. No one is bombing the entrances to the tunnels on the Egyptian side of the border.

**The tunnel economy means that for the ordinary citizens of Gaza, where there is a 70% unemployment rate and where over 900,000 of the 1.5 million in Gaza are on United Nations rations, closing the border and forcing commerce through the tunnels they pay exorbitant fees for every item brought through the tunnels.**

**MORE:**



**“These Men May Not Earn Much From The Tunnels, But Others Do”  
“The Tunnel Cost Around £100,000 To Build And The Owners Say They Earned That Back Within The First Two Months”**



A Palestinian man moves a goat through a smuggling tunnel from Egypt to Gaza under the border at Rafah. Photograph: Khalil Hamra/AP

[Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

10 February 2009 Rory McCarthy, The Guardian [Excerpts]

Inside the large white tent is a wooden coat rack from which hang the jackets and spare clothes of a dozen men or more. To the right is an electrical circuit board with five sockets.

From the back, the wires run out of the tent, across the sand dunes and directly into the public electricity supply of the municipality of Rafah. From the front, a cord runs out to power a winch. Outside, a large black plastic water butt with a tap provides the thirsty workers with fresh drinking water - again, courtesy of the municipality.

All of this is registered and paid for. Smuggling in Gaza is a semi-official business.

The focus of activity is the tunnel's well: a 15m deep shaft lined on its four sides by planks of wood. Three metal beams are positioned pyramid-shape over the well and support the electric winch, whose cable runs down the shaft to the sandy floor below.

There, two men crouch low and operate two more winches that run horizontally 300m to the south along the tunnel, stretching out of Gaza and into Egypt. One of the winches

draws in the goods from the Egyptian side, a train of boxes and sacks sliding over the sand on plastic containers. The second winch sends back the empty containers for reloading.

It took about eight weeks to dig this tunnel; a team of men worked long days underground using a pneumatic drill to dig out the soil, which they then carried out in large, plastic containers and dumped nearby.

By the time it was finished, the tunnel was tall enough for a man to stand with his head bowed, and nearly a metre wide along its full length. The tunnel walls are bare soil with regular wooden supports to prevent collapse - although it still remains a dangerous business.

Around 40 Palestinian tunnellers were killed last year in cave-ins.

It is midday and the work is constant. Every 30 seconds one of the men below shouts "Raise" and a man sitting over the mouth of the well switches on the winch and pulls up another sack.

So far this morning, they have contained: dry, yellow chickenfeed; spare parts for cars; a box of coat hooks; microwaves; kerosene cookers; packets of rather dowdy women's underwear; and now several large, 5.5kW generators.

Notably absent are drugs and alcohol, which are forbidden by Hamas; cigarettes, which are heavily taxed by Hamas; and anything even resembling weaponry or military material, which come in through more discreet tunnels far from the public eye that may or may not have been more seriously damaged by the war.

"Without these tunnels, everything would stop in Gaza," says one of the workers, who gave his name only as Abu Zeid, 22.

"And they say we are terrorists. Where are the terrorists here? The world knows very well what's going on, but they don't want us to live. If they opened the crossings, why would we need to do this business?"

Since Israel pulled its soldiers and settlers out of Gaza in mid-2005, it has imposed an ever-tighter economic blockade on what it calls the "hostile entity". For the past year and a half, that has meant closures of the crossings: banning all exports and prohibiting all imports, save for a limited list of humanitarian goods.

Even the UN secretary-general Ban Ki-moon called it "collective punishment" - illegal under international law. It has left more than 80% of Gazans reliant on aid.

Most of the workers in this tunnel were once employed as daily labourers within Israel, but Palestinians have long been refused such jobs. Now in Gaza there is barely any work available. Some at this tunnel are former policemen once employed by Hamas's bitter rival, Fatah; others are farmers whose livelihoods collapsed with the ban on exports. "There is nothing for us except the tunnels," says another worker.

These men may not earn much from the tunnels, but others do.

The tunnel cost around £100,000 to build and the owners say they earned that back within the first two months.

The original owners of the land are given a 10% commission and Egyptian security officials on the other side earn healthy bribes. As his staff worked, one of the owners took out a thick fold of dollar bills, from which he was to send the equivalent of £13,000 to the Egyptians, enough to provide protection for the tunnel for around 10 days until the next payment was due.

Around half an hour's drive north from the border are the recently destroyed remains of what, a month ago, was one of the largest food-processing factory compounds in the Gaza strip, owned by the wealthy al-Wadeya brothers. Yaser al-Wadeya has a PhD in industrial engineering from Cleveland State University and little sympathy for Hamas. He estimates the damage caused by the Israeli military to his biscuit, ice-cream, snacks and dessert factories is worth around £15m. Even if he had the money for repairs, Israel's restrictions mean he would not be able to import new machinery.

Even before the war, Al-Wadeya directed some of his Israeli suppliers to give up waiting for the Israeli crossings to open and ship their products to Egypt, then for them to be smuggled under the border into Gaza.

"The main reason for all of this is to destroy the economic infrastructure of the weak Palestinian economy," he says. "They want to make sure that we will never have a state in Palestine."

**Among the other targets hit were the largest cement factory in Gaza, the largest flour mill, the only parliament building, a major sewage project and the leading private school, not to mention the 21,000 homes and more than 200 factories completely or partially destroyed.**

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

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## **CLASS WAR REPORTS**

**“These Guys Won’t Be Happy Until The Government Agrees To Relieve Them Of Every Last One Of Their Lousy Loans And Investments At Inflated Prices”**

14 February 2009 by: Michael Winship, Truthout Perspective

You know what they say - half a million dollars just doesn't go as far as it used to.

News from the White House that \$500,000 was the cap the government wants to put on executive salaries at banks receiving bailout cash had some on Wall Street and along the plush corridors of Manhattan's swank Upper East Side hollering "Unfair!" (But without those unsightly street demonstrations and picket lines, of course.)

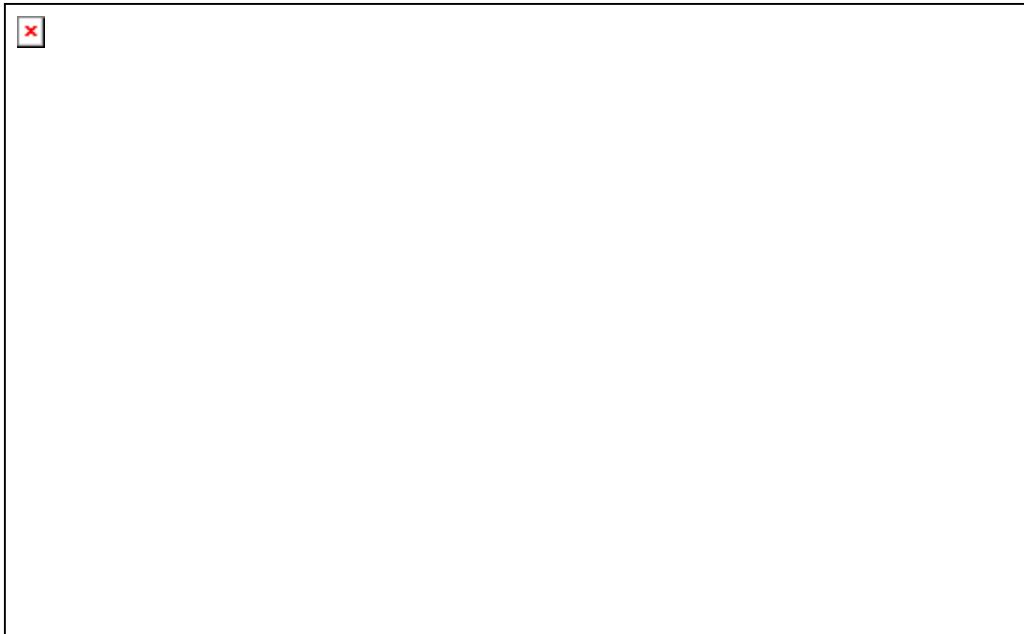
But they work hard for their multimillion-dollar salaries and bonuses, perks and solid gold benefits, complained some of the financiers.

Besides, executive headhunters say, the money giants just can't get good help for anything less.

Good help? Spare us the kind of moguls who helped us straight into the current deep, dirty hole we're trying to climb out of.

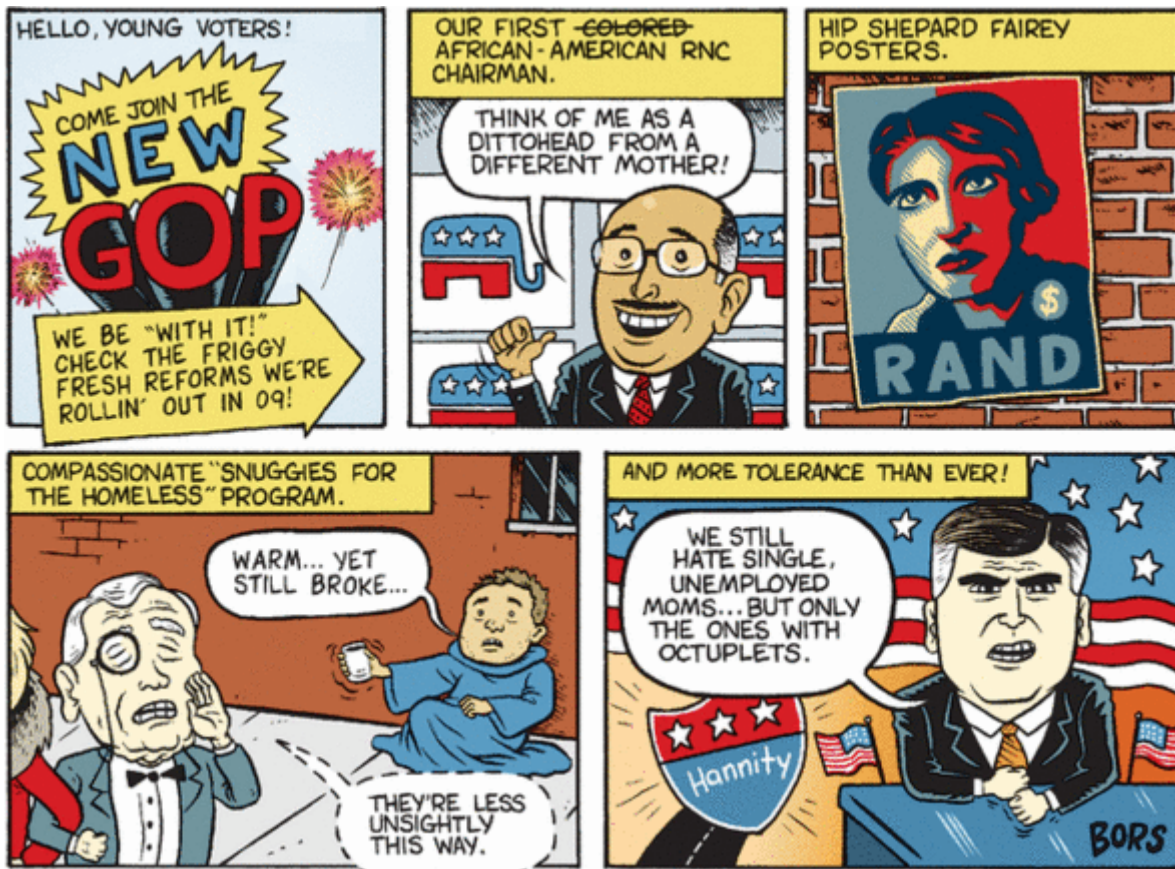
**"Like spoiled, petulant children," is how Washington Post columnist Steven Pearlstein described them.**

**"These guys won't be happy until the government agrees to relieve them of every last one of their lousy loans and investments at inflated prices, recapitalize every major bank and brokerage and insurance company on sweetheart terms and restore them to the glory days, so they can once again earn inflated profits and obscene pay packages by screwing over their customers and their shareholders."**



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**DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**



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