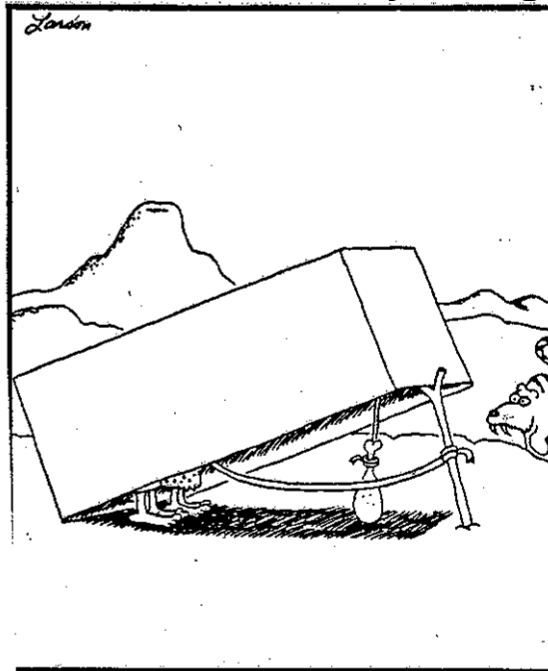


GI SPECIAL 7C10:

[The Obama Plan For Victory In Afghanistan]



"Shhhh, Zog! ... Here come one now!"

**“There Was No Military
Solution”**

**“His Soldiers Were Caught In A
Cycle Of Attack And
Counterattack With An Enemy
That Usually Slipped Away By
The Time The Artillery Shells
Rained Down”**

“His Staff Officers Came To Realize That They Simply Weren't Going To Win The War By Military Means”

**“But Unfortunately It Was Too Late”
“For The Americans, Yermakov Said, It Probably Will Become A Familiar Story”**

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

March 09, 2009 Tom Lasserter, McClatchy Newspapers

MOSCOW - The old diplomat sighed as he recalled his years in Afghanistan, and then leaned forward and said in a booming voice that no escalation of troops would bring lasting peace.

As the Soviet ambassador to Afghanistan from 1979 to 1986, Fikryat Tabeyev saw the numbers rise to more than 100,000 troops without any possibility of victory against a growing insurgency.

Even with President Barack Obama's plan initially to send 17,000 more U.S. soldiers and Marines to that mountainous nation this year, the combined NATO-American force will be smaller than the Soviet contingent was.

The seven years of war since the U.S. intervention, though, look familiar to the Russians.

Many challenges that bedeviled the Soviets confront the American operation today, the retired envoys and generals said.

Among them are vicious tribal rivalries, a weak central government, radical Islamists, power-hungry warlords, incompetent or corrupt local military commanders, failing infrastructure and the complexity of fighting guerrilla groups.

“You may elect a parliament, you may invite parliamentary delegations from Afghanistan to visit Europe, but it means nothing,” said Boris Pastukhov, whose service as Soviet ambassador began in 1989, the year the Red Army withdrew. “The decisions by parliament cannot be compared with the decisions of a jirga,” a tribal council.

Among the experts, there was gloating that the U.S. military is battling some of the same insurgents whom the CIA once funded to fight Moscow.

The Soviets also were convinced that superior numbers, firepower and training would make it possible to avoid the mistakes that the British and others had committed stretching back to Alexander the Great, former Ambassador Tabeyev said.

"History didn't listen to us," said Tabeyev, who's now 81.

"All our efforts to restore peace in the country . . . this was a flop in the end."

The fundamental problem in Afghanistan is that it isn't a country in the way the West thinks of countries, said retired Lt. Gen. Ruslan Aushev, who did two tours there and left as a regimental commander.

"There has never been any real centralized state in Afghanistan. There is no such nation as Afghanistan," said Aushev, who's a former president of the Russian Caucasus republic of Ingushetia and now heads a veterans group in Moscow. "There are (ethnic groups of) Pashtuns, Uzbeks and Tajiks, and they all have different tribal policies."

As a result, any occupation force will spend much of its time propping up a government that has little relevance outside Kabul and trying to corral disparate ethnic groups and tribes into a national army that's often unwilling to fight, Aushev said.

"We made the same mistake when we put the weak Babrak Karmal as the head of state," Aushev said of a former Afghan president. "He was so weak that no one obeyed him. He was hiding behind the backs of Soviet soldiers. . . . Today the situation is the same; (Afghan President Hamid) Karzai is being protected by U.S. special forces."

Retired Gen. Pavel Grachev, who spent two tours in Afghanistan, including commanding an airborne division, had a tone somewhere between disbelief and shock when he discussed the news of Obama's troop buildup.

"I believed as sincerely as American officers do now that we were fighting there to help make our country safer," said Grachev, who later became defense minister and sent in Russian units to quell Chechnya during the 1990s, a campaign that also ended in disaster.

"After the war, as a politician, I could see this war had been pointless."

That said, Grachev offered some advice: Post soldiers to guard road projects and irrigation systems, and send in an army of engineers, doctors, mining experts and construction advisers.

Pouring billions of dollars into infrastructure would be a lot more productive than firefights in far-flung villages, he said.

"You have to understand that in the economic sphere, Afghanistan is now at a stage lower than the Middle Ages," Grachev said.

Unlike Iraq, which has relatively large cities and highways, much of the Afghan population is dispersed across small villages of mud houses connected by dirt paths and crumbling roads. In many regions, there are no jobs other than tending poppy fields. Health care and education levels are among the worst in the world.

That, Grachev said, is a commander's nightmare; it gives insurgents and terrorists a population that sees little reason to support the Kabul government or its Western backers. The hardened military man insisted that instead of bombs, "It is urgently necessary to create a comprehensive road network!"

Retired Gen. Viktor Yermakov agreed. He led the Soviet Union's 40th Army in Afghanistan during the early 1980s, and he said that his staff officers came to realize that they simply weren't going to win the war by military means.

"But unfortunately it was too late," Yermakov said, adding later that, "We had to answer fire. When we were attacked, we attacked with all of our might."

His soldiers were in a battlefield, caught in a cycle of attack and counterattack with an enemy that usually slipped away by the time the artillery shells rained down. There was no military solution, but he had a war to fight.

For the Americans, Yermakov said, it probably will become a familiar story.

ACTION REPORTS

New York National Guard Outreach: "Thank You." Plain And Simple.

From: Elaine Brower
To: GI Special
Sent: March 08, 2009
Subject: S Armory

Today I hit the S[XXX] armory, when they returned from their trip back from training, I think probably at Ft. Dix. They left Wednesday evening, according to the schedule, and returned today.

I got there about 3 PM, after running to kinko's and making 60 copies of the new Guard handout, and "Why We Are here Statement." I had extras of GI Rights Pamphlet, Bring the Guard home brochures and the IVAW leaflet. But today I included a flyer that specifically related to [XXXXX], and I got great response to it. **You can see the attached flyer below.**

It was only me since others here were unavailable to come with me. I know that is not proper procedure, but I really wanted to get out the lit, and especially the info on our upcoming event on the beach. MFSO, MDS, VFP, and Peace Action have put together an exhibit similar to that of "Arlington West" in California. So next weekend, for 2 days, we will have crosses, boots, flags and signs commemorating the 6th year of war and

occupation in Iraq. The visual will be stunning, and we hoped to attract some of the guardsmen.

I handed out all of the lit, didn't have any cookies, sorry to say, but everyone took a packet. Very young crew there, I must admit. New recruits, I was really sorry to see that, but they were extremely polite, and I was able to stand at the main gate.

Some parked inside the armory, but a lot were on foot, so walked out of the gate to their cars, carrying gear. I put the flyer of our exhibit "Arlington, New York State" on the top of the packet, so they could see it right up front.

Many stopped to read it immediately, and turned to me and said "thank you." Plain and simple.

Arlington, New York State, will be created with a memorial in mind. It does not represent a political point of view, although I am sure those of us who are presenting it, who are part of the anti-war movement, will be giving it that slant. So we are not sure what to expect, but hope we do attract a wide array of people, to challenge them, to discuss the wars with them, and hopefully win some "hearts and minds" to our cause. I will make sure that next weekend I bring more literature just in case our National Guard members or any other military members show up.

All are invited, and all are welcome to come out to the beach in Staten Island. Can't promise it will be swimming weather, but the memorial will definitely be emotionally moving, and thought provoking.

Attached flyer



ARLINGTON NEW YORK STATE MARCH 14th & 15th, 2009

A WAR MEMORIAL FOR THOSE KILLED IN IRAQ & AFGHANISTAN

Press Conference: Saturday, March 14th at 1:00 PM

To mark the 6th year of war in Iraq, there will be a vigil at South Beach, Staten Island for two days. On the beach an emotionally moving visual exhibit will be displayed reminding everyone of the human costs of wars.

As done in Santa Monica and Santa Barbara, California, visitors to “Arlington: New York State”, will witness a sea of crosses, and other representations of faith, as well as combat boots provided from the “Eyes Wide Open” AFSC exhibit which represent members of the military killed in the war who resided in New York State. Shoes representing Iraqi civilians killed will be displayed as well.

One will stand on the boardwalk or wander through the exhibit on the beach, to witness a sea of markers dedicated to all of those who have fallen.

Presented by: Movement for a Democratic Society-Staten Island (MDS-SI), Military Families Speak Out-Staten Island, Peace Action of Staten Island, Peace Action New York State, American Friends Service Committee, Veterans for Peace, Chapter 95

Location: Father Capadanno Blvd. & Seaview Avenue, on the beach next to the fishing pier

For more information visit our website at www.mfsony.com

MORE:

ACTION REPORTS WANTED: FROM YOU!

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE WELL:

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

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

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

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

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/)**

TROOP NEWS

“Baristas Are Iraq War Veterans Wearing T-Shirts Against The War”

“Manzel’s Concern Is That “Anti-War Protesters Understand That G.I.S Are Not Their Enemy”

“G.I. Voice Recently Hosted A Training Of Active-Duty Members Of Iraq Veterans

Against The War Who Are Organizing Within The Armed Forces Rather Than Seeking To Leave The Military”



[Thanks to Sandy Kelson, Military Project & Veterans For Peace & Clancy Sigal & Frank Millspaugh who sent this in.]

March 10 , 2009 By ZOLTAN GROSSMAN, Counter-Punch [Excerpts]

The early morning scene could be at any one of the innumerable coffeehouses in the Pacific Northwest. Two baristas serve steaming mugs of espresso, while their co-worker produces graphics on a computer. Another employee plays Rachmaninoff on the piano. Customers are sipping their coffee as they read the morning newspaper.

Yet at second glance, both baristas are Iraq War veterans wearing t-shirts against the war.

One served in Iraq as an Army machine gunner, and the other as Marine machine gunner.

The guy on the computer was an Army counterintelligence agent in Mosul, and the guy playing the piano was a private first class in the Army National Guard.

Most of the customers are wearing khaki fatigues, and reading about their imminent deployment to Iraq or Afghanistan.

This is COFFEE STRONG, a new G.I. coffeehouse just outside the gates of Fort Lewis, the largest Army base on the West Coast. It is located in Lakewood, Washington, between Olympia and Tacoma. The coffeehouse—whose capitalized name spoofs the recruitment slogan “ARMY STRONG”—was opened on Election Day 2008 by G.I. Voice, a local veteran-led nonprofit project. It is only the second G.I. rights coffeehouse to open in the country since the Vietnam War; others have opened in New York, Texas, and Virginia.

COFFEE STRONG is modeled after the G.I. coffeehouse movement from the 1960s, as described in the book *Soldiers in Revolt*, and the documentary *Sir! No Sir!*.

But G.I. Voice is using 21st-century outreach tools to connect with soldiers and their families, such as computers for soldiers to access the Internet without Army interference. The historic project also started a website at <http://www.GIVoice.org>, and is planning a radio webstream to connect with military personnel using music and culture.

The goal of the G.I. coffeehouse is to provide soldiers, their families and recent vets a place away from the base where they can learn about resources available to them, meet with G.I. rights counselors, and access alternative information. It holds weekly movie nights, and hosts speakers, hip-hop, punk and folk concerts, and other events.

The response from soldiers visiting the coffeehouse has so far been overwhelmingly positive.

Anti-war veterans often feel unrepresented both by mainstream veterans' groups that support the wars, and peace groups that do not understand the experiences and grievances of soldiers.

Through G.I. Voice, they are organizing among themselves to speak for themselves, and to provide servicemembers and their families with a place to freely express themselves.

G.I. Voice addresses issues of concern to soldiers--such as repeated "Stop-Loss" deployments to war zones, command abuse, repression of constitutional rights, sexual harassment and rape, health and safety conditions, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Yet the purpose of G.I. Voice is not to reform the military into a more effective fighting machine. Instead, the group maintains that once servicemembers are actively struggling with their command around issues of working conditions, they will start to see the connections between the occupation of other countries and their own oppression in the United States.

G.I. Voice Director Seth Manzel spent a year deployed in Iraq in 2004, assigned to the 1st Stryker Brigade from Fort Lewis. He wrote in the local newspaper *Works in Progress*, "For soldiers and their families to engage in resistance requires them to stand up for soldiers' rights. The mere act of standing up for one's rights in the Army is enough to slow down a unit's deployment times.

The Army could not function if it delivered on all its promises to soldiers and their families. In this way a moderate message (stand up for G.I. rights) could have a radical effect on the military. We don't need to indoctrinate people in the military. If we inform them of their rights, they will come to anti-war conclusions on their own."

Fort Lewis spokesman Joe Kubistek said the Army is aware of the coffeehouse, but acknowledges that since it is a legal business, the Army will not restrict soldiers from going there.

Kubistek added, "We don't have a position on the political views of an outside individual."

Manzel jokes that “if they blacklisted us, it would be the best publicity we could get.” He asserts that G.I. Voice does not want to push its political views on customers, saying “We’re anti-war, but we’re not ‘in your face’ about it.”

Perhaps nowhere else in the country is there such a stark juxtaposition between a large military base community and large progressive anti-war communities, in nearby Olympia and Tacoma.

In this area, we see and hear the Iraq and Afghanistan wars almost every day. It is impossible to miss hearing the howitzer fire booming on the Fort Lewis artillery range, seeing the giant C-17 transport planes from Baghdad or Bagram landing at McChord Air Force Base, or overlooking the PTSD exhibited in local car accidents, robberies, bar brawls, domestic abuse, and sexual assaults.

The overpass and the gates of Fort Lewis (and of the Army National Guard’s Camp Murray) are only a few hundreds yards from the G.I. coffeehouse, on Union Avenue behind the Subway franchise.

Over the past two years, large direct actions at the Ports of Olympia and Tacoma have protested the movement of Stryker armored vehicles to and from Iraq.

Manzel’s concern is that soldiers understand the reasons for these actions, and that anti-war protesters understand that G.I.s are not their enemy.

He says of the new G.I. coffeehouses, “I think this is going to be a real link between the peace movement and soldiers on the bases that these are outside of.”

Port protesters have noticed some Stryker soldiers flashing peace signs when their officers are not watching, even if a smaller number of soldiers have instead flashed “half a peace sign.”

Fort Lewis has become a national center of G.I. dissent against the Iraq War, as it was during the Vietnam War.

G.I. Voice recently hosted a training of active-duty members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) who are organizing within the armed forces rather than seeking to leave the military.

G.I. Voice points to a new relationship between the growing G.I. movement and the larger civilian anti-war movement.

Fort Lewis is scheduled to deploy 10,000 more troops later this year, including three Stryker Brigades to Iraq and Afghanistan, making this a critical period for G.I. organizing in the area.

Although COFFEE STRONG has an advantageous location next to the region’s busiest fast-food joints, it has competition from the Starbucks on post.

Any kind of support would help the nonprofit G.I. coffeehouse stay open as a “safe space” for soldiers and their families.

For more information, contact G.I. Voice, P.O. Box 99404, Lakewood WA 98496, or on-line at <http://www.GIVoice.org> or <http://www.CoffeeStrong.com>. (Tax-deductible contributions can be made on-line, or with checks made out to "Seattle Draft & Military Counseling Center" or "SDMCC").

As the German poet-playwright Bertolt Brecht wrote:

"General, your tank is a powerful vehicle.
It smashes down forests and crushes men.
But it has one defect:
It needs a driver....
General, man is very useful.
He can fly and he can kill.
But he has one defect:
He can think."

**"While Official Reports Are Saying
That The Situation In Iraq And
Afghanistan Is Improving, These
Veterans Will Stand Up To Reveal
The Unpleasant And Unpublicized
Realities Of The Ongoing U.S. Military
Occupation"
Appeal for Winter Soldier Europe**



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

February 12, 2009 Press release, Connection-ev.de

Iraq Veterans Against the War invites you to a hearing in Freiburg [Germany] on March 14

Soldiers and veterans will share the truth about wars in Iraq, Afghanistan.

Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) invites you to hear the hard truth about what is really on happening on the ground in Iraq and Afghanistan, day in and day out, from American, British and German veterans.

Winter Soldier Europe will feature veterans' testimony in Freiburg, Germany, on March 14, just weeks before NATO has its annual summit in southern Germany.

Coordinated by the European chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), the event is supported by Connection e.V., RüstungsInformationsBüro (RIB), Freiburger Friedensforum, Freiburger Friedenswoche, Tübingen Progressive Americans, Munich American Peace Committee, American Voices Abroad Berlin, Carl-Schurz-Haus Freiburg/Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institut e.V. as well as the Freiburg-based groups of DFG-VK, attac, VVN/BdA and IPPNW.

The event has been named Winter Soldier to honor a similar gathering 30 years ago of veterans of the Vietnam War. Winter soldiers, according to American founding father Thomas Paine, are the people who stand up for the soul of their country, even in its darkest hours. IVAW held its first Winter Soldier hearings about Iraq and Afghanistan last year in Washington, D.C.

While official reports are saying that the situation in Iraq and Afghanistan is improving, these veterans will stand up to reveal the unpleasant and unpublicized realities of the ongoing U.S. military occupation.

Expected testifiers include:

U.S. AWOL soldier and Iraq veteran André Shepherd who seeks asylum in Germany

Christian Neumann, soldier of the German army and veteran of the war in Afghanistan.

US Navy journalist Zack Baddorf.

US-veteran Chris Capps who deserted before deployment to Afghanistan.

"We've heard from the politicians, we've heard from the generals, we've heard from the media – now it's our turn," said Kelly Dougherty, executive director of IVAW and a former sergeant who served in Iraq.

The hearing will convene on March 14, 2009, 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. in Café Velo, Wentzinger Str. 15 in Freiburg (Stadtbahnbrücke/HBF Freiburg). We will be pleased to welcome you.

Broadcast Media: Please confirm your attendance by March 10 so we can reserve you an audio input on our sound system.

To run the hearing, we need your support. Please donate to the following account: "KDV im Krieg", BIC GENODEM1GLS, IBAN DE42 4306 0967 8022 4097 00, purpose: IVAW Europe/Winter Soldier

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For more information, visit:

Freiburger Friedensforum www.fffr.de

Connection e.V. www.Connection-eV.de

Iraq Veterans Against the War www.ivaw.org/wintersoldier

Iraq Veterans Against the War Europe www.ivaw-europe.blogspot.com

**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

**War Profiteers KBR Knew
Oregon National Guard Soldiers
Were Being Poisoned During
Operation "Restore Iraqi Oil"
Now They're Fighting For Their
Lives:
Shit-Eating Traitors In Army
Command Covered It Up For KBR;**

Oregon Guard Medical Bureaucrats Fail To Notify Poisoned Soldiers: Too Busy Sending More Troops To Die For Oil And Empire



Larry Roberta, who served in the National Guard in the Middle East, takes so many daily medications to manage shortness of breath and other problems, he needs a plastic tote box to keep them organized. "That's not the man I sent," says his wife, Michelle. Photo: Rob Finch, The Oregonian

[Compare With Photo Above]



Spc. Larry Roberta poses in the Basra oil fields near a water treatment plant in Iraq in 2003. He began wearing the scarf for the dust while patrolling at the plant. Courtesy of Larry Roberta

[Here it is again. Same old story. Used up, thrown away, and the politicians couldn't care less. To repeat for the 3,535th time, there is no enemy in Iraq or Afghanistan. Their citizens and U.S. troops have a common enemy. That common enemy owns and operates the Imperial government in Washington DC for their own profit. That common enemy started these wars of conquest on a platform of lies, because they couldn't tell the truth: U.S. Imperial wars are about making money for them, and nothing else. Payback is overdue. T]

The Army also concluded that the low levels of exposure that were found meant soldiers were not expected to suffer long-term health consequences. Finally, the Army concluded, KBR had fulfilled its contract. The oil was flowing.

March 07, 2009 by Julie Sullivan, The Oregonian [Excerpts]

The soldiers worried about Saddam Hussein loyalists, not the dust.

Dust coated the Oregon Army National Guardsmen's combat boots and caked their skin as they protected Halliburton KBR contractors restoring oil flow in Iraq in 2003.

Dust poofed from the soldiers' uniforms as they crowded into vans at the end of the day and shared tents at night.

When the dust blew onto Spc. Larry Roberta's ready-to-eat meal, he rinsed the chicken patty with his canteen water and ate it.

Six months later, doctors discovered the flap into Roberta's stomach had disintegrated. Six years later, the Marine and former police officer can no longer walk to the mailbox or work.

Another Oregon soldier, Sgt. Nicholas Thomas, died of complications of leukemia at age 21. Three others have reported lung problems to headquarters. Five more told The Oregonian they suffer chronic coughs, rashes and immune system disorders.

The same Oregon Guard soldiers who went into Iraq without adequate body armor or up-armored Humvees face another dubious first: exposure to hexavalent chromium, which greatly increases their risk of cancer and other diseases.

It was in the orange and yellow dust spread over half the Qarmat Ali water treatment plant by fleeing Saddam supporters.

Scientists call the carcinogen a Trojan horse because the damage may not be immediately obvious. Over time, people can develop different cancers, breathing problems, stomach ulcers or damage to the digestive tract.

“This is our Agent Orange,” says Scott Ashby, who served in the Oregon Guard.

Ninety-three Oregon soldiers may still not know that they have been exposed to hexavalent chromium. The Oregon Guard sent registered letters notifying them Friday, six years after their deployment.

Officials say they didn't learn of the problem themselves until November, when the Army, spurred by lawsuits in Indiana and Texas and a subsequent Senate investigation, alerted the Oregon Guard.

The suits claim KBR ignored both a United Nations report and its own employees' warnings about the danger.

Larry and Michelle Roberta of Aumsville received the Guard's letter Feb. 26 notifying them of his possible exposure. They set the letter aside. Roberta has known since July 2003 when an Army medic recorded exposure to hexavalent chromium at the water plant.

“We knew he was exposed since the very beginning,” says Michelle Roberta, 38. “I sent a very healthy man over there. He did not come back.”

The 1-162 arrived at its base of operations in Kuwait on April 18, 2003, and within weeks, the soldiers from Gresham and McMinnville were assigned to escort and protect KBR contractors on a mission called “Restore Iraqi Oil.” Soldiers also came from combined units from Hillsboro and St. Helens.

Houston-based Kellogg, Brown & Root Services, then a subsidiary of Halliburton, won the contract to get the oil flowing in Iraq. Repairing the water treatment plant, which maintained pressure in nearby oil wells, was a top priority.

Soldiers, officers and the undersecretary of the Army's manager for the project say that Oregon platoons rotated from Kuwait into Iraq in three to four day intervals from April 2003 until June 2003.

Oregon soldiers met KBR workers at a rest stop on the main highway into Iraq, then accompanied them in the contractors' SUVs to pipelines, oil fields or the water treatment plant.

Just weeks after the Indiana Guard replaced the Oregonians, a new KBR safety officer arrived at the water treatment plant at Qarmat Ali.

Ed Blacke was shocked by the widespread orange and yellow dust piled feet deep in places. The powder, he learned, was a corrosion fighter that contained hexavalent chromium.

Soon he had sinus, throat and breathing problems, and found that 60 percent of the soldiers and staff at Qarmat Ali had identical symptoms.

KBR managers told him it was “a nonissue.”

Blacke described the sequence of events to a Senate committee in June 2008.

According to a subsequent Senate query, KBR did not test the site until August 2003 or notify the Army until September 2003.

The Indiana Guard learned of the contamination when KBR managers showed up in protective suits. KBR closed the plant shortly after.

In October 2003, the Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine evaluated 137 soldiers and others at the site. They reported abnormalities including eye, nose and lung irritation that “could also be due to dehydration, diet supplements, previous conditions or heavy workouts.”

The Army also concluded that the low levels of exposure that were found meant soldiers were not expected to suffer long-term health consequences.

Finally, the Army concluded, KBR had fulfilled its contract. It paved over the contamination, then completed the water-treatment center repairs in 2006.

The oil was flowing.

In March 2008, nine KBR employees, including whistle-blower Blacke, sued KBR for damages.

In December, 16 Indiana Guardsmen filed their own lawsuit, contending KBR “disregarded and downplayed the extreme danger.” The Indiana commander is dying of a rare lung cancer that the VA has ruled is related to being at the water treatment plant.

Sens. Byron Dorgan, D-N.D., and Evan Bayh, D-Ind., have challenged the Army's handling of the issue, even after an independent panel backed the Army.

The senators also want to know why some Guard members -- including some from Oregon -- still haven't been notified.

But the Oregon Guard is busy.

The medical command is readying half the state's soldiers -- about 3,000 -- to return to Iraq this summer.

And they are still determining who served at the water treatment plant.

Because in the chaos of the early days of the war in 2003, no one kept an archive of names of who served where, or day-by-day events.

Brig. Gen. Mike Caldwell says the first Oregon Guardsmen sent into combat in 50 years paid a price.

“This was the low point of the Army's care of reservists, no doubt about it,” says Caldwell, commander of the Oregon State Defense Forces.

“The strategy was driven by former Secretary of Defense (Donald) Rumsfeld and (Deputy Defense Secretary) Paul Wolfowitz, and the responsibility goes right back to them.

“They thought we were going into Panama and we'd all be home in a week.”

When Larry Roberta finally did come home, Michelle barely recognized him.

For Larry Roberta, the military had always been a way out. As a foster child, he joined the National Guard for rent money. He rejoined the Guard in 2001 so he could afford college. And he kept working as a technician at Xerox in Wilsonville.

At 38, he scored at the top of every physical category in the Guard's exam. His only medications: ibuprofen and Tums. He left for Iraq tan, fit and in his prime.

Within weeks of arriving and patrolling the water treatment plant, Roberta had severe chest pains, sore throats, coughing attacks and wheezing, according to his medical records.

Although KBR and the Army did not move to close the plant or alert the soldiers and civilians until weeks later, as early as July 18, 2003, an Army medic wrote in Larry Roberta's chart: “Possible irritation of lung from reflux/inhalation air toxicity (sodium dichromate at Qarmat Ali WTP.)”

Roberta's commanders also were concerned, hounding him to get medical care. When the Army began investigating exposure two months later, his first sergeant thrust him at doctors: “This is the soldier you have to see.”

In December 2003, Roberta was evacuated to Madigan Army Hospital to repair the disintegrated stomach opening. They also diagnosed reactive airway disorder, upper chest pain and nasal polyps, noting his exposure to hexavalent chromium.

Then he came home.

Michelle Roberta noticed other changes.

He erupted at local boys on bicycles. The former policeman who despised domestic violence, grabbed her by the throat. She hit him with a Dirt Devil and went to the phone book for a therapist. After he climbed over the cubicle at work angry at a colleague, he called his wife: “I need help.”

With the help of an Oregon Department of Veterans Affairs counselor, he was rated 100 percent disabled by lung disorders, tinnitus and post-traumatic stress disorder.

He needs two inhalers to breathe and swallows eight kinds of pills a day for upper chest pain, migraines, high blood pressure, mood swings and a mystifying low level of testosterone.

“The worst part was, I couldn't figure out what was going on,” he says. At one point, he plotted to kill himself -- “right down to the noose.”

Michelle Roberta intervened. “I have ESP about these things.”

With their son Larry, 20, living at home, Michelle, a dialysis technician, has held the family together, working full time and meeting with the landlord and creditors to cover bills. She uses their pugs Jimi and Frank, who respond when a mood is coming.

And she introduced her husband to Donna Burleigh of S&D Exotic Bird Rescue in Keizer. Larry Roberta began working with abandoned birds and the couple have since moved 23 cockatoos, macaws and others into their home in a dizzying array of squawks and color.

Larry Roberta has begun visiting schools with his birds. He is trying, he says, to find purpose in his new life. Many of the birds are so traumatized they have plucked their own feathers and are unadoptable. They perch, beneath gorgeous heads, like whole chickens ready for the pot.

“They're misfits,” he says, “like I am.”

Hexavalent Chromium

- Exposure to 40 micrograms of hexavalent chromium per cubic meter -- about the size of a grain of salt in about a cubic yard -- has shown a high increase in not only lung cancer, but also leukemia and stomach, brain, renal, bladder and bone cancers.
- Erin Brockovich constructed the famous California case against PG&E because of contamination by hexavalent chromium.
- The chemical is the toxic component of the corrosion fighter sodium dichromate.

**Terrorists Devised Brilliant New
Way To Wound & Kill U.S. Troops:
Infiltrators Got Pentagon Jobs,
Stationed U.S. Soldiers Near Burn
Pits, Poisoned Them & Lied About It:**

Total Number Of Casualties Still Unknown

UCMJ

TITLE 18--CRIMES AND CRIMINAL PROCEDURE

PART I--CRIMES

CHAPTER 115--TREASON, SEDITION, AND SUBVERSIVE ACTIVITIES

Sec. 2388. Activities affecting armed forces during war

(a) Whoever, when the United States is at war, willfully makes or conveys false reports or false statements with intent to interfere with the operation or success of the military or naval forces of the United States or to promote the success of its enemies

March 10, 2009 John Byrne, Rawstory.com & 3.16.09 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]

A newly leaked military document appears to show the Pentagon knowingly exposed US troops to toxic chemicals that cause cancer, while publicly downplaying the risks exposure might cause.

The document, written by an environmental engineering flight commander in December of 2006 and posted on Wikileaks (PDF) on Tuesday, details the risks posed to US troops in Iraq by burning garbage at a US airbase.

It enumerates myriad risks posed by the practice and identifies various carcinogens released by incinerating waste in open-air pits.

Because of the difficulties in testing samples, investigators could not prove that chemicals exceeded military exposure guidelines.

But a military document released last December found that chemicals routinely exceeded safe levels by twice to six times.

The leaked report was signed off by the chief for the Air Force's aeromedical services. Its subject is Balad Airbase, a large US military base about 70 kilometers north of Baghdad.

"In my professional opinion, the known carcinogens and respiratory sensitizers released into the atmosphere by the burn pit present both an acute and a chronic health hazard to our troops and the local population," Aeromedical chief Lt. Colonel James Elliott wrote.

According to the document, a US Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventative Medicine investigator said Balad's burn pit was "the worst

environmental site I have ever personally visited,” including “10 years working... clean-up for the Army.”

While the Curtis memo document is a new release to Wikileaks, it was previously disclosed online by the founder and editor of VAWatchdog.org, Larry Scott, in December 2008.

Military outfits have routinely incinerated garbage in what are called burn pits. At Balad, the trash was hauled by contractors from the engineering giant KBR, a former Halliburton subsidiary.

Last December, the Pentagon issued a “Just the Facts” sheet about the burn pits to troops. While acknowledging that lab tests from 2004-2006 had found occasional carcinogens, it asserted that “the potential short- and long-term risks were estimated to be low due to the infrequent detections of these chemicals.”

The sampling reports are classified, according to the Army Times.

The Pentagon report adds, “Based on U.S. Environmental Protection Agency guidance, long-term health effects are not expected to occur from breathing the smoke.”

Strikingly, however, it does acknowledge that air samples taken in 2007 found particulate matter levels higher than military recommendations in 50 of 60 cases -- some two times allowable toxic levels, but others as many as six times.

The flyer given to troops appears to contradict assertions by the Air Force's own investigators.

In the leaked document, titled “Burn Pit Health Hazards,” Air Force Bioenvironmental Engineering Flight Commander Darrin Curtis expressed shock that troops were knowingly exposed to such risks.

“It is amazing that the burn pit has been able to operate without restrictions over the past few years without significant engineering controls being put in place,” Curtis wrote.

“In my professional opinion, there is an acute health hazard for individuals,” he added. In addition to carcinogens, “there is also the possibility of chronic health hazards associated with the smoke.”

Curtis noted that the chemicals associated with burning plastics, rubber and other common trash items included arsenic, benzene, formaldehyde, hydrogen cyanide, sulfuric acid and various other chemicals.

“Just the Facts,” while playing down long-term risks, also identified dioxins among tested samples. Dioxins were also present in Agent Orange, the notorious herbicide used during the Vietnam War. Benzene is known to cause leukemia, and cyanide and arsenic have throughout history been used as poisons to induce death.

An Army Times investigation in 2008 found anecdotal evidence of health conditions caused by exposure to the fires.

“Though military officials say there are no known long-term effects from exposure to burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan, more than 100 service members have come forward to Military Times and Disabled American Veterans with strikingly similar symptoms: chronic bronchitis, asthma, sleep apnea, chronic coughs and allergy-like symptoms. Several also have cited heart problems, lymphoma and leukemia,” Army Times reporter Kelley Kennedy wrote in December.

“A lot of soldiers in my old unit have asthma and bronchitis,” a staff sergeant stationed in Iraq in 2005 was quoted as saying. “I lived 50 feet from the burn pit. I used to wake up in the middle of the night choking on it.”

“I’ve seen four or five cardiologists, but no one can tell me what’s wrong with my heart,” the staff sergeant added.

“It seems like most of these cases, anecdotally, are people who were exposed heavily to the burn pits and they got sick quickly,” Kerry Baker, legislative director for Disabled American Veterans, said.

“There must be some areas that take a hit much harder than others.

“Everything seems to be pointing opposite to what the Defense Department is saying.”

Meanwhile, a retired Army captain who said he wants to help sick troops has produced a copy of a memo from Joint Base Balad in Iraq prohibiting service members from using soil or ash from the Balad burn pit to fill sandbags because of possible health risks.

The former officer gave Military Times a copy of a memo dated June 10, 2007, and signed by Maj. Scott Newkirk, commander of the 133rd Medical Detachment at Balad, stating that service members may not use soil or ash from the burn pit to fill sandbags “due to unknown levels of soil contamination.”

“Chemicals and contaminants may absorb into or adhere to the surface of old sandbags, creating respiratory and skin hazards as soldiers remove bags from the burn pit site,” the memo states.

Troops Invited:

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

While Soldiers Died: Thieving Pig Officer Stole \$400,000 In Afghanistan



March 10, 2009 KITV

HONOLULU -- A former dispersing officer for Schofield Barracks units in Afghanistan pleaded not guilty to stealing \$400,000 from the government while on deployment in a finance battalion.

Former Army Capt. David Silivano Gilliam, 39, was arrested in South Carolina for theft of government funds and illegally concealing money to bring it out of the country, according to court documents.

In 2004 and 2005, Gilliam was a disbursing officer with the 125th Finance Battalion from Schofield Barracks. He was deployed to the Kandahar Air Base in Afghanistan

In both Afghanistan and Iraq, American cash is a big part of the war effort, paying civilians for work and even for losses to combat.

Prosecutors said Gilliam was put in a position of trust.

"He misused that by stealing the money and smuggling it into the United States from Afghanistan and using it as set forth in the indictment to buy personal things and conduct personal transactions with it," Assistant U.S. Attorney Clare Connors said.

Gilliam apparently brought about \$400,000 in cash home in his luggage. The IRS got suspicious after he converted \$254,000 into a First Hawaiian Bank cashier's check.

Gilliam is not the only soldier accused of stealing American cash from the war zone. Just last week a captain from Beaverton, Ore., was accused of sending home \$700,000 from Iraq.

When first confronted about where the money came from Gilliam told IRS investigator LeiAnn Corpuz that he earned the money running a dating service when he was stationed in Panama.

The soldier is no longer in the Army. Military officials have not returned KITV's calls. It is not known whether he was dishonorably discharged.

Vietnamese Veterans Organize To Resist Land Grab By Corrupt Government Thieves: “We Each Have Lost Half Our Body, He Says, And He Says The Veterans Have No Money For Bribes”

07 March 2009 By Matt Steinglass, Hanoi; VOA

A support group for seriously wounded Vietnamese war veterans is resisting a government decision to take away their land in central Hanoi. Land disputes are increasing in Vietnam as urban property values rise.

Several dozen middle-aged veterans in khaki uniforms occupy a small empty lot in a central neighborhood of Hanoi.

They are surrounded by an equal number of police in red, white and blue jeeps.

The veterans, many with missing limbs, are members of the July 27 War Invalids Collective. Since 1996 they have used this plot for the three-wheeled motorized vehicles the government allows them to drive.

Now, the local People's Committee wants to give the land to a parking lot company. But war veteran Nguyen Nhu Khoa, who suffered brain and spine injuries during the 1972 Battle of Hue, said they are not leaving.

Khoa says the People's Committee's decision was unacceptable. He says the nation's ancestors said that the leaves that are whole should embrace the torn ones. Khoa says the People's Committee should ask themselves whether they are acting as the ancestors taught.

Land disputes like this one are increasingly common as Hanoi undergoes a massive construction boom.

Khoa said the disabled veterans need this land to earn a living.

Khoa says each veteran receives a pension of up to \$90 per month, not enough to support their families.

They used to use their three-wheeled vehicles as miniature moving vans. But last year, the Hanoi Transportation Department stopped that, saying the vehicles were unsafe.

The veterans decided to start a business washing cars and motorbikes, said disabled war veteran Do Dac Vinh.

Vinh says they invested to buy sand and improve the property.

When they heard the land was being taken away, they appealed to the People's Committee.

But in a January 8 decision, the People's Committee said it could do nothing, because the land belonged to the Transportation Department.

Veteran Nguyen Van Hai, injured in Vietnam's 1978 war in Cambodia, said the real problem was that the group could not bribe officials.

"We are people who have fought for the country, Hai says, and he says he and his fellow veterans find it unacceptable to bribe someone. We each have lost half our body, he says, and he says the veterans have no money for bribes."

A 300 square meter plot in central Hanoi is worth hundreds of thousands of dollars. Without money, the wounded veterans will have a hard time holding on to it.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Resistance Action

10 Mar 2009 BBC & March 11 (Reuters) March 12 (Reuters) & DPA

A foreign civilian has been killed in a rocket attack on a British military base in Iraq, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) has said. An MoD spokesman said: "There has been a rocket attack on a contingency operating base at Basra Airport. "There has been one foreign civilian fatality and there is an ongoing investigation. There are no British casualties."

A car bomb near an Iraqi army patrol killed three soldiers and wounded two soldiers, in western Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Two policemen were wounded when a militant threw a hand grenade at a police patrol in central Mosul, police said.

Three policemen were wounded by a roadside bomb in a village near the town of Jalawla, 115 km (70 miles) northeast of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded Taha Kudhair, a brigadier- general in the civil defence directorate, while he was heading to work in the Yarmouk district of Baghdad, police said. Kudhair's son and a passerby were also wounded in the blast.

Samir al-Waili, a major-general in the traffic police directorate was unharmed by a roadside bomb attack on his convoy as it passed through the al-Nahda area of central Baghdad, police said. Two of his guards and two civilians were wounded in the blast.

Early Thursday evening, a soldier on patrol near Mosul's College of Dentistry was killed when an improvised explosive device detonated near his patrol. A second soldier was wounded in that attack

On Thursday afternoon, two soldiers on patrol in the al-Baj district roughly 60 kilometres west of Mosul were killed by a roadside bomb.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATIONS

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



PAVLOV'S BANKER

CLASS WAR REPORTS



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

RECEIVED

Cartoons?

From: WP
To: GI Special
Sent: March 12, 2009
Subject: Re: GI Special 7C9: His Soldiers Defy Dictator

I love these cartoons.

Do you have a link for them?

Thanks for your email. I enjoy reading it.

Keep up the good work of faith of speaking out against these wicked unlawful wars.

REPLY:

A wide variety of editorial cartoons may be found at the lower half of the page
<http://news.yahoo.com/comics/>

T



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

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

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

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