

GI SPECIAL 7D16:



March 21 Washington, DC: Photo by Bill Perry. Thanks to Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace

**Betrayal In The Field:
“The Harassment Got To Be So
Commonplace That I Didn’t
Even Think It Was Wrong”
“Anyway, It Went Up So High In
The Ranks There Was Nobody To
Tell”**

“Most Of The Perpetrators Are Older And Of Higher Rank Than The Women They Target, So They Can Threaten Or Intimidate Their Victims Into Silence”

One night, while Ribeiro was on guard duty, a man in a U.S. military uniform crept up behind her, seized her in a choke hold, and dragged her behind a building. She did her best to fight him off, but he overpowered her and raped her. When she tried to report it, she was threatened with court-martial for having left her weapon behind during the attack.

By Helen Benedict, Columbia Magazine, Spring 2009 [Excerpts]

Female soldiers are confronting danger not only from the enemy, but from their brothers in arms.

Drawing from her new book, *The Lonely Soldier: The Private War of Women Serving In Iraq*, Journalism school professor Helen Benedict reports on the abuse that thousands of U.S. servicewomen endure.

Helen Benedict, a professor at the Graduate School of Journalism, is the author of 10 books.

Her writings on female soldiers in the Iraq war won the James Aronson Award for Social Justice Journalism in 2008 and her play, *The Lonely Soldier Monologues*, was staged in New York this spring. Her new novel, *The Edge of Eden*, will be published by Soho Press in late 2009. Visit www.helenbenedictco.com.

The stench was overpowering, strong enough to make Specialist Jen Spranger recoil as she stepped out of the military plane into the Kuwait night.

Was it rotting garbage? Burning oil fields? Dead bodies?

She knew only that the air was black with filth and smelled nothing like her hometown of Racine, Wisconsin.

Cramped and exhausted from 18 hours of flying from the U.S., she and the other fresh soldiers filed down the airplane stairs and into a waiting bus.

It was February 2003, the month leading up to the U.S. invasion of Iraq, and the soldiers were being driven to Camp Arifjan, a huge military base south of Kuwait City to wait for the war.

Spranger, her blond hair tucked under her army beret, huddled her small frame into her seat, wishing she could at least peek outside. But she and her comrades were forbidden to open the curtains even a crack. She felt as if she were being delivered to war blindfolded.

When she reached the camp and climbed off the bus, she was ordered into a long metal warehouse stuffed with roughly 1000 green army cots, almost every one occupied by a man. The building reeked of sweat. There, she was to sleep an arm's length away from her neighbor on either side, face to foot to minimize the spread of disease. If she needed a bathroom, she would have to weave her way across the room with all those men watching her. She lay down and changed her clothes inside her sleeping bag, feeling a long way from home.

Spranger was 1 of only 4 women in a platoon of 34 men, and 1 of 20 women in a company of 213. She was to live and work in close quarters with those men for the next seven months.

After she had spent several weeks at Camp Arifjan, during which time she turned 19, her unit was ordered to form a convoy of 175 trucks and Humvees and drive into war. The date was March 22, 2003, two days after the U.S. had bombed Baghdad, and one day after it had hurled 1500 bombs and missiles at other sites in Iraq.

Spranger's unit belonged to the 822nd Military Police Battalion, and its mission was to set up the first U.S. prison camp in Iraq, Camp Bucca, near the Kuwait border. Although Bucca was only 100 miles away from Arian, it took the convoy several days to get there.

"The first thing we did was get lost," she says.

"We didn't have any maps, and our radios were all old and broken. We didn't have nearly the equipment we should have. In fact, we got lost numerous times."

As Spranger hunched in the back of her unarmored Humvee, the lone female among the five soldiers stuffed into the cramped vehicle, she tried to get a sense of what kind of country she was in. All around her the dun-colored desert stretched to the horizon, scattered with garbage and tire shreds.

The carcass of a cow would occasionally come into view, bloated to twice its normal size, its legs stiff as sticks; or a cluster of small, yellow brick buildings, pock-marked and crumbling.

But sometimes the convoy would drive through a border town that had just been bombed, where hardly a house was standing and where blackened corpses lay stretched out on the ground, their skins split open, guts trailing. A dog chewed on a dismembered foot.

On March 25, Spranger's unit reached a former Iraqi military air base just outside of Nasiriyah, the city where Private Jessica Lynch had been ambushed two days earlier in an incident that was to become international news.

Nasiriyah is an ancient city of squat, flat-roofed houses built of yellow mud or cement. Interwoven by narrow, twisting alleyways, it rests on the northern side of the Euphrates River, and is one of the most picturesque areas of Iraq, with lush grass, waving palm trees, and grazing water buffalo.

But when Spranger got there, the U.S. had just finished blasting Nasiriyah for over 36 hours with explosive rounds and cluster bombs. All she could see were buildings smashed into heaps of smoldering rubble, bodies lying in the roads, run over by so many trucks that they were flattened, and heaps of garbage as high as her head.

At the air base, she and the other soldiers were ordered to set up their quarters in what had been a jail. "We had to clean it up, shovel out human feces," she says. "God, it was disgusting. There were electric torture devices hanging from the ceiling. If this is what they did to their own people, I thought, maybe we are saving them."

A couple of days after they arrived, the soldiers had just settled down for the night when there was a blinding flash, followed by silence. An instant later, the loudest noise Spranger had ever heard exploded around her, so loud it felt more like a physical shock than a sound.

The building was being barraged with Iraqi mortars in what turned out to be one of the deadliest nights of the early war. Spranger curled deep into her sleeping bag, rigid with terror.

Then, right in the middle of the attack, a man climbed on top of her and began groping her.

"Get the fuck off of me!" she yelled, and pinched his thigh so hard he rolled away. She knew who the soldier was. From then on, they avoided one another.

This was only the beginning of the harassment Spranger endured at war.

"My team leader always made sure that we were out together when we had to do guarding, and he would say disgusting things."

He offered her money for a sexual favor. "I told him to kiss my ass."

In response he became vengeful, watching her constantly and trying to get her into trouble by reporting everything she did, no matter how trivial, to the platoon sergeant.

"It Went Up So High In The Ranks There Was Nobody To Tell"

Spranger's experience is hardly unusual among military women. According to several recent surveys conducted by researchers at veterans centers, nearly a third of female troops are raped by their comrades, while some three-quarters are sexually assaulted, and 90 percent are sexually harassed.

"The harassment got to be so commonplace that I didn't even think it was wrong," Spranger says.

“Anyway, it went up so high in the ranks there was nobody to tell.”

This is a widespread sentiment among women soldiers, especially as most of the perpetrators are older and of higher rank than the women they target, so they can threaten or intimidate their victims into silence.

In 2005, the Defense Department tried to remedy this by creating the Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Office (SAPRO), offering soldiers the choice to report assaults anonymously, and by hiring sexual assault counselors (www.sapr.mil). But these reforms made hardly any difference, according to many soldiers who have served since then.

Military platoons are enclosed, hierarchical societies, rife with gossip, so any woman who dares to report sexual harassment or assault has little chance of remaining anonymous.

She will probably have to face her assailant every day and put up with resentment and blame from other soldiers who see her as a snitch.

She risks being persecuted by her assailant if he is her superior, as Spranger described, and punished by any commanders who consider her a troublemaker.

And because military culture demands that all soldiers keep their pain and distress to themselves, reporting an assault would make her look weak and cowardly.

The Defense Department acknowledges that, despite its reforms, some 80 percent of military sexual assaults are still never reported.

“He Overpowered Her And Raped Her. When She Tried To Report It, She Was Threatened With Court-Martial”

Sergeant Marti Ribeiro, a wife and mother who entered the Air Force to follow family tradition, was relentlessly harassed throughout her deployment in 2003.

So when she was redeployed in 2006 and sent to Afghanistan as a combat correspondent with the Army’s all-male 10th Mountain Division, she resolved that this time would be different.

“Excuse my language,” says Ribeiro, “but I decided to be a bitch. So I stepped off the plane into my own personal hell. Yes, I was able to put up a wall, but at a price. My wall became thicker and thicker. I’m normally a very bubbly person, but that disappeared behind the wall, and to this day I don’t know if I’ve ever regained that part of my personality.”

One night, while Ribeiro was on guard duty, a man in a U.S. military uniform crept up behind her, seized her in a choke hold, and dragged her behind a building. She did her best to fight him off, but he overpowered her and raped her. When she tried to report it, she was threatened with court-martial for having left her weapon behind during the attack.

“That would have ended my career:’ says Ribeiro, “so I shut up and didn’t tell anyone. It’s taken me more than a year to realize it wasn’t my fault. The military has a way of making females believe they bring this upon themselves. That’s wrong.”

“My Battle Buddy Was My Gun And My Knife In My Pocket.”

“I was the only female in my platoon of 50 to 60 men’ says Army Specialist Chantelle Henneberry, who, like Spranger, was 18 when she began her tour in Iraq.

“One of the guys I thought was my friend tried to rape me. Two of my sergeants wouldn’t stop making passes at me. Everybody’s supposed to have a battle buddy in the army, and females are supposed to have one to go to the latrines with, or to the showers -- that’s so you don’t get raped by one of the men on your own side. But because I was the only female there, I didn’t have a battle buddy.

“My battle buddy was my gun and my knife in my pocket.”

When Henneberry, who served from 2005 to 2006 with the 172nd Stryker Brigade out of Alaska, complained to her commander about the assault, she was told she was the problem and was transferred to another camp, away from her friends.

There, matters were no better. “My company consisted of 1500 men and under 18 women,” she says. “I was fresh meat to hungry men.” She was harassed so relentlessly that she cried every day and was close to mental collapse.

“The mortar rounds that came in daily did less damage to me than the men with whom I shared my food.”

Several researchers have documented that the military has long regarded women soldiers as sexual prey rather than as reliable soldiers, and the Pentagon maintains that America is not ready to see its mothers and daughters die in battle.

For these and other reasons, the Department of Defense recently reaffirmed its long-standing ban against women in ground combat, even though women are in combat in Iraq every day.

Not all military men look down on their female companions, of course, but too many do, making it difficult for women to win acceptance, let alone respect.

A Double Betrayal

By the time Spranger’s sixth month in Iraq rolled around, she was emaciated, anxious, and sick. Her fingernails were peeling off, she couldn’t hold down her food, she fainted frequently, and her hands would not stop shaking.

For a long time she tried to “suck it up” and deny that she was ill. But finally she went to the camp medic, who discovered that her heart rate was so high she was in danger of having a stroke. She was sent to Kuwait for medical treatment, then to a German

hospital, and then home, where she spent months spinning into depression, remorse, and self-loathing.

Like Spranger, Ribeiro and Henneberry were shattered by their experiences.

Soldiers are taught to see their comrades as family, so the victims of military sexual assault are doubly betrayed.

As a result, they tend to feel ashamed and terrified, to blame themselves in irrational ways, and to find it hard to trust anyone again. Many turn to drugs or drink to numb the pain, losing control of their lives: a 2007 survey found that 40 percent of homeless female veterans say they were raped in the military.

Ribeiro was so full of self-blame that for six months she couldn't tell anyone, not even her mother, about the rape or why she'd left the Air Force.

"It makes me mad when I think about the fact that I let them get to me and left," she says. "I had dreams of becoming an officer one day, like my father and grandfather. Unfortunately, because I'm female, those dreams will not come true."

When Henneberry came home, she, too, was filled with self-recrimination. "I felt like I'd messed everything up," she says. "I'd let my mom and dad down. I'd let everyone down. I hated myself."

Shortly after her return, she tried to kill herself.

Tragically, many military women like these are not finding adequate help when they come home.

Recently, the VA has opened more mental-health facilities exclusively for women, which it says are safe and adequate to meet the demand. But in 2009 alone, more than 30,000 female troops will return from war, adding to the 1.7 million female veterans already here.

In January, after several congressional hearings and pressure from representatives Jane Harman (D-CA) and Louise Slaughter (D-NY), the Army announced its own efforts to improve conditions for women, including new approaches to the prevention of sexual assault and the hiring of more litigators to prosecute it.

The military has not always been so ready to embrace reform.

On July 31, 2008, the House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform held a hearing to address military sexual assault, and subpoenaed Kaye Whitley, the director of SAPRO, to testify DoD officials banned her from the hearing.

It took an angry letter from Representative Henry Waxman (D-CA), the committee chairman, threatening the officials with contempt of Congress, to make Whitley show up at a later hearing in September.

Her main message was that SAPRO was doing a fine job, even though four years after SAPRO was created, there is no evidence that sexual assaults in the military are decreasing at all.

Spranger was a mess her first year at home.

She moved in with a boyfriend, who turned violent, and she spent six months sniffing cocaine, continuing to grow thinner, unable to eat or sleep.

Even by 2007, after she'd kicked the cocaine and the boyfriend, Spranger still shook and had panic attacks that left her struggling for breath.

"To tell the truth," she says, "my life has been an absolute wreck since I've been back.

"I remember being happy a couple of years ago, but I haven't been happy since. I wasn't like that before. I didn't want to give up, like I do now.

"Now there are days when I can't stand being in my own skin."

MORE:

"I Wasn't Carrying The Knife For The Enemy, I Was Carrying It For The Guys On My Own Side"



Mickiela Montoya

[[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) & Mark Shapiro, Military Project, who sent this in.]

17 April 2009 BBC NEWS By Mickiela Montoya, via Helen Benedict

A lot of the men didn't want us there. One guy told me the military sends women soldiers over to give the guys eye-candy to keep them sane.

He told me in Vietnam they had prostitutes, but they don't have those in Iraq, so they have women soldiers instead.

At the end of my shift one night, I was walking back to my trailer with this guy who was supposed to be my battle buddy when he said: 'You know, if I was to rape you right now nobody could hear you scream, nobody would see you. What would you do?'

'I'd stab you.'

'You don't have a knife,' he said to me.

'Oh yes I do.'

Actually I didn't have one, but after that, I always carried one.

I practiced how to take it out of my pocket and swing it out fast.

But I wasn't carrying the knife for the enemy, I was carrying it for the guys on my own side.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Family Says Ohio Soldier Killed In Iraq

April 24 WCHS-TV8

CLEVELAND:

Family members say they've learned that an Ohio soldier was killed by a roadside bomb this week while on his second tour in Iraq.

Relatives of 21-year-old Cpl. Brad Davis says officers came to the family's home in the Cleveland suburb of Garfield Heights Wednesday night to say Davis had died earlier that day.

His sister, Jennifer Gardner, says Davis planned to leave the military when his current deployment ended in December.

Davis was a 2006 graduate of Garfield Heights High School. Gardner says he was the type who was always there for you but he also had a prankster side.

Davis was assigned to the 4th Squadron, 73rd Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 82nd Airborne Division based in Fort Bragg, N.C.

Memories Of Fallen Elk Grove Soldier Flow

Apr. 14, 2009 By Diana Lambert, The Sacramento Bee

The porch of the mint-green and brick ranch house on Lark Street in Elk Grove was beginning to fill with potted plants, flowers and cards Monday morning as word spread of the death of Staff Sgt. Bryan E. Hall, 32, who was killed in a suicide attack in Iraq on Friday.

Flags in front of city buildings were lowered to half-mast to honor the Elk Grove resident.

Hall was a career soldier, serving in the U.S. Army for 14 years. But he always returned to the family house on Lark Street when he was on leave, said neighbor Linda Holloway.

"This was home," she said.

Hall had just returned to Iraq last week, after a two-week visit home, when he was killed by a suicide bomber attacking a Mosul police station. Four other American soldiers also died in the attack.

Monday, in statements posted on extremist Web sites, the Islamic State of Iraq, a radical group thought to be a front for al-Qaida in Iraq, said it planned and carried out the bombing, news services reported.

During his leave, Hall had celebrated his 2-year-old daughter Addison's birthday and his third anniversary with his wife, Rachel, both on March 27, said his mother, Betty Hall. He and Rachel also had taken a short trip to Lake Tahoe to spend some time alone.

Later, the entire Hall family posed for family portraits.

"It was a nice visit," said Betty Hall.

Hall said her son was active in youth sports and played baseball at Elk Grove High School, where he graduated in 1994. He grew up in the house on Lark Street.

She said he always wanted to be in the military. "He was very proud of serving," she said. "And we were very proud of him."

Neighbors Clyde and Mildred Colton, both 82, remember Hall as a little boy riding his tricycle over to their house.

"He was always such a great kid," said Mildred Colton. "He would always come and visit and bring you something."

The couple proudly showed off pictures of Bryan sitting at their kitchen table in 2005 and on their couch with his wife and baby daughter in 2007.

Rachel and Addison have been living with family members in Sacramento, Betty Hall said.

The Hall family – Betty, father John, and sister Kristi – returned to the house on Lark Street on Monday afternoon after attending arrival ceremonies Sunday for Hall's body at

the Pentagon's main mortuary in Dover, Del. Also attending were Hall's wife, his daughter and his mother-in-law.

Betty Hall said the military assigned an officer to take care of them. She said there was a dignified service for the transfer of the caskets.

"I feel so much better now that I know he's back in the United States," Betty Hall said.

Monday morning, a rumpled yellow bow sat atop the Hall family mailbox. The family had passed out yellow ribbons to friends and neighbors at a send-off party last summer, when Bryan Hall first was deployed to Iraq. The ribbons still could be seen on doors along the street.

"I had a bad feeling he wasn't going to make it," said Mildred Colton, recalling the going-away party and wiping tears from her eyes.

Clyde Colton remembers Bryan Hall as a man who loved camping, fishing and hunting. "He was quite the outdoorsman," Colton said.

Hall told Colton stories of hunting trips he had taken when stationed in Georgia and Alaska.

Neighbor Linda Holloway said Hall had attended Capital Christian Center school, Joseph Kerr Middle School and Elk Grove High School with her daughters.

Holloway heard about the Mosul bombing on the news and was later stunned to hear that Hall had died in the attack. "You never think it's someone you actually know," she said.

She said the Hall family was helping their daughter move Friday evening when another neighbor saw men in uniform arriving at the house and called the family on their cell phone. She said the men told the family to come home right away. "It is very sad," Holloway said.

City leaders are waiting to talk to Hall family members before planning any special memorials.

"I am saddened by the loss of this young man, as well as others that have lost their lives protecting our freedom," said Elk Grove Councilwoman Sophia Scherman on Monday.

Hall received three Army commendation medals, according to military records, as well as good Army achievement, good conduct and war on terrorism medals.

Betty Hall said she had learned of the honors bestowed on her son from news reports of his death.

"He was such a humble man," she said.

WO1 Judson Mount Dies From Injuries Sustained In Iraq

4/16/2009 By Carole Robinson, Staff Writer; WILLIAMSON HERALD

First Warrant Officer Judson E. Mount, 37 died April 7 at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas from complications from injuries received while serving his country on his second tour of duty in Iraq.

With his grandfather, Grady Gardner of Franklin, a World War II and Korean War hero by his side, Judson joined the Army in 1991, served seven years, left for seven years and in 2004, returned to the military life he loved so much, knowing he would be sent to Iraq, according to his mother, Joyce Mount of Franklin. He earned several honorable awards for his service, including the Purple Heart.

Joyce said Jud was a loving father and husband, dedicated to his family and his country and he had a wonderful sense of humor that still brings a smile to the face of anyone who knew him.

From the time he was old enough to walk, Jud jumped out of the bed every morning with a smile on his face, Joyce said smiling.

“He was always a clown – with a big heart,” she said. “Everybody thinks of him as a joker. He was the funniest guy, a good Christian and devoted to his wife Jennifer and his daughters,” Joyce said.

Growing up, his best friend was his older brother, Joey, Joyce said. “Joey was always covering Jud’s back,” she recalled. “Now Jud was covering all of our backs while he was in the service.”

A roadside bomb near Baghdad, Iraq seriously injured Jud on Nov. 8 when his convoy vehicle was struck. Mount and one other in the vehicle were seriously injured, a third soldier was killed, and another escaped unharmed.

“He had shrapnel through both arms,” Joyce said. “He wasn’t hurt where he was covered by his vest. The only places there was damage were where he had no safety protection.”

His helmet and safety goggles saved him from serious injuries to his face.

“He was always in pain, but he never complained. He used his injuries to make everyone laugh. He never felt sorry for himself.”

Jud, a welder who was shuttled all over Iraq to repair vehicles, was taken to Walter Reed Military Hospital in Washington, D.C., where he underwent several surgeries, and then moved to Brooke Medical Center where he underwent more surgeries and reconstruction.

“In five months he had 13 surgeries and was lined up for three more,” Joyce said.

Jud was stationed at Fort Carson, Colo., when he left for his second tour of Iraq and recently spent three weeks at home with his wife, Jennifer and two daughters, Shelby and Sydney.

“He had a great time with his family,” she said. “They drove back to San Antonio – he was so happy to finally have his own vehicle. They went on the River Walk just a few hours before he died.” About a week before he died, Jud saw President Bush at the Center for the Intrepid, next to the hospital, Joyce said. The Center for the Intrepid is the world’s most technologically advanced rehabilitation center for amputees and burn victims. “Jud was so glad to see him – (Bush) goes there a lot,” she said.

During the funeral service, Ret. Col. Darrel Kilgore read an email he had received from Jud that filled the room with laughter and then said, “There will never be another Jud – his smile is unforgettable.”

At the request of his mother, when Jud returned from his first tour in Iraq, he brought back a footlocker filled with Iraqi war memorabilia for a display at the Williamson County Archives.

Judson Mount is survived by his wife Jennifer V. Mount, a Fairview High graduate; 13-year-old daughter Shelby & 6-year-old daughter Sydney; mother, Joyce G. Mount; father, James E. Mount (Marva); brother, Joey E. Mount; mother in-law, Wendy Verchota & father in-law, Lawrence Verchota of Fairview; sisters-in-law, Emily Verchota & Susan Warren.

Memorial services were held Monday, April 13, 2009 at Williamson Memorial Funeral Home in Franklin with Ret. Col. Darrel Kilgore officiating. Visitation was prior to the service at the funeral home.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**More Great Moments In U.S.
Military History:
“The Pregnant Wife Of Khan’s
Cousin, Who Lived Next Door, Went
Outside Her Home And Was Shot
Five Times In The Abdomen”**

“An Afghan Army Colonel Whose Wife And Children Died In A U.S.-Led Raid Demanded Action Against The Troops”

Apr 10, 2009 (AFP)

ALI DAYA, Afghanistan

An Afghan army colonel whose wife and children died in a US-led raid demanded action against the troops responsible Friday as President Hamid Karzai condemned the killings.

The operation in the eastern province of Khost around midnight Wednesday killed the wife of Afghan National Army artillery commander Awal Khan, two of his children and a brother.

The troops, who had been hunting a militant linked to radical Islamist groups, also shot a pregnant woman and killed her unborn baby, which had almost come to term, Khan and a provincial health official said. The woman survived the shooting.

“The (international) coalition has to stop this cruelty and brutal action,” a grieving Khan told AFP in the village of Ali Daya a few kilometres (miles) south of Khost.

Khan said he was flown home from his base in the eastern province of Ghazni in a military helicopter Thursday after being told of the deaths.

“I want the coalition leaders to expose those behind this and punish them,” Khan said, adding that the Afghan government should resign if it could not protect its people.

Khan lost his schoolteacher wife, a 17-year-old daughter named Nadia, a 15-year-old son, Aimal, and his brother, who worked for a government department. Another daughter was wounded.

After the shooting, the pregnant wife of Khan’s cousin, who lived next door, went outside her home and was shot five times in the abdomen, the army officer said.

She was taken to Khost provincial hospital, where the nine-month-old foetus was removed, he said.

“She survived but her child died. The child was hit by bullets,” said Khost province health director Abdul Majeed.

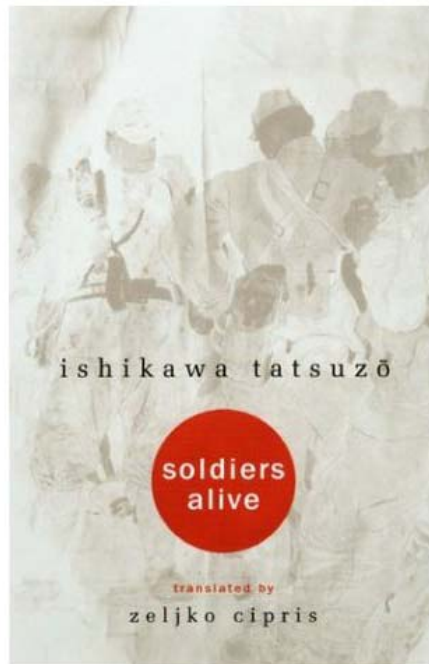
Police said troops stood on the roofs of houses surrounding that of a militant suspect, and appeared to be intruders to neighbouring residents, who came out with weapons and opened fire.

The US-led military initially said four people killed by troops were “armed militants.”

But a statement Thursday said investigations “suggest that the people killed and wounded were not enemy combatants as previously reported.”

US military spokesman Colonel Greg Julian told AFP Friday it had become clear that the four were not associated with the targeted militant, who was arrested.

Ishikawa and Kuroshima would understand: insert troops into a hell on earth and there’s no way to prevent atrocities. Yet the real fiends in their capital suites are never spattered with a single drop of blood. Solidarity, Z



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

**BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
POINTLESS WAR:**

ALL HOME NOW



Apr 3: A US soldier stands guard during a patrol on the outskirts of Naray in Nuristan province. (AFP/Liu Jin)

TROOP NEWS

Tone The Bell Easy: How Many More For Obama's Wars?

April 23, 2009 By Michael Robinson, Coordinator, Iowa Veterans Task Force; Journal Express [Excerpt]

Total deaths for current combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are 4,951 (Operation Iraqi and Operation Enduring Freedom U.S. Casualty Status, DoD, April 17, 2009).

When we examine the official count of the wounded in action, 18,442 military personnel have been wounded (Operation Iraqi and Operation Enduring Freedom U.S. Casualty Status, DoD, April 17, 2009).

NOT ANOTHER DAY

NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR NOT ANOTHER LIFE



The remains of Army Private Second Class Bryce E. Gautier, of Cypress, Calif., and Army Corporal Jason G. Pautsch, of Davenport, Iowa, are lowered to the tarmac on, April 12, 2009. Gautier, and Pautsch died with three other soldiers April 10, 2009, when their military vehicle was struck by a vehicle-borne improvised explosive device in Mosul, Iraq. (AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster)

Gates Told Tricare Uses Shitty, Uncertified Doctors: “Active-Duty Health Services Worse Than Those Given Medicaid Recipients”

April 21, 2009 By Tom Philpott, Daily Press

Defense Secretary Robert Gates' prescription for what ails military health care includes replacing aging hospitals and raising TRICARE fees for working-age retirees, which Congress has kept frozen since 1995.

“Health care is eating the (Defense) department alive,” Gates told officers attending the Air War College at Maxwell-Gunter Air Force Base in Montgomery, Ala., after a Wednesday speech there on the budget.

One question came from a lieutenant colonel in the Louisiana Air National Guard, who complained active-duty health services were “worse” than those given “Medicaid recipients.”

He told Gates, “TRICARE does not even require professional-board certification for its physicians.”

The officer asked Gates what initiatives might be in the works to make “uniformed health care providers” the “norm” again or at least to raise standards for TRICARE providers that would be deemed acceptable for civilian government employees.

Gates conceded that reports he received on TRICARE seemed to run in “parallel universes.”

In one, department health officials present him survey data showing “how well TRICARE is doing and how popular it is and how well it compares with private HMOs. ... And I leave the room feeling gratified.”

Then he gets a “very different story from every soldier, sailor, Marine and airman that I talk to” and from military spouses, Gates said.

Common complaints range from delays in getting appointments to routine bureaucratic hassles to difficulties getting referred to medical specialists.

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 Douglass, 1852

**“Hope for change doesn’t cut it when you’re still losing buddies.”
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

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

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

**“When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, “No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country.”
-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq**

Making The Children Behave

By W.D. Ehrhart, Two tours, USMC, Vietnam, Wounded In Action 1968 Hue

**Do they think of me now
in those strange Asian villages
where nothing ever seemed
quite human
but myself and my few grim friends
moving through them
hunched
in lines?**

**When they tell stories to their children
of the evil
that awaits misbehavior,
is it me they conjure?’**

April 25, 1974: Portugal Most Honorable Anniversary Soldiers Rise And Overthrow A Dictator



Socialist Worker.co.uk

Carl Bunin Peace History April 23-29

A peaceful uprising by army and civilians, known as the carnation revolution (Revolução dos Cravos), ended 48 years of fascism in Portugal.

The regime killed four before giving into the popular resistance.

25 April 2004 By Manny Thain, Socialist World.net [Excerpts]

It started at 12.25 am on Thursday 25 April 1974 when the rebel song, Grandola Vila Morena, played on the radio.

By early evening the end of dictatorship was announced.

The Movimento das Forças Armadas (MFA), radical mid-ranking officers, had executed the plan devised by Captain Otelo de Carvalho. Troops secured Lisbon and the second city, Porto. Key installations were taken, ministers arrested.

THE news of the regime's downfall spread like wildfire.

People flooded the streets.

MFA vehicles were mobbed by adoring crowds.

Thousands of school students marched, shouting "Down with fascism".

Red carnations, the symbol of the revolution, blossomed in rifle barrels and festooned the streets in this festival of freedom.

The ex-dictator, Marcello Caetano, cowered in National Guard barracks.

He was the successor to the fascist regime consolidated in the early 1930s by António Salazar. Paramilitary groups terrorised left-wing and industrial militants. Independent trade unions and the right to strike were illegal.

The secret police had a massive network of agents and informers.

Torture was systemic.

But it was the armed African liberation struggles - especially Angola, Guinea-Bissau and Mozambique - begun in the early 1960s, which drove the final nails into the coffin of the fascist regime.

Many mid-ranked officers had been influenced by the Marxism they read in counter-insurgency training.

Radicalisation continued in Africa with the brutal repression meted out to the people fighting for their freedom. A policy of fast-tracking new officers fuelled the anger.

The MFA set up a 'junta of national salvation' to rule until a provisional government was formed. Elections were promised within a year. It announced freedom of association and expression, and an amnesty for political prisoners.

Having suffered at the hands of bosses and landowners linked to the regime, workers drove them out of the factories and off the land. The editor of the daily, *Diário de Notícias*, was forced out on 7 June after print workers seized the presses, publishing a front-page article exposing his fascist connections.

Homeless people occupied empty properties. Shipyard and underground workers went on strike for a 50% pay rise. Car workers won a 40-hour week. Bakery and textile workers struck. Train and tram conductors refused to collect fares.

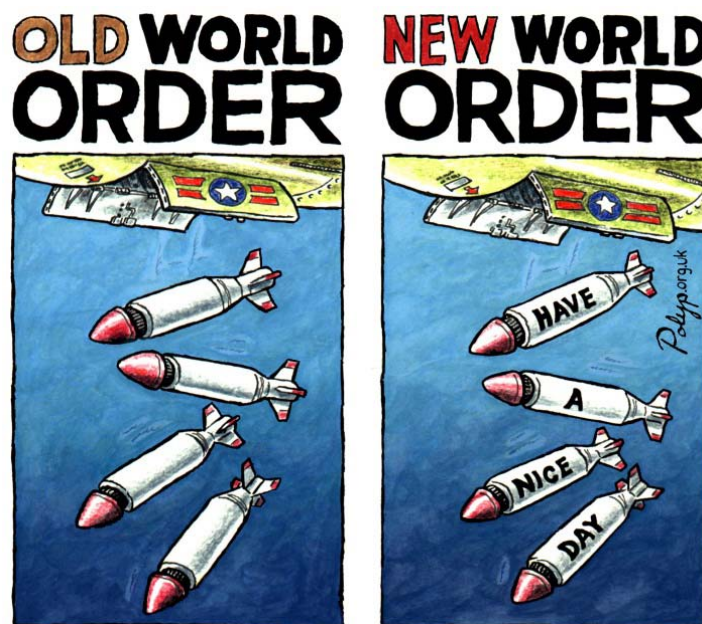
General António de Spínola was made acting president. The son of a friend of Salazar, Spínola had impeccable fascist credentials. He had, however, called for the easing of direct colonial rule, which gave him a certain amount of support.

Spínola made one more pathetic bid for power, on 11 March 1975.

But the paratroopers he mobilised mutinied.

The fact that six members of the Espírito Santo banking family were implicated in the coup fiasco fuelled further outrage.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

**Black Widow Spider Caught In Her
Own Net:
The Traitor Harman, Who Promoted
Wiretap Spying, Caught On
Wiretap Saying “This Conversation
Doesn’t Exist”**

She Was Promising An Israeli Spy To Help Americans Arrested For Spying



[mannahattamma.com]

April 23, 2009 By Tom Burghardt, Uruknet.info [Excerpts]

A major scandal involving a top Democrat, the Israeli lobby-shop AIPAC and charges that former U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales sought congressional help to suppress media reports of systematic, illegal warrantless surveillance of Americans by the National Security Agency (NSA) broke on Sunday.

Congressional Quarterly revealed that Rep. Jane Harman (D-CA) “was overheard on an NSA wiretap telling a suspected Israeli agent that she would lobby the Justice Department (to) reduce espionage-related charges against two officials of the American Israeli Public Affairs Committee, the most powerful pro-Israel organization in Washington.”

The former ranking member of the House Intelligence Committee, Harman is the co-sponsor of the shameful “Violent Radicalization and Homegrown Terrorism Prevention Act” (H.R.1955) and its mutant relative in the Senate (S.1959).

In other words, Harman’s “liberal” veneer is the perfect cover for currying favor with politically well-connected corporate grifters, major beneficiaries of the national security state’s largesse.

Harman was among the most vociferous defenders of the Bush regime’s warrantless wiretapping program.

As Salon’s Glenn Greenwald reminds us, during an appearance on “Meet the Press” with Republicans Pat Roberts and Peter Hoekstra, Harman said that “the whistleblowers who exposed the lawbreaking and perhaps even the New York Times (but not Bush officials) should be criminally investigated, saying she ‘deplored the leak,’ that ‘it is tragic

that a lot of our capability is now across the pages of the newspapers,' and that the whistleblowers were 'despicable'."

Jeff Stein reported that the southern California Democrat, in an apparent quid pro quo, was recorded as saying she would "waddle into" the AIPAC case 'if you think it'll make a difference,' according to two former senior national security officials familiar with the NSA transcript."

In exchange for Harman's help, the sources said, the suspected Israeli agent pledged to help lobby Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif., then-House minority leader, to appoint Harman chair of the Intelligence Committee after the 2006 elections, which the Democrats were heavily favored to win.

Seemingly wary of what she had just agreed to, according to an official who read the NSA transcript, Harman hung up after saying, "This conversation doesn't exist." (Jeff Stein, "Sources: Wiretap Recorded Rep. Harman Promising to Intervene for AIPAC," Congressional Quarterly, April 19, 2009)

CLASS WAR REPORTS



Enraged By Job Losses, French Auto Parts Workers Storm And Wreck Factory And Government Building:

“Officials Are Looking Increasingly Overwhelmed By Protests That Have Engulfed France”

“New Concern About Increasingly Violent French Worker Protests”

4.22.09 & 4.23.09 AP& Wall St. Journal

PARIS — An auto parts factory in northern France was closed Wednesday after employees angry over job losses ransacked offices and prompted new concern about increasingly violent French worker protests.

On Tuesday, a French court rejected a motion brought by employees of a factory run by Germany's Continental AG to block the plant's planned 2010 closure. Citing the steep drop in demand in the automobile sector, Continental announced in March plans to shutter the factory in Clairoix, north of Paris, which employs 1,120.

Workers responded to the ruling by smashing windows and destroying equipment at the factory.

Workers also stormed and wrecked a French government regional administrative office in nearby Compiègne.

They hurled floor lamps at windows and stomped on furniture as despair over the economic downturn took a violent turn.

“Unacceptable,” government officials said Wednesday of the rampage by workers at a factory north of Paris and nearby regional government offices.

Officials are looking increasingly overwhelmed by protests that have engulfed France in recent weeks as the nation faces its worst economic outlook in 30 years.

Workers have locked up their bosses. They have blocked production of Toyota Yaris cars and deliveries to key oil terminals. They've burned tires at protests and marched on the capital to ask for government help.

But on Tuesday, workers from a factory run by German auto parts maker Continental AG exploded in anger after a court north of Paris refused to forbid the company from shutting down the site next year.

They smashed windows at the factory in Clairoix and at a regional administrative office in nearby Compiègne, pulling up lamps and crushing desks and cabinets.

Budget Minister Eric Woerth called the sacking of the government regional administration “unacceptable.”

“To go ransack the state’s property when the state is the only recourse for all of these employees, it’s rather paradoxical,” he said. “This needs to stop.”

While strikes and protests are common among French workers, this kind of outburst is rare.

“In the industrial sector, labor relations have always been more conflictual than in other social segments,” said Laurent Willemez, sociologist at the University of Poitiers. And since industry is particularly hard hit by the current crisis, the conflicts are more intense than elsewhere, he said.

He joined many in saying the economic downturn has merely set alight a tinderbox of worker frustrations that had been smoldering for years.

While France’s union membership rate is low, labor unions wield significant influence on government policy and company management in certain sectors, and non-union workers often join strikes and other protests.

Continental’s case has drawn nationwide attention. Citing the steep drop in demand in the automobile sector, Continental announced in March plans to shutter the factory in Clairoix, north of Paris, which employs 1,120.

On Wednesday, factory management suspended production because of the damage wrought by protesters.

The French subsidiary of American automotive company Molex filed a lawsuit for sequestration after two bosses were held for two days by angry workers — a departure from past “bossnapping” cases, when managers and workers agreed to keep the affair in-house and avoid going to court.

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The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657.
Phone: 917.677.8057

Four Million Laid-Off Workers Lost All Health Insurance Coverage Since December 2007: 3.6 Million More Forced To Depend On Charity & Medicaid; [While Billions Pissed Away On Stupid, Futile Imperial Wars]

APRIL 23, 2009 By VANESSA FUHRMANS, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

Earnings from the nation's big health insurers show them losing members at a rapid rate, suggesting the ranks of uninsured Americans are surging during the recession.

Analysts and economists have said the number of uninsured almost certainly has risen by several million people since the U.S. Census Bureau in 2007 pegged it at 45.7 million.

For every one-percentage-point rise in the unemployment rate, the number of uninsured has likely grown by 1.1 million, according to research by the Kaiser Family Foundation.

Kaiser estimates that of the nine million people expected to have lost employer-sponsored health coverage since December 2007, about four million of them currently are uninsured.

An additional 3.6 million have likely enrolled in Medicaid or other public programs, estimates the foundation.

The latest evidence came from WellPoint Inc., the country's largest health insurer with nearly 35 million medical-plan members. Reporting a 1.3% drop in first-quarter net income Wednesday, the insurer also said it had shed nearly 500,000 net members since the end of December.

On Tuesday, UnitedHealth Group Inc., the second-largest insurer in terms of members, reported a 900,000 drop in the number of people enrolled in its commercial health plans in the first quarter, compared with the end of last year, many because of higher-than-expected layoffs at the insurer's employer clients.

"It's probably not a surprise that with all these people losing jobs, a lot will lose their health insurance," said Paul Ginsburg, president of the Center for Studying Health System Change, a Washington, D.C., health-policy research group.



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

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

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

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

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