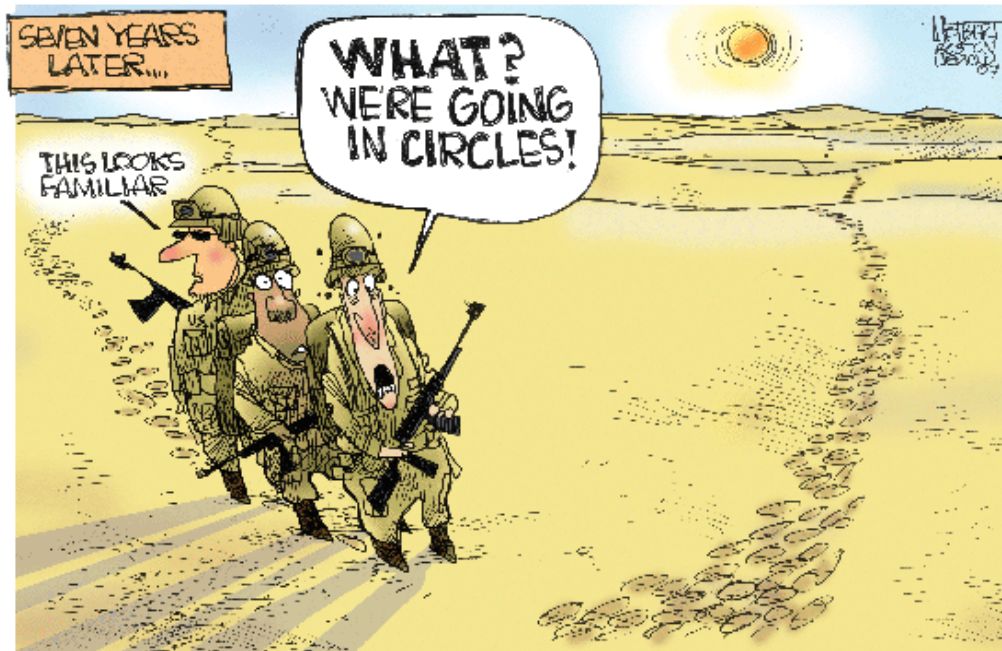


GI SPECIAL 7E17:



BACK TO AFGHANISTAN, after IRAQ, after AFGHANISTAN, after IRAQ,

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

**“Almost Every Soldier I
Know Is Disillusioned
With These Wars”
“These Wars Will Continue Until
Soldiers Refuse To Fight Them”**

“Fort Hood Is The Largest American Military Installation In The World”

“If The GI Resistance Movement Takes Off Here, It Is Just A Matter Of Time Before Other Military Communities Follow”

Please Attend The March For Peace On Monday, May 25, In Killeen

[Thanks to Ward Reilly, Veterans for Peace, who sent this in. He writes: From Victor Agosto's Facebook page. (full permission to reproduce) Peace from Ward]

By [SPC] Victor Agosto, Afghanistan War Resister

Please attend the March for Peace on Monday, May 25, in Killeen [Texas, home of Fort Hood]. Many of you have asked me, “how can I support you?” Well, this is how.

Not only will you support me, you will show your solidarity with soldiers who are considering resistance.

I guarantee that your participation in this event will have a stronger impact than participation at any anti-war rally in Austin.

You will certainly not be “preaching to the choir” here in Killeen.

I think it is safe to say that most soldiers have never even seen a protest in their entire lives.

Many soldiers think anti-war protesters are people who hate the troops and call them “baby killers.”

Let's show the troops our concern for their voices and their rights and let us come together to demonstrate peace and compassion.

These wars will continue until soldiers refuse to fight them.

Almost every soldier I know is disillusioned with these wars.

Most of them are opposed to the war in Iraq, and many are opposed to the war in Afghanistan.

Some consider resisting but do not because they are not aware of a large community ready to support them. It will only take a few bold actions to spur the GI anti-war movement.

Fort Hood is the largest American military installation in the world. If the GI resistance movement takes off here, it is just a matter of time before other military communities follow.

I have learned from personal experience, nothing is as powerful or inspirational as hearing the cries of "They're our brothers, they're our sisters, WE SUPPORT WAR RESISTERS!"

These chants are heard in the progressive communities of Austin and even in Fort Worth, though not a single soldier stationed at Fort Hood has heard it in Killeen.

Veterans, your participation is vital to the success of this event.

You know better than anyone that Killeen needs to see a big anti-war demonstration.

I hope to see you and the entire peace community there.

Power to the People,
Victor Agosto

MORE:

**“The Support I Have Received From
My Family At Under The Hood Has
Helped Me Take The Liberating Leap
From Obedient Soldier To War
Resister”**

**“I Have Spent Countless Hours
Discussing And Thinking About Ways To
End These Wars”**

[Thanks to Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

Friends and Supporters:

As you all know, Under the Hood Café does not run by itself. Now, more than ever, funds are needed to keep things moving smoothly and to encourage development.

Under the Hood provides a refuge and a voice for soldiers in need. Soldiers have access to a network of mental health providers who are Tricare approved as well as pro bono. In addition, recently Under the Hood has secured a local lawyer willing to provide free advice as well as some pro bono services.

This is only the beginning. With events, support groups, and meetings, and new soldiers arriving daily, we have the opportunity to build this community and continue giving a voice to those in need.

We cannot do this alone. Though we know that times are difficult financially for everyone, we ask that you open your hearts and your pocketbooks. If we obtain five dollars from 8400 people, we will be able to keep our doors open for another year. With an additional two dollars, we can secure the house next door and provide additional services for our soldiers and veterans. We are engaged in endless fighting and those returning home are broken. Please allow us to continue our mission in aiding the soldiers, veterans, and families who need us most. We cannot survive without your support.

The following are two testimonials written by Under the Hood patrons, both active duty soldiers, and endless supporters.

They speak for themselves:

MICHAEL KERN:

October 31st 2007 I made one of the biggest mistakes of my life. Though I knew it would change my life, I never expected it to change for the worse. After completing basic combat training I was shipped out to my new unit in the 4th Infantry Division 1st brigade combat team 66th Armor Regiment.

After a year of training and living the army life in Ft. Hood, TX, I received deployment orders to FOB Rustamiyah, just east of Baghdad, IQ.

After my arrival in Iraq, my eyes quickly opened, and I began to oppose the "mission".

While I was over there I discovered Casey Porter, a dedicated filmmaker seeking to reveal the truths of Iraq, and we became friends. I did everything I could to assist him in his work, including a video interview. My tour finally ended after months of emotional struggle and I came back to the United States empty, with nothing inside me but hopelessness and regret.

After mere days of being home and "free" I began drinking heavily to forget the destruction and death I witnessed in Iraq. My life began to slowly disintegrate, and I found myself lost. Finally, Casey called and told me to come with him to Under the Hood Café. Though intoxicated at the time, I made my way down and immediately felt at home. Now two months later I feel my life is getting back on track and I have goals. I

have completely quit drinking, and have remained sober for almost two months. I no longer rely on alcohol to suppress my feelings. I feel that I am part of a support group who I can contact at any time, day or night. Now I can safely say that I feel better about myself, and I feel if it wasn't for the coffee shop and the people I have met there, I feel I wouldn't be here today. Under The Hood has saved my life and it needs to stay open for more people like me.

VICTOR AGOSTO:

I lived a miserable existence since I turned against the war in Iraq in 2007. I have frequented Under the Hood Café since its grand opening in March of 2009. The café has become my refuge from a closed-minded and dehumanizing military culture. I have seen it bring joy to every soldier and civilian that has become a regular here. The civilian staff is dedicated to helping soldiers deal with personal and legal issues.

I have attained a sense of purpose that I have never had in my life.

I am now committed to the success of both Under the Hood and the anti-war movement.

I have spent countless hours discussing and thinking about ways to end these wars. The support I have received from my family at Under the Hood has helped me take the liberating leap from obedient soldier to war resister. I cannot remember the last time I was this happy. Under the Hood has changed my life forever.

- SPC Victor Agosto,
Afghanistan War Resister

**To give much needed donation you can go to our website
www.underthehoodcafe.org.**

We are non-profit and have our 501(c)(3) statue so all donations are tax deductible. We are asking everyone for help. Please send this to as many friends, family and supports as you can.

Thank you all for your support.

Cynthia Thomas
FORT HOOD SUPPORT NETWORK
IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR SUPPORTER

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to:

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Prayers For A Staten Island Soldier “The Armed Services’ First Quadruple Amputee To Survive”



In this 1999 photo Brendan Marrocco holds the arrow with which he scored his second consecutive bull's-eye, with the second shaft splitting the first in half. Advance file photo

[Thanks to Elaine Brower, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

May 13, 2009 Contributed by Frank Donnelly, Staten Island Advance

Huguenot resident Brendan Marrocco wanted to do his part for his country when he joined the U.S. Army more than a year ago.

But the 22-year-old former Boy Scout, who once, in Robin Hood-like fashion, split an arrow he had shot into a bull's-eye with a second arrow, is now paying a tremendous price for helping keep America safe.

Early on Easter Sunday, Marrocco was severely injured when his convoy was blasted in Iraq.

The Staten Island Academy graduate survived the explosion but each of his badly damaged limbs required amputation, according to a posting in a Web log, "Burks Law." He also suffered severe burns and facial injuries.

With his family at his side, Marrocco is back in the States, at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

"He was very anxious to be part of the military," said Monsignor Jeffrey Conway, pastor of Our Lady Star of the Sea R.C. Church, Huguenot, where Marrocco is a parishioner. "He had volunteered and wanted to do whatever was necessary."

Monsignor Conway said he has visited Marrocco twice in the hospital, but at the behest of his family, declined to comment on the soldier's condition.

"The only thing they want to get out is they appreciate the support and prayers for him," the monsignor said.

Marrocco's mother, Michelle Marrocco, declined requests to be interviewed for this story.

However, in a posting two weeks ago on "Burks Law," she said that her son had then undergone nine operations and was "doing well."

"He is in a lot of pain, but alert and responsive," Ms. Marrocco, a nurse, wrote to Leeann Tweeden of NBC Sports, who met the Marrocco family last month in a U.S. military hospital in Germany while on her way back from a humanitarian mission in Iraq.

Ms. Marrocco said her son's legs were each removed above the knee, while his left arm was amputated below the elbow and the right arm above the elbow.

She said she was told he was the armed services' first quadruple amputee to survive.

He also was badly burned, lost teeth and suffered injuries of his left eye.

Touched by his plight, students at Our Lady Star of the Sea School have penned hundreds of letters of encouragement to Marrocco. Parishioners also have been asked to show their support by writing to Marrocco, said Monsignor Conway.

Marrocco had attended mass in March while home on leave, the monsignor said. He was injured about a month later.

Specifics on the April 12 attack were not available today. An Army spokeswoman said federal privacy laws regarding patient information prohibited her from releasing any details.

According to Advance records, Marrocco was a Boy Scout with Troop 5. Monsignor Conway said he earned the rank of Life Scout, the second-highest attainable by a Boy Scout.

In August 1999, Marrocco, then 13, earned a merit badge with a startling feat at a Scouting jamboree upstate. Making like Robin Hood, the teen hit two bull's-eyes, back-to-back, with the second arrow splitting the first in half.

Tom Delese, his Scoutmaster, called it a "one-in-a-million shot."

"It was a great feeling, and I was really happy when it happened," the elated teen told the Advance afterward.

Marrocco graduated in 2004 from Staten Island Academy, where he played volleyball and soccer, Advance records show. A call to the school today was not returned.

About five or six years ago, Marrocco spent the summer doing maintenance work at the parish school, said Monsignor Conway.

"He was a good worker, a very friendly kid," he said.

Monsignor Conway said he wasn't sure whether Marrocco planned to make a career out of the military.

But his family obviously was moved that he chose to serve his country.

"Proud parent of a soldier," proclaimed a bumper sticker on an SUV outside a Great Kills home where neighbors said Marrocco's father lives.

Outside Marrocco's Huguenot home earlier today, the Stars and Stripes and an large Army flag fluttered in the breeze.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two U.S. Soldiers From 10th Mountain Killed In Chak

May 18, 2009 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 343-09

The Department of Defense announced today the death of two soldiers who were supporting Operation Enduring Freedom. They died May 15 at Forward Operating Base Shank, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when their patrol was attacked by enemy forces using small-arms fire in Chak, Afghanistan.

The soldiers were assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 87th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 10th Mountain Division (Light Infantry), Fort Drum, N.Y.

Killed were:

Staff Sgt. Esau I. De la Pena-Hernandez, 25, of La Puente, Calif.

Sgt. Carlie M. Lee, III, 23, of Birmingham, Ala.

Resistance Action

17 May 2009 By VOA News & 18 May 2009 Radio Netherlands & PakTribune & (AP)

The head of the provincial council in the southern Afghan province of Kandahar, Ahmad Wali Karzai, survived an assassination attempt early today. The convoy of the younger brother of Afghan President Hamid Karzai was sprayed with rocket and machine-gun fire. The president's brother escaped unharmed, but his bodyguard was killed. He says the Taliban were responsible for the attack.

Afghan authorities say militants attacked a police post and killed six officers in southern Helmand province Sunday.

The Afghan Defense Ministry also says a roadside bomb in neighboring Zabul province killed an Afghan army soldier and wounded three others Sunday.

The governor of southwestern Nimroz province said Taliban fighters attacked a police checkpoint in Khash Rod district on Sunday, and the resulting clash killed five police.

Fighting in southern Afghanistan killed six Afghan police yesterday, and a roadside bomb killed an Afghan soldier in the same region, the government said.

The clash in Helmand province started when insurgents attacked a police checkpoint in Nahri Saraj district in the early morning, the Interior Ministry said. Police arrested one of the attackers and sent search teams out to chase others, the ministry said. Meanwhile, a roadside bomb in Zabul province killed one Afghan army soldier and wounded three others, the Defense Ministry said.

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

**“The Official Line From Top
Commanders Is That They Now
Have All The Troops They
Need”**

“The Soldiers Of 6/4 Squadron Tell A Different Story”

“The New Troops Are Just ‘A Drop Of Water’ In The Sea, Said One Soldier”

“A Small Contingent Expects To Be Under Constant Attack”

May 17, 2009 By Laurent Hamida, Reuters

KUNAR VALLEY, Afghanistan (Reuters) - Lieutenant Joshua Rodriguez, a U.S. platoon commander guarding the Afghan-Pakistan frontier, reckons he is lucky to be alive.

Two weeks after he set up an outpost with 20 Afghan soldiers and seven Americans overlooking a key Taliban smuggling route, some 80 insurgents attacked them hard at daybreak.

"We were very close, very close," he said, days after the fight, holding his fingers a fraction of an inch apart.

As the Taliban threatened to overrun the base, his sniper put down his long-range rifle and grabbed a shotgun. Then he dropped the shotgun and picked up hand grenades. The enemy had come within throwing distance of the outpost's razor wire.

"They were trying to get in from everywhere. It was a miracle," Rodriguez said.

Yet although they managed to fend off the fighters and prevent the outpost from being overrun that day, they abandoned it a few days later, leaving the cross-border smuggling route through the vast Suna Valley unguarded.

A few days earlier, NATO troops at another outpost called Barialai were less lucky. The Taliban overran the position, killing three Americans, two Latvians and five Afghan soldiers.

U.S. commanders are rushing thousands of reinforcements to the south of Afghanistan to take on the Taliban in what Washington considers a make-or-break year for a war it now views as its main security priority.

Here in the east of the country, the official line from top commanders is that they now have all the troops they need.

But down on the ground, in the high mountain passes on the east bank of the Kunar river which guerrillas have been using to smuggle fighters and weapons in from Pakistan for decades, the soldiers of 6/4 squadron tell a different story.

The fighting is hard and constant, and they do not have enough men to stop the Taliban infiltrating across the border.

Before it was overrun, the Barialai post overlooked two valleys, Hlegal and Daring, that are used as smuggling routes.

The U.S. troops say they know the names of insurgent commanders who are living in the two valleys, but do not have enough forces to clear them.

In January, U.S. commanders sent an extra 700 troops to the area south of 6/4 squadron's territory.

The new troops are just "a drop of water" in the sea, said one soldier who asked not to be identified while discussing the shortage of manpower.

Officially, 6/4 squadron controls a stretch of border through two provinces, Kunar and Nuristan. But they have not had enough manpower to visit Nuristan for months. Mountain passes there are guarded by the Afghan police.

"They called us two times ... a few months ago when they were attacked by insurgents. We sent a combat assault team and we repelled the attack. Since then they haven't called us. Nobody knows what is happening up there," the soldier added.

In Kunar, helicopters race to the remote outposts throughout the night, bringing the isolated troops food, water and ammunition. Artillery back at their base booms constantly, lighting up the valley with explosions and flares.

Captain Jay Bessey, commander of the squadron's Charlie troop is overseeing the construction of a new fortified combat outpost where a small contingent expects to be under constant attack.

Drawing fire was part of the reason for being here.

"When the enemy is focused on attacking us here he is not focused on attacking the road crew who is building the road up. He is not attacking the guys that are working on the schools over in the neighboring villages," he said.

"You know, this is part of the job."

“Members Of A Senior Afghan Delegation From Kabul Are Giving Money To Family Members Of The 140 Victims”

“Payment Does Little To Ease The Anger Survivors Feel Toward The Americans”

May 18, 2009 by Soraya Sarhaddi Nelson, NPR [Excerpts]

American and Afghan officials will probably never agree on what happened in a remote village in western Afghanistan earlier this month, when up to 140 civilians were killed by what many in that country say were U.S. airstrikes.

The fierce battle ended that night with airstrikes on a village called Garani.

The Afghan government concluded 140 were killed, most of them children. It says more than two dozen were injured.

In a burn center in the western city of Herat, five female villagers are recovering from serious burns to their faces and limbs that they and their families say were caused by those bombs.

All but one of the patients are children, including Fereshte, who is 5 years old.

She struggles to get comfortable inside her thick bandages, while French nurse Marie-Jose Brunel tries to comfort her.

Her 13-year-old brother, Naeem, watches nearby. He and Fereshte lost their mother. His other two sisters, ages 7 and 12, were also badly burned.

The teen said he and other villagers heard a drone fly overhead. He said everyone scattered.

Fifteen minutes later, Naeem said, another plane came and dropped the bomb that destroyed the compound his mother and sisters were hiding in.

"The Taliban had already left," he said. "They just passed through and went to the river behind our village."

Back in Farah province, members of a senior Afghan delegation from Kabul are giving money to family members of the 140 victims.

Each gets the equivalent of \$2,000, a small fortune by Afghan standards.

But payment does little to ease the anger survivors feel toward the Americans, including Mohedin, a 55-year-old farmer who, like most Afghans, has no last name.

"The Americans can see something as small as a cell phone from far away," he said, "so how can they with their sophisticated equipment not distinguish between women and children and Taliban fighters?"

**“Unable To Pacify Afghanistan’s
Pashtun Tribes (A.K.A. Taliban),
Washington Has Begun Tearing
Pakistan Apart In An Effort To End
Pashtun Resistance In Both
Nations”**

**“Patriotic Pakistani Soldiers May
Rebel And Shoot The Corrupt
Generals And Politicians On
Washington’s Payroll”**

**“Alarms About Pakistan’s Nukes Come
From The Same Fabricators With Hidden
Agendas Who Brought Us Saddam
Hussein’s Bogus Weapons”**

Now, Washington’s ham-handed policies and last week’s Swat atrocity threaten to ignite Pakistan’s second worst nightmare after invasion by India: That its 26 million Pashtun will secede and join Afghanistan’s Pashtun to form an independent Pashtun state, Pashtunistan.

17th May 2009 By ERIC MARGOLIS, Winnipeg Sun [Excerpts]

PARIS -- Pakistan finally bowed to Washington’s angry demands last week by unleashing its military against rebellious Pashtun tribesmen of North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) -- collectively mislabelled "Taliban" in the West.

The Obama administration had threatened to stop \$2 billion US annual cash payments to bankrupt Pakistan’s political and military leadership and block \$6.5 billion future aid, unless Islamabad sent its soldiers into Pakistan’s turbulent NWFP along the Afghan frontier.

The result was a bloodbath:

Some 1,000 "terrorists" killed (read: mostly civilians) and 1.2 million people -- most of Swat's population -- made refugees.

Pakistan's U.S.-rented armed forces have scored a brilliant victory against their own people. Too bad they don't do as well in wars against India. Blasting civilians, however, is much safer and more profitable.

Unable to pacify Afghanistan's Pashtun tribes (a.k.a. Taliban), a deeply frustrated Washington has begun tearing Pakistan apart in an effort to end Pashtun resistance in both nations.

CIA drone aircraft have so far killed over 700 Pakistani Pashtun. Only 6% were militants, according to Pakistan's media, the rest civilians.

Pashtun, also improperly called Pathan, are the world's largest tribal people.

Fifteen million live in Afghanistan, forming half its population.

Twenty-six million live right across the border in Pakistan.

Britain's imperialists divided Pashtun by an artificial border, the Durand Line (today's Afghan-Pakistan border). Pashtun reject it.

Many Pashtun tribes agreed to join Pakistan in 1947, provided much of their homeland be autonomous and free of government troops.

Pashtun Swat only joined Pakistan in 1969.

As Pakistan's Pashtun increasingly aided Pashtun resistance in Afghanistan, U.S. drones began attacking them.

Washington forced Islamabad to violate its own constitution by sending troops into Pashtun lands.

The result was the current explosion of Pashtun anger.

I have been to war with the Pashtun and have seen their legendary courage, strong sense of honour and determination.

They are also hugely quarrelsome, feuding and prickly.

One quickly learns never to threaten a Pashtun or give him ultimatums.

These are the mountain warriors who defied the U.S. by refusing to hand over Osama bin Laden because he was a hero of the anti-Soviet war and their guest.

The ancient code of "Pashtunwali" still guides them: Do not attack Pashtun, do not cheat them, do not cause them dishonour. To Pashtun, revenge is sacred.

Now, Washington's ham-handed policies and last week's Swat atrocity threaten to ignite Pakistan's second worst nightmare after invasion by India: That its 26

million Pashtun will secede and join Afghanistan's Pashtun to form an independent Pashtun state, Pashtunistan.

The Pashtun of NWFP have no intention or capability of moving into Pakistan's other provinces, Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan. They just want to be left alone.

Alarms of a "Taliban takeover of Pakistan" are pure propaganda.

Lowland Pakistanis repeatedly have rejected militant Islamic parties. Many have little love for Pashtun, whom they regard as mountain wild men best avoided.

Nor are Pakistan's well-guarded nukes a danger -- at least not yet.

Alarms about Pakistan's nukes come from the same fabricators with hidden agendas who brought us Saddam Hussein's bogus weapons.

The real danger is in the U.S. acting like an enraged mastodon, trampling Pakistan under foot, and forcing Islamabad's military to make war on its own people. Pakistan could end up like U.S.-occupied Iraq, split into three parts and helpless.

If this continues, at some point patriotic Pakistani soldiers may rebel and shoot the corrupt generals and politicians on Washington's payroll.

Equally ominous, a poor people's uprising spreading across Pakistan -- also mislabelled "Taliban" -- threatens a radical national rebellion reminiscent of India's Naxalite rebels.

As in Iraq, profound ignorance and gung ho military arrogance drive U.S. Afghan policy.

Obama's people have no understanding what they are getting into in "AfPak."

I can tell them: An unholy mess we will long regret.

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

***Good News For The Afghan
Resistance!!***

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



A foreign occupation armed forces member from the U.S. searches the clothing of an Afghan citizen after others ordered him at gunpoint to publicly humiliate himself by undressing in the Golestan district of Farah province May 8, 2009. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 50,000 Afghan troops over here to the USA.

[They can make American citizens take their clothes off at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Afghans are sure a bunch of backward primitives.

[They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country.

[What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by Barrack Obama.

[Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

WELCOME TO VIETNAMISTAN: HAVE A NICE DAY



U.S. soldiers of the 26th Infantry patrol near the U.S. base Camp Blessing in Afghanistan's Kunar Province, May 4, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW 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/)**

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Insurgents Capture Key Somali Town; Fighting Today Nears Presidential Palace



A militiaman from the Hizbul Islam clashes with Somali government troops in the vicinity of the presidential palace in Mogadishu on May 14, 2009.

Islamist insurgents captured the key Somali town of Jowhar on May 17 after days of battling to topple the country's U.S.-allied government, dealing a heavy blow to President Sharif Sheikh Ahmed. (AFP/File/Mohamed Dahir)

TROOP NEWS

“The Breakdown In Discipline Is One Of The More Glaring Examples Of Falling Morale”

5.18.09 By Gina Cavallaro, Army Times [Excerpts]

A record number of suicides has prompted Army Vice Chief of Staff Gen. Peter Chiarelli to launch a massive house-cleaning plan with orders to garrison, installation and medical commanders to revive lapsed health and welfare programs, and restore discipline in the barracks. Suicide rates among soldiers have nearly doubled in the last four years,

reaching a record high last year. The current rate of suicides suggests that 2009 may exceed numbers for 2008.

Soldiers living in barracks can expect to feel the impact in coming months with a return to inspections, when commanders feel it necessary, to find troubled soldiers and get them the help they need and crack down on those whose illicit behavior, such as drug use or having firearms in their rooms, has gone unchecked.

Soldiers increasingly are “popping hot” on urine analysis tests for substances that include LSD, cocaine, marijuana, methamphetamines, heroin and illegally used prescription drugs, according to Brig. Gen. Colleen McGuire, director of the Suicide Prevention Task Force, who described that as “an eye opener.”

Almost as unexpected as the rise in drug and alcohol abuse was that most of those soldiers haven’t been referred for treatment or evaluation, McGuire said. Many would have been chaptered out if regulations had been followed, she said.

The breakdown in discipline is one of the more glaring examples of falling morale and points to an environment in which tired leaders have had their focus on war for almost eight years, she said.

The Army is “tired and under immense stress as the result of a protracted conflict” and associated deployments, Chiarelli said in a memo about the campaign.

“Under these strains, current efforts are not enough.” Soldiers and families, he said, “need immediate help” to cope and build the resilience it takes to overcome stress, medical and behavior issues and fatigue.

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

Scapegoat



The Wall in Washington, D.C. 1986 by Mike Hastie

From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: May 17, 2009
Subject: Scapegoat

Scapegoat

**You always scapegoat the angry veteran,
because the truth can be so toxic.
So, when the angry vet says the U.S. Government
is a monster, that has to be taken with a grain of
salt by the general public.
Right in the middle of the wound...**

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
May 17, 2009**

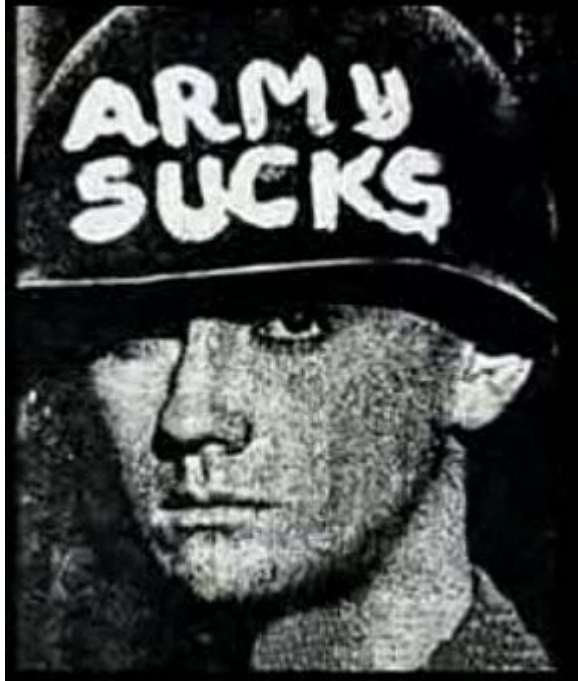
Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS?



Senior Chief Petty Officer Shannon Dittlinger, center, gets a hug from her daughter Halie Dittlinger, left, while hugging another daughter Victoria Dittlinger before she is deployed with the 2nd Marine Expeditionary Brigade to Afghanistan from Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune at Camp Lejeune, N.C., April 30, 2009. The brigade will conduct counter-insurgency operations in partnership with Afghan National Security Forces. (AP Photo/Jim R. Bounds)

Vietnam Days



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Project, who sent this in.]
[From: http://tomheller.de/war_made_easy.html]

RIP The Post 9-11 Peace Movement

Spring 2009 Quaker House Newsletter

This spring there were not one but two major national antiwar marches?

Did you notice?

Me neither.

Actually, I did, because keeping track is part of the job.

But it wasn't easy.

Turnout for the rallies organized by the once-dominant national umbrella groups (United for Peace & Justice and the ANSWER Coalition) was negligible, and media coverage so minimal that it took much searching to find any traces of it.

These two groups are pretty much out of gas; I wouldn't be surprised if they disappeared. Their "movement" has stalled.

As recently as January 2007, they were useful vehicles for the many who felt a need for large public opportunities to protest the Iraq war, including me. I'm grateful for that

But times change. After the huge shifts of opinion that shaped the 2008 election and its aftermath, their style and rhetoric just don't work anymore

I've seen such changes before; they remind me of a hand of cards that's been played out – it's now time to reshuffle the deck.

What the new hand" will look like I won't try to predict. Certainly the need for organized peace action continues: wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, military budgets still growing, the torture mess to clean up, and more. There's plenty to do.

In such times of transition, though, what stands out for me is the presence of those groups and projects which are still there after the big coalitions dissipate, as they usually do.

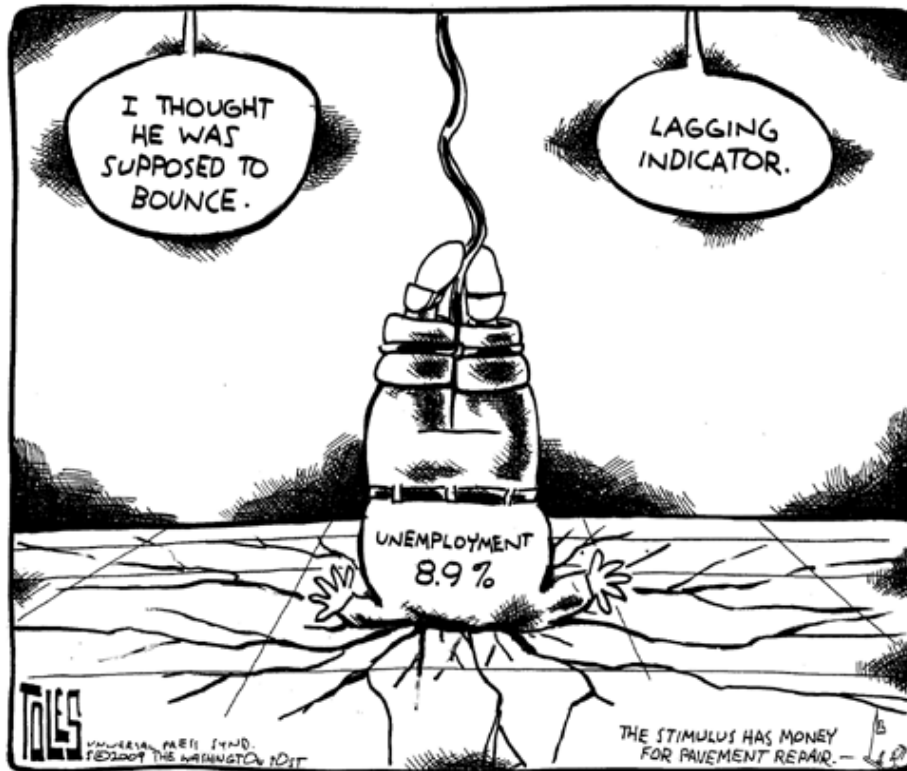
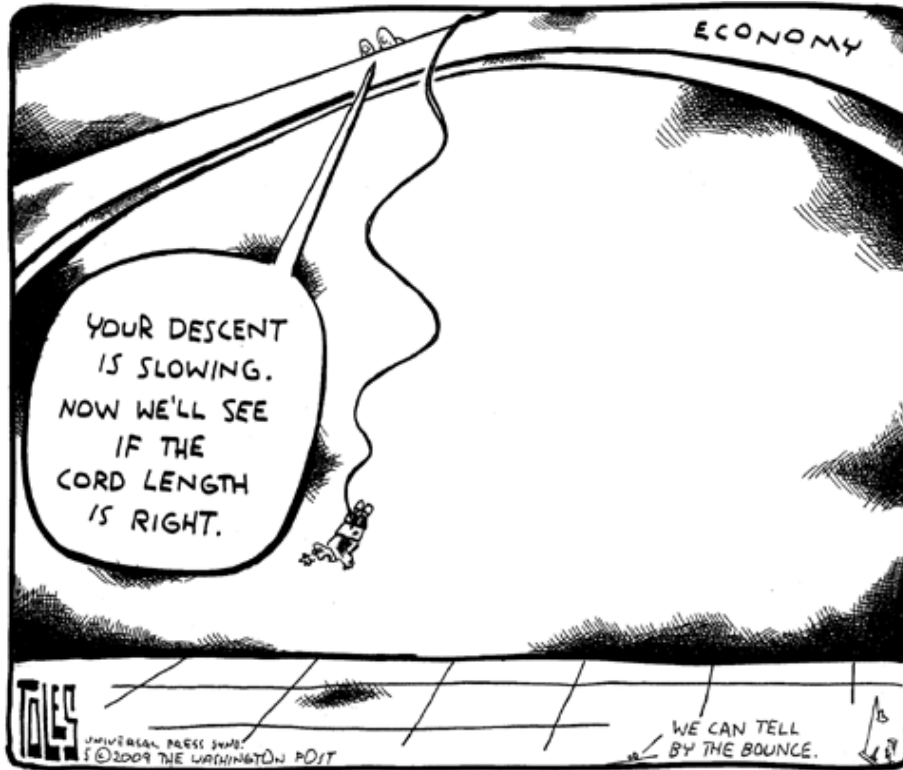
Quaker House is one of those. Times are definitely changing. We're adapting too. But we're not going anywhere.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS

MATCHED PAIR:



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

Luxembourg: Laid-Off Steel Workers Storm Arcelormittal Meeting



ArcelorMittal workers attack the company's headquarters using a steel barricade.
Photograph: Geert Vanden Wijngaert/AP

13 May 2009 The Guardian

Angry steel workers attacked the Luxembourg headquarters of ArcelorMittal, the world's biggest steelmaker, during the company's annual shareholders' meeting yesterday, setting off smoke bombs and breaking through the front door in protest at temporary layoffs.

Buses had brought 1,000 workers from plants in northern France and Charleroi and Liège in southern Belgium.

Some hurled cobblestones and steel fencing, smashing windows and tearing off a steel moulding from the ornate 1920s exterior as riot police lined up to protect the head office.

ArcelorMittal has halved production and is offering voluntary redundancy to 9,000 of its 315,000 staff around the world.

ArcelorMittal's chief executive, Lakshmi Mittal, said the cuts were a "temporary suspension of production in view of the market conditions".



Workers attack the company's headquarters with flares. Photograph: Geert Vanden Wijngaert/AP

Poland: “Thousands Of Workers Bricked Up The Entrance To The Company’s Headquarters, Protesting Wage Cuts”

May 14, 2009 Naomi Klein, Avi Lewis, Huffington Post [Excerpts]

A comedy hit in France this spring was a movie called "Louise-Michel," in which a group of women workers hires a hitman to kill their boss after he shuts down their factory with no warning.

A French union official said in March, "those who sow misery reap fury. The violence is done by those who cut jobs, not by those who try to defend them."

Also this week, in Southern Poland, at the largest coal coking producer in Europe, thousands of workers bricked up the entrance to the company's headquarters, protesting wage cuts.



**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!**

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