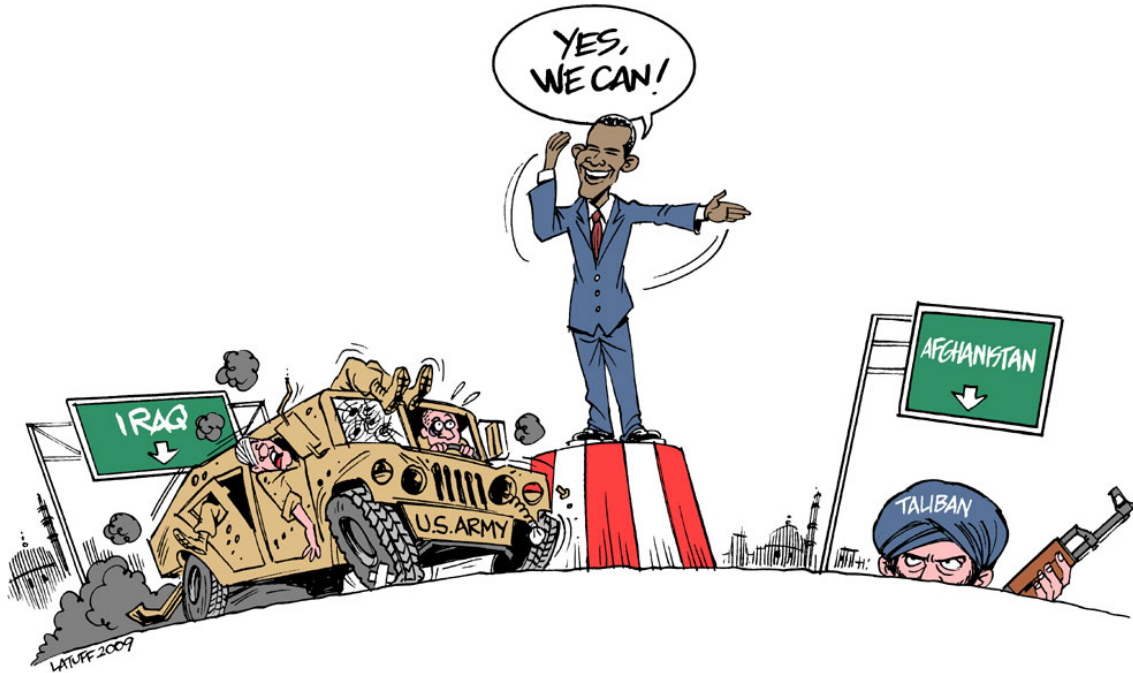


GI SPECIAL 7E9:



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

A Courageous Soldier Faces Prison For Principles; Combat Veteran Says “There Is No Way I Will Deploy To Afghanistan” “The Occupation Is Immoral And Unjust”

“It Does Not Make The American People Any Safer” “It Has The Opposite Effect”



Victor Agosto with fan club at opening of Under the Hood Cafe in Killeen, Texas, on March 1, 2009. Photo by Carlos Lowry, The Rag Blog.

To Victor Agosto, Ft. Hood, Texas: ‘You will deploy in support of OEF on or about [XXXXX] with 57th ESB. This is a direct order from your Company Commander CPT Michael J. Pederson.’

07 May 2009 By Alice Embree, The Rag Blog

In a photo taken at Under the Hood Café in Killeen, Texas, Victor Agosto stands soldier tall, flanked by two older women peace activists from Fort Worth. Victor doesn’t talk a lot, but when he does he reveals a resolve and intelligence that seems far older than his 23 years.

Victor has served three years and nine months in the U.S. Army, including one tour in Iraq.

His Estimated Termination of Service (ETS) date was until very recently August 3, 2009. With his impeccable record and accrued leave, he was slated for release at the end of June.

That date slipped away, apparent victim to the Stop Loss clause that renders the phrase “voluntary service” meaningless.

The Army has told Specialist (SPC) Victor Agosto that he will be deployed to Afghanistan.

He has told the Army he won't go.

Victor's Facebook page posts the specifics.

**His Counseling Form dated May 1st states the Army's position:
"You will deploy in support of OEF on or about [XXXXX] with 57th ESB. This is a direct order from your Company Commander CPT Michael J. Pederson."**

Victor's Session Closing statement is succinct:

"There is no way I will deploy to Afghanistan. The occupation is immoral and unjust. It does not make the American people any safer. It has the opposite effect."

Victor has been something of a fixture at Under the Hood. In the small house turned gathering spot, a free speech zone has been created for GIs, military families and friends. Coffee, snacks and GI Rights literature is available.

A large world map featuring U.S. interventions takes up one wall. The first interventions posted were Iraq and Afghanistan. Gradually, more countries and dates have been added: Chile, 1973, the CIA-backed military coup; Guatemala, 1954, the Marine invasion; Iran, 1953, the CIA-backed overthrow of the democratic government.

Under the Hood is a place where GIs can talk, relax, and think. It is the thinking that has brought Victor to his decision.

In his words, "The supportive 'family' that I have found at Under the Hood helped me muster up the courage to resist."

(Under the Hood Café is a project of the Fort Hood Support Network. Donations can be made at underthehoodcafe.org.: Rag Blog contributor Alice Embree is a founder of Austin's original underground paper The Rag and serves on the Board of the Fort Hood Support Network.)



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

U.S. Soldier Kills 5 U.S. Troops In Baghdad; Wounds Three More

[Thanks to Carl Foster, Military Project, who sent this in.]

May 11, 2009 CBC News & By TIMOTHY WILLIAMS, The New York Times Company & BBC & By Ernesto Londoño, Washington Post Foreign Service

A U.S. soldier killed five other service members Monday at an American base in Baghdad, the military has confirmed.

"The shooter is a U.S. soldier and he is in custody," Marine Corps Lt. Tom Garnett, a U.S. military spokesman in Iraq, told Reuters.

"The only thing we know at this time is five coalition force members were killed in the shooting," Maj. Jose Lopez, the senior press officer with Multi-National Forces Baghdad, told CNN.

A Defense Department official in Washington said three people were wounded, but he did not know whether they were military or civilians.

The shooting occurred about 2 p.m. at Camp Liberty near Baghdad International Airport. NBC News reported that the shooter was described as a "stressed out" soldier.

CNN, citing unnamed officials, said that the attack had taken place at a clinic for soldiers suffering from war stress.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the incident shook up soldiers, many of whom are in their third and even fourth tours. Some broke down in tears, he said.

Liberty is one of three U.S. military bases adjacent to Baghdad International Airport.

The BBC's Natalia Antelava, in Baghdad, says troops at Camp Liberty had been enjoying a much more relaxed atmosphere in recent months.

Basra Province IED Kills U.S. Soldier

May 11 By Ernesto Londoño, Washington Post Foreign Service

The military said an American soldier was killed by a roadside bomb in southern Iraq. The attack occurred Sunday at 2 p.m. in Basra province. U.S. soldiers recently deployed additional troops to the province to replace British troops, who formally ended their mission there last month.

Resistance Action

May 9 (Reuters) & AFP & May 10 (Reuters) & May 11, 2009 The Sunday Times & Reuters

ONE of Baghdad's most senior police chiefs has been assassinated in a drive-by shooting in Baghdad, a police official says. Partisans shot dead the head of police operations, Abdul Hussein Mohsen al-Kadhemi, as he was driving in a central Baghdad district today, the official said.

Insurgents shot dead an off-duty policeman and wounded three civilians at a market in central Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents shot dead an off-duty high-ranking police officer in a shop in the town of Zubair, about 470 km (290 miles) southeast of Baghdad, police said.

An Iraqi police general was assassinated on the street near the oil hub of Basra on Saturday, police said. A gunman shot dead Hakeem Jassim as he stood in front of his son's shop in the district of Zubair, south of the city centre, a police official told AFP

A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol wounded one policeman in northern Mosul, police said.

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!</p>
--

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**“When ANA Troops Are Sent On Patrol Inside Taliban Areas, They Pay The Taliban To Avoid Being Killed”
“The Price Is Arms, Ammunition Or Rockets, Which Is Handed Over And Then Reported As Having Been Lost”**

[Thanks to Carl Foster, Military Project & Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

May 5, 2009 By Syed Saleem Shahzad, Asia Times Online [Excerpts]

There is an arrangement between the Taliban and ANA [Afghan National Army] all over the south of Afghanistan, especially in Khost, Paktia, Paktika, Helmand and Ghazni provinces.

Under this, when ANA troops are sent on patrol inside Taliban areas, they pay the Taliban to avoid being killed.

The price is arms, ammunition or rockets, which is handed over and then reported as having been lost during an encounter with the Taliban.

In turn, when ANA arrests any Taliban fighters, they demand cash money for their release.

If the fighters are Pakistani or non-Afghan, ANA takes a little longer to negotiate a price, but if the fighters are Afghans, ANA personnel will not take unnecessary risks.

Either they strike a deal then and there and release the Taliban fighters, or within a few days they hand them over to NATO.

“Essentially, It Was The Appropriation Of Good Old Class Struggle That Led To The Taliban Getting The Upper Hand”

“Welcome To Yet One More Chapter Of The Indeed Long Pentagon War Against The World’s Poorest”

“Any Form Of Resistance To Foreign Interference Or Predator Hell From Above Bombing Is Inevitably Branded ‘Taliban’”

“Expect Any Pashtun Opium Farmer Or Peasant Who Brandishes His Ax, Dagger, Matchlock Or Rusty Lee-Enfield Rifle At The Ultra-High Tech Incoming US Troops To Be Branded A ‘Terrorist’”

[Thanks to Carl Foster, Military Project & Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

The wily Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM - Movement for the Enforcement of Islamic Law), led by Sufi Muhammad, managed to regiment Swat valley landless peasants to fight for their rights and “economic redistribution” against the usual wealthy, greedy, feudal landlords who happened to double as local politicians and government officials.

May 8, 2009 By Pepe Escobar; Asia Times [Excerpts]

The “lasting commitment” Washington war-time summit/photo-op between United States President Barack Obama and the AfPak twins, “Af” President Hamid Karzai and “Pak” President Asif Ali Zardari was far from being an urgent meeting to discuss ways to prevent the end of civilization as we know it.

It has been all about the meticulous rebranding of the Pentagon’s “Long War”.

In yet another deployment of his impeccable democratic credentials, Karzai has just picked as one of his vice presidential running mates none other than former Jamiat-e-Islami top commander and former first vice president Mohammad Fahim, a suspected

drug warlord and armed militia-friendly veteran whom Human Rights Watch deplores as a systematic human-rights abuser.

Faheem is Tajik; Karzai is Pashtun (from a minor tribe). Karzai badly needs the Tajiks to win a second presidential term in August.

By now it's clear that the upcoming, Pentagon-enabled, summer surge in the "Af" section of Obama's war in AfPak will be deployed essentially as Obama's new opium war.

In a spicy historic reversal, the British Empire (which practically annexed Afghanistan) wanted the Chinese to be hooked on its opium, while now the American empire wants Afghans to stop cultivating it.

The strategy boils down to devastating the Pashtun-cultivated poppy fields in southern Helmand province - the opium capital of the world. In practice, this will be yet another indiscriminate war against Pashtun peasants, who have been cultivating poppies for centuries.

Needless to say, thousands will migrate to the anti-occupation rainbow coalition/motley crew branded as "Taliban".

Destroying the only source of income for scores of poor Afghans means, in Pentagon spin, "to cut off the Taliban's main source of money", which also happens to be the "main source of money" for a collection of wily, US-friendly warlords who will not resign themselves to being left blowing in the wind.

Thus, expect any Pashtun opium farmer or peasant who brandishes his ax, dagger, matchlock or rusty Lee-Enfield rifle at the ultra-high tech incoming US troops to be branded a "terrorist".

Welcome to yet one more chapter of the indeed long Pentagon war against the world's poorest.

Pakistani "sovereignty" is a joke; Pakistan is now openly being run from Washington.

"We want to respect their sovereignty" does not mean "we" actually will.

In this complex neo-colonial scenario Pakistan's "Talibanization" - the current craze in Washington - looks and feels more like a diversionary scare tactic.

On the same topic, a report on the Pakistani daily Dawn about the specter of Talibanization of Karachi shows it has more to do with ethnic turbulence between Pashtuns and the Urdu-speaking, Indian-origin majority than about Karachi Pashtuns embracing the Taliban way.

The original Obama administration AfPak strategy, as everyone remembers, was essentially a drone war in Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) coupled with a surge in Afghanistan.

But the best and the brightest in Washington did not factor in an opportunist Taliban counter-surge.

The wily Tehrik-e-Nifaz-e-Shariat-e-Mohammadi (TNSM - Movement for the Enforcement of Islamic Law), led by Sufi Muhammad, managed to regiment Swat valley landless peasants to fight for their rights and “economic redistribution” against the usual wealthy, greedy, feudal landlords who happened to double as local politicians and government officials.

It’s as if the very parochial Taliban had been paying attention to what goes on across South America ... Essentially, it was the appropriation of good old class struggle that led to the Taliban getting the upper hand.

So what happened in Swat is that it moved beyond a corrupt state, and neo-colonial control.

Washington’s enemy suddenly swelled to part of the 1.3 million people in the area whose only means of protection are armed militias - what the West bundles up as “Taliban”.

It’s always crucial to remember that the “Taliban” have all sorts of agendas, from armed resistance to US occupation in Afghanistan to armed resistance to Pakistani army incursions.

What they all want is basically the end of Washington’s drone war, the end of Pakistan’s support for the “war on terror” in AfPak, or at least for the inept, corrupt Pakistani state to leave them alone.

What matters for the Pentagon is that the minute any sectarian outfit or bandit gang decides to collude with the Pentagon, it’s not “Taliban” anymore; it magically morphs into a “Concerned Local Citizens” outfit.

By the same token any form of resistance to foreign interference or Predator hell from above bombing is inevitably branded “Taliban”.

Left to its own devices, the Pentagon solution for Swat would probably be some form of ethnic cleansing.

Predictably, what Obama and the Pentagon are in fact doing - part of their cozying up with the Pakistani army - is to side with the feudal landlords and force a return to the classic Pakistani status quo of immense social inequality.

Thus virtually every local who has not become a refugee (as many as 5000,000 already did, leading to a huge humanitarian crisis) has been duly branded a “terrorist”.

The Swat tragedy is bound to get bloodier.

As Steve Clemons from The Washington Note blog has learned in a conference in Doha, Obama and Petraeus are forcing the Pakistani army to crush Swat.

Once again the imperial “fire on your own people” logic.

Predictably, Zardari and the Pakistani army are still against it. But if they accept - that would be a tangible result from the Washington photo-op on Wednesday - the prize will be a lot of money and loads of precious helicopter gun ships.

It ain't easy: at least 20% of Pakistani army soldiers are Pashtun - now forced to fight their own Pashtun cousins.

History once again does repeat itself as farce: in fact the only sticking point between the Taliban and Washington is still the same as in August 2001 - pipeline transit fees.

Washington wouldn't give a damn about sharia law as long as the US could control pipelines crossing Afghanistan and Balochistan.

Yes, Pipelineistan rules.

What's a few ragged Pashtun or Balochis in Washington's way when the New Great Game in Eurasia can offer so many opportunities?

“Pashtun Frontier Tribes Are Up In Arms Again Because They Are Being Bombed By U.S. Predator Drones, And Attacked By The Pakistani Army, Which The U.S. Rents”

“Even The British Imperial Raj's Most Junior Officer Knew It Was Foolhardy To Provoke Warlike Pashtun”

“Washington's Ham-Handed Tactics Are Creating A Bigger Storm: A National Revolution In Pakistan Against The Western-Backed Feudal Oligarchy That Has Ruled It Since 1947”

Most Pakistanis see the Afghan Taliban and their own rebellious Pashtun as heroes fighting western domination, and scorn their own isolated leaders in Islamabad as working for the Yankee dollar.

May 04, 2009 By Eiril Margolis, Baltimore Sun [Excerpts]

The worldly French and British who are taught history and read books are looking with wry amusement and some pity on the Americans who are now gripped by a renewed bout of Taliban terror.

About ten days ago, a bunch of lightly-armed Pashtun tribesmen rode down from the Malakand region on motorbikes and pickup trucks and briefly swaggered around Buner, only 100 km from Pakistan's capitol, Islamabad.

Hysteria erupted in Washington. 'The Taliban are coming. The Taliban are coming!'

Hillary Clinton, still struggling through foreign affairs 101, warned the scruffy Taliban tribesmen were a global threat.

Pakistan's generals dutifully followed Washington's orders by attacking the tribal miscreants in Buner who failed to obey the American Raj.

Over a hundred people were killed, almost all innocent civilians, and thousands of refugees fled the government bombing and gunfire.

It would have been helpful had the anguished Mrs. Clinton read page 30 of my book, 'War at the Top of the World:'

'In the first quarter of the 20th century...two colorful figures emerged from the barren mountains of the Northwest Frontier. First, a fiery holy man with a wonderful name, the Fakir of Ipi.

'The old fakir rallied the Pashtun tribes against the infidel and came within a turban's length of taking Peshawar from the British, who spent a decade chasing the elusive fakir through the mountains of Waziristan.'

'Then, a fearsome figure, the 'Mad Mullah' (as the British press branded him), who rode down from the Malakand Pass at the head of 20,000 savage horsemen, determined to put the impious city of Peshawar (the main British Imperial base) to the sword.'

Like Mrs. Clinton, the good Christian ladies of the British Peshawar garrison had a very big scare.

Cries were raised that the Mad Mullah and his wicked Muslims were going to lay fire sword on Peshawar and carry off its Christian ladies upon whose white bodies would be inflicted unspeakable Islamic abominations.

Plus ca change.....

A century later, western imperial forces are again chasing unruly Pashtun tribesmen on the wild Northwest Frontier.

Today, they're called 'terrorists' by western media and politicians.

In the 1980's they and their fathers were hailed as 'freedom fighters' battling the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan.

Pashtun (aka Pathan) frontier tribes – collectively mislabeled 'Taliban' by western media - are up in arms again because they are being bombed by US Predator drones, and attacked by the Pakistani Army, which the US rents for \$1.5 billion annually (the official figure; actually, it's a lot more), to support its widening war in Afghanistan.

Pashtun civilian casualties - 'collateral damage' in Pentagon speak – are rising fast.

The primary cause of the growing rebellion in Pakistan's Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) is the US war in Afghanistan, which is rapidly spreading into Pakistan.

Most Pakistanis see the Afghan Taliban and their own rebellious Pashtun as heroes fighting western domination, and scorn their own isolated leaders in Islamabad as working for the Yankee dollar.

Equally, the Pashtun tribes of NWFP were guaranteed total autonomy in 1947;

Pakistan's army was formally excluded from the Pashtun tribal region.

Washington has pressured Islamabad into violating this basic provision of Pakistan's constitution by sending troops and warplanes into the independent tribal region.

Even the British Imperial Raj's most junior officer knew it was foolhardy to provoke warlike Pashtun.

But Washington has done just this.

Still, the Pashtun 'Taliban' have no influence outside their Northwest Frontier and are not about to take over the rest of Pakistan.

But Washington's ham-handed tactics in Afghanistan and Pakistan are creating a bigger storm: a national revolution in Pakistan against the western-backed feudal oligarchy that has ruled it since 1947.

Pakistan is among the world's poorest nations. Half its people are illiterate. Most subsist on \$1.13 daily.

The feudal landowning elite, only .5% of the population, holds over 90% of national wealth.

Corruption engulfs everything.

Democracy is a sham; the legal system a cruel joke.

Islamic law, however draconian, offers the only justice that cannot be bought.

Growing resistance movements in Northwest Frontier and Baluchistan call for national leadership that represents Pakistan's rather than western interests.

Pakistanis are humiliated by being forced by the US and Britain to wage war against their own people under the pretext of 'fighting Islamic terrorism.'

**NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1:
PACK UP
GO HOME
THIS IS BULLSHIT**



U.S. soldiers are carried on boats from one side of a river to the other side in Lalpoor district of Jalalabad, the provincial capital of Nangarhar province east of Kabul, Afghanistan, April 20, 2009. (AP Photo/Rahmat Gul)

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

TROOP NEWS

NOT ANOTHER DAY

NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR NOT ANOTHER LIFE



1st Sgt. holds the company guidon flag as he and other soldiers assigned to 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team wait at Green Ramp on Pope Air Force Base, N.C., Tuesday, April 21, 2009, prior to their departure to Iraq. (AP Photo/Gerry Broome)

**“Many Severely Injured Troops Are
Not Employable, And Their Mean Age
Is Only 22”**

**“What About The 18-Year-Old Wife Who
Did Not Have The Opportunity For
Education And Chose To Take Care Of
Her Husband”**

May 11, 2009 By Karen Jowers, Army Times [Excerpts]

Family members and loved ones who stand vigil at wounded warriors' bedsides need more support, a panel of wounded warriors and spouses told a Senate subcommittee.

“I’ve seen family members remain living apart while the service member recovers because they can’t afford” to be together, Army Lt. Col. Gregory Gadson told the Senate Armed Services personnel panel April 29.

“That is a choice families should not be forced to make.”

Gadson said his wife had to quit her job as a teacher when he was wounded in 2007 in Iraq and lost both legs. She was reimbursed for meals and lodging as a nonmedical attendant when she came to his bedside at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., while they maintained their residence at Fort Riley, Kan.

But when she moved to the Washington area, that money was cut off, he said.

“There should be a set rate for nonmedical attendant (compensation), as well as per diem and lodging,” he said.

Kimberly Noss, whose husband, Army Sgt. 1st Class Scot Noss, sustained a severe brain injury in 2007 in Afghanistan, said many severely injured troops are not employable, and their mean age is only 22.

If they require round-the-clock care for their safety, it’s difficult for a family member to continue a career, she said.

“What about the 18-year-old wife who did not have the opportunity for education and chose to take care of her husband, instead of putting him in a nursing home? She will not have means for income,” Noss said.

V.A. Clinic Caught “Improperly Charging For Care Relating To Sexual Assault In The Military”

May 6, 2009 By JAMES DAO, New York Times [Excerpts]

The Department of Veterans Affairs will review the billing practices of veterans health centers around the country amid concerns that some are improperly charging for care relating to sexual assault in the military, officials said Wednesday.

The department is required to provide free care, including counseling and prescription drugs, to veterans who were sexually harassed or assaulted while in military service. Sexual assault includes rape and attempted rape.

But the Office of Inspector General at the department found this year that an outpatient clinic in Austin, Tex., had repeatedly charged veterans, mostly women, for those services. Based on concerns that the practice may be more widespread, the office decided to expand its review to a sampling of veterans health care centers and clinics nationwide.

Studies have found that male and female members of the military have reported high rates of sexual harassment and assault while in the service, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs. A 2003 report by the department estimated that nearly a

quarter of women in the National Guard or Reserve reported having been sexually assaulted.

Over half of the assaults were at a military base or worksite during duty hours, and in most cases, military personnel were the offenders, the report said.

The inspector general's review was prompted by complaints from a woman in Texas who said the clinic in Austin had for years charged her for care relating to military sexual trauma, the department's term for physical and psychological problems caused by sexual harassment or assault.

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

“While there is a lower class I am in it; while there is a criminal element I am of it; while there is a soul in prison, I am not free”
-- Eugene V. Debs

“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

There Will Be Peace When You Are Done



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special

Sent: May 10, 2009
Subject: There Will Be Peace When You Are Done

There Will Be Peace When You Are Done

My family loves my dementia now, because they no longer have to hear my anti-American rants about the Vietnam War. At times they seem to even dote over me. In a way, I like my new home, especially with the side rails on my bed to protect me. Everyone in the family tells me I'm much safer when they come and visit. I guess the stress level in the family is much lower now. So, maybe things work out better in the end. My grandson came and visited me the other day. He is on Christmas leave from the military. He is stationed somewhere in the Middle East. While he was here, he read something I had written years ago when I got out of the military. He had tears in his eyes when he was finished. The last thing he said before he left was, " Grandpa, you were right. I wish I had listened to you a long time ago. I can't understand why I never heard your words of truth. Now I understand that lying is the most powerful weapon in war." After he left, a nurse came into my room, and handed me a small box that my grandson wanted me to have. Inside the box were several of his medals, along with a Combat Medical Badge. I slowly read the note he left inside of the box. " Grandpa, I will always love you. Thank you for giving me the courage to do what is right in my heart. The words you wrote about the soldiers who committed suicide in your unit in Vietnam, and after they came home, has had a powerful impact on my life. Your brutal honesty has changed the direction of my life. I will probably never see you again, because I can no longer live in America anymore. The pain is more than I can bear. You are the moral compass in my life now. I understand more than ever why our family never accepted you when you came back from Vietnam. I cannot bear that same history for the rest of my life here. Nothing has changed in war Grandpa. Several of my friends have committed suicide because of multiple tours in combat zones. The cost of killing is too much. The lying is the same, and my soul is no longer for sale. Like Vietnam, civilians are killed as though they were combatants. If the churches in America knew the truth, they would be horrified. What you stood for all your life, and what I stand for now, will never die. When I finally made the decision to leave, I felt a freedom I have

never felt in my life.
I'm starting over, or maybe I'm living for the first time in my life.
I want my children to carry your sacred memory the rest of their lives.
Grandpa, the cycle of lies will end with me.
America has no idea who their heroes are.
Now it is time for me to take the family name to a safer place.
Peace Grandpa, just peace.”

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
May 9, 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)

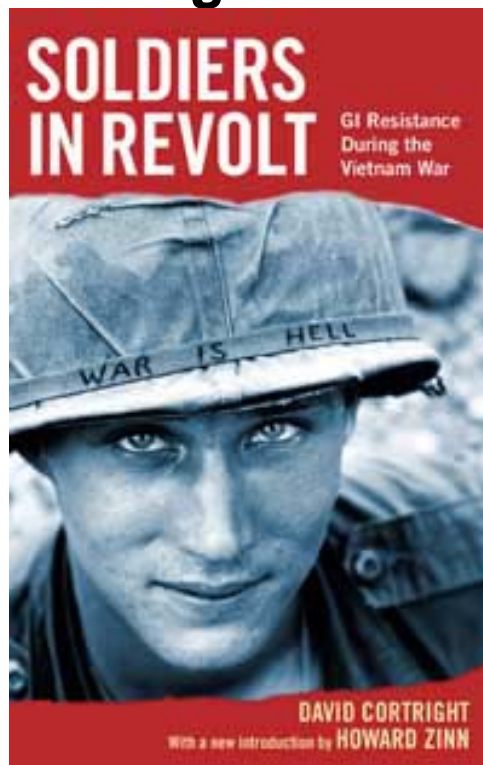
One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth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

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

**“The End Of Conscription Did
Not Halt The GI Resistance
Movement”**

**“The GI Movement Had Always
Been Primarily A Movement Of
Enlistees, And Filling The Ranks
With Volunteers Thus Actually
Increased The Likelihood Of
Internal Dissent”**

“While Disgruntled Ex-College Students May Have Sparked Some GI-Movement Activities, The Bulk Of The GI Resistance Came Not From Draftees But From Volunteers”
“The Evidence Available From An Examination Of The GI Movement Suggests That The Majority Of Dissenters And Organizers Were Volunteers From Working-Class Backgrounds”



This was best summed up by Sp/ Jim Goodman, former editor of the Baumholder *Gig Sheet* in Germany: “Draftees expect shit, get slit, aren’t even disappointed.”

“Volunteers expect something better, get the same shit, and have at least one more year to get mad about it.”

From: SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: David Cortright, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975. Now available in paperback from Haymarket Books.

One of the first acts of the Nixon administration was the appointment of the President's Commission on the All-Volunteer Force, to recommend proposals for eliminating the draft.

The Gates Commission completed its work quickly, issuing its report in February of 1970, and soon afterward the signs of change began appearing.

In May, the Army announced that appearance regulations would be revised to allow slightly longer hair.

A month later, in a dramatic signal of the new emphasis on personnel problems, the Pentagon shocked the Navy establishment by appointing Admiral Elmo Zumwalt Chief of Naval Operations. Zumwalt was promoted over thirty-three other admirals and assigned the special mission of improving service life and bolstering sagging reenlistment rates

The liberal innovator immediately began shaking up Navy traditions, ordering numerous changes through a series of highly publicized personal messages to the fleet, so-called “Z-grams.”

Among the measures announced during Zumwalt’s first four months were relaxed uniform regulations, beer in the barracks, the opening of hard rock clubs, allowance of beards and longer hair, a ban on “panic painting” and other forms of unnecessary harassment, and liberalized leave policies.

In December, Army Chief Westmoreland followed suit with a major directive altering the traditions of Army life — among other things, eliminating morning reveille, easing pass restrictions, and introducing beer in the mess hall.

In that same mother [January 1971] the Army launched a comprehensive Volunteer Army (VOLAR) experiment designed to test its new liberal policies, focusing on the 197th Infantry Brigade at Fort Benning, the 3rd Armored Cavalry at Fort Lewis, and the 192nd Infantry Brigade at Fort Knox.

An example of the program was the Fort Benning Plan, which comprised some 106 proposed administrative actions for improving Army life, including such measures as greater variety of food in mess halls, reduction of work schedules to five days a week, replacement of soldier KPs with civilians, scheduling of additional dances at post service clubs, and the improvement of barracks lounge areas.

In addition, the Army conducted an experimental volunteer Army training program for basic trainees at Fort Ord. The program for the first time eliminated the requirement for shaved heads and called for a change in the traditionally abusive manner of drill sergeants.

The experiment also removed such practices as infiltration-course training, midnight inspections, and excessively long working hours

Of course, the end of conscription did not halt the GI resistance movement.

The assumption that a professional military would be free of dissension, that volunteers would be more docile and acquiescent than draftees, proved wrong.

In fact, the GI movement had always been primarily a movement of enlistees, and filling the ranks with volunteers thus actually increased the likelihood of internal dissent.

Indeed, the volunteer armed forces have encountered record peacetime levels of AWOL and desertion and are still troubled by widespread political opposition and black unrest.

The volunteer force has faltered in other respects as well. It has created an unprecedented crisis in the defense budget and has contributed to severe manpower difficulties in the reserves.

Many have warned that an Army composed only of volunteers will no longer be subject to the healthy internal questioning evidenced during Vietnam.

Inherent in this position is the view that the GI movement developed primarily because the military was forced to draft middle-class college students.

While disgruntled ex-college students may have sparked some GI-movement activities, particularly certain of its more articulate expressions, the bulk of the GI resistance came not from draftees but from volunteers.

The evidence available from an examination of the GI movement suggests that the majority of dissenters and organizers were volunteers from working-class backgrounds.

While by no means conclusive a number of small-scale surveys conducted in recent years confirm this.

In March of 1970, the National Council to Repeal the Draft looked into the backgrounds of twenty-five members of GIs United Against the War at Fort Bragg. According to Tom Reeves of the Council, seventeen of the twenty-five activists had volunteered and sixteen of the group came from lower-middle-class families.

In November of 1971, the United States Servicemen's Fund sponsored a GI-movement conference in Williams Bay, Wisconsin. Of the approximately fifty active-duty GIs and veterans attending from various organizing projects, the vast majority were volunteers, not draftees. At one meeting of active dissenters, an informal poll showed that eighteen of the twenty men present had volunteered.

Additional evidence comes from an independent survey taken among members of Vietnam Veterans Against the War encamped on the Mall in Washington, D.C., on April 2, 1971. The results of 172 returned questionnaires showed that approximately two thirds of the veterans had enlisted in the service, while nearly 49 per cent listed their father's occupation as 'labor.'

Further indication of the volunteer origins of GI dissent comes from the extensive history of protest within the Air Force and the Navy, neither of which uses conscripts, and the continuation of the GI movement beyond 1972, despite the end of the draft.

These findings confirm the opinion of nearly every leading GI-movement figure with whom I had contact in writing this book.

They also corroborate my own experience.

At Fort Hamilton and Fort Bliss, most of the people involved in anti-war work were, like myself, volunteers from working-class families.

To be sure, many had volunteered most reluctantly, and some had been to college, at least for a time; but very few were draftees.

This should not really surprise us, given what we have seen of the oppression of enlisted service and the economic compulsion of volunteering.

It seems certain that lower-middle-class enlistees will not shirk protest against policies and conditions they find intolerable.

This was best summed up by Sp/ Jim Goodman, former editor of the Baumholder *Gig Sheet* in Germany:

"Draftees expect shit, get slit, aren't even disappointed.

"Volunteers expect something better, get the same shit, and have at least one more year to get mad about it."

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

Iraq 1920:

“Our Armies Do Not Come Into Your Cities And Lands As Conquerors Or Enemies, But As Liberators”

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

1 May 2009 By Robert Fisk, Independent.co.uk [Excerpts]

History is a hard taskmaster.

In my library, I have an original copy of General Angus Maude's statement to the people of Baghdad – \$2,000, it cost me, at a telephone auction a few days before we invaded Iraq in 2003, but it is worth every cent.

“Our military operations have as their object,” Maude announced, “the defeat of the enemy... our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators.”

And so it goes on. Maude, I should add, expired shortly afterwards because he declined to boil his milk in Baghdad and died of cholera.

There followed a familiar story.

The British occupation force was opposed by an Iraqi resistance – “terrorists”, of course – and the British destroyed a town called Fallujah and demanded the surrender of a Shiite cleric and British intelligence in Baghdad claimed that “terrorists” were crossing the border from Syria, and Lloyd George – the Blair-Brown of his age – then stood up in the House of Commons and said that there would be “anarchy” in Iraq if British troops left.

Oh dear.

Even repeating these words is deeply embarrassing.

Here, for example, is a letter written by Nijris ibn Qu'ud to a British intelligence agent in 1920: “You cannot treat us like sheep... it is we Iraqi who are the brains of the Arab nation... You are given a short time to clear out of Mesopotamia. If you don't go you will be driven out.”

So let us turn at last to T E Lawrence.

Yes, Lawrence of Arabia.

In The Sunday Times on 22 August 1920, he wrote of Iraq that the people of England “had been led in Mesopotamia into a trap from which it will be hard to escape with dignity and honour.

“They have been tricked into it by a steady withholding of information... Things have been far worse than we have been told, our administration more bloody and inefficient than the public knows.”

Even more presciently, Lawrence had written that the Iraqis had not risked their lives in battle to become British subjects. “Whether they are fit for independence or not remains to be tried. Merit is no justification for freedom.”

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

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS



Squatters were removed from this vacant home located on West Maple Ave. in Sterling.
(Photo: Tracy A. Woodward)

May 3, 2009 By Derek Kravitz, Loudoun Extra, The Washington Post Company
[Excerpts]

One former homeowner rigged his front door with coffeepots filled with boiling water.

Another left piles of ferret feces.

Hidden compartments have been used as living spaces, with people hiding in attics, tool sheds and garages to elude police.

In the D.C. suburbs, a new class of squatter has emerged, as people illegally remain in homes after they have lost them to the bank.

Some have become aggressive in their efforts to stay, setting booby traps to ward off police.

“People got in over their heads, and they don’t want to leave,” said Loudoun County sheriff’s Capt. Chuck Wyant, who oversees the department’s five-person eviction unit.

The problem seems especially acute outside the Capital Beltway.

Initially viewed as an unusual symptom of the economic downturn, squatting has grown into something closer to an epidemic in Loudoun. Court-ordered evictions in the county

have more than doubled over the past three years, and a six-month backlog of cases at the Loudoun courthouse is a dire reminder that things might only get worse, Wyant said.

A docket at the courthouse has been created for the approximately 2,300 in the county facing evictions.

“It’s hit us hard, worse than other counties, because we grew so quickly,” he said.

The squatters represent two distinct groups: victims of the foreclosure crisis, who have lost homes to the banks and refuse to leave, and homeless people who see in the growing number of vacant houses an opportunity to upgrade their standard of living.

Steve Whetzel has increasingly been dealing with the first group.

He runs KNK Home Preservation in Warrenton, a company banks hire to clear out newly foreclosed homes.

But in recent weeks, Whetzel said, he’s responded to cases in which homeowners have threatened to harm themselves or others.

About six weeks ago, at a house north of Frederick, a man threatened to kill members of Whetzel’s crew, and county SWAT team members were called in.

In a case outside Baltimore, a father tried to commit suicide by overdosing on pills as he was being evicted. His two children were still inside the house.

“It’s definitely intensified,” Whetzel said. “Most people know we’re coming.”

A national survey released last month showing the impact of widespread foreclosures found that an estimated 42 percent of those who have lost their homes in the housing crisis now have no fixed address.

People being forced out of foreclosed homes represent a quarter of those facing evictions in Loudoun; the others are renters who have stopped paying their landlords.

“All of a sudden, a lot of longtime renters, a lot of families, are being evicted, with little or no notice,” said Vickie Koth, executive director of the Good Shepherd Alliance, an Ashburn-based homelessness nonprofit group. “It’s overwhelming.”

Wyant said calls about squatters aren’t just coming from the low- and middle-income neighborhoods of Sterling and Sterling Park anymore. Take the two-story house on West Maple Avenue in middle-class Sterling.

They are indications, neighbors said, that the \$430,000, four-bedroom house has turned into a haven for squatters.

“It was sort of weird,” said a next-door neighbor, Nicholas J. White. “One day, after it was foreclosed upon, I just saw a lot of people coming and going. You could tell something was up.”

Jose Huvy Hernandez, 32, of Ashburn and Bertha Olinda Bonilla, 37, of Sterling, two longtime Loudoun residents — one of whom is believed to be a relative of the home's former owner — were arrested there three weeks ago for allegedly living and partying at the house.

Squatters have become an unlikely but increasingly common nuisance in Loudoun, which is among the wealthiest regions of Northern Virginia.

Loudoun sheriff's deputies have been sent to several multimillion-dollar houses in affluent western Loudoun in recent weeks.

Those trend lines are mirrored in every other Northern Virginia county and across the nation, as once-wealthy communities report a surge in the number of cases of people illegally living in cordoned-off and condemned homes.

In Prince William County, the number of court-ordered evictions has shot up 40 percent since 2006. In nearby Arlington County, the number has increased by 33.5 percent since last year. In Fairfax County, it's up by 13 percent over the past year.

Squatting has long been a barometer of economic health in urban areas.

During down times in the District and New York in the 1970s and 1980s, squatting was a way of life for many low-income city dwellers.

In some areas hit hard by the spike in foreclosures, including Cleveland, Detroit and Miami, some agencies for the homeless have even resorted to finding abandoned and foreclosed homes to break into.

The majority of those facing eviction in the Washington region are low- and middle-income renters, county social services agencies say.

A number of the cases involve families who have lost their homes and struggled to transition into rental units that they also cannot afford.

"People are getting desperate," said Cheryl Tillman, who manages rental assistance programs at the nonprofit Northern Virginia Family Service in Oakton.

"Renters have a harder time because their situations, oftentimes, are just so precarious."

Wyant, the Loudoun sheriff's captain, said the desperation has given rise to determined squatters who refuse to leave their homes.

GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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

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

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

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_speGla/; news@uruknet.info;

<http://www.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res2&mod=newse&lan=1>

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.