

## GI SPECIAL 7G18:



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

# **Charlie Mike? Maybe: Maybe Not: The SecDef Has Been Warned: Some Soldiers Ask The SecDef Some Questions That Aren't Really Questions At All**

Comment: T

[The answers Gates pukes out have been cut. They're the usual lame, tired bullshit about how everything is as good as it can be, and nothing can be done right now to make it better because of national security, and he feels the soldiers'

**pain and really cares blah blah, and someday in the future, somehow, things will get better.**

**[It's the questions that are important. Put up right in the face of the SecDef.**

**[The last two especially have a certain edge; a warning that things are getting serious, and the workforce has had about enough.]**

July 21, 2009 By Walter Pincus, The Washington Post Company [Excerpts]

Outside the military, not much attention is paid to the personal problems of families caught up in the endless rotational deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan that mark serving in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Marines.

Last Friday, Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates dealt with a handful of those problems in a town hall meeting at Fort Drum, N.Y., in front of Army units that either were coming from Southwest Asia or preparing to go there.

With 130,000 troops remaining in Iraq through the end of the year and 68,000 more scheduled to be in Afghanistan during the same period, pressures on military family life have grown.

An Army sergeant opened by pointing out that one brigade has alternated between one year at home and one year deployed over the past five years, whereas another brigade in the same division has been spending two-year stretches at home. He asked whether anything could be done to even out the dwell time.

**A private first class in a support battalion, scheduled to go to Iraq, asked whether, if troops don't complete their 12-month tour in that country, they will be transferred to Afghanistan before coming home.**

**An artillery sergeant asked about the likelihood that Army deployments to Iraq or Afghanistan would be shortened to nine months or even six months.**

## **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**

## **Three U.S. Soldiers Wounded In Kirkuk**

July 23 (Reuters)

An insurgent threw a hand grenade at a U.S.-Iraqi patrol in Kirkuk, wounding three U.S. soldiers, one Iraqi interpreter and one Iraqi civilian, the U.S. military said.

---

## **Minn. Soldier Wounded In Iraq Attack**

July 22 2009 Associated Press

WILLMAR, Minn. — The fourth Minnesota soldier who was wounded in last week's attack that killed three other Minnesota National Guardsmen has identified himself.

Spc. Jacob Benson, 22, of Willmar is recovering from injuries suffered in last Thursday's insurgent attack near Basra in southern Iraq.

Benson tells the West Central Tribune that pieces of shrapnel were found in his arm and back after the attack. He also suffered bruises from being thrown by the explosion.

Benson's friends — Spc. James Wertish, 20, of rural Olivia, Spc. Carlos Wilcox IV, 27, of Cottage Grove, and Spc. Daniel Drevnick, 22, of Woodbury — were all killed in the attack.

Drevnick's funeral is scheduled for 10 a.m. Saturday at King of Kings Lutheran Church in Woodbury, with burial at Fort Snelling National Cemetery.

---

## **U.S. Convoy Attacked Near Abu Ghraib**

22 July 2009 (AFP)

BAGHDAD - American troops shot dead two attackers who tried to blast their convoy with hand grenades near Abu Ghraib west of Baghdad, the US military said on Wednesday.

In addition, one civilian was killed and four wounded in Tuesday's incident, which also saw the convoy coming under small arms fire, said military spokesman Lieutenant Colonel Philip Smith.

---

## **Blackwater Mercenary Killed In Iraq**

July 22, 2009 WORTHINGTON, Ind. -- A pilot from southern Indiana died in a helicopter crash in Iraq while working for a contractor just months after his brother said he retired from the Army.

William F. "Sonny" Hinchman completed two tours in Iraq with the Army, but was killed Friday in the crash near Baghdad.

Kirk Hinchman said his 42-year-old brother enlisted after graduating from Greene County's Worthington-Jefferson High School in 1984. Hinchman left the Army in March and lived in Copperas Cove, Texas.

Kirk Hinchman told the Greene County Daily World that relatives asked his brother why he was returning to Iraq, but that he believed his work there protecting diplomats would help stabilize the country.

The Associated Press left a message seeking comment from North Carolina-based XE, formerly known as Blackwater, about Hinchman's death.

---

## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Four Fort Drum Soldiers Killed In Afghanistan**



Owens

Lightfoot



Roughton

Pratt

U.S. Army at Fort Drum soldiers who died July 20, 2009 in Wardak Province, Afghanistan. A roadside bomb exploded near the vehicle the four were riding. Then, they came under enemy fire with rocket-propelled grenades and small arms. The soldiers are Sgt. Gregory Owens Jr., 24 of Garland, Texas; Spc. Anthony M. Lightfoot, 20, of Riverdale, Ga.; Spc Andrew J. Roughton, 21 of Houston and Pfc. Dennis J. Pratt, 34 of Duncan, Okla. (AP Photo/U.S. Army at Fort Drum)

---

## **Bomb Kills Two U.S. Marines In Helmand**

JULY 22, 2009 Associated Press

KABUL -- A military spokesman says a bomb blast in Afghanistan has killed two American troops.

Tech Sgt. Chuck Marsh says the explosion happened in southern Afghanistan. Southern Helmand province is the site of the largest U.S. Marine operation since the 2001 invasion to oust the Taliban regime.

---

## **U.S. “Service Member” Killed By Something Or Other Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan**

7.23.09 By FISNIK ABRASHI, Associated Press Writer Fisnik Abrashi, Associated Press Writer

KABUL – A U.S. service member was killed Thursday in an insurgent attack in the country’s south, a U.S. military official said, raising to 35 the number of American troops to die in the Afghan war this month.

U.S. military spokeswoman Lt. Cmdr. Christine Sidenstricker confirmed the latest U.S. death but released no further details.

---

## **Soldier From Coldstream Guards Killed In Nad E Ali**

22 Jul 09 Ministry of Defence

It is with great sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that a soldier from 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards, attached to 1st Battalion Welsh Guards, was killed in Afghanistan today, Wednesday 22 July 2009.

The soldier was killed as a result of an explosion that happened whilst on a dismounted patrol in Nad e Ali District, central Helmand Province this morning.

---

## Fallen Soldier Re-Enlisted After 11 Years



Army Specialist Greg Missman

7/9/09 Reported by: Jay Warren; Scripps TV Station

A soldier with ties to the Tri-State lost his life while serving his country in Afghanistan.

Army Specialist Greg Missman, 36, was killed when his convoy was ambushed by insurgents on Wednesday.

Missman's family says he re-enlisted to support his four-year-old son.

"He was in the army in the early 90s and then he's been in civilian life for the past eleven years Greg decided to go back in the Army in fact he re-enlisted on Veterans Day 11/11," said Jim Missman, Greg's father.

Missman, who was from Pierce Township and attended Amelia High School, entered the Army's Warrior Transition Program.

"He'd gone through a separation, a divorce. Greg has a four-year-old son and was obligated to provide him health insurance monthly support and he was unemployed so I believe that was probably the stimulus that he was going to fulfill his obligation," continued Greg's father.

Specialist Missman served in Afghanistan with the 4th Infantry Division. He had been there barely a month after being deployed in June.

"The phone call I initially received told me that Greg's convoy was out in somewhere in southeastern Afghanistan and had been ambushed and that they had been hit by an IED and Greg apparently took the brunt of it," explained Greg's father.

Jim Missman and Donna Missman Turner, Greg's mother, along with their grandson, Jack, and Jack's mother are traveling to Dover Delaware to await the arrival of Specialist Missman's remains.

---

# Canadian Troops Assist Taliban; Shoot Some Collaborator Cops

Jul. 22 2009 The Canadian Press

Three Afghan policemen were injured when Canadian soldiers inspecting a possible improvised explosive device fired on a vehicle that was approaching in the dark with its lights out.

Two members of the Afghan National Police suffered minor injuries, while the third remains in hospital.

---

## Resistance Action

07/19/09 AFP & Jul 22 By Sayed Salahuddin and Hamid Shalizi Sayed Salahuddin And Hamid Shalizi, (Reuters) & July 23 (Xinhua)

On Sunday, provincial council candidate Jan Mohammad was killed when insurgents attacked him as he campaigned in northern Kunduz province, the provincial governor's spokesman Mahbubullah Saidi said. Mr Mohammad is the third provincial election candidate to be killed since registration for the polls in May.

Also on Sunday, a bomber struck at Torkham, a key border crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan in Nangarhar province. "There was an attack on one of our police posts in Torkham. A police officer and policeman have been killed," regional border police commander Mohammad Zaman Mamozaï said.

A convoy belonging to a minor presidential candidate, former Taliban commander Mullah Salam Rocketi, was ambushed as he returned to Kabul after campaigning in northern Baghlan and one of his campaign officials was killed, Rocketi told Reuters. Rocketi, an army commander during Taliban rule who renounced the militants after their overthrow to become a minister of parliament, was unhurt. He took his name because he often fired rocket-propelled grenades at occupying Soviet troops.

Two soldiers of Afghan National Army (ANA) went missing in west Afghanistan while Taliban claimed to have captured them, a local official said Thursday. "Mohammad Ali and Ghulam Haider, who are two soldiers of ANA, went missing Wednesday afternoon," commander of police in west Afghanistan Ikramudin Yawar told Xinhua.

<p><b>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATIONS</b></p>
--

# “27 IEDs Had Been Discovered By Task Force Paladin On The Previous Day”

7.24.09 ABC News

The presence of IEDs in Afghanistan is a growing concern. Upon his arrival to Bagram Air Base, ABC News anchor Bob Woodruff learned that 27 IEDs had been discovered by Task Force Paladin on the previous day.

The damage is felt by U.S. soldiers and Afghan civilians alike. The impact of such attacks can be seen in military hospitals throughout Afghanistan that are quickly filling up.

IEDs can be damaging even when they do not maim or kill. The bombs slow down military operations in Afghanistan by making roads too dangerous to deliver weapons and supplies.

---

**EVERY BREATH YOU TAKE  
EVERY MOVE YOU MAKE  
I'LL BE WATCHING YOU**



A Taliban fighter looks through binoculars in an undisclosed location in Afghanistan July 14, 2009. REUTERS/Stringer

---



# **Let's Play Whack-A-Mole!**

## **“Afghanistan Is Repositioning Forces To The South Even As Clashes Erupted In The North”**

Jul 22 By Sayed Salahuddin and Hamid Shalizi Sayed Salahuddin And Hamid Shalizi, (Reuters)

Afghanistan is repositioning forces to the south after complaints too few are involved in major U.S. and British offensives against the Taliban, officials said on Wednesday, even as clashes erupted in the north.

Afghan troops battled a group of Taliban fighters dug into a valley in northern Kunduz on Wednesday, Defense Ministry spokesman Zaher Azimi said. He said fighters loyal to a wanted al Qaeda-linked Uzbek leader had entered the north recently.

Violence has spiked across the country since the operations in Helmand began.

Azimi blamed the media for complaints about the paucity of Afghan troops fighting in Helmand and said security forces were stretched to their limit combating insurgents across the country.

---

## **Fighting Spreads To Within 20 Miles Of Mazar-I-Sharif**

24 Jul 09 The Local Europe AB

Swedish military forces were involved in a battle in Aqchah in northern Afghanistan on Thursday night. No Swedish soldiers have been reported injured.

The battle began around 6.30pm on Thursday night when opposition groups ambushed the Swedish troops.

The Swedes were in armoured wheeled vehicles and later received reinforcements from several soldiers in a Combat Vehicle 90.

“The firefights were intermittant during the evening and night,” Veronica Sandström, press officer for the Swedish Armed Forces (Försvarsmakten), told the TT news agency.

The Dagens Nyheter (DN) newspaper reported Friday that three members of the attacking troops were killed and an additional two injured.

Aqchah is approximately 40 kilometres west of Mazar-i-Sharif, the largest city in northern Afghanistan and the base for the Swedish force led by the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF).

DN reported the attack came in the wake of several other incursions in the region.

“We have had three incidents within a month and it is more than usual.

---

## **BEEN ON THE JOB TOO LONG: COME ON HOME, NOW**



U.S Marines patrol Golestan district of Farah province, May 11, 2009. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

---

## **SOMALIA WAR REPORTS**

### **Insurgents Launch Heavy Attack On Occupation Troops**

July 23, 2009 By Ahmednor Mohamed Farah, (Mareeg)

MOGADISHU:

At least twenty five civilians have been killed and sixty others have been wounded in heavy mortar shelling exchanged by government soldiers and Islamist rebels in Mogadishu overnight, witnesses said on Thursday.

The Islamist insurgents launched heavy attack on African Union [translation: occupation] troops known as AMISOM and government soldiers based in K4 area in Mogadishu overnight.

Mogadishu ambulance drivers said they were taking to hospitals severely wounded patients by mortars to Mogadishu hospitals and still looking for other civilians caught by stray bullets and mortars in remote districts in Mogadishu.

The allied Islamist forces, Hizbul Islam and al Shabaab started their major offensive against the fragile government led by their former leader Sheik Sharif Sheik Ahmed on 7 May 2009.

---

## **TROOP NEWS**

**NOT ANOTHER DAY  
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR  
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



Burial services at Fort Snelling National Cemetery in Minneapolis July 20, 2009 for Sgt. C. Wayne Hosford who was killed July 6 in Kunduz, Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Jim Mone)

---

**Specialist Victor Agosto Says:  
“If You Look At What The Goal Of  
The War In Afghanistan Was -- To  
Make American People Safer -- An  
Occupation Can’t Accomplish  
That”**

**“The Occupation Just Increases  
Resentment Against Americans And  
Actually Endangers The Soldiers  
Because The Occupation Fuels The  
Insurgency”**

**“And I Think That Those In Power Know  
This”**



Specialist Victor Agosto

[Thanks to Sandy Kelson, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

Jul 17, 2009 Interview with Victor Agosto By Aaron Glantz; New America Media. Agosto spoke with NAM editor Aaron Glantz from the U.S. Army base at Fort Hood, Texas.

*Why did you decide to join the army?*

I'd been in college for two years and I was tired of it. I wanted to be something. I wanted to see the world. I was in Miami Dade College and I really didn't have a clear idea of what I was going to do. I was just focusing on my classes for my associate's degree. I had always wanted to join the army, but I had initially wanted to graduate from college first so I could have a commission, but then I just decided to go in and be enlisted.

*Is your opposition to the war in Afghanistan based at all on your previous military experience in Iraq?*

I would say, not really. I was in Iraq when I turned against it, but it wasn't because I had a traumatic experience or anything like that. I never shot anyone. I never got shot at. I never felt I was in any danger or anything like that. I was on the FOB [the base] the whole time. I was doing I.T. work: configuring computers, routers, servers, switches, providing customer service.

*So you didn't see or do anything while you were in Iraq that caused you to have any particular opinion about it one way or the other?*

I guess the main thing that got my mind going was seeing how much money the contractors were making, and how little sense that made to me. And I guess that just got me thinking, exploring in that direction. Something is not right here. It's a jump from that to concluding that the war is not right but that's what got the ball rolling.

*And once the ball got rolling, how did you get to the next step?*

Well, I was reading books, like Noam Chomsky's *Hegemony or Survival*. That was the one that just totally shattered any conception I had about moral superiority or good intentions.

*Obviously there are many theoreticians writing various things about American policy. Why did this resonate with you?*

Well it was just that the stated reasons for the war didn't make sense.

*And so the reasons that you concluded after doing your reading were what?*

Ultimately, just for more control and to project American power. Obviously, there's oil in Iraq. And American corporations stand to benefit a great deal from controlling the oil fields, but the main thing is just that there are benefits to obtaining control, and it's the same in Afghanistan.

*But the big difference of course is that there is no oil in Afghanistan.*

That's right.

*So how did you go from having this particular feeling about the war in Iraq to refusing to deploy to Afghanistan, which is of course a different war. And there are a lot of people who would say 'Iraq is a bad war but Afghanistan is a good war, because the people who attacked us on 9/11 were based out of Afghanistan.'*

Well, to me there really isn't a difference. To me the main thing is control, just to project power.

If you look at what the goal of the war in Afghanistan was -- to make American people safer -- an occupation can't accomplish that.

Those things can't be accomplished through military means.

The occupation in both places just increases resentment against Americans and actually endangers the soldiers that are there because the occupation fuels the insurgency.

We go after an insurgent and kill several innocents in the process and it just creates more insurgents. And the process would continue like that indefinitely.

And I think that those in power know this. And so the reason that we're there can't be to make the American people safer.

*And that's what you wrote in a statement to military counselors that you would not deploy to Afghanistan because it is "immoral and unjust" and "does not make the American people any safer." What would make the American people safer in your opinion?*

Well I think that the terrorist networks gain recruits from populations that have been oppressed. Until these grievances are addressed, there will always be a fresh supply of people who will join up with these extremist groups and decide that they want to attack America. There is really no battlefield solution to terrorism.

People say, 'Look, I know the U.S. military operations in Afghanistan are not necessarily the most productive, but imagine there were no American soldiers there -- the Taliban would just take over again.'

I don't really see that as worse than what we're doing now. As I said before, until we actually address the grievances of people in that part of the world, we're really not going to defeat terrorism. Being there does make things worse. It wouldn't be an ideal situation to just leave and then perhaps the Taliban would re-establish control over the country, but that to me would be better than what's going on right now.

*How do the other soldiers that you interact with at Fort Hood feel about your decision to refuse to go?*

They've been generally positive. I really don't get a lot of negative feedback from people. I know that negative feeling exists but people don't usually come up to me and tell me that. And when they have, they always set it up saying they really respect me and stuff, but they disagree with what I'm doing. It's never a bitter type of response.

*Why did you decide to contest this head-on instead of just passively resisting during your deployment to Afghanistan, since as you describe it, you're more of a back office soldier?*

I guess a combination of things. I concluded some time while I was in Iraq that these wars were wrong, but I wasn't ready to make that jump because I feared the consequences. But after a while I got to meet a lot of people in the peace community who would be supportive of me if I were to take such an action. That, combined with the fact that I just wasn't sure if I could live with myself if I were to deploy, if I actually got on a plane and went over there. It made it almost a no-brainer for me and something I needed to do.

*You're facing a Special Court Martial, where you face a bad conduct discharge and a year in prison. Suppose you were to get a bad conduct discharge and some amount of prison time. How would you compare that to deploying to Afghanistan?*

I'd say it's more than a fair deal. I mean, if those are my two options, I'd say that's a no-brainer right there. I would much rather go to prison for a year than go to Afghanistan for a year.

## **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/](http://www.ivaw.org/))**

## **Betrayed By An Ungrateful Government:**

# **Severely Disabled Troops Abandoned By Politicians; “Parents, Spouses And Siblings Of The Disabled Have Given Up Jobs, Health Insurance And College To Care For A Loved One. Yet They Get No Compensation To Ease The Burden”**



Michelle Briggs talks with her husband Bob in their home, Wednesday, July 15, 2009, in Hillsboro, Iowa. On good days, Michelle Briggs has to remind her 40-year-old husband to shower and eat. On bad days, she lifts him out of bed and picks him up when he falls. (AP Photo/Charlie Neibergall)

**"If the VA thinks they're already providing or the administration thinks they're already providing support, it's because they're simply not paying attention and not listening to the families right now," Nardizzi said.**

July 21, 2009 KIMBERLY HEFLING, Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON -- On good days, Michelle Briggs has to remind her 40-year-old husband to shower and eat. On bad days, she lifts him out of bed and picks him up when he falls.

Robert W. Briggs, a former Army sergeant, was severely injured in Iraq and needs constant monitoring because of traumatic brain injury, blindness in one eye and paralysis on one side.

He walks with the help of a service dog.



Briggs gave up her job as a veterinarian technician to care for him and their two kids.

With tissue in hand, Michelle Briggs huddled Monday in a hotel conference room with 15 other caregivers who shared hugs and exchanged stories.

They will go to Capitol Hill this week with a message to Congress: We need help.

"Mentally, it takes a very big toll on you," said Briggs, 34, of Hillsboro, Iowa, whose husband was injured in a rocket grenade attack in 2005 while serving with the Iowa National Guard. "You have to be a very strong person to get through a lot of it. It's a choice whether you stay or not. It's very much a choice."

Briggs said she's met other spouses of injured veterans who sought a divorce.

"It doesn't make them a bad person at all, but they just couldn't handle the situation because it's very, very stressful and you have to fight for the things that you're entitled to," Briggs said.

The caregivers say parents, spouses and siblings of the disabled have given up jobs, health insurance and college to care for a loved one. Yet they get no compensation to ease the burden.

"We're providing them with such a better quality of life and we need support in order to provide that," said Tracy Keil, 31, of Parker, Colo., whose husband, Matthew Keil, was paralyzed from the chest down from a sniper's bullet in 2007 and now needs around-the-clock care.

The two married six weeks before he was injured.

She said she gave up the job she had as an accountant for 11 years and makes \$60,000 less working from home part-time for a nonprofit organization.

The caregivers seek passage of legislation that would require the Veterans Affairs Department to offer more training to primary caregivers of severely injured veterans from the recent wars. Those certified would be eligible for benefits such as health care and a stipend of a few hundred dollars a week.

The alternative, they say, would be life in an institution for some veterans now mostly in their 20s or 30s.

Sen. Daniel Akaka, chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, who authored legislation in the Senate to address the issue with Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., said there are more than just an isolated few families asking for help.

**"This has been growing, growing to the point now where we can not ignore it," Akaka said.**

Akaka, D-Hawaii, said he's waiting for a final analysis about how much the legislation would cost, although he's confident keeping a veteran in the home is cheaper than a nursing home.

**The VA has expressed concerns about the cost of the legislation.**

It has also said it would divert from the agency's mission of providing care to veterans and training clinicians, and said some of the same services are provided in other programs.

**Steven Nardizzi, executive director of the Jacksonville, Fla.-based Wounded Warrior Project, which organized the caregivers' effort this week, said what the VA provides simply isn't adequate.**

He said the VA needs to adapt its primary mission to include helping families of the wounded, and providing health benefits and a stipend would go a long way.

**"If the VA thinks they're already providing or the administration thinks they're already providing support, it's because they're simply not paying attention and not listening to the families right now," Nardizzi said.**

His group estimates that under legislation it's seeking, about 750 caregivers would be eligible long-term, whereas several thousand would participate for about one to three years.

Briggs said she's thrown out her back at different times lifting her husband. She said she went through a period of depression as she adjusted to their new life but has learned to find comfort talking to other caregivers.

She said she's dedicated to making their arrangement work but could use more resources.

"I love him and we've been married -- it will be 15 years in November. It's like your marriage vows for better or worse," Briggs said.

**"This wasn't his fault, and there would be no one else to take care of him properly. He would be in a nursing home."**

**Troops Invited:**

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

**Quit Fucking Up The Reserves!**

# **“To Intentionally Deploy This Force On A Routine And Recurring Basis Will Essentially Reduce The Force To Rubble”**

7.20.09

Letters To The Editor  
Army Times

Planning for the call-up of the Reserve components of a period of 12 months every five years looks great on paper, but is not practical.

The reserves were wisely created years ago for one reason — to be a strategic asset in time of national emergency.

To intentionally deploy this force on a routine and recurring basis will essentially reduce the force to rubble. Recruiting and retention, already in decline, will only worsen.

Further, the new five-year training cycle increases the annual training requirements from 14 days in the first and second years to 21 days in year three, and to 29 days in year four.

This policy places an unrealistic burden on civilian employers. We cannot expect civilian employers to look favorably on employees who can only work four out of five years, and must spend increasing time away from the job for annual training.

This increased annual training requirement and one-in-five-years deployment philosophy will subject employees who are reservists to discrimination. They will leave the Reserve.

If you had a choice of hiring someone who must be replaced one out of every five years versus an employee who had no expectation of deployment, who would you hire?

Small-business entities just cannot survive if their only employee (in the case of sole proprietorship) or a key employee (in a small business) has to be away for a year.

Such a strategy of planned deployments once every five years will, over a short period of time, lead to attrition and result in a Reserve force comprised mostly of federal, state and municipal employees. Governmental employers are less likely to discriminate. I'm not discounting the value of government employees, but I submit such a policy will cause us to lose the variety of experience and knowledge our civilian citizen-warriors bring to the force.

Lt. Col. David S. Miller (ret.)  
Newton, N.J.

---

# 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**

## A MILITARY DICTATOR'S WORST NIGHTMARE COME TRUE



President Manuel Zelaya, forced out of Honduras by the Army Military Dictatorship that took control of the country, shakes hands with a Honduran soldier at the Las Manos border station on the Honduras border July 24, 2009. Honduran soldiers were ordered to the border with Nicaragua on Friday against an attempt by Zelaya to enter the country after he was removed in a military coup and sent into exile. REUTERS/Oswaldo Rivas

---

### Honduras: The Military Dictatorship's New Flag



July 22, 2009 By Al Giordano, Narcosphere.narconews.com

---

# **“Us Soldiers Ended The War In So Many Ways”**

## **[Beyond The Hype: Cronkite And The Vietnam War]**

From: Dennis Serdel [Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade]  
To: GI Special  
Sent: July 21, 2009 9:56 AM  
Subject: Beyond the Hype: Cronkite and the Vietnam War

We never saw Cronkite up north in the jungles where we were, in fact, we never saw any reporters before or after Tet '68 or at anytime during our whole Tour, maybe it was too dangerous or they did Not care or we were Not important.

We never saw Bob Hope USO Shows, the United States was like a small Dot on the other side of the World to us.

Forgive me, I forgot that us Soldiers ended the War in so many ways, like a group of 10 of us Not hiking 6 miles into the blackness of night to check out a small village, but only hiking just over the first small hill between us and our Company and calling back through the night that we see nothing.

Or maybe we were just Sane 19 and 20 year olds when given a Suicide Mission of Insanity to Not do it for there are better examples.

---

# **“Malcolm X Warned Against Both The Stealth Democratic Foxes And The Unrepentant Carnivorous Republican Wolves”**

July 21, 2009 By CARL FINAMORE, Counterpunch [Excerpts]

**Just as it doesn't feel very good being stabbed anywhere, it also doesn't really make any difference whether you are eaten, as Malcolm X pithily observed, by the “liberal' fox or the 'conservative' wolf.”**

Malcolm X himself didn't want to be anyone's lunch so he warned against both the stealth Democratic foxes and the unrepentant carnivorous Republican wolves of his day.

Consider the largely unchallenged lies of racist politicians like Senator Sessions and commentators like Pat Buchanan who flagrantly mischaracterize affirmative action during Congressional hearings for Judge Sotomayor.

The Democratic majority sidestepped the whole discussion instead of defending affirmative action gains in the last quarter century.

**And then there is the painful truth that discussion of a Single-Payer government medical plan has been completely marginalized by both parties in Congress.**

**Grass-roots organizations are doing their best to expose the lies spread by insurance companies but there is no echo in Washington and no prospect for mass street actions proposed by any organization with real clout.**

It's also completely wrong to expect the administration to lead a staunch defense of Medicare, Social Security and the GI Bill as three examples of essential government programs benefitting millions?

It won't happen. The job has to be done by a re-energized social protest movement. Right-wing mouthpieces would stutter and stumble if challenged to explain their opposition to these hugely popular programs as "socialistic."

Finally, we had to endure the ridiculous spectacle of reactionaries mischaracterizing President Obama's plan to lapse Bush's tax largesse for the super rich as "Marxist redistribution of wealth."

Where are the voices from powerful national organizations explaining loud and clear that dramatic and steady redistribution of wealth upward actually began in the early 1980s and, oops, continued under both Democratic and Republican administrations?

Perhaps the truth is too embarrassing for some of President Obama's liberal allies to admit, but whatever the reason, none of these conservative political blows will be answered effectively unless unions and progressive organizations stop waiting for cues from "friends" in Washington.

That's why it was so refreshing to see significant opposition briefly emerge to successfully shed a bright light on Obama's inaction and extreme hypocrisy regarding equal rights for Gays. The White House felt the pressure.

We must honestly admit, however, that overall, recent attacks against working people, women and minorities have gone largely unchallenged. No national demonstrations, rallies or protests. No civil-disobedience sit-ins, nothing.

Joe Hill possessed the absolute defiance and determination we need today in our reform movement leaders. Hill was an Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) itinerant labor organizer who was murdered by the mine-owners controlled Utah state government in 1915. Joe's admonition to his supporters that they "don't waste any time mourning, organize," is of course known the world over.

I don't see any of these bold, daring impulses today from leaders of our larger political organizations. But there is room for optimism.

The historical record provides ample evidence that people will ultimately act in their class interests.

Sooner or later, today's profoundly depoliticized mass will experience a liberating social awakening just as yesteryears' slaves, serfs and colonial oppressed have all eventually done.

That's when modern Joe Hill rebels will emerge and perhaps be capable of assuming the leadership of the unions and other mass organizations of working people.

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

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

## **Our 'Patriotic Duty' "The Ministry Of Defence Has Been Using 'Covert Surveillance' Techniques On Soldiers Returning From Combat, Who Claim Disability Compensation"**

From: Felicity Arbuthnot  
To: GI Special  
Sent: July 20, 2009  
Subject: Our 'patriotic duty.'

*'Patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.'* Dr Samuel Johnson (1709-1784.)

Last week Britain's Prime Minister Gordon Brown instructed the people of Britain of their 'patriotic duty' to support the troops.

The Manchester based Iraq Solidarity Campaign had just launched an initiative with Combat Stress, to raise funds and awareness for: '..everyone who has been affected by the consequences of the Iraq invasion', troops and Iraqis alike.

Combat Stress, which this year celebrates its 90th anniversary of dealing with traumatised troops, from shell shock in the first World War to the more recently



diagnosed Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, currently cares for 4,000 service personnel, which, they state, is the tip of the iceberg.

Having launched with a successful information and fund raising event, central Manchester's busy Stretford Mall shopping centre agreed to allow a stall for the initiative.

However, it transpires that they must have public liability insurance, at a cost of approximately £400. As the average donation is about £1, the first £400+ would go, not to the traumatised, but to support this ludicrous New Labour piece of red tape.

It is hard to understand what damage to the public could be inflicted by a small tressle table, a collection tin and a quantity of A5 leaflets.

**Meanwhile, it further transpires that the Ministry of Defence has been using 'covert surveillance' techniques on soldiers returning from combat, who claim disability compensation.**

**This is just the latest shoddy attempt to evade supporting financially those mentally and physically injured in the armed forces returning from Britain's questionable, illegal and currently unwinnable marauding in far away lands in which they have no business, or in preparation for the onslaught.**

Those who were used as guinea pigs in Britain's nuclear tests in the Pacific in the 1950's, given no protection and instructed to attend the detonations, but cover their eyes with their hands, suffered possibly the most massive X-ray known to mankind, as they saw the bones in their hands, exactly as that on the medical plate version.

Predictably they suffered life threatening and lifeterminating conditions. Many have died and those ill and suffering ever since, still fight on for compensation in their ailing twilight years. A recent High Court ruling, finally awarded the compensation they sought, but the legal wrangling continues.

After the 1991 forty two day blitzkrieg on Iraq, what came to be known as Gulf War Syndrome hit those who had been involved in numerous of the coalition personnel. British troops, so 'valued' by Mr Brown, had, it transpired, been given multiple vaccinations, some untested.

Guinea pigs again.

Countless medical records including the inoculations given and subsequent symptoms, personal medical records vital for future treatment and assessment, simply went missing - for ever. There was also definitely something in the air too. Australians on a war ship well off the coast of southern Iraq also became ill.

That something, as became known about a year later, was chemically toxic and radioactive DU (depleted uranium) used in US and British missiles and bullets. It is, of course, neither depleted nor alone uranium (which remains to poison the earth and the gene pool for four and a half billion years.) The forces, the Iraqi population and the earth was subject to another lethal experiment, which even outdid the unspeakable evil of the Pacific testing, since these weapons are created from the nuclear waste from the

nuclear fuel cycle and contain the whole lethal cocktail. 'Nuclear waste with fins on', as one expert described this unprecedented assault on the planet and humanity.

When British veterans Ray Bristow and Colin Purcell-Lee, both medics in the 1991 assault, blocked at every turn by the Ministry of Defence from finding out what was causing their life threatening symptoms, undertook the exhausting overland journey from Jordan to Baghdad, to attend an international Conference on the toxic threats the bombardment had caused, where some world foremost experts were to speak, they returned to a shock.

They had been collecting urine specimens from sick Gulf veterans and sending them to two specialists, one in Canada and another in Bremen, Germany, for analysis, and meticulously documenting the results. Those results included the fact that almost all of the sickest veterans had over one hundred times the 'safe' level of uranium in their bodies.

**The police had raided Bristow's home and removed all the painstakingly gathered data and test results.**

Four eminent specialists involved in trying to unravel the troops' problems, two in Canada and two in the United States received threats on their lives, one was forced to flee across the States from his Professorship in a southern university, the other Professor fled the country.

When the tests, which had come back with such chilling reading from two different academic institutions in two different countries, were re-run by the Ministry of Defence's medical unit formed to 'assist' the 1991 Gulf war veterans, they came back negative.

No surprise there then.

In December 2003, ten months after the invasion of Iraq, the Defence Correspondent of the (London) Daily Telegraph, Michael Smith, alleged that the Ministry of Defence was 'forcing out sick Gulf war veterans', using 'manning control system to avoid paying soldiers medical pensions.

Neuro-toxin damage has been recorded in personnel who have served in Iraq has shown to have led to brain damage, arthritis and chronic fatigue - and frontal-lobe damage.

And the Ministry sleights of hand continue still.

A 'patriotic duty' to support them eh?

No, clobbered by successive government's and for eleven years, New Labour's penny pinching, duplicity, demented by-laws and paranoia at every turn. And Gordon Brown's hypocrisy is without bounds.

The final irony worth mentioning is that Combat Stress is supported by the Ministry of Defence.

---

# **‘The Hurt Locker’**

## **An EOD Team Stars In A Great Movie**

### **That’s Set In Iraq**

#### **[FILM REVIEW]**



PHOTO COURTESY OF MAPLE PICTURES

7.20.09 By Chuck Vinch, Army Times

Films about war have been a mainstay of the movie business since its inception. But for whatever reason, the Iraq war has proven to be stubbornly barren ground for Hollywood.

If any film can change that, it’s director Kathryn Bigelow’s “The Hurt Locker,” mainly because while the setting is Iraq, this is not an “Iraq war” movie. It’s just a great war movie.

And as all great war movies do, it avoids broader geopolitics to put a tight, intense, ground-level focus on the grunts doing the sweating and bleeding.

That’s hardly the film’s only ace in the hole. The grunts at the center of the action aren’t the familiar infantrymen or pilots, but explosive ordnance disposal experts — an eclectic vocation that puts an intriguing and irresistible twist on things.

As Bigelow surely recognized when she first saw the script by Mark Boal, a journalist who was embedded with the Army in Iraq in 2004, this is not about the violence of war, but rather the absence of violence.

The film is filled with moments as eerily quiet as they are starkly terrifying. When a bomb-disposal team faces the mother of all improvised explosive devices — a spidery nest of eight serially rigged 155mm shells — you can’t help holding your breath and cringing in your seat, on edge for that big bang to erupt in a smoky cloud laced with fine red mist.

A third reason the film works so well is the canny decision by Bigelow and Boal to cast as their leads three fine but relatively unknown actors, and then drop in brief supporting cameos from more familiar faces. Two of the three leads are the steely, no-nonsense Sgt. J.T. Sanborn (Anthony Mackie) and the young, inexperienced Spc. Owen Eldridge (Brian Geraghty). On their three-man EOD team, Sanborn coordinates the mission while Eldridge's primary duty is to provide covering fire.

The actual dismantling of the bombs is handled by the team's third member. In the harrowing opening scene, that's Sgt. Matt Thompson (Guy Pearce, one of the aforementioned recognizable faces), and the fact that it's a cameo pretty much tells you how the scene plays out.

Thompson is soon replaced by Staff Sgt. William James (Jeremy Renner), who radically changes the team dynamic — not necessarily for the better — with an unnervingly reckless approach to his work.

Once the three are in place, the film explores the dynamics among the men as they head out on their missions. (The film is set in 2004, when IEDs were just coming into vogue as the insurgent weapon of choice).

Sanborn and James repeatedly clash over their vastly different styles, with Eldridge, seeking a mentor to help him stave off his growing sense of disillusionment and dread, caught between them.

A main theme of Boal's script is the addictive nature of combat, set up by a simple, powerful quote from author Chris Hedges: "War is a drug." James is the poster boy for this idea.

Bigelow and Boal slowly peel back the bomb expert's layers to reveal a bravado that borders on psychosis. He knows he's being consumed by the adrenaline rush but just can't give it up, not even for his wife (Evangeline Lilly) and baby back home.

The film is jammed with memorable moments, including a long scene in the open desert in which the EOD team stumbles across some British troops and then gets pinned down by some very persistent insurgent snipers. (Hey, is that Ralph Fiennes as one of the Brit commandos?) The sequence will make you just as hot, thirsty and sweaty as the grunts on screen.

Bigelow — who has a special place in my heart for directing my all-time favorite Keanu Reeves flick, "Point Break" ("You're goin' down, Bodhi!") — gives the film a gritty, almost documentary feel that serves the subject matter well.

She and Boal make only one wrong move, a scene in which James heads off the reservation into downtown Baghdad on a misguided revenge mission — in cammie pants and a sweatshirt hoodie, no less. It's an off-key sequence that should have been left on the cutting room floor. But that slight miscue aside, "The Hurt Locker" is the bomb.

---

# DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

STRATEGY: AFGHANISTAN:



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

# CLASS WAR REPORTS



---

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](http://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.**