

GI SPECIAL 7H14:

**MAKING IT HAPPEN:
A Military Resistance Organizers'
Conference:**



U.S. Army soldier in Beijia village in Arab Jabour, south of Baghdad. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

**September 6, 2009
10 AM – 6 PM
Savannah, GA 31401**

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

THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE WAR

**THIS IS AN ORGANIZERS CONFERENCE LIMITED TO PEOPLE WHO WISH
TO ACT TOGETHER TO SUPPORT ARMED FORCES RESISTANCE TO**

IMPERIAL WARS BY DIRECT FACE-TO-FACE CONTACT WITH THE TROOPS.

The Objective:

This conference is to provide a time and place to discuss and draft operating plans for going out to active duty bases in an organized way in 2009-2010.

Bridging The Gap, The Military Project April 2008 conference, made the argument about the importance of reaching out to troops.

The objective 9.6.09 is not to turn out the general public or large numbers of people to hear that argument all over again, but to bring together committed activists, especially IVAW activists, who want to meet and develop plans for action: coordinated outreach to active duty bases.

Because people now in the armed forces or working with them will have fresh ideas about approaching a particular base, no detailed format is pre-announced as binding, within the general framework and understanding that outreach is to be led by Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans, with civilians in support.

Conference: Physical Layout

A group of tables put together in a large square, rather than an elevated stage and podium as at last conference, since this is an organizers meeting.

Outline Of The Day:

Welcome & Introduction: Why We Are Here Today

10 AM:

Welcome

5 minutes presentation

**By Jason Hurd, Savannah Iraq Veterans Against The War & Thomas Barton,
Military Project; GI Special**

Report on how discussion will be organized: presentation followed by free discussion

Restatement of theme: Advocacy and organization steps towards a campaign of national outreach to active duty members of the armed forces at military bases (best pick of active duty bases) in 2009-2010, led by veterans/active duty troops, as proposed by both Military Project and members of IVAW for some time.

10 minutes Discussion period:

Situation Reports: Review Of The Military Situation In Iraq And Afghanistan Report On The Mood In The Armed Forces

10:15 AM:

Session 1: Review of the military situation in Iraq and Afghanistan:

15 minutes presentation

By Camilo Mejia, Iraq Veterans Against The War & Thomas Barton, Military Project & GI Special

A review of where the wars are, the political/economic context, what the new regime is doing or not doing, what has changed, what has not.

30 minutes Discussion period:

11 AM

Session 2: Report on the mood in the armed forces

20 minutes presentation

By Soldier A; Active Duty, U.S. Army; Jeff Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War; Alan Stolzer, The Military Project

The mood in the armed forces within the framework of events discussed in opening session.

30 minutes discussion period

Lunch Break: Noon- 1 PM Regional Groups To Come Together

Lunch may be a good time for regions to meet in smaller groups, before a large planning meeting is held.

Strategy:

A New Approach For A New Situation

1 PM

Session 3:

30 minute presentation

By Jason Hurd, Savannah Iraq Veterans Against The War & Fabian Bouthillette, Los Angeles Iraq Veterans Against The War & Elaine Brower, The Military Project & Military Families Speak Out.

The importance of marching out to troops at several active duty bases on the same day, and how that is key to organizing resistance to the war.

IVAW members committed to outreach will lead, with civilian support.

This will gain media coverage for IVAW, since media has become uninterested in covering the same kind of anti-war actions in Washington again and again. Those no longer gain much attention, but this will be new and fresh.

The media attention will help shift public attention to the idea of direct outreach to active duty troops, and open that door for others to follow.

30 minutes discussion period

Organizing Action: Learning From The Denver DNC Experience

2 PM

Session 4:

30 minutes presentation

By Jeff Englehart, Colorado Iraq Veterans Against The War, on the immensely successful IVAW action at DNC in Denver, Colorado led by IVAW in uniform, then a huge banner that said "We Support GI Resistance," and civilians marched behind that.

This as a case study for organizing future coordinated marches on bases. They will discuss how this was organized, the problems, and the successes.

IVAW members have stressed the importance of marching in uniform, and the immensely powerful impact this made at Denver.

30 minutes discussion period

Making It Happen:

Planning Coordinated Outreach To Active Duty Bases:

3 PM

Session 5:

30 minutes presentation

By Jason Hurd, Savannah Iraq Veterans Against The War; Jeff Englehart, Colorado Iraq Veterans Against The War; Fabian Bouthillette, Los Angeles Iraq Veterans Against The War.

Planning the coordinated outreach to active duty bases: How many bases are realistic to focus on, where, when, etc.? Press relations.

What structure to take up for getting the work done?

- 1) A national coordinating and lead structure be elected to form a point of contact, to be in touch and coordinate outreach actions in different parts of the country? Press relations.
- 2) Regional coordinating and point of contact structure by decided on by regions so they can plan their actions? Press relations.

We are using this meeting to actually plan future operations, and should always keep that in the back of our heads.

We need to develop a vision that will bind together our action on a national level, but allow organizers at a local level to be flexible and develop tactics that will work best in their environment.

30 minute discussion period

Regional Groups Meet Together Again

4 PM

Session 6:

Camilo Mejia, Iraq Veterans Against The War chairs, introduces the objective of this session:

Organizers for regions can then take the large vision and design a specific plan for their area.

60 minutes total

Report Backs And Wrap Up

5 PM

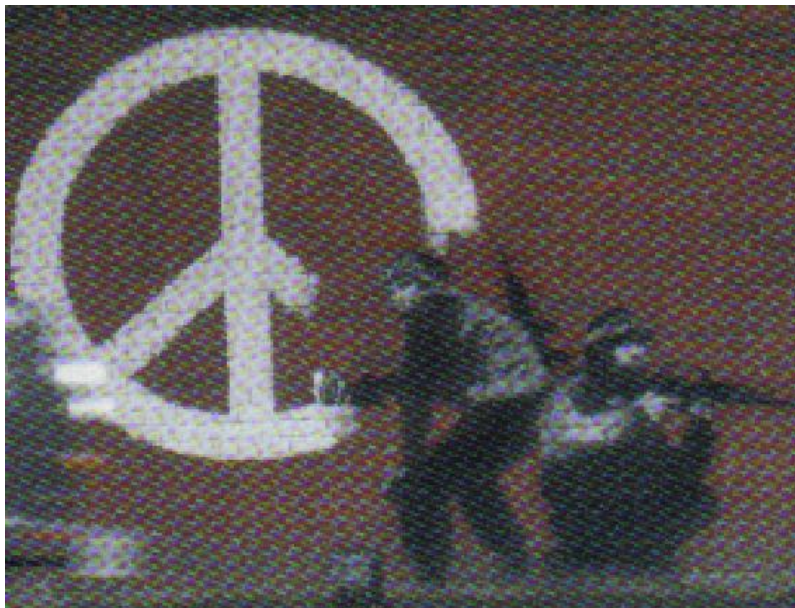
Session 7:

Camilo Mejia, Iraq Veterans Against The War chairs, introduces the objective of this session:

60 minutes total

No later than 6 PM: Conference Ends

Party Time



Tactical Painting
From Soldier X, Iraq 4.25.05

**THIS MEETING HAS BEEN ORGANIZED BY MEMBERS OF IRAQ
VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR AND THE MILITARY PROJECT,
WORKING TOGETHER:**

**Copies of this flyer from: The Military Project:
Labor Donated**

contact@militaryproject.org

917.677.8057

**If you are an IVAW member, and interested in
attending, contact the Savannah IVAW.**

If you are not an IVAW member, and interested in attending, email a request for Conference registration to:
contact@militaryproject.org

AND/OR:

If you are unable to attend, or even if you are, you can help bring a Veteran to the Conference:

An Appeal: You Can Help Active Duty Troops And Iraq/Afghanistan Veterans Meet To Organize Armed Forces Resistance To Wars Of Empire

Why will active duty troops and Iraq/Afghanistan veterans meet with civilian activists in Savannah, Georgia, Labor Day weekend?

No doubt Barrack Obama's inauguration in January was a great moment for all people concerned about ending racism and promoting the equality that Thomas Jefferson wrote about in the Declaration of Independence.

But in the context of the grand struggle to achieve equality for all humans in all areas of life, the President's inauguration was a mere baby step.

A baby step whose ensuing honeymoon period has ended.

As President Obama continues to prolong a withdrawal from Iraq and actually escalate the occupation of Afghanistan, the need to continue reaching out to and organizing with veterans protesting the occupations has never been greater.

For this reason, The Military Project is working to facilitate a meeting of anti-occupation troops in September.

This meeting is to take place near Fort Stewart in Georgia.

We are aiming to not only to make gains in the Southeast region of the United States, but to boost the profile of outreach to soldiers on a national level.

To achieve this, representatives from Iraq Veterans Against the War from around the country are being invited to lead the discussion and planning to be conducted in Georgia in September.

The Military Project will be present to share opinions and facilitate, but truly The Military Project is interested only in empowering the anti-war veterans movement.

We are asking for a donation to The Military Project that will be used for the sole purpose of transporting veterans to Georgia in September.

Your money will not be used for any sort of overhead cost.

The Military Project is taking care of that.

But we do need help bringing the veterans' representatives from around the country to this meeting.

No one's voices and no one's actions are more important than those of veterans in the struggle to bring home our armed forces from two occupations they should never have been asked to take part in.

President Obama made a lot of popular statements about ending the current "wars" in his historic campaign, but he has made it clear that we cannot count on him to turn those messages into action.

If we want the occupations to end immediately, we are going to have to work for it ourselves.

Please help The Military Project carry out its primary and sole mission of supporting the anti-war soldier.

We cannot possibly transport all of these veterans needed at the Conference in Georgia by ourselves.

Our goal is to take any donation that you make for this cause, and turn it into action that will be more significant than just a baby step in the fight for equality.

Very respectfully,

Fabian Bouthillette, Lieutenant, USNR
Member, Iraq Veterans Against the War
Member, Military Project Organizing Committee

Jeff Englehart, Former Spc., U.S. Army, Iraq Service
Member, Military Project Organizing Committee
Member, Iraq Veterans Against the War

Camilo Mejia, Former Staff Sergeant, Florida National Guard
Member, Military Project Organizing Committee
Member, Iraq Veterans Against the War

YOU CAN SEND YOUR SUPPORT BY MAIL OR CREDIT CARD:

**BY MAIL:
IF YOU SEND A CHECK OR MONEY ORDER,
Make Payable To: The Military Project**

Mail to:

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

CREDIT CARD OR PAYPAL PAYMENT THROUGH OUR PAYPAL ACCOUNT:

**CLICK ON THIS PAYPAL LINK OR COPY IT INTO YOUR
BROWSER ADDRESS FIELD:**

https://www.paypal.com/cgi-bin/webscr?cmd=_s-xclick&hosted_button_id=5069540

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

ACTION REPORTS

IVAW Outreach Action To Quantico Marine Corps Base During The Convention A Success



August 11, 2009
From: IVAW

Friday evening of the [IVAW] Convention, 36 IVAW members took a trip to nearby Quantico Marine Corps Base in Virginia, one of the largest Marine bases in the country.

IVAW members went to local bars where Marines hang out, approaching them for brief one-on-ones about IVAW and our movement.

Because Quantico is mainly a training facility, many military members IVAW encountered that night had not yet been to Iraq or Afghanistan.

Many were very interested to hear from us about our experiences on deployments and our lives afterward.

That night, IVAW outreached to over 50 active duty military members with our message.

In addition, we gained an ally in one local bar owner sympathetic to IVAW's mission who agreed to keep IVAW leaflets and materials on display at her bar.

MORE:

ACTION REPORTS WANTED: FROM YOU!

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

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

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

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

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

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

NOTE WELL:

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

All identifying information – locations, personnel – will be omitted from the reports.

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

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

The sole exception: occasions when a member of the armed services explicitly directs identifying information be published in reporting on the action.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Resistance Action

Aug 15 (KUNA) & Aug 16 (Reuters)

Iraqi police said two policemen were killed on Saturday when a bomber detonated his explosive belt near an Iraqi police patrol in the downtown district of Al-Ramadi. The explosion killed the two police officers and wounded 10 others, all with different injuries requiring them to be whisked off to hospital for treatment, said the source. (

An off-duty soldier was killed by militants near his house in southwest Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded a member of a U.S.-backed neighbourhood militia in the northern city of Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb targeting a provincial council member's convoy wounded him and two guards in the east of Mosul, police said.

Insurgents shot a soldier dead at an Iraqi army checkpoint in western Mosul, police said.

Insurgents hurled a hand grenade at a police checkpoint in central Mosul, wounding two policemen and four civilians.

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

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**WELCOME TO OBAMA'S LETHAL
NOWHERE:
FUTILE EXERCISE:**

ONLY 251,125 SQUARE MILES MORE TO OCCUPY:



U.S. Marines from the 3rd Marines at an observation post near Now Zad in Afghanistan's Helmand province June 19, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



U.S. Marine from 3rd Marines walks down from an observation post near Now Zad in Afghanistan's Helmand province, June 19, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



U.S. Marines from the 3rd Marines run d towards their vehicles as they battle Taliban fighters near Now Zad in Afghanistan's Helmand province, June 20, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



June 22, 2009: U.S. Marines from the 3rd Marines in the village of Khwaja Jamal near their base near Now Zad in Afghanistan's Helmand province. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



U.S. Marines from 3rd Marines walk to their base near Now Zad in Afghanistan's Helmand province, returning from a patrol to the village of Khwaja Jamal June 22, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



U.S. soldiers from the 5th Stryker Brigade during a patrol along the border with Pakistan, on the outskirts of Spin Boldak, Afghanistan, Aug. 7, 2009. (AP Photo/Emilio Morenatti)



Marines with 2nd MEB, walk toward the village of Khaji Jamal during a patrol Aug. 9, 2009, in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Julie Jacobson)



U.S. Marines just outside the village of Dahaneh Aug. 12, 2009, in the Helmand Province of Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Julie Jacobson)

Three UK Soldiers Killed In Helmand

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

16 August 2009 BBC

Three British soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan, taking the number of UK fatalities to 204.

The Ministry of Defence said the soldiers were from the 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers.

They died following an explosion while on patrol near Sangin in Helmand province on Sunday morning. Next of kin have been informed.

British Soldier Killed Near Sangin

16 Aug 09 Ministry of Defence

It is with great sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that a soldier from 2nd Battalion The Royal Regiment of Fusiliers has been killed.

The soldier died as a result of injuries sustained in an explosion that happened while on a foot patrol near Sangin, northern Helmand Province on Saturday 15 August.

Soldier Dies In UK Of Wounds Sustained Near Musa Qaleh

16 Aug 09 Ministry of Defence

It is with great sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that a soldier, from The 2nd Battalion The Royal Welsh died of wounds on Saturday 15 August at the Royal College of Defence Medicine, Selly Oak.

The soldier had been wounded while on a vehicle patrol near Musa Qaleh in Helmand Province on the morning of 13 August 2009.

Irish Mercenary Killed In Herat

16/08/09 Irish News

A former regular soldier who was born in Co Derry has been killed in Afghanistan while working for a private security firm, it was confirmed today.

The man from Ballykelly died in Herat in the west of the war-torn country.

It is understood he was caught in an ambush, but it was not known whether it was a bomb or gun attack.

It is understood he was employed by London based ArmorGroup International which classifies itself as a private military security firm founded in 1981 and which was acquired by G4S last year.

It provides protective security services, risk management consultancy, security training and mine action services.

**“The Taliban Don’t Hide, They
Live With The People”
“We Average Two Or Three
Attacks A Day Against The
Americans And Their Allies”
“The More Troops They Send, The
More Targets We Have, So It’s Good”
“The Foreign Troops Are Non-Muslims
And There Was No Referendum From
The People To Ask Them To Come Here”**



A Taliban fighter loyal to Jalaluddin Haqqan. Photograph: Ghaith Abdul-Ahad

[Thanks to Linda O, who sent this in.]

“Ninety-five per cent of the people here support the Taliban. They give the Taliban shelter. The businessmen and traders give them money, and the five per cent who work for the government look the other way and wave you through if you are with Taliban. The tribes here are very strong. It would bring great shame on you to arrest your cousin.

15 August 2009 By Ghaith Abdul-Ahad, The Guardian [Excerpts]

The provinces of Khost, Paktia and Paktika in south-eastern Afghanistan are dominated by one name: Jalaluddin Haqqani.

A famous commander, tribal chief and cleric, Haqqani came to prominence during the war against the Soviets. In more than 20 years of fighting, he built an extensive network of influence that covered eastern Afghanistan and the tribal area of Waziristan in Pakistan, and reached as far abroad as the Gulf states, which he visited often.

Once a minister in the Taliban government, he is now aligned with their leader, Mullah Omar, but has retained independence and control over his men.

His operations have struck deep into the territory controlled by Hamid Karzai's government, reaching targets in Kabul.

We waited for Haqqani's Taliban in a roadside cafe not far from the Pakistani border, where old Russian trucks decorated with hundreds of little bells, painted waterfalls and eagles and religious slogans swayed under the weight of rice, sugar and flour they brought from Pakistan, and the illegally logged trees they carried in the other direction.

It was noon and we had a few hours to kill.

Like everywhere in Afghanistan, there was road etiquette to respect.

From nine in the morning until four in the afternoon, the government controls the country's main arteries.

The rest of the time they belong to the Taliban.

The air in the cafe was filled with the potent smell of meat stew and damp feet. Bedding and cushions were piled at one end of the room, while at the other end men hastily finished their prayers, then sat cross-legged on the mottled carpets where two young boys set plates of rice and stew in front of them.

"Here, we are all of the same tribe," said a young Pashtun poet and journalist. He had a flimsy beard and eyes the colour of honey.

"Ninety-five per cent of the people here support the Taliban. They give the Taliban shelter. The businessmen and traders give them money, and the five per cent who work for the government look the other way and wave you through if you are with Taliban. The tribes here are very strong. It would bring great shame on you to arrest your cousin.

"The situation is very simple here," he continued. "We are Muslims and tribal people, the Taliban are Muslim and from the same tribes, the foreign troops are non-Muslims and there was no referendum from the people to ask them to come here.

"God told us to fight the occupation so the people are against the occupation. The people are ideologically similar to the Taliban, so the Taliban don't hide, they live with the people."

A driver with a big bushy beard lay on his back, hugged an ageing tape player and listened with closed eyes to a melancholic Pashtun woman singing about love, longing and betrayal. His right foot drew circles in the air.

An hour later another song, loud and screechy, filled the room. A young boy chanted, drowning the driver's love songs.

In front of the restaurant, in the middle of the road, an old pickup truck was parked and an old Talib with a big black turban and a chest-long beard stood next to it.

"March to your trenches, oh Taliban," the boy sang. "March to your trenches." The chant emanated from a loudspeaker on top of the car.

Several men walked over to the Talib and dropped money in his hands, donations to the Taliban.

In the back of his truck three teenage Taliban sat on sacks of rice and flour donated by other villagers. The poet smiled. His point made, he went back inside to finish his tea.

Our ride arrived around five in the evening.

We drove out of the village, down a steep slope, around the side of a hill and entered a valley where any pretence of government control vanished.

The only road here is a shallow river that twists between boulders and trees and is littered with rocks. We drove along it for two hours, against a muddy current that crashed down from the mountains above. Sheets of rain fell from the dark sky.

Past a bend in the river where the valley was so narrow that the trees formed a canopy over it, small terraced gardens protruded from the cliffs on each side, almost touching each other.

"This is where we meet after our operations," said one of the Taliban in the car.

Villagers hopped on and off the back of the truck as we drove along, grabbing lifts, and the hum of the Taliban chants from a tape player broke through the sound of the rain and the waterfalls.

Leaving the riverbed, we drove uphill through a thick forest, past two scouts, who lay as motionless as the rocks around them, and stopped in a clearing in the wood guarded by two [guards].

In the fading light I could make out here and there guns, hats, combat trousers, boots, a beard, another gun and a white flag.

As we climbed the slope into the camp, the scattered objects became men, and by the time the stout commander with his cap pushed to the back of his head shook my hand, I could see a whole unit of more than 100 spread out on the wooded hilltop.

Instead of the trademark Taliban uniforms of turbans, eyeliner and flip-flops, these men wore Russian and Nato poncho raincoats over their shalwars, and boots and trainers.

Most striking was the way they held their guns. Instead of carrying them in the standard militia style, on their shoulders or holding them like walking sticks, they wore them strapped around their chests, one hand by the trigger and the other holding the muzzle down.

They stood just like the Americans.

The stout commander, Mawlawi Jalali, sat surrounded by his men. One carried the white flag of the Taliban and another a video camera, which he kept pointed at me at all times.

“We are Afghans fighting the jihad and defending our country under the leadership of Jalaluddin Haqqani,” the commander said. He spoke in a schoolmasterly tone. As well as being a commander, Mawlawi Jalali is a teacher in Haqqani’s madrasa.

“The Americans toppled the emirate (of the Taliban) and we are fighting to bring it back. When the Taliban were here the jihad was only in Afghanistan. Now, thanks to the Americans, the jihad has spread to many other countries.”

“We use different tactics: mining the streets, fighting and direct attacks. Here in this camp we make all the preparations and have all the men we need for these different tactics.”

What about the new American surge, I asked. Did it concern him?

“We attack the towns, like in Wazi Zadran, where there is a strong American and Afghan garrison, and mine the streets every day.

“We average two or three attacks a day against the Americans and their allies.

“The more troops they send, the more targets we have, so it’s good.”

Allahu akbar, the men around him murmured in response.

He went on to explain the difference between his men and the average Taliban.

“We follow Haqqani. He was a smart mujahid against the Soviets and during all his wars he taught us how to focus on training and teaching. I was taught by him and most of our men were trained by him and his commanders. We have order, because we had good teaching and good training.”

By this time, night had begun to fall, dogs barked and the men melted into the darkness. Only a flicker of light from a mobile phone separated the ghosts around me from the mountain behind them.

“We have mujahideen from the time of the emirate, but we have new fighters too,” Mawlawi Jalali told me.

“The young are keen to join, but we tell them stay put, finish your madrasa now and then come. We can’t provide for all of them now and we can’t get them supplies.

“The government and the Americans control the streets and the cities because of the planes, but the mountains are for us.”

The number of men stationed on this single mountain cliff might explain how the Haqqani Taliban have managed recently to launch bold and relatively large attacks.

The hum of a generator rose and fell in the background, sometimes drowning our conversation. I looked for signs of electricity, but apart from a few flickering oil lamps in a faraway village, there was nothing but darkness for kilometres on each side of the valley. I realised suddenly what a “generator hum” meant on a mountain in the border region between Afghanistan and Pakistan.

“Drone ... plane ... sky ...” I mumbled my words, closed my eyes and waited for the whoosh of a missile.

The commander and his men laughed. “These are media lies, that Americans can see us,” he said.

“Look now, we are a big group of Taliban. There are 200 men here and they can’t see us. We believe in God, so don’t be scared.”

Another fighter spoke up: “If you stand still in the dark and not move they can’t see you. It’s written in the Qu’ran.”

On the way to the camp I had been told of other drone-dodging techniques.

If you are on a motorcycle and the drone fires a missile, jump off and the missile will follow the motorcycle. If you are with a large group, stop, like musical statues, and the drone will confuse you with the trees.

A young fighter called for prayer and the commander and half his men lined up to pray, their guns on the ground in front of them. When they had finished, the other half began to pray.

“We are Afghans, we have lived all our lives in the trenches and caves,” said the commander as he shook my hand. “We tell the Americans to stop this war, we are not tired.” His fatigued voice, however, told a different story.

The men separated into three groups. Two headed to different villages, while the third climbed up the cliff to take up fighting positions. We followed one group down to a small village.

After half an hour we were among houses, and the men dispersed. We waited outside a green door while a Talib went in to talk to the owners. In a valley where everyone

comes from the same tribe and everyone is someone's cousin, finding a shelter for the night is simply a matter of knocking on a door.

The family gave us their largest room and six of us took their places, on cushions and mattresses that were still warm. A kerosene lamp was lit and we shared a dinner of eggs, tomato, yoghurt and dry, dark bread.

"You are not the first Iraqi here," said one of the fighters. He was tall and thin and poor-looking, with a big beard and clothes that were a faded grey. "There is an Iraqi commander who is fighting in the mountains. He has been here for many years and he is very good." He scooped up bits of eggs and tomatoes with a piece of bread.

Like everyone else, the tall fighter was a graduate of madrasas. Unlike other Taliban, Haqqani's men do not divide their time between farming or working and fighting. "When we don't fight, we take religious classes with the emir (commander)," explained the tall fighter.

He was a specialist in ambushes, he said, and explained his tactics. Because of the threat from planes, the fighters didn't move around in big groups any more: they travelled to the attack areas in twos and threes.

He positioned a glass and a piece of bread and a cucumber in a triangle. The glass represented the target.

"We hit them (the glass) with a mine and we position ourselves here (bread and cucumber) and shoot. Then when the attack is over we move towards the woods before the helicopters arrive."

After dinner the men wrapped themselves in their blankets and scarves and slept. We left the house soon after morning prayers as a thick mist that had settled in the bottom of the valley was chased away by the early morning sun, which filtered down the mountains through the cypresses.

Men squatted in the fields, relieving themselves. walked in the muddy lanes. Women with heads wrapped loosely in colourful scarves walked in small groups carrying buckets of water. A young girl with wild hair and wide eyes followed us at a distance.

At the entrance to the village, local men sat on the edge of the river wrapped in their scarves and blankets and looked intently at everything that moved: the three trucks piled high with logged trees, the other villagers, and the Taliban and their guests.

We met Mawlawi Jalali again in a different field. A few of his men walked between the high grass and trees, patrolling the valley.

"The villagers are good," he said. "They feed us and give us shelter, even if we are 100 men, but sometimes their hearts are weak – they think that the foreigners bring development projects to help them, which is not true. This is why we have to forcefully stop these projects, to protect the villagers."

What about schools, and education for the villagers? "We have no problem with education, it's the curriculums that we have problems with. Under our government, when

we taught the children the letter J it stood for jihad. Now it's jar (meaning neighbour). So we closed the schools, but we have madrasas for the children.”

As we drove out of the valley the Taliban pickup truck again gave lifts to villagers. Old women, young men and couples held on to the sides of the car as it climbed over the rocks and drove through the water.

On a mountain road outside the valley, a group of contractors and their heavily-armed security escorts were clearing the road of debris. It was the wreckage of one of their cars, an SUV that had been blown in half earlier in the week. Bits of blackened flesh lay on the road and a piece of blue cloth hung from a bush.

We drove on, down from the high mountains of eastern Afghanistan towards Kabul.

Welcome To Now Zad; [Have Some Mortar Shells]

Aug. 16, 2009 CBS/AP

Insurgents managed to fire six mortar shells directly at the Marines' main Forward Operation Base in Now Zad on Sunday, the AP saw. Troops responded with over a dozen mortar shots aimed at the part of the valley under Taliban control.

The exchange occurred just as Helmand's governor was raising the Afghan national flag on a nearby Marines' outpost where Afghan police are meant to settle.

Welcome To Liberated Afghanistan: “So The Americans Haven't Decided Yet”

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

15 August 2009 Kate Clark, BBC [Excerpts]

So, who is going to be the next president? The question was put to me a year ago, by a friend who is more political than most Afghans.

He is a former mujahid - he fought the Soviet armies as a young man and is too honest for his own good.

Like many Afghans, he is completely disheartened by the corruption that has engulfed his country. But he was looking to the future, hence the question.

“I have no idea,” I replied. “The elections are ages away.”

“Ah,” he said, “so the Americans haven’t decided yet.”

It is a generally held belief here that foreigners in general and Americans in particular will decide next week’s election.

Resistance Action

Aug 15 (KUNA) & Aug 16 (Reuters)

Iraqi police said two policemen were killed on Saturday when a bomber detonated his explosive belt near an Iraqi police patrol in the downtown district of Al-Ramadi. The explosion killed the two police officers and wounded 10 others, all with different injuries requiring them to be whisked off to hospital for treatment, said the source.(

An off-duty soldier was killed by militants near his house in southwest Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded a member of a U.S.-backed neighbourhood militia in the northern city of Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb targeting a provincial council member’s convoy wounded him and two guards in the east of Mosul, police said.

Insurgents shot a soldier dead at an Iraqi army checkpoint in western Mosul, police said.

Insurgents hurled a hand grenade at a police checkpoint in central Mosul, wounding two policemen and four civilians.

SOMALIA WAR REPORTS

Resistance Attacks In El Dher District

Aug 14 (Garowe Online)

Al Shabaab [nationalist insurgents] spokesman Sheikh Ali “Dheere” Mohamud told reporters in Mogadishu that Al Shabaab seized control of El Dher district.

“Praise to Allah, we achieved victory in our battle against Ahlu Sunnah, which is supported by Ethiopia,” Sheikh Ali Dheere said.

Local sources in El Dher district said that the warring factions “remain on the outskirts of town.” Ahlu Sunnah militias took control of El Dher district earlier this week.

Ahlu Sunnah and Al Shabaab have been fighting for control of Galgadud region since late 2008, when the Ahlu Sunnah militia was formed to fight against Al Shabaab's northbound expansion.

TROOP NEWS

HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS



The remains of Army Spc. Andrew Roughton at Dover Air Force Base, Del. on, July 21, 2009. Roughton, from Houston, Texas, was killed in Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

Latest Death Brings UK Afghan Combat Toll To 200

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

8.15.09 UKPA

[Prime Minister] Gordon Brown has pledged to press ahead with the "vital" mission in Afghanistan as the UK death toll hit 200.

The latest soldier, from The 2nd Battalion The Royal Welsh, died on Saturday at the Royal College of Defence Medicine, in Selly Oak, West Midlands. He had been on vehicle patrol near Musa Qal'eh in Helmand province when the explosion happened on Thursday morning. His next of kin have been informed.

Earlier, three British soldiers were said to have died while providing security for a meeting of tribal elders in the run-up to Afghanistan's crucial elections.

Two of the servicemen killed by a blast had died trying to save a colleague injured in an earlier explosion.

Lance Bombardier Matthew Hatton, 23, of 40th Regiment Royal Artillery, was wounded along with two colleagues in the initial attack in Sangin on Thursday.

Captain Mark Hale and Rifleman Daniel Wild, both from 2nd Battalion The Rifles, were carrying him to a helicopter landing zone when there was a second explosion, killing L/Bdr Hatton and Rfn Wild. Capt Hale died of his injuries later in hospital.

No To Obama's War



Fort Hood, Texas: Sergeant Travis Bishop being led away after his courtmartial August 14 for refusing to deploy to Afghanistan flashes a peace sign to onlookers. (Photo: Eric Thompson) Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Project, who sent this in.]

“The Titanic Of The Ground” Lockheed Martin’s “Hard To Tip Over” Combat Vehicle Tips Over During Demonstration

August 14, 2009, by Alex, Army Of Dude

The Titanic of the ground tipped over during a media demonstration of Lockheed Martin's combat vehicle, the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle.

The vehicle will likely replace Humvees for the Army and Marines. For some reason, they let a journalist test drive the vehicle. "Coming to you live from my broken femur!"

Couldn't they just put a turret in a Canyonero and save us a few million bucks?

"I Will Tell You, Very Hard To Tip Over"

8.14.09 Live Leak & News 10

TIOGA COUNTY, N.Y. – Lockheed Martin touted it as the media's chance to get an up close look at their latest military vehicle. But it turned out far differently than anyone planned.

It was a showcase for the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle being developed for the Army and Marines. The truck just surpassed the important threshold of 50,000 test miles, including 2,000 miles a week of rigorous secondary and off-road testing at Lockheed's Owego track.

"All of these trucks are expeditionary. That means they can go aboard an expeditionary ship like the humvees do today," said Louis DeSantis, Vice President of JLTD Systems.

"The speed, the spec is 74 miles per hour. These will exceed the specifications fully armored at 24,000 pounds and I will tell you, very hard to tip over."

After the interviews, reporters were invited to take the vehicle for a test drive on the cross-country track. News 10 Now reporter Neil St. Clair was third to go behind the driver seat, with one of our photographers in the passenger seat and a Lockheed Martin test driver in the back.

As Neil came off a hill and rounded a curve, the test drive went terribly wrong.

The truck flipped over and was damaged.

We are thankful that our crew and the Lockheed Martin employee walked away from the crash with only minor injuries.

Lockheed Martin says they have begun an incident review as a result of the crash.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

Five Ways Scumsucking Rat Car Dealers Rip Off Soldiers (And Everyone Else)



[Photo used under Creative Commons license by Flickr user bitzcelt]

By Stephanie Mencimer, July/August 2009 Issue, Mother Jones

THE PHANTOM TRADE: Navy Culinary Specialist Joe Lee thought he'd gotten a sweet deal on a used Mercedes. Then he learned that the Norfolk, Virginia, dealer never paid off the loan on his trade-in, a common scam.

It simply sold his old Hyundai and pocketed the cash, plus money he'd put up to cover the old loan. Now Lee is stuck with two payments.

THE YO-YO SALE: In this classic credit ruse, you leave the lot with one interest rate only to be called back and asked to pay a higher one.

Army Specialist Michael Hill smelled a rat after his Florida dealer claimed financing had fallen through on the used Acura he'd bought the week before. He and his wife refused to bring it back, so the dealer retaliated with phone calls, five an hour, threatening arrest — until they hired a lawyer.

THE HOT BOX: If you fall for the yo-yo (see above) and return the car, then they've really got you.

Airman Sandy Lieu was stuck at a Florida dealership for more than six hours; salespeople threatened to have her arrested if she took the car back home, but if she ditched it there, they'd impound it at her expense.

When Lieu balked at the higher interest rate, a saleswoman claimed she was "making the Air Force look bad."

THE STEALTH REPO: In June 2006, former Navy Petty Officer James Tapio, recently disabled in Iraq, tried to buy a used Ford Expedition.

The Florida dealer jerked him around for months with various yo-yo scams — making him sign new contracts and put down more cash. Then Tapio woke one morning to find his ride reposed without explanation. The dealer refused to return Tapio's trade-in car or his \$5,000 down. Tapio finally got a lawyer and prevailed when the case settled.

THE NO-SERVICE CONTRACT: Used car dealers, amazingly, are not required to disclose a car's known defects to the buyer, a fact that makes the service contracts they peddle even dicier.

When the front end of Marine Corporal Adam Nowak's Mitsubishi Eclipse collapsed on the road, his overpriced contract wouldn't cover repairs — the car had previously been in a head-on collision. His dealer refused to provide a refund.

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

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