

GI SPECIAL 7H4:

WELCOME TO OBAMAWORLD: HAVE A NICE DAY



Soldiers from the 2-87 Infantry, 10th Mountain Division from Fort Drum, NY at an IED attack site on 2nd platoon Apache Company that destroyed an U.S. MRAP vehicle in Wardak province, Aug. 3, 2009, in Afghanistan. Casualties not announced. (AP Photo/Dima Gavrysh)

Ten Lessons

A Vietnam Veteran's Ten Lessons Learned From Seeing The War In Iraq:

**“As With Vietnam, The So-Called
Leaders Who Sent Our Young
People Across The Seas To Fight
Failed To Understand Both The
Enemy And The Nature Of The
War”**

**“Obama Is Making The Same Mistake
In Afghanistan That Bush Did In Iraq”
“Few Of Those Leaders Will Ever Have
To Pay The Price Of Their Folly”**

The 4,300-plus American dead, 31,000-plus American wounded, hundreds of thousands of dead and maimed Iraqis have paid the cost. But not the McNamaras or the Bundys or the Cheneys or the Wolfowitzes or the Johnsons or Nixons or Bushes.

They get medals and money. The ones who made the ultimate sacrifice get lost in the pages of history. Five of their names are carved in granite at Courthouse Park in Merced.

August 03, 2009 By Mike Tharp; Baghdad Observer, Baghdad bureau, McClatchy Newspapers

Forty years ago last week I landed in Vietnam as a soldier.

I covered the war in Iraq for the last six weeks as a correspondent.

Bookends.

Several volumes between them -- a dustup in Belize with Guatemala; South Korea's street fights for democracy; the Persian Gulf War; the L.A. riots; Somalia; Bosnia; Kosovo; Iraq last year. Not a large library. Some of them more CliffsNotes than books. But they've all left their mark on me, the way some songs, novels, photographs, paintings and poems haunt you.

The U.S. military leaves formal footprints behind in a war.

They're called "lessons learned" and "after-action reports."

This is a personal after-action report.

In the Editor's Note to our Merced Sun-Star's 2007 Special Report, "The War Comes to Merced," we quoted Plato: "Only the dead have seen the end of war."

That's Lesson No. 1. As I've found over four decades, from carrying a rifle to carrying a pen, war will always be with us.

Young reporters, like our Corinne Reilly, who twice has covered the war in Iraq in sterling fashion, can count on a war coming along sometime during their careers.

Fewer, it seems, want to bear battlefield witness today than my generation and earlier ones did. But if some Twitter dude or lady blogger wants to don the battle-rattle, good on 'em. It'll make them better journalists. And Americans need someone on the ground, watching and listening for them in the most important decision any human society ever makes.

Lesson No. 2 is that we Americans don't learn from our mistakes.

Vietnam was a mistake.

This war in Iraq was a mistake.

We'll get out of it with fewer than the 58,257 dead from Nam. And the Iraqis probably won't lose 2-3 million, as the Vietnamese did. But we won't leave behind a functioning democracy or even, over time, a U.S. ally.

As with Vietnam, the so-called leaders who sent our young people across the seas to fight failed to understand both the enemy and the nature of the war.

Lesson No. 3 is that few of those leaders will ever have to pay the price of their folly.

The 4,300-plus American dead, 31,000-plus American wounded, hundreds of thousands of dead and maimed Iraqis have paid the cost.

But not the McNamaras or the Bundys or the Cheneys or the Wolfowitzes or the Johnsons or Nixons or Bushes.

They get medals and money.

The ones who made the ultimate sacrifice get lost in the pages of history.

Five of their names are carved in granite at Courthouse Park in Merced.

A learning curve leads to Lesson No. 4.

By the time I got to Vietnam, America knew it was losing.

The late Walter Cronkite had called it "a stalemate" the year before I stepped onto the tropical tarmac at Tan Son Nhut Airbase. Americans don't do stalemates. Before Tet in

'68, American soldiers and Marines -- like those in Gen. Hal Moore's and Joe Galloway's book, "We Were Soldiers Once, and Young" -- believed in their mission.

By the time the guys in my company landed there, all we wanted was to get home alive.

Lesson No. 4 is that from the Persian Gulf War onward, the quality of soldiers -- and that includes all branches of the service -- has gotten better each year.

The volunteer army has produced smart and brave studs, male and female. Each trooper I met over the last 18 years impressed me more each time. From technology to leadership to commitment, the modern American soldier is somebody we can all be proud of.

My dad taught me the next lesson. It may seem to contradict No. 4, but they're opposite sides of the same coin of our realm. National service should be mandatory. My dad said people shouldn't get to vote unless they'd performed two years of national service. Like him, I don't think it has to be only military service. But every able-bodied, able-minded youngster over 18 should be made to serve the country in a way that helps our society.

Lesson No. 5 is that the same virtues and values I've found in young soldiers can be applied to peacetime problems right here at home.

Sign 'em up and watch what happens -- to our crumbling bridges; to our weak grade schools; to our understaffed hospices; to our trashed national parks.

Another two-sided coin for Lesson No. 6. Take care of our casualties.

All you patriots with the bumper stickers and yellow flags and Old Glory on a pole outside your house -- when's the last time you visited somebody in a VA hospital? Or sent a CARE package to troops in harm's way?

Or told somebody in uniform, "Thanks for your service"? Or wrote your congressional rep or senator and told them to vote for more money to take care of veterans? Or voted them out if they didn't?

Side two is the Iraqis.

We've taken in a grand total of 20,000 out of 2 million Iraqi refugees, let alone the millions we killed, hurt, uprooted and ruined. We need to do as good or better a job with Iraqi refugees as we did with Vietnamese, Hmong, Lao, Cambodians, Bosnians, Somalis. We owe them. I know three personally we can help. Contact me and I'll put you in touch with them.

Lesson No. 7: Obama is making the same mistake in Afghanistan that Bush did in Iraq.

It's called "the graveyard of empires" for a reason.

We can't fight our way to victory in a land that sucked in and spit out Alexander the Great, the British Empire and the Soviet Union.

A couple of excellent counterinsurgency manuals give us blueprints on how to contain al-Qaida, the Taliban, the takfiri Muslims who violate the precepts of the Koran by killing nonbelievers of their warped creed.

Launching Hellfire missiles into Afghan wedding parties ain't in either manual.

Vote the rascals out. Or don't vote for them in the first place.

Lesson No. 8 is maybe the easiest to learn. War is a team blood sport. It takes both the executive and legislative branches to declare and to wage. We pay for both, in KIA/WIA/MIA, tax dollars and moral stature in the world. Vote for women and men who understand that war should be the last resort of a democratic republic -- not the first.

Lesson No. 9 is like unto No. 8. Teach your children well.

Parents, teachers, coaches, Scout leaders, clerics -- all of you charged with instructing our kids should also talk with them about war. Helping them understand better about war is at least as important as teaching them how not to have babies, multiplication tables, the two-handed chest pass, a bowline knot and whether angels are real.

Finally, Lesson No. 10. I'm done.

I'm not leaving my home in Merced except for vacation.

No more will I walk to the sound of guns. This was my last war. I would not trade what I've learned and felt for gold or fame.

Covering wars has let me make friends for life.

War has shown me the face of evil -- and the heart and soul of courage and loyalty and honor.

But it's over for me.

Now it's for memories and dreams. And for younger reporters.

Thus endeth the lessons.

MORE:

**Endstate:
Win or Lose? Was It Worth It?**

“Nearly Every Iraqi Knows Someone Who Has Been Killed Or Wounded By An American”

“They See Americans As Occupiers. They Want The Occupiers Out”

August 03, 2009 By Mike Tharp; Baghdad Observer, Baghdad bureau, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

Endstate: Win or Lose?
Was It Worth It?
Endstate.

That's the U.S. military's strategic term to describe their "commander's intent" --their goal -- before they leave Iraq in 2011.

For most Americans, the fancy word will help answer two key questions: 1) Did we win or lose? 2) Was it worth it?

Three tours in Iraq -- six weeks this year, six weeks last year, 100 hours in 1991 with "visa" provided by the sappers of Fort Bragg's 37th Engineer Battalion -- don't make an expert. But there are several reasons to try to answer, even with limited expertise, those questions.

Five reasons are the names inscribed in granite at Merced, California's Courthouse Park, the Mercedians who died in Iraq.

Other reasons include the vets who came back whole, more or less, to live and work among us.

They returned home with scars and wounds, mostly inside, that they never talk about but carry with them every day.

The Twitter Generation, the Thumb Tribe -- kids today in high school and below -- need answers because they'll be the next to go to the next war.

Finally, there's you -- Mercedians and other Americans who are paying for this war and the one in Afghanistan.

Paying money most of you can't afford.

Money that could be spent well here.

You'll pay it if you believe it has been spent to make you safer.

To answer the two questions, we need to look at Iraq now and over the next 28 months. At the end of 2011, U.S. troops must leave Iraq, under terms of last year's Status of Forces Agreement, unless the government of Iraq asks them to stay.

One important measuring stick, especially if you live in Iraq, is the level of violence. It's been falling for almost two years. Each week, 60 to 80 Iraqis are killed and a couple hundred wounded, but U.S. KIA/WIA have dropped to their lowest point since the 2003 U.S. invasion. (In June more Iraqi civilians were killed than in any month over the past year.) The drop-off in dead and maimed has continued after the historic pullback of U.S. combat forces from major Iraqi cities on June 30. That bodes well for Iraqis and Americans alike, if it can be sustained.

Several U.S. patrols have been turned around, says a soldier who used to go out on them. Unless a patrol is with one of the new Transition Teams, which include Iraqi forces, or unless Iraq's Baghdad Operations Center greenlights them, Americans are confined to their perimeter bases. "Logpack" or supply convoys can move on their own from midnight to 4 or 5 a.m.

Some Americans, especially those who served earlier tours when they were the Jolly Tan Giants and could run passenger cars off the roads, don't like the new rules.

"If some higher-ups are trying to get around them (the rules), it's because they are used to having their own way," says this soldier.

"Arrogance, in my very, very quiet opinion."

Another American soldier in Baghdad says that "most combat units, where I am, are spending time training. No one is sitting idly by. No one wants to be caught with their pants down and are training to keep from getting too complacent."

Hashim Ammar, a 31-year-old government employee, speaks for many Iraqis about the June 30 handover of security to Iraqi forces: "I feel the situation is a little bit better, but my hope is not to see them (Americans) in Iraq at all."

Most Iraqis want us gone.

For all the soccer balls handed out to Iraqi street kids by American grunts--the "soft power" the best analysts say is required for a successful counterinsurgency--nearly every Iraqi has been touched by American "hard power."

Nearly every Iraqi knows someone who has been killed or wounded by an American.

They see Americans as occupiers.

They want the occupiers out.

Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki, the strongest leader since Saddam, must balance all these competing domestic interests, plus the U.S., plus Iran. So far, he's done better than most anybody would have predicted. One sheikh who's dealt with him described

him as a man holding a pen with all eight fingers and two thumbs. "Can this pen ever write anything useful?" he asked.

But let's say, as author Tom Ricks does in his latest book, "The Gamble," that we're only about halfway through the Iraq adventure. That means men and forces we don't even know about today can influence or determine Iraq's destiny.

After eight years of Bush administration bluster about missions accomplished, and eight months of Obama's vaporous hope and change, it's best to remain skeptical about official pronouncements.

But it's clear that Iraq is now at a crossroads, a tipping point. Iraqis are in charge. Americans are leaving.

Can tribal sheikhs control sectarian violence through the traditional blood-money compensation system? Can they reconcile past and present grievances before they spin out of control, as happened two years ago? Can Maliki's administration keep the Kurds from seceding in the north? Can it keep Iran's influence benign?

Historically, says one American army officer, "The hardest part in winning any battle is conducting a successful pursuit to exploit an unexpected victory. The first step is recognizing when is the time to begin the pursuit. Is it time to begin the pursuit?"

Some bright people are optimistic. Iraq's ambassador to the U.S., Samir Sumaida'ie, said in June that he was. "Iraq will come out right," he told a conference sponsored by the Center for a New American Security. "The alternative is just too awful to contemplate -- a collapse, a failed state."

Retired Gen. Jack Keane told the conference that Iraq "wants a relationship with the Iranians, to be sure -- but they want to be an ally of the United States of America." And however patchy elections in Iraq have been, the nation remains the only elected Arab Muslim government in the region. John Nagl, president of the center and a former infantry officer, believes the Iraqi army and federal police "are a good foundation on which to build."

Twelve weeks plus 100 hours in Iraq lead to this answer: Unless the military foundation laid by the U.S. become the framework for enough stability to jump-start Iraq's non-oil economy, the endstate will be too awful to contemplate.

With 30-40 percent joblessness among young Iraqi men, burying a bomb for \$300 looks like a good deal.

Sometime in 2007 one of McClatchy's Iraqi Baghdad reporters had to cross checkpoints at both ends of a bridge across the Tigris River.

Guards at one end asked drivers and passengers if they were Sunni. If they were, they were killed or disappeared. At the checkpoint at the other end, the question was, are you Shia? If they were, the result was the same as at the other end of the bridge.

Sometimes the guards at each end were the same men.

They were killing for money.

So to answer the first two questions, a third one must be posed: "Is this what victory in a foreign counterinsurgency looks like?" asks the American officer in Baghdad.

"We've been involved in this war for so long that for many people, it's simply hard to imagine what victory looks like."

The last time the U.S. won a foreign counterinsurgency was in the Philippines in the early 1900s, so the officer adds, "Nobody is quite sure just what victory looks like in this type of war."

Will it look like Iraq under Saddam when he was defanged by sanctions and inspections, a threat to nobody outside his borders? Will it look like Lebanon, with religious factions running their own rigged games? Or Iran, with a nutty political figurehead, rising middle-class and boisterous young people still under the thumb of black-turbaned mullahs?

Or Israel, another Middle Eastern political theocracy, except Iraq won't have Israel's nuclear weapons?

Somebody once said the commonest form of human stupidity is forgetting what we set out to do.

1) Did we win or lose?

2) Was it worth it?

Historians will answer both questions with far more information and perspective on which to base their judgments.

As of today, based on 12 weeks plus 100 hours, the answers are:

1) A draw.

2) No.

That's the endstate for both Iraq and America.

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 Dies Of Iraq Wounds

August 03, 2009 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 575-09

Staff Sgt. Johnny R. Polk, 39, of Gulfport, Miss., died July 25 at Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, Landstuhl, Germany, of wounds suffered when his vehicle was struck by an anti-tank grenade on July 23 in Kirkuk, Iraq.

He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 82nd Field Artillery Regiment, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas.

“In Diyala Province, The Provincial Police Commander Ordered Police Stations Closed To American Troops”

August 4, 2009 By TIMOTHY WILLIAMS and ROD NORDLAND, The New York Times

On June 30, United States combat forces departed Iraq's urban areas as part of the American military's negotiated drawdown in Iraq.

In the weeks since, many Iraqi commanders have interpreted that to mean that all American troop movements, other than logistics and force protection missions, require prior approval from the Iraqi military. That has led to some friction between American and Iraqi units.

In Diyala Province, for instance, the provincial police commander ordered police stations closed to American troops, resulting in the cancellation of training visits for several weeks.

Resistance Action

Aug 4 (Reuters) & 8.5.09 DPA & Reuters

Baghdad- Five policemen were killed and three injured Wednesday when a bomb targeted their patrol in southern Baghdad, a police source said. The bomb was planted on a road in al-Athouriyeen neighborhood in al-Doura, Aswat al-Iraq news agency reported.

A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol wounded two soldiers in western Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, on Monday, police said.

A militant shot dead an off-duty government employee in front of his home in northern Mosul, on Monday, police said.

Militants shot dead the brother of Iraq's chief of traffic police in Mussayab town, 60 km (40 miles) south of Baghdad, on Monday, police said.

Clashes between gunmen and police killed a police officer and two attackers, and wounded three other gunmen and a civilian in northern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A bomb in a parked car wounded two policemen and a civilian when it struck a police patrol in central Ramadi, 100 km (60 miles) west of Baghdad, police said.

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

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

Welcome To Liberated Iraq; Report A Bomb; Get The Shit Beat Out Of You

August 05, 2009 by Correspondent Jenan; washingtonbureau.typepad.com/iraq/

My brother told me this sad story about a man who probably saved many people and received tens of kicks in return.

Two days ago a Sudanese man who has lived in Baghdad more than 20 years found two bombs beside his tea stand in the center of the city. The man did not think only of saving people in that crowded market. He carried the two bombs and ran toward the policemen at a nearby checkpoint.

"I found bombs" the man shouted.

The policeman took the two bombs and quickly threw them away where they exploded far from the crowd without causing any casualties.

The man saved tens of people in this market; but what did he gain in return?

The policemen surrounded the man and started to beat him before taking him to prison as a reward for his bravery.

Two days later he was released but I wonder will he do it again if he saw or suspected any bombs?!

ENOUGH; ALL HOME NOW



May 27, 2009: U.S. soldiers unload bed frames in Camp Carver on the outskirts of Madain, about 15 miles southeast of Baghdad, Iraq. (AP Photo/Hadi Mizban)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Four U.S. Marines Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan

8.6.09 AP

Four U.S. Marines were killed Thursday when a roadside bomb struck their vehicle in western Afghanistan. NATO declined to say exactly where the Marines were killed or immediately release other details of the attack.

Tatum Man Killed In Ambush In Afghanistan “Serving In A Secret Mission For The U.S. Government”

August 04, 2009 By JIMMY ISAAC, Cox East Texas, Marshall News Messenger

TATUM — Family members say Alejandro Granado III told them he didn't feel good about his latest trip to Afghanistan.

"He told me that he had a bad feeling about going away — that he probably won't come back," his brother, Rolando Granado remembered.

"And here we are."

The family learned Sunday evening that retired Army Staff Sgt. Alejandro "Alex" Granado III was among three people killed during an ambush in eastern Afghanistan earlier that day. Granado, 42, retired from the Army less than a year ago but was serving in a secret mission for the U.S. government, family members said Monday. As of late Monday, the Department of Defense had not officially released information about the incident.

"We're hearing that they got attacked, and after that, they went in and finished them off," his brother said while sitting with family outside their Tatum home. "We've never really kept up with him because he was always gone. He could never tell us where he was."

Granado signed up for military service before graduating from Tatum High School in 1986.

"Instead of working out here somewhere in the sun, he joined as soon as he was 18," he said. "He loved to travel."

Granado spent three weeks with family and friends in June. His older sister, Tatum High School Cafeteria Manager Dionicia Cruz, remembers the eerie feeling she got when he asked her to always take good care of herself and his three kids — ages 19, 21 and 23.

"I asked, 'Why is that so important?' and he said, 'It would make me very happy to know you are all OK,'" Cruz said. "He was such a good boy."

Services for Granado are pending with Jimerson-Lipsey Funeral Home in Carthage.

"The family has contacted us, but we have not heard back from the military," said funeral home spokesman Don Lipsey. "If he died in eastern Afghanistan, it may be a week before we hear anything."

Another brother, 35-year-old Jose Granado, is scheduled for active duty in either Afghanistan or Iraq in October, family members said.

"That was their goal — protect the country," said Rolando Granado. "He was a good kid, man. A good kid."

Royal Electrical And Mechanical Engineers Soldier Killed In Babaji

4 Aug 09 Ministry of Defence

It is with great sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that a soldier from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, attached to The Light Dragoons, was killed in Afghanistan today, Tuesday 4 August 2009.

The soldier was killed as a result of an explosion that happened while on a vehicle patrol in Babaji district, southern Helmand province, this morning.

Two Australian Soldiers Wounded By IEDs

Aug 4 2009 AEST

Two Australian soldiers in Afghanistan have been injured in separate incidents after suspected Taliban insurgents detonated explosive devices.

An Australian and an Afghan soldier were injured on Saturday after insurgents detonated an improvised explosive device during a security patrol near Tarin Kowt, in southern Afghanistan, Defence said on Tuesday.

Two soldiers were killed in the incident.

The injured Australian, from the Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force, and the Afghan soldier were flown to an International Security Assistance Force base at Tarin Kowt for medical treatment.

Both soldiers remain in a satisfactory condition, the Australian Defence Force said in a statement.

Another Australian soldier was injured on Monday after his Operational Mentoring and Liaison Team patrol struck a roadside bomb.

"The injured soldier will remain in theatre where he is receiving treatment for his wounds and will return to active duty," Defence said in a statement.

Meanwhile, an Australian Army CH-47D Chinook helicopter operating in Afghanistan was fired at on Monday morning.

Great Moments In U.S. Military History: Attack Helicopters Kill Kids For Carrying Jugs While Afghan



Bodies of some of the children killed in an airstrike are seen on the back of a truck in the city of Kandahar August 5, 2009. An air strike by U.S. troops killed four members of a family in Afghanistan's southern Kandahar province, villagers said on Wednesday after bringing the bodies to the provincial capital to show officials. The incident happened in the village of Kowuk, some 12 miles (20 kilometers) north of Kandahar city, said Abdur Rahim, a villager who said he lost three of his children in the bombing. (AP Photo/Allauddin Khan)

Aug 5 (AFP)

Furious Afghan villagers protested in Kandahar on Wednesday by carrying the bodies of four brothers, three of them children, who they said were killed by US attack helicopters.

More than 100 men arrived with the corpses from nearby Arghandab district, protesting that US forces trying to defeat a Taliban insurgency were killing the "innocent" and should leave Afghanistan.

The villagers showed reporters the bodies of three boys who looked to have been aged 10 to 13, and a man aged about 25 who they said was a civilian, an AFP correspondent said.

Another child and a civilian man were hurt in the incident, village leader Hazrat Mohammad told reporters.

"Last night around 1:00 am helicopters shot nine rockets into a house and destroyed it," Mohammad said. The six casualties were all brothers, he said.

The villagers, who arrived in about seven pick-up trucks, accused the US military of trying to "capture" Afghanistan, not help the Afghan people.

US Lieutenant Robert Carr told AFP the helicopters targeted militants on motorbikes, and jugs that the men were carrying exploded.

It was not known what was in the jugs, he said.

Resistance Action

Aug 2, 2009 Ahmad Qureshi, PAN & Aug 4 (Reuters)

Unknown militants blew up an antenna of Roshan Communication Company in Bazaar Tui area of Balamarghab district of northwestern Badghis province last night, police said.

Taliban insurgents fired up to nine rockets at the Afghan capital on Tuesday causing minor damage, security officials and residents said. At least two rockets landed in Wazir Akbar Khan district, home to the U.S. and British embassies and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force headquarters, senior police official Sayed Ghafar said. The Taliban said it had fired 12 rockets, with the city's main airport as their target.

Three Afghan security guards were killed and 24 seriously wounded when an 82 mm rocket fell from a vehicle as it was driven out of a compound in the southeastern province of Ghazni, said Ismael Jahangir, a spokesman for the provincial governor.

Maidan Wardak province governor Mohammad Halim Fedaye was unhurt after a roadside bomb attack on his convoy on the western outskirts of Kabul, Fedaye's spokesman Shahedullah Shahed said. Two of four roadside bombs planted under a bridge exploded near the convoy, Shahed said, and four suspects were detained later.

A bomber killed an intelligence official in southern Zabul province, police said.

A roadside bomb killed one soldier and wounded four in the Kharwar district of eastern Logar province on Monday, the Defence Ministry said.

Poorly Armored Helicopters For Afghanistan Easy To Shoot Down

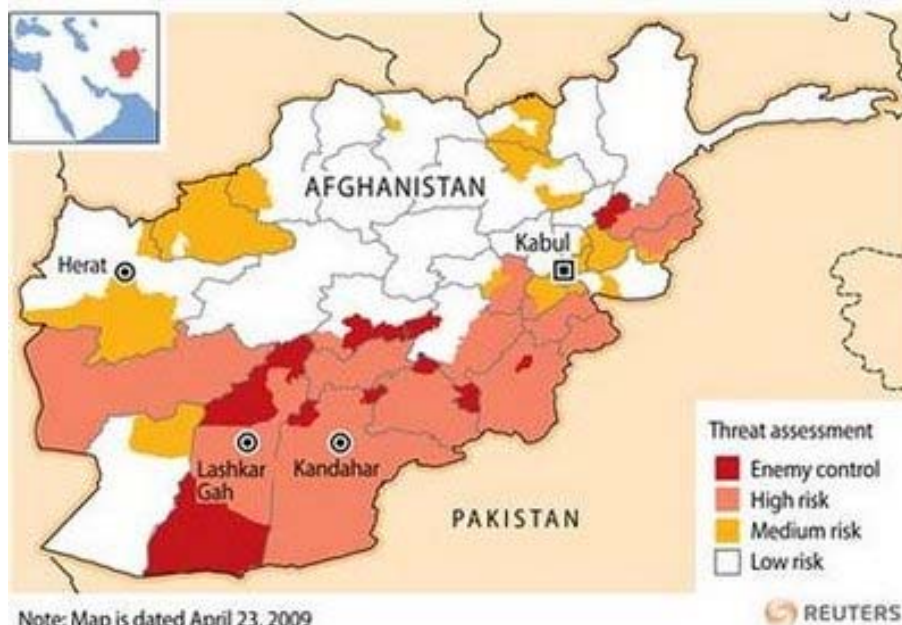
Aug 3 (AFP)

Military helicopters set to be deployed to Afghanistan were not properly equipped to fly combat missions, a newspaper said Tuesday, fuelling a row over adequate resources for troops.

The helicopters were not fitted with special armour, leaving them vulnerable to attack by Taliban extremists while transporting troops, the Daily Telegraph newspaper said, citing unnamed Royal Air Force sources.

The newspaper said pilots wanted the helicopters fitted with Kevlar armour, which would cost about \$170,000 for each aircraft, to protect them from bullets and rocket-propelled grenades.

Secret Government Map Shows Resistance Areas Cover “Almost Half Of Afghanistan”



Almost half of Afghanistan is at a high risk of attack by the Taliban and other insurgents or is under "enemy control," a secret Afghan government map shows, painting a dire security picture before presidential elections. REUTERS/Graphic

Good News For The Afghan Resistance!!

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



Foreign occupation soldiers from the USA stop an Afghan citizen at gunpoint to put their hands on his body in an act of public humiliation in Chapadara, at the Pesh Valley in Kunar Province August 5, 2009. REUTERS/Carlos Barria

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 50,000 Afghan troops over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, butcher their families, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Afghans are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people.]

[How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by Barrack Obama.]

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

GI Special Available In PDF Format

If you prefer PDF to Word format, email contact@militaryproject.org

WELCOME TO VIETNAMISTAN: HAVE A NICE DAY



U.S. Army soldier looks up at Apache helicopters circling overhead as the helicopters arrive to support troops who came under fire by the Taliban during an operation on a ridge line in the Korengal Valley of Afghanistan's Kunar Province, May 13, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)

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

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

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

TROOP NEWS

**THIS IS HOW OBAMA BRINGS THE TROOPS
HOME:
SIX AT A TIME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



Six bodies of American soldiers killed in Afghanistan, Aug. 4, 2009 at Dover Air Force Base, Del. (AP Photo/Steve Ruark)

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**

**I say that when troops cannot be counted on to follow orders because they see the futility and immorality of them THAT is the real key to ending a war.
-- Al Jaccoma, Veterans For Peace**

**“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**

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.

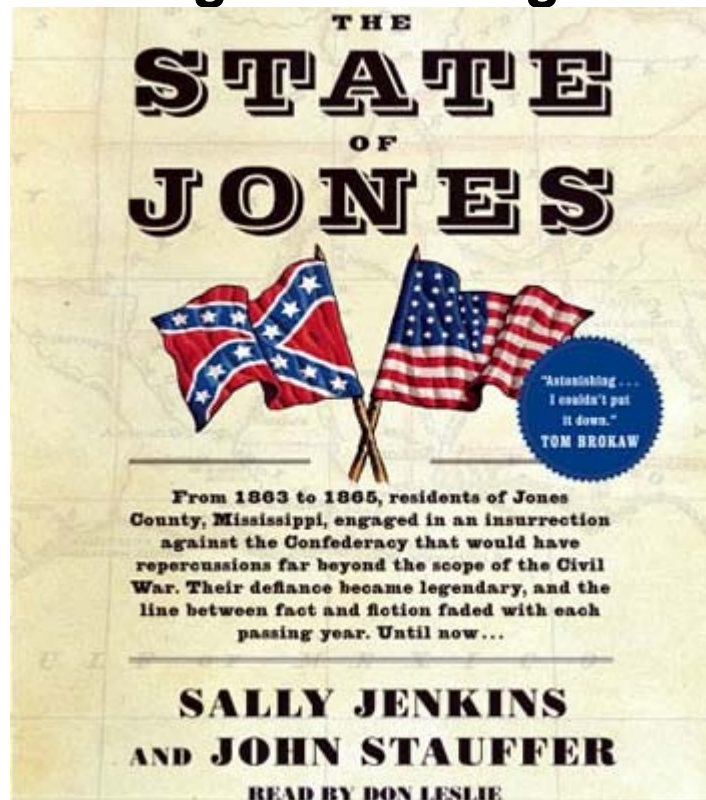
**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004**

A “Surprising Account Of The Only Southern County To Secede From The Confederacy”

**“A Farmer Named Newton Knight
Led His Neighbors, White And
Black Alike, In An Insurrection
Against The Confederacy At The
Height Of The Civil War”**

**“He Survived Only Because He Could
Reload A Shotgun Before The Smoke
Cleared”**

**“A Gritty Picture Of A War In Which
Generals Sacrificed Thousands Through
Their Arrogance And Ignorance”**



[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & Military Project, who sent this in.]

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Book Review: The State Of Jones, Written by Sally Jenkins and John Stauffer; Random House 2009; ISBN: 978-0-385-52593-0 (0-385-52593-1)

27 Jun 2009 Amazon.com Review

New York Times bestselling author Sally Jenkins and distinguished Harvard professor John Stauffer mine a nearly forgotten piece of Civil War history and strike gold in this surprising account of the only Southern county to secede from the Confederacy.

The State of Jones is a true story about the South during the Civil War—the real South.

Not the South that has been mythologized in novels and movies, but an authentic, hardscrabble place where poor men were forced to fight a rich man's war for slavery and cotton.

In Jones County, Mississippi, a farmer named Newton Knight led his neighbors, white and black alike, in an insurrection against the Confederacy at the height of the Civil War.

Knight's life story mirrors the little-known story of class struggle in the South — and it shatters the image of the Confederacy as a unified front against the Union.

This riveting investigative account takes us inside the battle of Corinth, where thousands lost their lives over less than a quarter mile of land, and to the dreadful siege of Vicksburg, presenting a gritty picture of a war in which generals sacrificed thousands through their arrogance and ignorance.

Off the battlefield, the Newton Knight story is rich in drama as well.

He was a man with two loves: his wife, who was forced to flee her home simply to survive, and an ex-slave named Rachel, who, in effect, became his second wife.

It was Rachel who cared for Knight during the war when he was hunted by the Confederates, and, later, when members of the Knight clan sought revenge for the disgrace he had brought upon the family name.

Working hand in hand with John Stauffer, distinguished chair and professor of the History of American Civilization at Harvard University, Sally Jenkins has made the leap from preeminent sportswriter to a historical writer endowed with the accuracy, drive, and passion of Doris Kearns Goodwin.

The result is Civil War history at its finest.

**Sally Jenkins And John Stauffer About Their Book:
*The State Of Jones:***

Newton Knight is the most famous Civil War hero you've never heard of, because according to Mississippi legend he betrayed not only the Confederacy but his race as well.

In 1863 Knight, a poor farmer from Jones County Mississippi, deserted the Confederate Army — and began fighting for the Union — after the battle of Vicksburg.

It was rumored he even started a separate Unionist government, The Free State of Jones, and for two years he battled the Confederacy with a vengeance that solidified his legend.

During his life Knight was hardly regarded as a proper soldier by either side, and after his death his Mississippi backwoods grave went unstrewn with flowers.

Many southerners would have preferred to spit on it, and most northerners never recognized that such loyalty to the United States could exist in Dixie.

But in truth, this lost patriot was a vital actor in helping to preserve the Union.

The recovery of the life of a Mississippi farmer who fought for his country is an important story.

The fact that southern Unionists existed, and in very large numbers, is largely unknown to many Americans, who grew up with textbooks that perpetuated the myth of the Confederacy as a heroic Lost Cause, with its romanticized vision of the antebellum South.

Some historians have even palpably sympathized with Confederate cavaliers while minimizing — and robbing of credit — the actions of southerners who remained loyal to the Union at desperate cost.

One would never know that the majority of white Southerners had opposed secession, and that many Southern whites fought for the Union.

In Tennessee, for example, somewhere around 31,000 white men joined the Union army.

In Arkansas more than 8,000 men eventually served in Union regiments.

And in Mississippi, Newton Knight and his band of guerillas launched a virtual insurrection against the Confederacy in Jefferson Davis' own home state.

“There's lots of ways I'd rather die than being scared to death,” Knight said, and it was a defining statement. At almost every stage of his life this yeoman from the hill country of Jones County, Miss., took courageous stands.

The grandson of a slave owner who never owned slaves, he voted against secession, deserted from the Confederate Army into which he was unwillingly impressed, and formed a band called the Jones County Scouts devoted to undermining the Rebel cause locally.

Working with runaway slaves and fellow Unionists and Federal soldiers caught behind enemy lines, Knight conducted such an effective running gun battle that at the height of the war he and his allies controlled the entire lower third of the state.

This “southern Yankee,” as one Rebel general termed him, remained unconquered until the end of the war.

His resistance hampered the Confederate Army’s ability to operate, forced it to conduct a third-front war at home, and eroded its morale and will to fight.

Knight also burst free of racial barriers and forged bonds of alliance with blacks that were unmatched even by Northern abolitionists.

He fought as ardently as any man for racial equality during the War, and after, during the terrifying days of Reconstruction, when his life was, if anything, even more in danger.

He lived with an ex-slave named Rachel, fathering several children with her (but he never divorced his Caucasian wife, Serena), and worked on behalf of U.S. Grant’s Republican administration and against the nascent Ku Klux Klan, and envisioned a world that would only begin to be implemented a century later.

Moreover, he operated in an inverted moral landscape in which fealty to country was labeled traitorous, and kinship with blacks was considered morally repugnant.

He survived only because he could reload a shotgun before the smoke cleared.

As an Alabama Unionist told a Congressional committee in 1866 in testifying about the little appreciated service of southern loyalists, “You have no idea of the strength of principle and devotion these people exhibited towards the national government.”

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OCCUPATION PALESTINE

The Zionist Terror Never Ends



Members of the Palestinian Hanoun family stand outside their home after being kicked out by Zionist police in occupied the Arab district of Sheikh Jarrah, East Jerusalem, Palestine. Club-wielding riot police evicted two Palestinian families from their homes in occupied east Jerusalem on Sunday, defying international protests over Zionist settlement activity in the area. (AFP/Ahmad Gharabli)

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

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/)**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS

“Health Care” Vampires Spent \$130 Million In Three Months To Buy Members Of Congress

01 August 2009 by Michael Winship, Truthout Perspective [Excerpt]

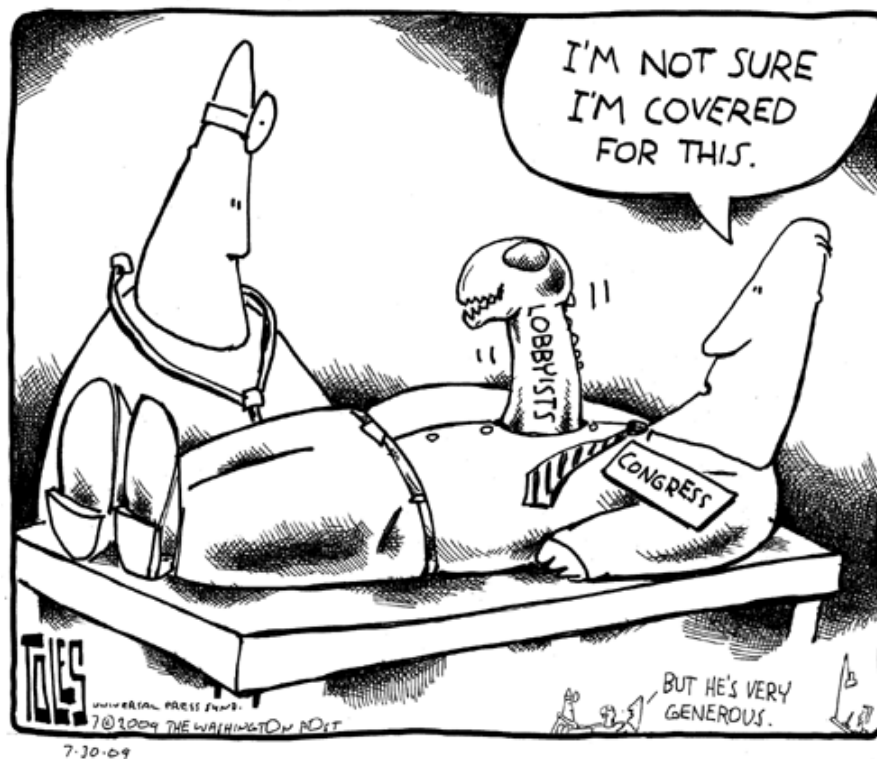
This week, the Center for Responsive Politics reported that in the second quarter of this year alone, the pharmaceuticals and health product industries spent \$67,959,095 on lobbying, and the insurance industry \$39,760,477.

Another \$25,552,088 was spent by lobbyists for hospitals and nursing homes.

That's a total of \$133,271,660 in just three months, and that's not even counting the lobbying money spent to fight health care reform by professional associations like the US Chamber of Commerce.

Just to further roil your ire, comes news from McAllen, Texas, reported in the July 30 New York Times: "One of the largest sources of campaign contributions to Senate Democrats during this year's health care debate is a physician-owned hospital in one of the country's poorest regions that has sought to soften measures that could choke its rapid growth.

"The Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee collected nearly \$500,000 at a reception here on March 30, mostly from physicians and others affiliated with Doctors Hospital at Renaissance, financial disclosure records show."



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