

Military Resistance: 7/11:
[Formerly GI Special]



US commander in Afghanistan proposes revamped strategy: Steve Bell

**Censoring Helmand:
Prominent British War Reporter
Expelled For Telling The Truth:
“My Best Guess Is That It Relates
To My Sustained Criticism That
The British Government Is Not
Properly Resourcing Its Soldiers”**

“The Media Ops People — Who Do Not Leave Their Base Or Go On Missions — Are Spooling Out ‘The Message’ To The Media”
“Those Officers Are Either Completely Oblivious To The Actuality Of The Situation Or Lying”

25 September 2009 By Michael Yon, <http://www.michaelyon-online.com/bullshit-bob.htm>

The surprise discontinuation of my embedment from the British Army left my schedule in a train wreck.

Until that decisive moment, I am told, that my embed with the British Army had lasted longer than anyone else's; other than Ross Kemp's.

I've also been told that I've spent more time with the British Army in Iraq than any correspondent.

So it's fair to say, we have good history together.

In the last 12 months, I've embedded with the British Army in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, then over to the jungles of Brunei to attend a man-tracking school, and again back in Afghanistan.

During that time, I've also been with U.S. forces in Iraq, the Philippines, and Afghanistan.

I've accompanied the Lithuanians in Afghanistan and also been downrange for months without any troops or official assignment.

This dispatch, and many others, should have been about soldiers at war. But it's not.

This dispatch is being written in downtown Kandahar City and I have not seen a soldier in days.

The Taliban is slowly winning this city. There have been many bombings and shootings since I arrived in disguise.

“On August 24th, With No Warning, Unseen Faces Of MOD Discontinued My Embed From 2 Rifles”

“My Best Guess Is That It Relates To My Sustained Criticism That The British Government Is Not Properly Resourcing Its Soldiers”

In 2006, Iraq was melting down and I had just written twelve dispatches that clearly stated we were losing in Afghanistan.

Those dispatches caused a public uproar and the consequences were such that U.S. military refused to let me back into Iraq.

Because of the U.S. military censorship in Iraq, I published a dispatch in the Weekly Standard titled, Censoring Iraq.

General Petraeus emailed to me immediately, and if not for his intervention, there would have been Censoring Iraq II, III, IV, V.... Ultimately, dozens of dispatches about soldiers have been forever lost.

I returned to Iraq in 2006, and in 2007, I reported that the war had turned around and progress was clear. In 2008, I wrote that we had won the Iraq war. And although recent bombings have grabbed headlines, overall violence continues to decrease.

This brings us to Afghanistan, 2009.

My latest embed with British 2 Rifles, which began in July, was extended on at least two occasions.

The British Ministry of Defence (MoD) had recently agreed that I would spend roughly one more month with 2 Rifles.

My scheduled embeds with the United States Air Force and Marines were specifically arranged around the British schedule, and I was enjoying reporting on the excellent British troops.

However, on August 24th, with no warning, unseen faces of MoD discontinued my embed from 2 Rifles.

The message that I was no longer embedded was emailed to me by Media Ops, just as I returned from an interesting firefight in the Green Zone. Luckily, none of our guys got hit, but I think the British soldiers may have killed some Taliban.

I do not know the reason for the embed termination.

My best guess is that it relates to my sustained criticism that the British government is not properly resourcing its soldiers.

“It Takes Only One Roach Leg To Spoil A Perfect Soup”

Before going further, it is essential to underscore the importance of the “Media Ops” in the war.

When Media Ops fails to help correspondents report from the front, the public misses necessary information to make informed decisions about the war. Many soldiers in the British Media Ops are true professionals who strive constantly to improve at their tasks and work very well with correspondents. Their professionalism and understanding of the larger mission—ultimate victory—provide an invaluable service to the war effort.

But there are a few who should not be in uniform and it takes only one roach leg to spoil a perfect soup.

For example — without giving names so as not to tar and feather someone for his entire life when he still has a chance to change his behavior — the British Major running Media Ops at Camp Bastion has been particularly problematic.

Even before my embed started with 2 Rifles, his words raised red flags among the correspondents about his priorities.

I had a specific incident with this British Media Ops Major.

The Major and I were driving in Camp Bastion around midday when it was very hot. A British soldier ran by wearing a rucksack. He was drenched in sweat under the blazing, dusty desert. I smiled because it's great to see so many soldiers who work and train hard. Yet the Major cut fun at the soldier, saying he was dumb to be running in that heat. I nearly growled at the Major, but instead asked if he ever goes into combat. The answer was no.

And, in fact, the Major does not leave the safety of Camp Bastion.

That a military officer would share a foul word about a combat soldier who was prepping for battle was offensive.

Especially an officer who lives in an air-conditioned tent with a refrigerator stocked with chilled soft drinks. Just outside his tent are nice hot and cold showers. Five minutes away is a little Pizza Hut trailer, a coffee shop, stores, and a cookhouse.

This very Major had earned a foul reputation among his own kind for spending too much time on his Facebook page.

I personally saw him being gratuitously rude to correspondents. Some correspondents — all were British — complained to me that when they wanted to interview senior British officers, they were told by this Major to submit written questions. The Major said they would receive videotaped answers that they could edit as if they were talking with the interviewee.

(Presumably, senior British officers are avoiding the tough questions, such as, “So, when do you plan to send enough helicopters?”)

When I asked a different Media Ops officer about meeting with a senior British General in Afghanistan, I was told that submitting a CV (curriculum vitae) would be helpful, to which I laughed.

A CV?

How about this:

Name: Michael Yon

Profession: Writer

Experience: Years

Notes: I will be in and affecting your battle space for years to come. (By the way, you are losing the war. Hiding from correspondents does not change that fact.)

This war is moving fast and there is no time for games. If a general does not want to tell his story, someone will tell it for him. He will have failed by losing another winnable media battle.

On a sidebar, before this article was published I was invited to the Netherlands by the esteemed James "Maggie" Megallas to attend an incredible Dutch remembrance for our World War II veterans.

For those who don't know him, James Megallas is a retired U.S. Army officer who commanded Company "H" of the 3rd Battalion, 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment (PIR), 82nd Airborne Division during World War II. Maggie is the most-decorated officer in the history of the 82nd Airborne Division, having received a Distinguished Service Cross, a Silver Star, and been nominated for the Medal of Honor. Maggie at 92 and is an extraordinary man. He can give an eloquent speech for an hour without a single written note.

He has spent a couple months in Afghanistan — in the worst places. He's a true leader and a wise man, known to General McChrystal and General Petraeus. General Petraeus told me last week that CENTCOM had okayed Maggie's trip to Afghanistan. Maggie is an American treasure. Last week in the Netherlands, "Maggie" was spending time General Petraeus and with European royalty, including Queen Beatrix of the Netherlands. General Petraeus and World War II veterans stayed several days at the same hotel Maggie and I were in.

In Holland, folks were lining up to honor and pay tribute to our World War II veterans and General Petraeus. I didn't want to distract General Petraeus with any questions while he was so busy. But on about the third day, there was a tap on my shoulder and I was told that General Petraeus had some time if I wanted to talk.

I asked the good General some tough questions on Afghanistan — the kind that would end discussions with timid people—yet, like normal, he fielded those questions with the candor that I so respect in him and have come to expect. The same has happened to me with the Secretary of Defense, Robert Gates, and other top military leaders. Gates and Petraeus will field challenging, difficult questions and will take what you throw at them.

Yet the British Media Ops in Afghanistan wants correspondents to submit written questions so they can provide tidy answers.

That's a sad joke and there are many correspondents, including me, who are not laughing.

More on the trip to Netherlands will be forthcoming, but now back to Afghanistan:

Those BS-filled officers who deny the obvious are, in fact, symptomatic to why we are losing the war.

“Those BS-Filled Officers Who Deny The Obvious Are, In Fact, Symptomatic To Why We Are Losing The War”

At Camp Bastion there are two tents at Media Ops.

One tent is for the Media Ops staff and the other is for the itinerant correspondents.

When ever the Internet died in the correspondents' tent, the Major in question let the journalists use the Internet in the staff tent. That was helpful and appreciated. But he locked the door at night (the tent has a door) and kept it that way until the morning so that no correspondent would wake him with keyboard tapping. Not helpful on transmitting information.

At a glance, that seems trivial stuff, really.

But it's not trivial when you know that these are the same Media Ops people — who do not leave their base or go on missions — who are spooling out “the message” to the media.

They are clueless about the state of the war in Afghanistan.

For instance, many of the Media Ops officers will insist that we have enough helicopters in Afghanistan.

Those officers are either completely oblivious to the actuality of the situation or lying.

General Petraeus told me straight up that we don't have enough and that we doubled our helicopters in the last four months and are in the process of fielding “two more fistfuls.” (He did not give specific numbers.)

Those BS-filled officers who deny the obvious are, in fact, symptomatic to why we are losing the war.

When I deliver good news, out rolls the red carpet.

Bad news, and it's time to fight again.

Only now it's not Censoring Iraq, it's Censoring Helmand. And it's not the U.S. doing it this time, but the British government. The British people are demanding truth and they deserve accountability. They aren't getting it from Camp Bastion.

Some of the Media Ops guys in Afghanistan are good at something such as threatening future access if a correspondent shows “attitude” about being poorly treated.

My answer is go to hell. They can take their access and. . . .

I work for the soldiers, for the readers, and for the people in general.

If Media Ops chooses to be an obstacle, that is their choice.

After being summarily disembodied it took days — due to the helicopter shortage — to catch a helicopter from the Green Zone and head over to the posh Media Ops tent. There I found the same Major still up to his old attitude with some of the correspondents.

Meanwhile, because of the abrupt embed, my scheduling problems were unfolding. The U.S. Marines, of whom I have never seen treat anyone like the British Major treats correspondents, wanted to take me. But the earliest I could embed with them was on 16 September. This fell at the same time I needed to punch out and head to Eindhoven in The Netherlands for the World War II remembrance ceremonies which I had been invited to long ago. The Royal Netherlands Air Force (RNAF) had made arrangements to fly me from Afghanistan to Eindhoven. Disembodied or not, it should have been a simple matter for me to have a few days, even out of pure courtesy, where I could settle some business with the U. S. Air Force and U.S. Marines.

But the boss of Media Ops in Afghanistan, Lt Col Nick Richardson in Lashkar Gah, through the Major at Bastion, demanded that I leave the Regional Command South (RC-South) which is under British control.

I said in essence, hold on, partner, are you saying that you are knowingly interfering with my ability to arrange an embed with the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Marines? Especially after you abruptly released me as correspondent? Because if that's what Media Ops was saying, then we were going to have a Texas-sized fight.

The boss of Media Ops in Afghanistan Lt. Col. Richardson has tweaked other peoples' BS sensors on the helicopter issue, including Daniel Bennett at the Frontline Club.

Richardson is doing more damage to the war effort than the Taliban media machine. By perpetrating falsehoods that undermine our combat capacity, Richardson has helped the enemy.

Some of the smokescreens are less important but they are demonstrative of the pattern:

On 20 August a, CH-47 helicopter was shot down by a Taliban RPG during a British Special Forces mission. Richardson reported that the aircraft landed due to an engine fire. Some hours later, while I was on a mission nearby, the Taliban were singing over the radios about shooting it down. I heard the rumble when the helicopter was destroyed by airstrikes.

The Taliban knew they hit the helicopter.

So who is Richardson lying to?

Not the enemy...unless the enemy is the British public.

Stephen Grey and others have noted the censorship:

“Despite the risk of being blacklisted and refused access to report from the frontline, journalists are speaking out about what they say is the government's attempt to control the news. It is ‘lamentable’, says one Fleet Street foreign editor; the Times correspondent Anthony Loyd describes it as ‘outrageous’; Christina Lamb of the Sunday Times calls it ‘indefensible’; it is ‘redolent of Comical Ali’, says the Sun’s defence editor, Tom Newton Dunn.

“Almost all journalists travelling with British forces are ordered to email their copy to the military’s press officers in Helmand before publication. Many fear that negative coverage could mean trips back to the frontline are cancelled or delayed.”

“When Soldiers Hear Something That Is Patently False, They Call It ‘Bullshit.’ I Looked At The Major And Said, ‘Bullshit,’ To Which He Stomped Out”

The Media Ops boys are treating this like a game.

Eventually I had a meeting at the same table with a U.S. Air Force officer, a U.S. Marine officer, and the British Major from Media Ops in an attempt to work out a solution that would get me with the Air Force or Marines. The Major was docile in the presence of the two other officers.

The Marine and Air Force officers said that they were willing and happy to help. Despite their goodwill, the scheduling train wreck had other moving issues stacking up, and the British Media Ops weren’t done with playing games.

In addition to the disembed, the British Media Ops were insisting that I leave RC-South at once.

Let’s be clear – this was Afghanistan, not London where I can easily hail a cab or jump on The Tube. By their demands, the Media Ops folks were ignoring the obvious truth that it takes time, planning, and much coordination to move anyone, soldiers or correspondents, around Afghanistan.

Also, Media Ops knew that I was waiting for two important packages to arrive at Camp Bastion – packages that took a great amount of time and expense to send for.

When I brought this up, the Major said he had checked into the packages and that because there was no FedEx in Camp Bastion, my packages must be in Kabul.

This was a flat out lie.

When soldiers hear something that is patently false, they call it “bullshit.” I looked at the Major and said, “Bullshit,” to which he stomped out.

He later said I had cursed him, which, if by calling him on his lie he implied that I was cursing him, then so be it; he was right. It was bullshit because there is a FedEx and a DHL in Camp Bastion.

Something you would think (and hope) a Media Ops guy would know about his own camp.

The Major said again that Lt. Col. Nick Richardson demanded that I leave RC-South, and that Media Ops would forward my satellite and night vision gear that was in transit.

Before the Major had stomped out, I said that I was not leaving Camp Bastion until those packages were in my hands.

I told him to call Lt. Col. Nick Richardson at Lashkar Gah — a nearby base — and say that if Richardson wants me gone, he'd need to call the Royal Military Police (RMP).

The satellite gear is crucial to the operation and the night vision gear is expensive. I was not going to leave without the gear unless under arrest. I had heard the Major arrogantly tell a correspondent how a soldier had punched another correspondent and “knocked him on his ass.” Bullying apparently had been working for him; he was still doing it.

“Go ahead,” I said, “Call the RMPs right now. Have them come down and flex cuff me and put me on an airplane out of here.” I waited for the RMP's to arrive and arrest me. At least they would be professionals.

There is the maxim that a customer can judge the cleanliness of a restaurant's kitchen by the restroom. After much experience in Iraq and Afghanistan, I have discovered another: Soldiers always treat correspondents the way they treat the local people.

When soldiers treat correspondents badly, they treat local people even worse and are creating enemies. Those troops who brag about how they mistreat or detest correspondents are abusing and resentful of the local population, and they cannot win this sort of war. The people will kill them and the media will bash them and they will blame the people and the media.

When a soldier alienates sympathetic correspondents, he has no real chance against mortal enemies such as the Taliban and al Qaeda, and they will defeat him. Yet there is subtlety: for “the people,” in the case of Media Ops, is you.

The Major doesn't deal with Afghans. Afghans are not his target and it is not correspondents who are being denied access. YOU are being denied access. YOU are resented and deceived, and people like Minister of Defence, Bob Ainsworth, wish to separate realities from readers.

The reader is my boss, and my job is to observe, analyze where possible, and report back. When Media Ops or others try to deceive my boss, I fight for my boss. That's my job and duty.

I told some U.S. Marine officers about issues with Media Ops. The Marines wanted to take me but there was a pesky twelve-day wait before I could start with them, and as mentioned I needed to get to The Netherlands. Luckily, the Marines and Air Force helped me get the packages.

The problem with embedding with the U.S. Air Force, as with the U.S. Marines, was timing. The U.S. Air Force rescue folks, the Pedros, were going home to America and were being replaced but there was a window of opportunity before that happened. The bottom line: Air Force Pedros took me on three missions, but it could have been a lot more.

Meanwhile, the British Media Ops, who backed down from the arrest, made a Plan B. The Major said I must leave the media tent because fourteen journalists were coming and needed space. There were six bunks and two cots, meaning all fourteen spots would be filled. I asked the Major who the journalists were and when they were coming. The Major answered that he didn't exactly know who was coming or when, but they were (or might be) coming, and they needed space. The Major was easier to read than a five year-old, and too sad a specimen to be angry with. I had been sleeping outside for weeks and would readily continue, but instead contacted the Pedro guys who let me stay with them. Ironically, our Pedro teams happened to be staying with British 2 Rifles at Camp Bastion — and so 2 Rifles welcomed me back.

This was all bizarre. Although the British Media Ops kicked me out, I was now staying in a tent with the U.S. Air Force who were also staying with British soldiers, so I was right back at home.

Word had somehow spread that I told Media Ops to have me arrested. I had not mentioned the confrontation. Word must have gotten out from Media Ops themselves and some journalists soon realized that a fight was on. The correspondents I was talking with did not like Media Ops — not one bit — and support poured in.

An email came from a fellow correspondent with these words:

“During all of this time I was aware that your own predicament was also strained with the Pic (Media Ops). Rumour reached me in (...) that you had told the pic team in Bastion that if they wanted you out then they'd have to get the RMPs to arrest you, and that they were forced to back down! (I don't know if the story was true or not but it was a huge morale boost to all who heard it in (...).)”

“Mr. Ainsworth Is, In Effect, Murdering British Soldiers By Not Resourcing Them”

The British soldiers from 2 Rifles were angry with Media Ops for ending the reporting and their families are forever deprived of the dispatches that would have been written. Media Ops said they needed the space, but nobody replaced me in combat, and nobody is likely to.

Media Ops lied again.

Meanwhile, British citizens began demanding answers from their government.

A question was asked and Minister of Defence Bob Ainsworth made public his reply:

“Ann Winterton (Congleton, Conservative)

“To ask the Secretary of State for Defense for what reasons the journalist Michael Yon is no longer embedded with British armed forces in Afghanistan.”

Hansard source (Citation: HC Deb, 14 September 2009, c2121W)

[Reply]: Bob Ainsworth (Secretary of State, Ministry of Defence; Coventry North East, Labour)

“Opportunities to embed with Task Force Helmand are in high demand from across the media—national, regional, print, broadcast, specialist and new media. It is not possible to meet all requests and slots must be time-limited to ensure that the opportunities are shared as widely as possible. A normal embed for a national news organisation will last on average around two to three weeks, including time for travel.

“Michael Yon had been embedded with British forces on a number of occasions before his recent visit — twice in Iraq in 2007, and once in Afghanistan in 2008. His latest embed had been scheduled to last for two weeks but it was extended to take account of delays to his arrival.

“In all, his stay was extended twice and he was embedded for five weeks—much longer than is normally the case, and longer than had been agreed with him before he went. He was facilitated by British forces in a number of locations and given a high level of access both to the operations and to our personnel. At the end of this five-week period Task Force Helmand ended his embed as they were no longer able to support it given their other commitments, including other media visits.”

That’s hogwash, Mr. Ainsworth.

Pure hogwash!

The fact that the British Minister of Defence (MoD) would go on record with hogwash is again symptomatic of a much larger problem.

Mr. Ainsworth is lying to the British public about the helicopter issue in Afghanistan.

Mr. Ainsworth tells the British public that British soldiers have enough helicopters. British troops are suffering — even dying — for those lies. Mr. Ainsworth is, in effect, murdering British soldiers by not resourcing them.

If the British MoD is demanding that I be complicit in their lies to gain access to their soldiers, I decline.

I strongly believe that the embed was cancelled due to my criticism of the helicopter shortage.

Yet helicopters are just the most obvious issue that needs to be raised and addressed.

This story rings true:

From The Sunday Times
August 30, 2009

"Bob Ainsworth In 'Cover-Up' Over Soldier's Death"

"Bob Ainsworth, the defense secretary, has been accused of a cover-up over the death of the first British soldier to be killed in action in the Nato operation in the Helmand province of Afghanistan, by smearing his commanding officer."

The story continues:

"This will prove Bob Ainsworth was trying to cover up the real reason for James's death. He was trying to shift blame away from the lack of equipment for which the MoD was responsible and negligent," Philippson said."

Bob Ainsworth is covered in British blood and painfully deceptive.

Henceforth, he will always be known as "Bullshit Bob" to me.

My relationship with the British military is not diminished and I would go into combat with their soldiers anytime.

My respect for British soldiers is immense and undying. But I'm ready to throw down with Media Ops if they even glance in my direction. I refuse to work with the crew at Camp Bastion.

It's hard to forget the Major's cutting insults at the soldier who was training in the heat as a commendable young man.

Any combat troop, whether they are pilots, PJs, sailors, special operations, or my favorite — the infantry — should never be the subject of jokes or derision from any military leader of any rank.

The infantry soldiers are out there living like animals, taking bullets and getting blown up and, all while the Major sits back in his comfortable tent, playing on Facebook and watching The Simpsons.

Those combat troops, British and American, are my family. That Major and his ilk should not cut fun of them.

Bottom line for the bad apples: Nobody is asking for access. This is not a game. Stay out of the way.

[Note: Word arrived that the Media Ops crew has been replaced during a normal rotation.]

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Drone Hits Political Party Headquarters: “It Was A Coincidence”

September 26, 2009 Reuters

An unmanned US reconnaissance drone crashed in the northern Iraqi city of Mosul early today hitting the offices of one of Iraq's biggest political parties, the US military said.

No injuries were reported, and there was no indication the aircraft was shot down, said Major Derrick Cheng, a military spokesman in northern Iraq.

Major Cheng said it was a coincidence that the drone struck the local offices of the Iraqi Islamic Party, Iraq's biggest Sunni Arab political group, the military said.

<p>OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!</p>
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AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**[Sleazy Lying Bullshit Award Of
The Year, So Far]**

**“Obama Has Approved Sending 2,500
To 3,000 Additional Non-Combat
Troops To Afghanistan”**

**These “Non-Combat” Troops Will
Engage In “Route Clearance,”
“Surveillance” And “Search Out And
Disable Improvised Explosive Devices”**



30 July 2009 New Statesman

9.28.09 By William H. McMichael, Army Times [Excerpts]

President Barack Obama has approved sending 2,500 to 3,000 additional non-combat troops, known as “combat enablers,” to Afghanistan at the request of the U.S. commander there, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said.

In a Sept. 17 Pentagon news conference, Gates added that he is ready to ask Obama for the flexibility to send more enablers if Army Gen. Stanley McChrystal asks for more, and to do so “before the president makes a decision on ... whether or not to send significant additional combat troops.”

About 62,000 U.S. troops are now in Afghanistan; Obama has authorized an end strength of 68,000 through year 's end.

The request has been forwarded to U.S. Joint Forces Command, which is now identifying the troops to be deployed and the services from which they will be drawn, the official said.

Enablers are critical components of military operations, particularly given the counterinsurgency strategy employed in Afghanistan and Iraq.

The non-combat troops specialize in areas such as intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance; explosives ordnance disposal; medical and mental health; and personnel administration.

The newly authorized troops will deploy in team-sized elements as opposed to larger units, according to the official.

Gates has expressed a desire to significantly beef up enabler strength in both Afghanistan and Iraq, especially with regard to building more capability to search out and disable improvised explosive devices.

“He’s looking at seeing how he can get more counter-IED capabilities over to our forces in Iraq and Afghanistan,” Pentagon spokesman Geoff Morrell said. “He wants to figure

out how he can provide them route clearance, explosive ordnance disposal teams, medics, medevac capabilities, intelligence assets, things of that nature.”

Earlier this year, Obama approved the deployment of an additional 21,000 troops — 3,500 of them are trainers being deployed this month.

ENOUGH OF THIS SHIT; ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. soldier attached to Marines of 2nd Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion patrols near the town of Khan Neshin in Rig district of Helmand province, southern Afghanistan September 9, 2009. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic



9.23.09: A US Marine from 2/3 Fox company attempts to connect a humvee to a MRAP vehicle after it broke down while on patrol in Farah Province, southern Afghanistan. (AFP/David Furst)

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

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

TROOP NEWS

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



Graveside services at Bryars-McGill Cemetery for Lance Cpl. Bruce E. Ferrell of Perdido, Ala Aug. 17, 2009 in Perdido, Ala. 21-year-old Lance Cpl. Ferrell died Aug. 10, 2009 in Helmand province, Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Press-Register, John David Mercer)

**“Army Leaders Have Known Since
At Least 2006 That The**

Camouflage Pattern Soldiers Wear Into Combat Is Inferior To Other Available Patterns”

“They Have Done Nothing About It”

“Those Responsible For Settling For A Second-Rate, If Unique, Pattern Should Be Held To Account”

9.28.09 Army Times Editorial [Excerpts]

Army leaders have known since at least 2006 that the camouflage pattern soldiers wear into combat is inferior to other available patterns. Yet — other than order studies — they have done nothing about it.

Well over 100,000 troops rely upon the inferior camo to shield them from detection by enemy forces in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Many soldiers are convinced that better camo could have saved lives and limbs.

Curiously, the Army can't explain exactly how it came to adopt its Universal Camouflage Pattern in 2004.

Asked to provide the data or research that backed that decision — which has cost taxpayers some \$5 billion in uniform and equipment costs over the past five years — Army leaders come up empty-handed.

Astoundingly, they appear to have made the selection without regard to any significant research. [“Astoundingly,” there is no investigation by the press into who got that \$5 billion and what strings they pulled or paid of to get it. T]

Only now, pressured by inquiries from Army Times and Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa., are Army leaders moving with some degree of urgency to field better camo.

A field test of two alternative patterns will begin in October in Afghanistan, and officials promise to make a recommendation regarding a solution by the end of the year.

The alternative pattern they select could be one of those two, or it could be one of five others that will be put to another photo-simulation test in Afghanistan this fall.

Army Times obtained an Army camouflage test report completed in March through a Freedom of Information Act request after the Army refused to release them.

The two-year test concluded that the UCP is “significantly” worse at concealing soldiers when compared to the MultiCam and Marine desert digital camouflage patterns.

The Desert Brush pattern was better at hiding the wearer, as was a Syrian military pattern, which was not an option when UCP was selected.

Those tests, conducted by U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research, Development and Engineering Center, followed a 2005-2006 Natick study that compared just the UCP and MultiCam patterns, concluding that “MultiCam performed significantly better than the UCP in most conditions.”

That the Army is doing new tests is a good thing.

But what remains to be discovered is why the service deployed a camouflage pattern that wasn’t effective in the first place.

With the lives of soldiers in the balance and now \$5 billion invested in fielding the new gear, the Army leadership has some serious explaining to do.

And even now, the charade continues.

Among the two patterns being field-tested is one that is based on the now discredited UCP, dubbed UCP Delta, and featuring an additional color, coyote brown.

It remains unclear why the UCP Delta pattern, which has never been tested previously and has no track record to prove itself, was included.

Officials claim they took it to Fort Bragg and got feedback from soldiers, but they have no data to show for it.

More senior officials and members of Congress should not be fooled. Soldiers deserve the best possible camouflage, something scientifically proven to be as good or better than anything else available.

And those responsible for settling for a second-rate, if unique, pattern should be held to account.

Lives depend on it.

MORE:

“Fuller, Who Took Command Of PEO Soldier In 2008, Said He Did Not Have Data To Show Army Times To Justify The UCP Selection In Light Of Its

Poor Performance Against The Three U.S. Patterns In The Natick Testing” “Those Problems Are Well-Known To Army Leaders Familiar With The Service’s Own Studies Of The Issue”

9.28.09 By Matthew Cox, Army Times [Excerpts]

The Army has known since 2006 that it outfits soldiers with an inferior camouflage pattern — but has taken no action to correct the problem until now.

Two studies by the Army Natick Soldier Systems Center and one by Army Special Operations Command show that the Army’s Universal Camouflage Pattern, now criticized by soldiers and Congress, performs poorly when pitted against other camouflage patterns.

The two-year study completed in March 2009 confirmed what Army experts concluded in 2006: that the Army’s UCP is less effective than other patterns available since 2002, well before the Army adopted the current camouflage for the Army Combat Uniform.

Officials released the 2009 Natick study Sept. 14 in response to a Freedom of Information Act request filed by Army Times.

Although the Army demonstrated the ability to rapidly field other changes to soldiers’ combat equipment during the same period — the latest advancements in soldier and vehicle armor, for example — officials failed to move with the same urgency when it came to effective camouflage.

Rep. John Murtha, D-Pa., chairman of the powerful House Appropriations defense subcommittee, took up the issue in mid-June after hearing complaints from “a dozen” Army noncommissioned officers who told him the ACU’s pattern is ineffective in Afghanistan’s brown and green countryside.

In a Sept. 14 interview with Army Times, Brig. Gen. Peter Fuller, commander of Program Executive Office Soldier, questioned the seriousness of the camouflage pattern’s shortcomings in Iraq or Afghanistan.

“I have not seen an ONS (operational needs statement) from either theater saying they have a camouflage problem: ‘Go get me an alternative,’ ” Fuller said. “This is the challenge that we do have — on one side we are trying to be responsive, and on the other side, we are trying to be responsible.

“If we hear a soldiers say, ‘We have a problem,’ show me the problem.”

Those problems are well-known to Army leaders familiar with the service's own studies of the issue.

The most recent of these, "Photosimulation Camouflage Detection Test," conducted by U.S. Army Natick Soldier Research, Development between March 2007 and March 2009, pitted the current UCP pattern against alternative camouflage patterns. Four outperformed the Army Combat Uniform's UCP.

The Marine Corps desert digital, MultiCam, Desert Brush and a Syrian military pattern all "improved the soldier's visual detectability by decreasing the detection distance by a minimum of 16 percent in the desert and woodland environments as compared to the target wearing UCP," the report states.

All four patterns performed 16 percent to 36 percent better than the UCP across the woodland, desert and urban settings of the test, the report shows.

Army Times filed a Freedom of Information Act request Aug. 18 after Army officials refused requests for the report. It was delivered nearly a month later.

The 2009 Natick report raises questions as to why PEO Soldier overlooked the Marine desert digital, MultiCam and Desert Brush patterns in 2004 and chose the UCP for its Army Combat Uniform, a decision that resulted in \$5 billion in uniform and equipment costs.

Fuller, who took command of PEO Soldier in 2008, said he did not have data to show Army Times to justify the UCP selection in light of its poor performance against the three U.S. patterns in the Natick testing.

The Syrian pattern was not an option when the UCP was selected.

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

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

-- Eugene V. Debs

“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”

Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.

"The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!"

-- Camille Desmoulins

"When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, "No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country."

-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq

We stand in a moment of time between the eternal past and the eternal future, content that, for us, all that was before and all that will be cannot exist for us, and yet we exist because all that was before us gave us our moment in time, and we will share the responsibility for all that will exist in the eternal future.

-- Abraham Lincoln

“Obama Is Only Taking The Killing And Death Out Of One Roan (Iraq) And Transferring It To Another Roan (Afghanistan)”



Stanley Howard Photo: New Abolitionist

[This is part of a letter to Military Project from Stanley Howard, Founder of Prisoners Against The War, a Chapter of Military Project. For more about Prisoners Against The War, see below. T]

Can't wait to get out of here and help with the organizing and outreach.

Sounding like it's going to be needed because Obama is only taking the killing and death out of one roan (Iraq) and transferring it to another roan (Afghanistan), WHILE THE KILLING AND DEATH CONTINUE IN BOTH ROOMS.

It's a damn shame that a guy is elected claiming he's going to do this and that, then: gets in office and decide to play ball with the same people he fought in the election.

Crazy Shit!!!

MORE:

PRISONERS AGAINST THE WAR: Founding Statement 10.12.05

BY: Stanley Howard

10.12.05: Done at Statesville Prison:

The Prisoners of Statesville Correctional Center in Joliet, Illinois, extends our deepest and sincere condolences to the Families and Loved Ones of those lost in the Iraq and Afghanistan war.

To show we support the troops and that we stand firmly in solidarity with the Military Project and the countless of other people, groups and organizations determined to Bring Them Home Now, we came together and formed the "Prisoners Against The War."

Being an ex-Death Row prisoner who spent 16 horrible years as an innocent man on Illinois' Death Row before being pardoned by then-Gov. George Ryan (Jan 2003), I knew President George W. Bush as the "Texecutioner" who showed no value or respect for human life.

He viciously and unsympathetically ordered over 150 people to be poisoned to death as Governor of Texas.

So when he led a military offensive aimed at ousting Saddam Hussein as President of Iraq, done under the pretext that Saddam had weapons of mass destruction, I knew then that that was a lie and whatever his agenda was, it was only going to cause a lot more deaths.

I expressed my feelings about this in my "Keeping it Real" column in the New Abolitionist (May 2003), the newsletter of the Campaign to End the Death Penalty:

"I'm not subscribing to their propaganda: 'They just hate Americans and no one knows why.' I'm not buying into this wacky patriotic frenzy whipped up after 9/11 that enables Bush to proclaim, 'either you're with us, or you're with them' mentality.

We need to stop this senseless cycle of violence by stopping these arm chair chief SI warmongers from sending our mothers, fathers, sisters and brothers onto battlefields to kill each other, when these same leaders cannot come together to combat starvation, AIDS, global warming, pollution, racism and etc."

It's said that we study history to stop repeating the errors of the past. And if that is true, then we as a civilized people living in the 21st century must come to grips with what the history of war has taught us: war causes nothing but death and destruction, and pain and suffering.

Moreover, its easy for these armchair chiefs/warmongers to declare war with the assurance that they nor their Loved Ones would never set foot on the battlefield.

It's now a proven fact that Saddam had no WMDs nor was he attempting to reinstitute his nuclear program, and it' s a shame that thousands of our human family members has died and are dying because of this well orchestrated lie.

The war continues even though the truth was exposed, and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice who helped perpetrate the WMD lie was recently quoted as estimating that, "the American military could quite possibly be in Iraq for 10 to 15 years."

This estimate is unacceptable, ridiculous and a sign of stupidity.

And even though Bush says we should honor our Fallen Heroes by staying and completing the mission, Prisoners Against The War asserts that since the mission, Bush's mission, was exposed to be an international crime, we're going to honor our Fallen Heroes and those still in harms way by ending this war and Bringing Them Home Now.

**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: 888.711.2550

**Where Have All The Young Men
Gone --
In Memory Of Mary Of Peter Paul & Mary**

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: September 25, 2009
Subject: Where Have All The Young Men Gone

By Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, Veterans For Peace 50 Michigan, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

**Where Have all The Young Men Gone
In Memory of Mary of Peter Paul & Mary**

Jimmy wakes up on the floor of his car laying there with
empty beer cans and a bump on his head
Grabbing the steering wheel he pulls himself back on his seat
looking at the round crack in the windshield and then
to the mirror with blood all over his face
He is in a ditch on a dirt country road against a small tree
with the engine barely running as he finds his Maroboro's
pokes at the lighter and it pops he lights his cigarette

He puts the car in reverse and backs his beat up
big Oldsmobile onto the road and turns off the switch
opens the door and stands by his car looking all around
at the greenest and the mist trying to figure out just where
in the hell he was on this morning as a white tailed deer crosses
the road up ahead and he takes off his bloody T-shirt
pours remnants from empty beer cans wipes off his head
cleans up his face as he looks in the mirror on the door
then grabs his car keys where lays a loaded shotgun in his trunk
and a plastic bag with a clean shirt that he pulls on and jumps
back in his car kicking out empty beer cans where he finds two
that are unopened that he opens and washes down
yesterday and last night and Vietnam
He puts his car in gear and heads out and drives around
then finds a paved road. Not too long he finds a country store
walks in grabs 24 beers and 5 packs of cigarettes
some beef jerky chips pulls out his check book and asks
the old man how much does it come to but he hesitates
and Jimmy asks what's wrong and he says the check as Jimmy
looks at him and says I am a Vietnam Veteran and on of all
days, this is Memorial Day that he fought and bled for this
country Do you want to see my scars he shouts as the old
man says OK OK
Then Jimmy walks out to his car grinning and trying
not to laugh because that check is like the rubber on his
worn out old tires as he sits in the car rolling a joint smoking
driving nowhere then seeing a graveyard with flowers
and flags with no one there anywhere they did their duty
Jimmy slows and pulls into it stopping and getting his shotgun
he starts shooting off the flags and screams across
the cemetery Oh the Glory the Fucking Glory
as he shoots the flags down drinks some more beers.

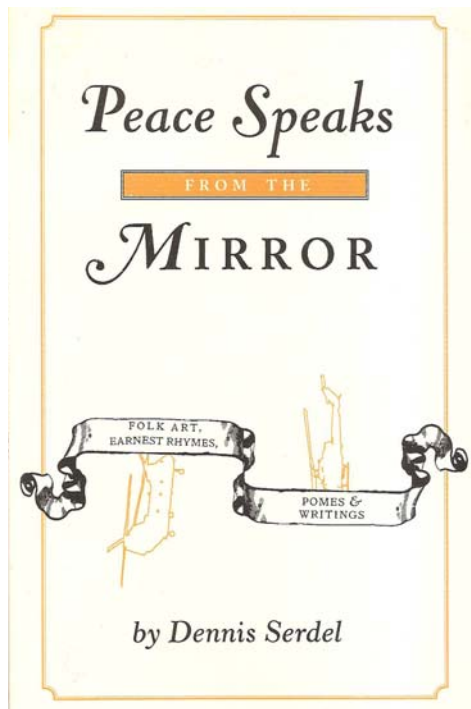
written by Dennis Serdel
Military Resistance

MORE:

MORE OF DENNIS SERDEL'S WORK IN *PEACE SPEAKS FROM THE MIRROR*:

Get Some While There Still Are Some:

[You know the power of the poems by Dennis Serdel from the pages of GI Special:
now they're in book form: Ordering information below: T]



DENNIS SERDEL:

Shipped to Vietnam in November 1967.

Returned home in October 1968 to Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Joined Veterans For Peace in January 1990.

Joined Vietnam Veterans Against the War when Iraq and Afghanistan War started.

Books are \$15 Post Paid: Check or Money Order Payable to Dennis Serdel

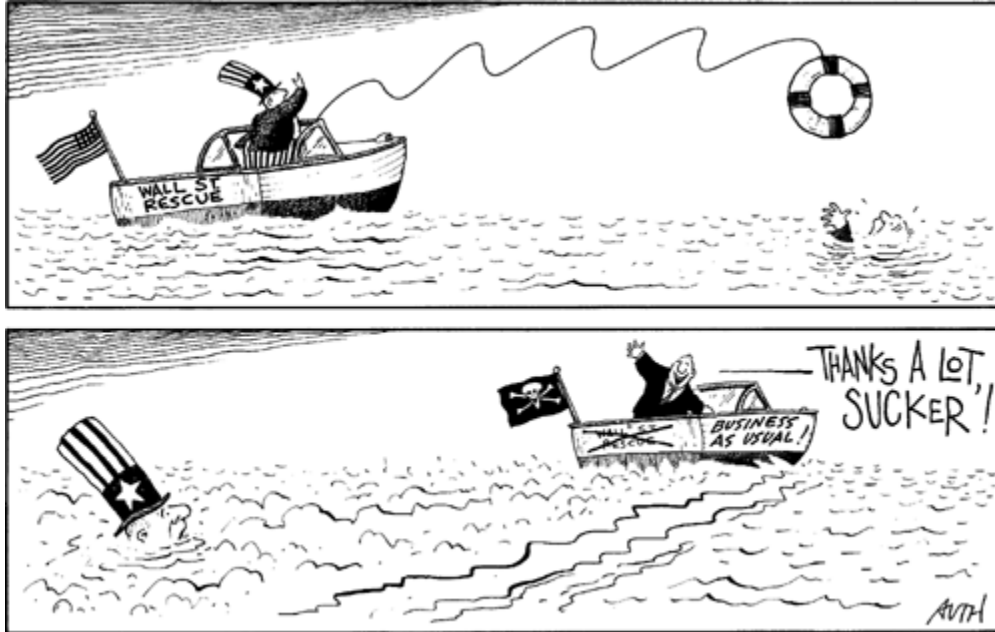
Dennis Serdel
339 Oakwood Lane
Perry, Michigan 48872

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 to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 888.711.2550

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS



American Girl Introduces Homeless Doll: \$95

“Buy The Hairbrush For Only \$7 More”



The "Gwen Thompson" American Girl doll retails for \$95. (Photo: americangirl.com)

September 25 By Robyn Kurth, Clarity Digital Group

American Girl, best known for their high quality, ethnically diverse dolls representing various periods in American history, has just introduced a "limited edition" doll representing the plight of the homeless.

The back story of the "Gwen Thompson" doll is that she lives in a car with her mother; the actual doll with the accompanying paperback book retails for \$95, accessories not included.

American Girl products are definitely as wholesome as (and even more educational than) all things Disney, but the dolls and accessories would be rather inaccessible to the type of child that "Gwen Thompson" is based on, which is probably why a \$95 "homeless" doll (buy the hairbrush for only \$7 more) is raising more than a few eyebrows among parents who might be asked to buy an American Girl Doll one day for their daughter.

Military Resistance Looks Even Better Printed Out

Military Resistance/GI Special are archived at website

<http://www.militaryproject.org> .

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

<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/2008/index.html>; news@uruknet.info;

http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/

Military Resistance www.militaryproject.org

*This is how Obama brings the troops home,
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.*



*Military Resistance is a near-daily news bulletin for service members
www.militaryproject.org*

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