

Military Resistance: 7J3: [GI Special]

Feeding the Empire: By Mr. Fish —



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

Eight U.S. Soldiers Killed In Complex Attack On Kamdysh District Base Camps

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

October 5, 2009 By SABRINA TAVERNISE and SANGAR RAHIMI, The New York Times Company & By Amin Jalali (Reuters) & By LORI HINNANT (AP)

KABUL, Afghanistan — Insurgents besieged two American outposts in eastern Afghanistan on Saturday, American and Afghan officials said, killing eight Americans and two Afghan policemen in a bold daylight strike that was the deadliest for American soldiers in more than a year.

The attack took place in the Nuristan province, a remote area on the border with Pakistan. It began Saturday morning, when insurgents stormed the area, pounding the two American base camps with guns and rocket-propelled grenades.

Americans fought back, striking their attackers with helicopters, heavy guns and airstrikes, but the insurgents were persistent and the battle lasted into the afternoon, said Col. Wayne Shanks, a spokesman for NATO forces in Afghanistan.

It was unclear whether insurgents made it inside either of the two compounds, but Colonel Shanks said that by the end of the battle, American forces still controlled the outposts. The Americans shared the compounds with Afghan security forces.

“The militants put on a very aggressive attack,” Col. Shanks said. “Our forces had to use a considerable amount of firepower to counter it.”

The governor of Nuristan province, Jamaluddin Badar, reached by telephone on Sunday, said that 11 Afghan police officers, including the district police chief, had been kidnapped in the strike.

Badar said the two outposts were on a hill — one near the top and one at the foot of the slope — flanked by the village on one side and the mosque on the other.

Fighting began around dawn Saturday and lasted several hours, said Jamaludin Badar, governor of Nuristan province. Badar said the two outposts were on a hill — one near the top and one at the foot of the slope — flanked by the village on one side and the mosque on the other.

Nearly 300 militant fighters flooded the lower, Afghan outpost then swept around it to reach the American station on higher ground from both directions, said Mohammad Qasim Jangulbagh, the provincial police chief.

Afghan provincial authorities said they had lost contact with scores of Afghan policemen after the day-long attack and did not know whether they were dead or alive.

The province’s deputy police chief Mohammad Farooq said the fate of an entire 90-strong police force in the Kamdesh district was unknown.

He said the attackers did breach the compounds briefly.

The American military did not confirm the report.

Much about the attack was still unclear on Sunday, but its broad outlines were eerily familiar. Nine American soldiers were killed in July 2008 in the same province, when 200 insurgents stormed their small outpost in the village of Wanat.

That attack, which has been described as the “Black Hawk Down” of Afghanistan, with the 48 American soldiers and 24 Afghan soldiers outnumbered three to one in a four-hour firefight, is now seen as a cautionary tale for the war here, which commanders say should focus more on protecting civilians.

Locals in the area were furious with Americans for the killing of local medical staff in an airstrike the week before, and commanders believe that for that reason, they were more hospitable to insurgents.

Outrage was so intense that President Hamid Karzai called for an investigation into the airstrike, which local officials at the time said had killed 22 innocent Afghans.

Mr. Badar said Saturday's attack took place in the Kamdysh district, about 10 miles from the border with Pakistan, and less than 20 miles southwest of the attack last year.

Attackers gathered in a mosque and a nearby village, before staging the attack.

The Americans identified the attackers as "tribal militia," a departure from their typical usage of the word Taliban.

Col. Shanks said the description was more specific. Some military planners argue applying the word Taliban to all insurgents oversimplifies the fight Americans face here and gives the appearance, sometimes falsely, of a coordinated, hierarchical fighting force.

The American military statement said American forces had "effectively repelled the attack and inflicted heavy enemy casualties."

It was the largest number of American casualties in a single day since the Wanat attack last July, according to iCasualties.org, an independent group that tracks NATO casualties here.

The bodies of at least five insurgents were found in the area after the fight, Mr. Badar said.

The hostages were taken to Mandigal, a village in Kamdysh.

The commander of the unit the Americans belonged to, Col. Randy George, called Saturday's strike "a complex attack in a difficult area."

American forces had planned to pull out of the sparsely populated area, as part of a strategic shift to place more troops in heavily populated centers. The attack does not change those plans, Colonel Shanks said.

But Mr. Badar believes that would be a mistake. Too few troops in the area and clumsy airstrikes have created a poisonous mix for his province, whose proximity to the lawless tribal areas of Pakistan allows easy passage for the Taliban.

"We knew the Taliban was getting stronger every day in eastern Nuristan," he said, describing how teachers and civil servants in the area had received threats and can no longer travel to the central parts of the province.

He added: "We have long shared our concern with the government and foreign forces, but they didn't take it seriously."

A Taliban spokesman, Zabiullah Mujahed, said that Taliban fighters overran the outposts and briefly occupied them.

He said Taliban fighters were holding the district police chief and an intelligence officer hostage.

He said that dozens of Afghan soldiers and police were killed along with Western troops.

Fighters captured 35 police during the battle and their fate would be decided by the movement's provincial council, he added.

He said seven Taliban fighters had been killed and that the fighters eventually withdrew because the area came under bombardment.

MORE:

U.S. Troops Call Afghan Region 'Vietnam Without Napalm'

"I Don't Have Enough Troops For Everything They Want Me To Do Here"

"Bravo Company Arrived In Afghanistan With 24 Strykers. A Third Of The Vehicles Are Now Out Of Service Due To Bomb Attacks Or Maintenance"

"The Road To One Smaller Outpost Has So Many Homemade Bombs That The Soldiers Usually Arrive On Foot,

A Treacherous Hike Due To Buried Land Mines”

“On A Single Deadly Day In August, A Bravo Company 1st Lieutenant Had Both Legs Blown Off By A Mine, And Explosions Killed Two Soldiers”

Thanks to Military Project members Mark Shapiro, Pham Binh and Michael Letwin who sent this in.]

September 30, 2009 By Hal Bernton, McClatchy Newspapers

JELAWUR, Afghanistan — The men of Bravo Company have a bitter description for the irrigated swath of land along the Arghandab River where 10 members of their battalion have been killed and 30 have been wounded since the beginning of August.

“Like Vietnam without the napalm,” said Spc. Nicholas Gojekian, 21, of Katy, Texas.

A prime agricultural area of vineyards and pomegranate orchards, the 18-miles of valley that the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment patrols includes Taliban insurgents, booby traps and buried explosives.

The troops call the area the “green zone,” but unlike Iraq, where it’s a fortified area in the heart of Baghdad, this green zone can be a hellish place.

The soldiers have one of the toughest tasks in Afghanistan: improving security and winning the support of villagers in an area where the Taliban have been gaining power.

The battalion arrived in southern Afghanistan this summer as part of a brigade of more than 3,800 soldiers from Fort Lewis, Wash.

The unit took its heaviest losses in August, when it had the highest casualties in what was the deadliest month so far in America’s eight-year war here.

So far, the Army mission here has been an uneasy mix of trying to woo elders with offers of generators, roads and other improvements while fighting a nasty war with an often-unseen enemy.

Bravo Company arrived in Afghanistan with 24 Strykers, the first of the eight-wheeled combat vehicles outfitted with high-tech communications and surveillance gear to arrive in Afghanistan.

A third of the vehicles are now out of service due to bomb attacks or maintenance.

The bomb threats are so pervasive that Stryker drivers have abandoned some stretches of road in favor of driving through the deserts on different routes.

The road to one smaller outpost has so many homemade bombs that the soldiers usually arrive on foot, a treacherous hike due to buried land mines.

“We have had enemy contact almost every day,” said Lt. Col. Jon Neumann, the commander of the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment.

“Until we do clearing, we can’t hold or build here right now,” a reference to the U.S. counter-insurgency tactic of “clear, hold and build.”

Neumann said that a “perfect storm” of factors has bolstered the Taliban in the Arghandab. They include a successful spring insurgency campaign, the death of a strong tribal leader who supported the U.S.-backed Afghan government and the wounding of a charismatic police chief.

The Americans are up against a foe who’s adept at creating unforeseen hazards. Often the Taliban fill large yellow water jugs with explosives — packing some underneath road culverts and burying others in the sandy desert soil.

Some battalion soldiers perished when their Strykers hit roadside bombs — known as IED’s or improvised explosive devices — and others were killed by bombs that exploded while they patrolled on foot.

On a single deadly day in August, a Bravo Company 1st lieutenant on a patrol had both his legs blown off by a mine, and explosions killed two soldiers temporarily attached to the unit as they walked through the green zone.

Bravo Company is responsible for an area that’s considered a key staging point for Taliban as they organize forays into Kandahar, a major southern city where the insurgents rule by night and set off bombs by day.

The Arghandab valley is starkly divided between a flat, barren desert and the fertile stretch of irrigated orchards, vineyards and cornfields along the river.

In the 1980s, Soviet troops spent more than a month in an unsuccessful attempt to defeat U.S.-backed mujahedeen forces that took refuge in the orchards.

From the green zone, the Taliban fan out to villages, which consist largely of mud brick homes inside mud-walled compounds that sprout out of the ground in the same dun colors of the surrounding desert.

In the nearby village of Jelawur, the U.N. was able to complete a rebuilding project a few years after the fall of Taliban, an effort marked with a plaque on a wall. Seven years later, however, several dozen Bravo Company soldiers found a walk down the main street to be a tense one this week.

The soldiers were in full battle gear, scanning culverts for IED’s and checked their gun sights to search the surrounding fields for signs of a Taliban attack.

Some soldiers stripped off their shoulder patches to make themselves less of a target.

Villagers warily monitored their passage.

A soldier threw out a piece of candy, and a shopkeeper quickly admonished a young boy to leave it alone.

The company had 152 soldiers when it arrived, which was more than a dozen short of its authorized strength.

Since then, some platoons have been depleted by injuries, including concussions from bomb blasts.

“I don’t have enough troops for everything they want me to do here,” said Capt. Jamie Pope, the company commander, a West Point graduate from Sherrills Ford, N.C.

One platoon authorized to have more than 40 soldiers is now trying to get by with fewer than 32 soldiers.

After guard duty is assigned, a platoon may be at less than full strength for patrols.

“We may go with 10 to 11 guys, when we like to have 14 to 21,” said Sgt. 1st Class Anthony Dimico, a 1st platoon soldier from Yakima, Wash.

Another platoon that arrived with 39 soldiers was operating this week with 22, according to Sgt. 1st Class Zalman Dass from Renton, Wash..

The tempo was set on one of the first patrols back on Aug. 10 as Bravo Company soldiers trekked through a cornfield and were attacked at close range by nearly a dozen fighters who fired from the edge of some orchards.

Spc. Richard Thiebault was one of the lead soldiers. He heard the slam of a rifle bolt, and then went down with a bullet in his chest from an RPK machinegun about 60 feet away.

His ballistic vest probably saved his life: The bullet left a half-dollar sized dent in the armor, but it didn’t penetrate.

“I’m still shook up to this day,” said Thiebault.

“I don’t like going near the orchards.”

MORE:

**“Almost A Lost Cause”
“Nothing Ever Felt Safe Out
There”**

**“We Felt Like We’d Been Backed
Into A Corner”**

**One Of The Deadliest Attacks Of The
Afghan War Is A Symbol Of The U.S.
Military’s Missteps.**

**“Nine U.S. Soldiers Were Killed And 27
Were Wounded During The July 13, 2008,
Attack”**

October 4, 2009 By Greg Jaffe, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

The rocket-propelled grenade and rifle fire was so intense that most of the soldiers spent the opening minutes of the battle lying on their stomachs, praying that the enemy would run out of ammunition.

They had been in the tiny Afghan village of Wanat, near the Pakistani border, for four days. The command post of their remote base was still just a muddy hole surrounded by sandbags.

The radio crackled. About 50 yards from the base’s perimeter, nine U.S. soldiers manning an observation post were on the verge of being overrun.

Several soldiers were already dead.

“We need to get up there!” screamed 1st Lt. Jonathan Brostrom, the platoon leader at the main base.

He and Spec. Jason Hovater grabbed as much ammunition as they could carry and someone popped a yellow smoke grenade to cover their movement. The two soldiers sprinted into enemy fire.

It was a predictable reaction from the 24-year-old lieutenant -- courageous, reckless, impulsive. When Brostrom joined the military, his father, a retired colonel and career

aviator, had tried to steer him away from the infantry and toward flying helicopters. "I don't want to be a wimp," the son chided his father.

Brostrom and Hovater dove into the observation post. A sergeant who was too hurt to fight handed Brostrom his M240 machine gun. As the lieutenant turned to set up the weapon, someone spotted an insurgent: "He's inside the fucking wire!"

Nine U.S. soldiers were killed and 27 were wounded during the July 13, 2008, attack, which raged for several hours and was one of the bloodiest of the Afghan war.

Among the dead was Brostrom.

In recent months, the battle of Wanat has come to symbolize the U.S. military's missteps in Afghanistan. It has provoked Brostrom's father to question why Jonathan died and whether senior Army officers -- including a former colleague and close friend -- made careless mistakes that left the platoon vulnerable. It has triggered three investigations, the latest initiated last week by Adm. Mike Mullen, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

And it has helped drive a broader reassessment of war strategy among top commanders in Afghanistan, who have begun to pull U.S. troops out of remote villages where some of the heaviest fighting has occurred. Senior military leaders have concluded that they lack the forces to wrest these Taliban strongholds away from the enemy and are instead focusing on more populated and less violent areas.

To some soldiers and their families, this decision amounts to retreat.

A few weeks before Brostrom was killed, a military historian asked him about the successes he had witnessed in Nurestan province, where he had spent most of his tour. He gave a prescient reply.

"It is almost a lost cause up in Nurestan," he said flatly.

"There needs to be a lot more than just a platoon there if you want to make a big difference." He thought some more about his frustrating tour, leading the 40-man 2nd Platoon of Chosen Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment (Airborne), 173rd Airborne Brigade Combat Team. "We killed a few Taliban," he said, "so I guess that is a success."

Brostrom, who grew up on Army bases throughout the United States, was charming, athletic and a little bit immature. He arrived in Afghanistan in July 2007 and spent a couple of uneventful months in a battalion staff job before taking over a platoon that occupied a small outpost in Nurestan's Waygal Valley.

The outpost's location, near the tiny village of Bella, was chosen in 2006 because it sat on a historic mujaheddin infiltration route from Pakistan. The idea was to stop enemy fighters in the remote mountains before they made their way to more populated areas.

This account of Brostrom's time in Afghanistan and his final battle is based on interviews with his troops and commanders, as well as the Army's 800-page initial investigation. It

also draws from the work of an Army historian whose draft study of the fight was reported by ForeignPolicy.com and The Washington Post in July.

Brostrom entered the war at a time when the Taliban was gaining strength. Shortly after he became platoon leader, his unit was sent to recover the bodies of six U.S. soldiers and a Marine who were gunned down while returning on foot to Bella. One soldier had fallen more than 500 yards down a steep ravine, and it had taken Brostrom's troops and circling attack helicopters more than 15 hours to find him.

After the attack, the other soldiers rarely ventured far from their base.

"We felt like we'd been backed into a corner," said Staff Sgt. Jonathan Benton, one of the soldiers from the platoon. "Nothing ever felt safe out there."

In January 2008, Brostrom's platoon sergeant, Sgt. 1st Class Matthew Kahler, was fatally shot by an Afghan security guard as he returned to the outpost from a foot patrol.

One of Kahler's jobs had been to teach Brostrom, who was technically his superior, how to lead troops in combat. On a cloudless day at the Bella outpost, Brostrom delivered a simple eulogy for his 29-year-old friend and mentor.

He talked about Kahler's love for his wife and 4-year-old daughter, his patience with young soldiers, and his passion for punk music. "I can't even begin to list all the good qualities Sergeant Kahler had, because it would be impossible," he said, squinting into the bright midday sun and fighting back tears. "I think Sergeant Kahler knew everything."

"Bloodbath"

Brostrom's battalion commander, Lt. Col. William Ostlund, had concluded months before Kahler's death that keeping troops at the Bella outpost no longer made sense. Enemy fighters coming from Pakistan had long ago learned to maneuver around the base.

But Ostlund wasn't ready to give up the surrounding Waygal Valley, which was home to a largely illiterate and deeply religious population.

"It was a population I really had a hard time understanding and did not respect," Ostlund said.

"But I really did believe that they needed to be connected to the central government and that would be the first step to making them better people, less of a threat to themselves and Afghanistan."

Ostlund, square-jawed and intense, had a reputation in the Army as a high flier. He enlisted at age 17 and earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Nebraska in only four semesters. In the 1990s, he served as a platoon leader for then-Lt. Col. David H. Petraeus, who had risen to become the top commander in the Middle East. "Bill was one of those rare individuals who could truly inspire others," Petraeus recalled.

"Whatever the task, his platoon stood out . . . and the tougher the task, the more they

stood out.” Ostlund went on to earn a master’s degree in international relations from Tufts University and to teach at West Point.

He decided to relocate Brostrom’s platoon from Bella to a new base at Wanat, which was home to the valley’s district governor and police chief. The troops would establish a security bubble around the village and then win the support of local officials with \$1.4 million in reconstruction projects.

Ostlund had lost eight soldiers in the Waygal Valley and had twice been ambushed there himself. But he thought that U.S. troops could win the allegiance of the people there.

“Americans are hard to dislike for an extended period of time,” he said. “I really believe that.” **[Unless they’re invading your country and killing your friends and relatives, which does tend to have an effect on public opinion. For more information about that see: British Army in America 1776; German Army in Poland, 1939; Russian Army in Hungary, 1956.]**

His plan was also animated by the same stubborn resolve that caught Petraeus’s eye. “To accept defeat and have that population destroy my will to continue my mission just wasn’t on the menu of options,” he said. **[Typical Brass Rat: me me me me me, all about me.]**

Before Brostrom moved to Wanat, he went home on leave to see his parents in Hawaii, where they had settled after his father retired from the Army. One evening, he showed his father videos from Afghanistan. Most of the clips were of Brostrom and his troops under fire at the Bella outpost.

In one video, Brostrom’s battalion fired artillery and white phosphorus, an incendiary weapon, at a distant campfire in the mountains where it had killed insurgents earlier that day. Someone had come to collect the bodies. The soldiers were determined to kill them.

“Here comes a mighty big explosion on this little candlelight ceremony that the Taliban is having for their buddies that died there earlier,” one of the soldiers says on the video. “This is going to be glorious. It is going to be a bloodbath.”

A few seconds later, the mountainside exploded with fire, and the soldiers let up a raucous cheer.

Human rights groups have criticized the United States for employing white phosphorus to kill enemy fighters, but this type of use is permitted under military rules.

The elder Brostrom weighed his words carefully before he spoke. “How do you know those people dragging the bodies away weren’t villagers coming to get their relatives?” he asked.

“They are all fucking Taliban up there,” the son replied.

The father continued to press his doubts. The son maintained that the hard-nosed approach was the only thing keeping him alive in a hopeless corner of Afghanistan. Finally, the young lieutenant snapped. “You don’t understand,” he said.

“You’re right, son. I don’t,” the father replied. “I don’t understand it. But I am worried. I am really worried.”

“There Should Have Been A Lot More Done To Help Us” “The Real Problem Was Arrogance”

A few days later, Brostrom returned to Afghanistan. His platoon didn’t get its final order to establish the Wanat base until early July. The battalion was only two weeks from returning home, but Ostlund and his superiors wanted to make sure that the outpost was in place for the next unit.

The day before he left, Brostrom confessed his doubts about the mission to Lt. Brandon Kennedy, his closest friend in the Army.

Brostrom worried he didn’t have enough men to hold off an enemy attack and complained that the proposed base’s location, surrounded by mountains, would make it hard to defend, Kennedy wrote in a statement for Army investigators.

“He said he knew he was going to get fucked up, because the last four times he had gone up there, he had been ambushed every time, often with very good effects,” Kennedy wrote.

Nothing about the Wanat mission went as planned.

Brostrom and his soldiers were supposed to have 16,000 pounds of construction material to build defensive bunkers, big earthmovers to fill seven-foot-tall Hesco barriers, and a five-day supply of water, a senior military official said.

But the Afghan construction firm that was supposed to ferry the construction supplies and build the base refused to make the four-mile drive into the valley because it was too dangerous.

A small Bobcat earthmover was delivered to the base by helicopter, but it ran out of gas after one day. Brostrom’s soldiers, working in 100-degree heat, chipped away at the rocky soil with shovels to fill sandbags and dirt barriers.

The five-day supply of water also never made it to Wanat, and by their second day at the base, most of the troops were “mildly dehydrated,” one soldier told Army investigators.

Two days into the mission, a Predator surveillance drone -- one of only two in Afghanistan -- was shifted from Wanat. No attacks had occurred there during the opening days of the mission, and U.S. commanders decided there were more pressing priorities.

“There should have been a lot more done to help us,” said Sgt. 1st Class David Dzwik, who replaced Kahler as Brostrom’s platoon sergeant. “The real problem was arrogance. Everyone thought they knew the enemy.”

A few days after the platoon arrived, a Wanat village elder gave Brostrom a list of Afghans who had been killed in a helicopter attack the previous week.

The dead included insurgents but also several local medical personnel who had worked closely with U.S. soldiers.

The incident had infuriated people throughout the valley.

On July 13, their fifth day at the Wanat base, Brostrom and Dzwik ordered all of the soldiers to rise at 3:30 a.m. and man their fighting positions. In Afghanistan, the hours just before dawn are typically the most deadly.

Shortly after 4 a.m., an estimated 200 insurgents let loose a torrent of rocket-propelled-grenade fire, destroying the base's anti-tank missile system and its mortar tubes. Then they trained their guns on the observation post.

The initial blast threw Spec. Tyler Stafford onto his back. He screamed that he was on fire. Next to him, Spec. Matthew Phillips was rearing back to throw a grenade when a rocket came roaring at them. The tailfin ricocheted off Stafford's helmet, leaving a jagged dent. When he looked up, Phillips was dead.

A few feet away, Spec. Christopher McKaig and Spec. Jonathan Ayers prodded each other to raise their heads above the observation post's sandbagged wall. "I am going to count to three and then we are both going to jump up and shoot at whatever we see," McKaig recalled screaming.

The two soldiers leapt to their feet, fired a short burst from their rifles and collapsed. When it came time to rise again, Ayers hesitated. So McKaig started counting. On three, the men rose and a bullet struck Ayers. He coughed up enough blood to fill a teaspoon and fell over dead.

A few minutes later, Brostrom and Hovater sprinted up to the observation post. They were killed within minutes of their arrival.

With the enemy closing in, Stafford, McKaig and Sgt. Matthew Gobble -- woozy from a loss of blood -- abandoned the observation post. In the chaos, they accidentally left behind Sgt. Ryan Pitts, who could hear the enemy fighters barking orders just a few feet away. He whispered into a radio that he was alone and out of ammunition.

"I knew this was going to be it," he later told an Army historian. Soldiers at the main base called to him over the radio, but Pitts didn't answer. The wounded sergeant couldn't afford to let the enemy hear him.

Another team of reinforcements sprinted to the observation post, pulled rifles and ammunition off their dead comrades, and fired back at the insurgents. An hour into the battle, Apache helicopters arrived and swung the momentum in favor of U.S. troops.

Brostrom's friend, Brandon Kennedy, arrived at Wanat a short time later to find soldiers coated in sweat and blood. Thick clouds of smoke spewed from burning Humvees. "I had been in firefights before, but this was totally different," he said. "It was like a movie."

It fell to Kennedy to escort Brostrom's body back to the United States. He asked a sergeant who had done it before what to expect.

"It is always the same," the soldier replied.

"The moms just want to know about their son. They want to know what kind of man he was. The dads want to know how their son died. They want someone to explain to them what happened."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Resistance Action: Fuel Tankers Blown Up At Baghdad Airport



Fuel trucks destroyed in attack, Baghdad October 4, 2009. A bomb attached to a fuel tanker wounded five people and set ablaze other fuel tankers. REUTERS/Saad Shalash

Oct 3 (Reuters) & Oct 4 (Reuters) & (KUNA)

A fire which stopped traffic at Baghdad International Airport has been controlled, the authorities said on Sunday.

A bomb attached to a fuel tanker wounded five people and set ablaze four other fuel tankers in western Baghdad, police said.

Baghdad's security operations centre said seven U.S. Skylink company tankers were set ablaze.

Airport terminals were reopened after a one-hour halt.

A bomb stuck to the car of the mayor of Haditha town, Abdul Razaq Jubair, wounded him and two of his guards in Ramadi, 100 km (60 miles) west of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb struck the car of Amir Sadeq, general director of electricity supply for Iraq's Middle Euphrates region, wounding him and killing his driver in northern Baghdad's Adhamiya district, police said.

Guerrillas opened fire on and wounded a member of a local pro-government militia on the southwestern outskirts of Kirkuk, 250 km (155 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Afghan Government Soldier Kills Two American Troops In Their Sleep; Two More Wounded

KABUL, Oct 3 (Reuters)

An Afghan soldier on guard at a joint base with U.S. troops shot dead two American servicemen and wounded two others as they slept, a provincial official said on Saturday.

Shahedullah Shahed, spokesman for the governor of Wardak province west of Kabul, said the shooting took place after a combined team of Afghan and U.S. forces had returned from a joint operation late on Friday.

"The Americans were in the middle of sleep when an Afghan soldier on duty opened fire on them," Shahed said.

U.S. Service Member Dies From Wardak Attack

10.3.09 (AP)

A U.S. service member died Friday of wounds from a bomb attack in Wardak the day before.

Wisconsin Sgt. Killed In Logar

October 03, 2009 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 765-09

Sgt. Ryan C. Adams, 26 of Rhinelander, Wisc., died Oct. 2 in Logar province, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when enemy forces attacked his vehicle using rocket-propelled grenade fire. He was assigned to the 91st Engineer Company (Sapper), Wisconsin Army National Guard, Rhinelander, Wisc.

Balkh IED Wounds Four Finish Soldiers

October 03, 2009 (Xinhua) & AP

A Finnish convoy hit a roadside bomb in Balkh province, destroying one of the vehicles and injuring four soldiers, Afghan and Finnish officials said.

The troops were on patrol on Saturday morning 40 kilometres west of Mazar-i-Sharif when their RG-32 armoured patrol vehicle hit an improvised explosive device.

The military said that all four are being treated in a German field hospital and the soldiers are now in stable conditions.

This is the first time that Finnish soldiers stationed in Afghanistan have been injured.

Lauri Inna, a spokesman at the Finnish army headquarters, said that although Finnish troops had come under fire about a dozen times this year, Saturday's explosion was the first time Finnish troops had been wounded.

Australian Soldier Wounded Near Tarin Kowt

October 4, 2009 AAP

An Australian soldier has been injured following an explosion in Afghanistan, but has escaped with only "minor wounds", the defence department says.

The digger was conducting a routine operation east of Tarin Kowt, the capital of Oruzgan province, when the explosion occurred.

Joint operations chief Mark Evans says the soldier - part of the Mentoring and Reconstruction Task Force - is in a stable condition after being airlifted to a medical facility.

“The wounded soldier was given immediate first aid by his colleagues and the evacuated by helicopter to an ISAF (International Security Assistance Force) medical facility in Tarin Kowt,” Lt Gen Evans said in a statement.

“Our medical staff in Tarin Kowt will now monitor this soldier over the coming days to make an assessment on his ability to return to duty.”

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

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

**BAD IDEA:
NO MISSION;
POINTLESS WAR:
ALL HOME NOW**



9.23.09 US Marines from 2/3 Fox Company on patrol in Farah Province, southern Afghanistan. (AFP/David Furst)



Soldiers from the U.S. Army's 4th Battalion, 25th Field Artillery Regiment from Fort Drum, N.Y., patrol in the Jalrez Valley in Afghanistan's Wardak Province Sept. 25, 2009. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)



An armored vehicle from the U.S. Army's Alfa Company, 3rd brigade of 10th Mountain Division based in Fort Drum, New York, damaged by an IED laid by the Taliban, near the village of Eber in Logar province September 26, 2009. REUTERS/Nikola Solic



After taking fire from Taliban militants on open ground, Bravo Company, 1st Battalion 5th Marines move to cover in Nawa district, Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, Oct. 1, 2009. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

Good News For The Afghan Resistance!!

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



A foreign occupation armed forces member from the USA searches the body of an Afghan citizen without consent before the occupiers conduct "questioning." This is done in view of his friends and neighbors in his village at Kherwar district in Logar province October 2, 2009. [Photo: REUTERS/Nikola Solic]

Foreign occupation soldiers from the USA make a daily practice of publicly humiliating Afghan citizens in front of their own homes.

This encourages self-respecting, patriotic, honorable Afghans to kill them.

[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 want that in your home town, right?]



TROOP NEWS

Veterans Call For The Immediate And Unconditional Withdrawal Of All Occupying Forces In Afghanistan: “We Have Members Who Serve In Iraq And In Afghanistan And We Believe It’s Time For Them All To Come Home”



10/01/2009 by zackbaddorf, Iraq Veterans Against The War. CONTACT: Jose Vasquez, Executive Director, IVAW, 1-215-241-7123, jose@ivaw.org

Philadelphia – Iraq Veterans Against the War believes an escalation of the war in Afghanistan will only serve to exacerbate the plight of the Afghan people, destabilize the region, and further the breakdown of our military.

IVAW, which includes veterans who served in Afghanistan, opposes President Barack Obama’s planned expansion of the occupation and calls for the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all occupying forces in Afghanistan and reparations for the Afghan people.

“We’re entering our seventh year of war in Afghanistan,” said Jose Vasquez, IVAW’s executive director. “Casualties among the Afghan people are rising while U.S. and Coalition forces are facing their deadliest year since the invasion.

“This war dehumanizes the Afghan people and denies them their right to self-determination.

“We have members who serve in Iraq and in Afghanistan and we believe it’s time for them all to come home.”

While IVAW was formed to call for an end to the war in Iraq, the anti-war organization’s membership, which includes more than 1,600 active-duty military members and veterans in 48 states, passed a resolution to declare their opposition to the war in Afghanistan.

The resolution states “there is no battlefield solution to terrorism, and any escalation of the war in Afghanistan will only serve to exacerbate the plight of the Afghan people, destabilize the region, and further the breakdown of our military.”

IVAW member Donna Perdue said she believes the war in Afghanistan is threatening our national security.

“The war becomes larger and more destructive, the number of necessary American forces will further increase, and the cycle will continue to rage on,” said Perdue. “This cycle will continue to strain the struggling economy and the already over-taxed military. It’s imperative that the occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan end.”

IVAW is a national organization of veterans and active-duty service members who have served since September 11, 2001 – including those who took part in Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom. IVAW also is dedicated to fighting for adequate physical and mental healthcare, full benefits, and other support for returning veterans.

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



A U.S. soldier, wounded by sniper fire, in the village of Bargematal, Nuristan province, August 25, 2009. REUTERS/Oleg Popov

**“I’m Tired Of Friends Dieing For No Reason And Tired Of The Lies”
“I Was This Patriotic ‘Super Soldier’ Who Wouldnt Even Let People Talk Bad About Our Government But I’ve Opened My Eyes”**

Traveling Soldier, September, 2009 - Issue 24

From The Editors:

To protect the writer, his identity has been removed from this email as published here. Military Project, which produces Traveling Soldier, will follow up with the writer privately. We welcome other letters from members of the armed services.

From: [xxx]
To: GI Special/Military Resistance
September 15, 2009 12:26 AM

I am an MP in the Army and your news letter is the most sensible thing I have read since I joined in 06.

I have deployed and been injured. I’ve been that brainless soldier who has no opinion. But ever since I’ve come back from Balad Iraq I’ve been fighting back.

Since then I have had my own opinions on things.

I realized I didn’t like what the Army had made me and I was going to take myself back.

Having an oppinion has gotten me in alittle trouble because the higher ups dont like me having a personal opinion, let alone one that makes sense.

I’m tired of friends dieing for no reason and tired of the lies.

We shouldn’t have to take this shit and I’m glad there are people who think like me and are willing to express it like human beings.

I was starting to feel alone in this.

And its not just the Army, its the government in general.

I was this patriotic “super soldier” who wouldnt even let people talk bad about our government but I’ve opened my eyes and now I dont know what type of government to believe in or what type of government would even work out in this day and age.

Regardless of wheather i know what I want I know the way things are going now is wrong.

If there are any FTA soldiers on Ft Richardson or Ft Polk I would like to be contacted by them.

FTA!

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/)

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

Soldiers So Happy To Meet Honduran Dictator Who Overthrew The Government To Serve The Rich



Honduran de facto President Roberto Micheletti, traitor and dictator who serves the rich, shakes hands with a soldier during a military ceremony to commemorate the “Soldier Day” in front of Presidential Palace in Tegucigalpa. (AFP/Yuri Cortez)

“A Naked Female Sailor Was Handcuffed To A Bed Rack And Forced To Role-Play An Angry Lesbian”

“A Dog Handler Who Refused To Visit A Prostitute Was Duct-Taped And Locked In A Kennel Full Of Dog Feces”

“The Unit’s Chief Frequently Threatened To Use His Connections And Clout To Punish Anyone Who Reported His Misconduct, Saying: ‘God Help Anyone Who Airs Our Dirty Laundry’”

Oct 2, 2009 By Andrew Tilghman, Staff writer, Army Times [Excerpts]

A naked female sailor was handcuffed to a bed rack and forced to role-play an angry lesbian spat with another woman — all while being videotaped by other sailors.

A dog handler who refused to visit a prostitute was duct-taped and locked in a kennel full of dog feces.

A female sailor alleged that she was sexually assaulted by another sailor, but it was never reported up the chain of command.

In all, a Judge Advocate General Manual investigation found 93 incidents involving hazing and other improper behavior in the Military Working Dog Division at Naval Support Activity Bahrain in 2005 and 2006.

Despite it all, the chief in charge of the kennel was promoted, and the investigation into the matter sat on the shelf, with no apparent discipline for anyone in a leadership role.

That all changed in early September, when a former member of the unit went public with allegations of abuse.

Besides the abuse and hazing allegations, the command’s 2007 investigation found:

- Gambling, fraternization and socializing with prostitutes were commonplace among some of the unit’s sailors.
- The sailor was berated and removed from the kennel after admitting that some of his shipmates used to falsify — or “gun deck” — paperwork in the explosives accountability logs.
- The unit’s chief frequently threatened to use his connections and clout to punish anyone who reported his misconduct, saying: “God help anyone who airs our dirty laundry.”

And as the investigation was wrapping up, a female sailor who believed she would be implicated in the probe took her own life.

The man in the middle of it all, Chief Master-at-Arms Michael Toussaint, 38, was selected for senior chief in May 2006 and now works with SEALs at the elite Naval Special Warfare Development Group in Dam Neck, Va.

One Navy official familiar with the investigation, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said Toussaint was “counseled” by his superiors in Bahrain.

Also at the time, then-commander of Navy Installations Command, Vice Adm. Bob Conway, sent an e-mail to his lower-level commanders encouraging enforcement of the Navy’s hazing policy, the Navy official said.

And copies of the JAGMan were forwarded to the current commanding officers of the sailors implicated.

None of the officials familiar with the investigation could say why none of the sailors was disciplined.

Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Gary Roughead on Sept. 22 directed the commander of Navy Installations Command, Vice Adm. Michael Vitale, to review what happened after the investigation, said Cmdr. Cappy Surette, a Navy spokesman at the Pentagon. Mercer said he, too, began looking into the matter earlier in September.

Vitale’s report is due to Roughead by Oct. 6.

“Rocha Was Hogtied And Force-Fed Dog Biscuits” “There Was No Getting Around Toussaint, He Always Bragged About How He Was Untouchable”

Master-at-Arms 3rd Class Joseph Rocha arrived in Bahrain in February 2005, an 18-year-old with hopes of becoming a Navy dog handler.

He began volunteering at the kennel, but soon Toussaint singled him out for aggressive hazing.

“It started when I said I didn’t want to have sex with prostitutes,” Rocha said in an interview. Rocha described a “high-testosterone” environment where the male sailors frequently socialized with prostitutes and recounted the episodes.

Toussaint began accusing Rocha of being a homosexual, teasing him about his alleged “Marine Corps boyfriends,” investigators said.

Rocha, who is gay, said that while he was in Bahrain, he adhered to the Pentagon’s “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy.

Nevertheless, sailors in the unit frequently made anti-gay remarks to and about him, Rocha said.

On one occasion, Toussaint and several other sailors tied Rocha up with ropes and duct tape, then locked him in a dog kennel full of dog feces, Rocha said.

In another incident, Rocha was hogtied — with his hands and feet bound with a rope — and force-fed dog biscuits, he said. Rocha said Toussaint and others told him not to resist the hazing.

“They told me, ‘We can do this the easy way, or we can do this the hard way,’ “ Rocha recalled.

Rocha said the most humiliating incident was a “training scenario” in which dog handlers encountered two men having sex.

Toussaint told Rocha to get on his knees and simulate giving another sailor oral sex.

“I found myself with my head between a man’s legs,” Rocha said. “It was dehumanizing.”

There were rarely any officers at the kennel, Rocha said.

The chief ran the kennel and reported periodically to an Army colonel, who had little contact with the unit, which had 20 to 30 sailors, Rocha said.

“If I was to tell someone (about the hazing), they would have just told Toussaint and he would have punished us. There was no getting around Toussaint,” Rocha said.

“He always bragged about how he was untouchable. He made it perfectly clear that he ran the largest kennel in the Navy, that his connections were far and broad and he could destroy you,” Rocha said.

The investigation began in 2006 after a sailor reported some of the incidents, according to the report. The report did not say who raised the issue.

Rocha transferred from Bahrain in June 2007. He was accepted into the Naval Academy Preparatory School in Newport, R.I., with the goal of attending the Naval Academy.

While in Rhode Island, Rocha decided to tell his command that he is a homosexual because he disagreed with the “don’t ask, don’t tell” policy. He said he wanted to pursue a career permitting him to acknowledge his homosexuality. He received an honorable discharge that was unrelated to the hazing investigation in Bahrain.

He is a junior studying political science at the University of California-San Diego. He wants to become a Navy officer if the military’s ban on homosexuals is repealed.

“One Sailor Accused Another Of Getting Into The Shower With Her And Refusing To Leave, According To The Investigation. Toussaint Never Notified Senior Navy Leaders About The Incident”

The investigation that Navy officials conducted in Bahrain substantiated misconduct that went far beyond Rocha’s mistreatment.

Other sailors were mistreated to lesser degrees — ordered to wear a dog muzzle or to sing in public, forced to drag around mop buckets all day, and told to consume Twinkies and milk until vomiting.

Toussaint promoted favoritism among his sailors, offering his friends cushy temporary-duty assignments with increased pay, according to the investigation.

One sailor, Master-at-Arms 2nd Class Shaun Hogan, was removed from the kennel after responding “yes” to a question about whether some sailors “gun deck” their paperwork when compiling the unit’s explosives accountability logs, according to the investigation.

The supervisor — it’s unclear precisely who, because many names were redacted from the report — screamed at Hogan and said the proper response to that question was: “I can’t speak for other sailors, ... but I don’t gun deck my paperwork.”

Several sailors interviewed by investigators talked about “hooker parties,” and prostitutes were routinely seen at some sailors’ residential villas, investigators said.

Some sailors told investigators about a physical assault on a prostitute. One sailor recounted taking a prostitute to the hospital after an assault, according to the investigation.

Investigators also learned about an alleged sexual assault that was not reported up the chain of command.

One sailor accused another of getting into the shower with her and refusing to leave, according to the investigation.

But Toussaint never notified senior Navy leaders about the incident, the report said.

“The Leading Petty Officer In The Canine Unit Was Found Dead In Her Villa In Bahrain On Jan. 16, 2007”

As the Navy investigation was wrapping up, the leading petty officer in the canine unit was found dead in her villa in Bahrain on Jan. 16, 2007.

Master-at-Arms 1st Class Jennifer Valdivia’s apparent suicide came on the same day the investigators forwarded their report to the commander of Naval Support Activity Bahrain.

“They told her to pack her bags; she was going to the brig. They were going to strip her of everything she ever got in the Navy,” her father, Chris Young, of Alpha, Ill., told Navy Times.

Valdivia had been promoted to the kennel’s leading petty officer after Toussaint left Bahrain in March 2006, Young said.

The Navy official familiar with the investigation confirmed that Valdivia was leaving the Navy but her commanders halted that move as a result of the investigation. It's unclear whether her suicide was connected to the probe, the official said.

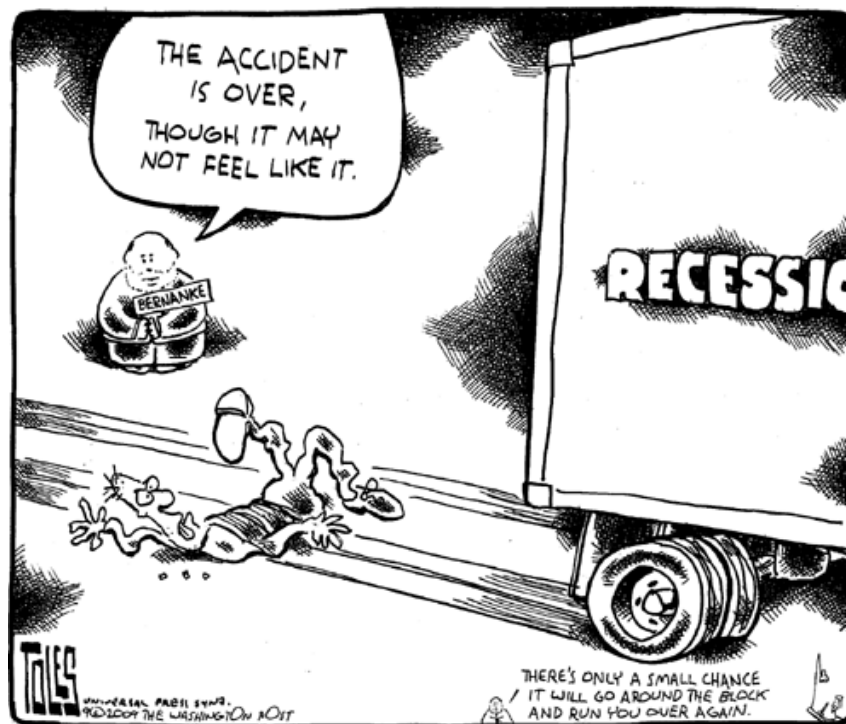
Young said he was angry at how the Navy handled his daughter's death. He learned of her suicide from an online report by a newspaper in Bahrain, and it took the Navy three weeks to confirm her cause of death — carbon monoxide poisoning, he said.

More than a year later, the Navy gave him a copy of the investigation of her unit, but "it was redacted so bad, it didn't make any sense," he said.

"That unit was in total chaos. She tried to right the wrongs, and then she got scolded for it.

"Why they weren't going after Toussaint, I'll never know why," Young said.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

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

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

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