

## Military Resistance 7J5

Afghan Policy Explained Over Dinner



## ACTION REPORTS

# MP Cards Are Big! [Outreach To New York National Guard]

## THE MILITARY PROJECT

Traveling Soldier  
Newsletter



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## SUPPORTING GI RESISTANCE

[front]

*If you are a veteran who supports an immediate end to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan -- the Military Project recommends you contact:*

## **IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR**



[www.IVAW.org](http://www.IVAW.org)

**[back]**

**[Cards designed by Richie M, Military Project]**

From: Alan Stolzer, Military Project  
To: Military Resistance  
Sent: October 05, 2009 4:41 PM  
Subject: MP Cards are Big!

Today's outreach to National Guard soldiers at two New York City commuter terminals turned up 5 soldiers - a small turnout as opposed to past outreaches.

Nevertheless, all 5 were customarily friendly although two had to turn down lit because of their patrol station but took a "Querido Camilo" DVD when I doubled back to see them.

At another post in the terminal two sergeants were approached; one took a copy of Military Resistance and the same DVD: he was Spanish speaking and intrigued about the content.

Upon leaving the second terminal a very young National Guardsman walked toward me. I engaged him and he, very politely, took lit + DVD.

He knew of IVAW when I also gave him one of our new MP business cards which brings me to the interesting thread of today's effort: ALL 5 gladly took the cards.

As a matter of fact, one of the troops I doubled back for took another 12 or so (upon slight urging) to distribute to others.

The beauty of this is obvious.

These cards are small, easily stored and producible to any soldier any of us may encounter.

No one should be without a few.

**MORE:**

# **ACTION REPORTS WANTED: FROM YOU!**

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

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

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

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

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

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

## **NOTE WELL:**

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

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

**If accidentally included, that information will not be published.**

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

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

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

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

**IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

# South Bend Soldier Dies In Iraq



Andersen

October 05, 2009 By ERIN BLASKO, South Bend Tribune Staff Writer

SOUTH BEND — A 49-year-old South Bend man died last week while serving in Iraq, according to family members.

Spc. Paul Eugene Andersen, with the Army Reserve's 855th Quartermaster Company based in South Bend, was killed Thursday by "indirect gunfire," his step-daughter, JoAnne Jester, said this morning.

The exact details of Andersen's death are not currently known.

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## Resistance Action

Oct 6 (Reuters) & Oct 7 (Reuters)

A minibus bomb exploded at a market in the western Iraqi town of Amiriya on Tuesday, killing five police officers, Shakir al-Isawi, leader of Amiriya town council, told Reuters. Police said several cars were set on fire by the explosion. "The area has been sealed off to bring the situation under control," Isawi said. Amiriya lies about 25 km (15 miles) south of the city of Falluja in the western province of Anbar.

Two roadside bombs targeting government-allied neighbourhood patrol members at their checkpoint killed one of them and wounded two policemen in northern Baghdad's Adhamiya district, police said.

Insurgents shot and wounded an off-duty policeman in front of his house in central Samarra, 100 km (62 miles) north of Baghdad, on Tuesday, police said.

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

## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **New York Soldier Killed In Afghanistan**



Oct. 7, 2009: Spc. Kevin O. Hill, 23, of Brooklyn, N.Y. was killed in action in Afghanistan on Oct. 4, 2009. Hill was assigned to the Fourth Engineer Battalion, Fort Carson, Colo. (AP Photo/Dept. of Defense)

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### **Pastor Says Soldier Honored To Serve**

Sep 29, 2009 The Associated Press

BENTON, Ky. — A western Kentucky pastor says a soldier who died when a roadside bomb hit his vehicle in Afghanistan believed he was doing his life's work in the Army.

The Rev. Jonathan Goodman told The Paducah Sun that 27-year-old Spc. Kevin J. Graham of Benton was honored to serve his country.

Graham died Saturday in Kandahar of wounds suffered in the attack by insurgents. He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, Fort Lewis, Wash.

Goodman says Graham joined the Army in 2007, was married in Washington and had a stepson. The pastor says Graham's parents brought reports of their son to church often and that members of the church would pray for him.

The newspaper said Graham's parents, Dan and Sandy Graham, live near Fairdealing and were at Dover Air Force Base, Del., on Monday when their son's body was returned to the United States. Graham has three older brothers.

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## **Spanish Soldier Killed Near Syah Washan; Five More Wounded: Thirty Year Old BMR Vehicle Hit “Was Not Prepared To Resist The Taliban Mines”**

Oct 7, 2009 By m.p.; typicallyspanish

A Spanish soldier has died in Afghanistan after his army vehicle drove over a mine near Syah Washan, on the outskirts of Herat, at around 9.30 local time on Wednesday morning. The Defence Ministry names him as Corporal Cristo Ancor Cabello Santana from the Soria 9th Infantry Regiment.

He was on patrol with a convoy of the Fuerteventura Task Force to dismantle illegal checkpoints in the Pashtun Zarghun district, to the east of Herat, when the explosion happened, and it's understood that five other soldiers who were in the vehicle with him were also hurt by the blast.

There has been no information as yet on the extent of their injuries.

The Corporal was transferred with the other injured to the Role 2 hospital but died shortly after he arrived.

It's been revealed that BMR vehicle which was hit was not prepared to resist the Taliban mines.

The vehicle was more than 30 years old and part of a program to be replaced, but despite spending 75 million € on 100 new vehicles in June 2008 the first models will not actually arrive in Afghanistan until November this year.

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## **Soldier From The 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards Killed Near Nad E-Ali**

6 Oct 09 Ministry of Defence

It is with sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that a soldier from the 1st Battalion Grenadier Guards has been killed in Afghanistan.

The soldier was killed as a result of an explosion that happened whilst on a foot patrol near to Nad e-Ali district centre in central Helmand province on the morning of 5 October 2009.

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## **Three Foreign Occupation Soldiers Wounded By Wardak IED; Nationality Not Announced**

Oct. 6 (Xinhua)

Three soldiers with the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) were injured as a roadside bomb struck a vehicle in Wardak province, west of Afghan capital Kabul, Tuesday, an official said.

“The incident occurred at around noon in Nurkh district, injuring three ISAF soldiers,” spokesman of the provincial administration Shahidullah Shahid told Xinhua.

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## **Resistance Ambush In Gerishk Kills Ten Afghan Soldiers**

Oct 6, 2009 Kabul - Ten Afghan soldiers were killed in a Taliban ambush in southern Afghanistan, the deadliest attack against the country's fledgling army in months, officials said Tuesday.

The militants attacked an army patrol Monday in the Gerishk district of Helmand province, sparking a battle that lasted for an hour, said Shir Mohammad Zazai, army commander in south-western Afghanistan.

He said 10 soldiers were killed and one was injured, adding that there were also casualties among the insurgents but he could not give any figures for the militants.

Taliban spokesman Qari Mohammad Yousif Ahmadi said Taliban forces ambushed a joint Afghan-NATO convoy on the highway linking Helmand with neighbouring Kandahar province. He said eight soldiers were killed and two NATO tanks and three Afghan army vehicles were captured.

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# **U.S. Military Losing Control Of Afghan Roads To Resupply Bases [Reading Between The Lines Dept.]**

Oct 5, 2009 By Bruce Rolfsen, Staff writer, Army Times [Excerpts]

Constraints on the use of airpower in Afghanistan continue to reduce the number of bombs dropped there, numbers from Air Forces Central Command show.

At the same time, the use of airdrops to supply troops continues to grow.

Mobility airmen set a record for Operation Enduring Freedom in September by airdropping 4.1 million pounds of cargo in Afghanistan.

Since January, C-130s and C-17s have parachuted in 21.3 million pounds of supplies, ranging from bottled water to artillery.

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## **Insurgents Breached U.S. Base Defenses During Afghan Battle: “Large Portions Of The Base Burned Down”**

**“When You Have An Insurgent Who  
Looks Just Like The Population, Like  
Anybody, You Don’t Know The  
Difference Until They Start Shooting At  
You”**

Oct 7 By TODD PITMAN, Associated Press Writer [Excerpts]

Insurgents fought their way inside an American base in Afghanistan last weekend in a rare security breach before they were driven back under heavy fire during the deadliest battle for U.S. troops in more than a year, a U.S. official said Wednesday.

Saturday’s nearly six-hour battle in mountainous Kamdesh district, near the eastern border with Pakistan, left eight American and three Afghan soldiers dead - one of the heaviest U.S. losses of life in a single battle since the war began.



Most U.S. installations in Iraq and Afghanistan are heavily guarded with rings of razor wire, huge sand-filled barriers, blast walls and security cameras.

It is rare - almost unheard of - for insurgents to breach such defenses and get inside.

Maj. T.G. Taylor, an American public affairs officer, said it was unclear how the attackers penetrated the base or how many there were.

Taylor said 24 Americans and 10 Afghan soldiers were wounded during the fighting.

Large portions of the base burned down, probably from incoming rocket and machine gun fire, he said.

The evening before the attack, insurgents comprised mostly of local Nuristani fighters began warning villagers "that something was going to go down and asked them to evacuate," Taylor told The Associated Press in a telephone interview from nearby Jalalabad.

It's unclear whether civilians fled, but local police units abandoned the village - nearly all except the police chief who was later captured and executed.

The assault began around dawn Saturday.

Some 200 fighters bombarded a joint U.S.-Afghan army outpost with small arms, rocket-propelled grenades and mortar shells.

Fire came from three sides simultaneously - including a local mosque they took over, buildings in the village, and high ground above the outpost.

Insurgents also attacked an observation post perched on a ridge above manned by another American platoon. Such posts are set up to keep watch over other allied positions.

**Nuristan Gov. Jamaludin Badar said that within the first minute alone, militants unleashed 32 rockets and four artillery shells.**

"They were having trouble identifying the location of the attackers," Badar said of Afghan troops defending the bases. "They were having trouble figuring out where the fire was coming from."

Only three American platoons were deployed at the two posts, mostly troops from Task Force Mountain Warrior of the 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, based at Fort Carson outside Colorado Springs. U.S. infantry platoons ordinarily number 30 to 40 soldiers.

Badar said several Afghan army checkpoints in Kamdesh were overrun.

But the worst of the battle came when attackers were able to "breach the perimeter of one of the bases and get inside," Taylor said.

“They got a foothold on the base. But coalition and Afghan national army forces consolidated their positions, retook the parts of the base the enemy was on and re-established security.”

**Fighting dragged on for about five and a half to six hours until coalition reinforcements were flown in by helicopter to a nearby location, Taylor said.**

**The reinforcements could not land in the area and traveled to the bases on foot.**

Sporadic exchanges of fire continued for another few hours, Taylor said.

**Badar, the Nuristan governor, said Kamdesh is so isolated that local police can only be supplied by helicopter. Vehicles can barely traverse roads to the area. Phone lines and cell phone reception are hard to come by.**

Asked how insurgents were able to get close enough to carry out the attack, Taylor cited difficulties distinguishing fighters from the general population.

“You have local fighters who might have weapons or might not, and you have a local population that is perfectly within its rights to carry weapons,” Taylor said.

“How do you tell them apart?”

“When you have an insurgent who looks just like the population, like anybody, you don’t know the difference until they start shooting at you,” he said.

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## **NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP GO HOME**



9.25.09: US Marines sleep in their base in Farah Province, southern Afghanistan.  
(AFP/David Furst)



A U.S. Chinook helicopter brings more troops to Cop Cherokee base in Kherwar district, Logar province October 3, 2009. REUTERS/Nikola Solic



Soldiers from the U.S. Army's Charlie troop, 371 Cavalry, 3rd brigade of 10th Mountain Division based in Fort Drum, New York, patrol in Kherwar district in Logar province October 4, 2009. REUTERS/Nikola Solic

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## **U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR;**

# RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



A foreign occupation soldier from the USA publicly humiliates an Afghan citizen by handling his body without consent during a patrol on the road before “questioning” him in his village at Kherwar district in Logar province October 2, 2009. REUTERS/Nikola Solic

Foreign occupation soldiers from the USA make a daily practice of publicly humiliating Afghan citizens. This encourages self-respecting, 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 Barack Obama. Why, how could anybody not love that? You’d want that in your home town, right?]**

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**“The Taliban Knows The Terrain”  
“They Are Able To Use Mountain Passes  
That We Are Simply Unaware Of”**

Oct. 5, 2009 By Katie Couric, (CBS)

The Hindu Kush mountain range, more than 500 miles long, splits Afghanistan. The range has nearly two dozen peaks taller than 23,000 feet. In the winter, temperatures go as low as 24 below zero.

They are virtually impassable ... to those who don't know them well.

"The Taliban knows the terrain," said John Nagl, of the Center for a New American Security. "They are able to use mountain passes that we are simply unaware of ... that only very local people know."

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## **“Most Days, They Have To Force Their Way Through Thick Cornfields Because The Ground They Patrol Is So Heavily Mined With Roadside Bombs”**

Oct. 6, 2009 By CBS News chief foreign affairs correspondent Lara Logan [Excerpts]

Recently, Sgt. Matthews and the Marines of Echo company used a canal as a secret approach into a Taliban-held village.

After an hour in the water, Marine engineers came scrambling back; they'd found a series of roadside bombs.

It took five more hours of waiting in the water before the bombs were destroyed.

Most days, they have to force their way through thick cornfields because the ground they patrol is so heavily mined with roadside bombs.

Getting through these cornfields is hard because the ground is uneven and it's full of mud. The humidity is stifling and it's hard to breathe, but it's great for cover.

Back at the base, there's nowhere to shower, no way to get comfortable.

It's blistering hot and filthy dirty. Marines sleep wherever they can. They haven't washed for months.

"As you can see, just living out in the dirt, that's never good. The shower situation, the bathroom situation... going out every day, getting shot at, walking through the mud... you're never dry you're always wet," said Matthews, "just stuff like that."

What makes it bearable?

When the mail truck finally arrives with letters from home.

“It’s a struggle. You worry about your Marines here, you worry about family at home, it’s hard trying to keep your head in the game,” said Matthews. “Try to keep your mind off of home as much as possible here.”

Many of these Marines are on their third or fourth deployments, and a lot of them have small children and young wives at home. But you really don’t hear them complaining. That’s a big part of the Marine culture.

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

**PAKISTAN WAR REPORTS**

**“People Think This Government  
Has Sold Us To The Americans  
Again For Their Own Selfish  
Interests”**

**“The American Presence Was  
Fueling A Sense Of Occupation  
Among Pakistani Politicians And  
Security Officials”**

**“The United States Was Now Seen As  
Behaving In Pakistan Much As It Did In  
Iraq And Afghanistan, They Said”**

There have been complaints by Islamabad residents who said they had been ‘roughed up’ by hefty, plainclothes American men bearing weapons, presumably from DynCorp.

October 5, 2009 By JANE PERLEZ, The New York Times Company [Excerpts]

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — Steps by the United States to vastly expand its aid to Pakistan, as well as the footprint of its embassy and private security contractors here, are aggravating an already volatile anti-American mood as Washington pushes for greater action by the government against the Taliban.

An aid package of \$1.5 billion a year for the next five years passed by Congress last week asks Pakistan to cease supporting terrorist groups on its soil and to ensure that the military does not interfere with civilian politics.

President Asif Ali Zardari, whose association with the United States has added to his unpopularity, agreed to the stipulations in the aid package.

But many here, especially in the powerful army, object to the conditions as interference in Pakistan's internal affairs, and they are interpreting the larger American footprint in more sinister ways.

The United States Embassy has publicized plans for a vast new building in Islamabad for about 1,000 people, with security for some diplomats provided through a Washington-based private contracting company, DynCorp.

The embassy setup, with American demands for importing more armored vehicles, is a significant expansion over the last 15 years.

The fierce opposition here is revealing deep strains in the alliance.

**Even at its current levels, the American presence was fueling a sense of occupation among Pakistani politicians and security officials, said several Pakistani officials, who did not want to be named for fear of antagonizing the United States.**

**The United States was now seen as behaving in Pakistan much as it did in Iraq and Afghanistan, they said.**

**In particular, the Pakistani military and the intelligence agencies are concerned that DynCorp is being used by Washington to develop a parallel network of security and intelligence personnel within Pakistan, officials and politicians close to the army said.**

The concerns are serious enough that last month a local company hired by DynCorp to provide Pakistani men to be trained as security guards for American diplomats was raided by the Islamabad police.

The owner of the company, the Inter-Risk Security Company, Capt. Syed Ali Ja Zaidi, was later arrested.

The action against Inter-Risk, apparently intended to cripple the DynCorp program, was taken on orders from the senior levels of the Pakistani government, said an official familiar with the raid, who was not authorized to speak on the record.

The entire workings of DynCorp within Pakistan are now under review by the Pakistani government, said a senior government official directly involved with the Americans, who spoke candidly on condition of anonymity.

In a public statement, the American ambassador, Anne W. Patterson, suggested last week that Pakistan should eliminate the Afghan Taliban leader, Mullah Omar, a onetime ally of the Pakistanis who Washington says is now based in Baluchistan, a province on the Afghanistan border.

If Pakistan did not get rid of Mullah Omar, the United States would, she suggested.

Reinforcing the ambassador, the national security adviser, Gen. James L. Jones, said Sunday that the United States regarded tackling Qaeda sanctuaries in Pakistan as “the next step” in the conflict in Afghanistan.

**The Pakistani army chief, Gen. Ashfaq Parvez Kayani, in an unusually stern reaction last week, said that missile attacks by American drones in Baluchistan, as implied by the Americans, “would not be allowed.”**

DynCorp has attracted particular scrutiny after the Pakistani news media reported that Blackwater, the contractor that has generated controversy because of its aggressive tactics in Iraq, was also in Pakistan.

**Recently, there have been a series of complaints by Islamabad residents who said they had been “roughed up” by hefty, plainclothes American men bearing weapons, presumably from DynCorp, one of the senior Pakistani officials involved with the Americans said.**

Pakistan’s Foreign Office had sent two formal diplomatic complaints in the past few weeks to the American Embassy about such episodes, the official said.

**There was considerable unease about the American diplomatic presence in Peshawar, the capital of the North-West Frontier Province, one of the senior government officials said.**

**Politicians were asking why the United States needed a consulate in Peshawar, which borders the tribal areas, when that office did not issue visas, he said.**

Another question, he said, was why did the consulate plan to buy the biggest, and most modern building in the city, the Pearl Continental hotel — which was bombed in a terrorist attack this year — as its new headquarters.

**As Parliament prepared to discuss the American aid package Wednesday, the tone of the debate was expected to be scathing.**

**On a television talk show, Senator Tariq Aziz, a member of the opposition party, called the legislation “the charter for new colonization.”**

**“People think this government has sold us to the Americans again for their own selfish interests,” said Jahangir Tareen, a former cabinet minister and a member of Parliament, in an interview.**



“Some people think the United States is out to get Pakistan, to defang Pakistan, to destroy the army as it exists so it can’t fight India and to break down the ISI’s ability to influence events in India and Afghanistan. Everyone is saying about the Americans, ‘Told you so.’ “

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## TROOP NEWS

# ENOUGH! TOO MANY THERE ALREADY



Oct. 5, 2009: A soldier says goodbye to his son as the Delta Company 3rd of the 141st gets ready to leave the armory in Houston, Texas. The troops will train as a brigade in Fort Bliss in preparation for their nine month deployment to Iraq. (AP Photo/Houston Chronicle, Mayra Beltran)

### **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](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 888.711.2550**

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



The casket of Sgt. 1st Class Bradley Bohle of Glen Burnie, Md., Oct. 5, 2009 at St. Bernadette Catholic Church in Severn, Md. Bohle was killed when a vehicle he was in struck by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan. Bohle was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 7th Special Forces Group, Fort Bragg, N.C. (AP Photo/Steve Ruark)

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**Soldier’s Dad “Has Mixed Feelings  
About The Continuing Mission In  
Afghanistan”  
“I Just Wonder How Long It’s Going To  
Take”**

Sep 29, 2009 By David Mercer, The Associated Press [Excerpts]

CHAMPAIGN, Ill. — Buses carrying 188 Illinois National Guard troops on the last legs of their trips home from Afghanistan fanned out across the state Monday, bringing to an end a yearlong deployment that cost 18 of the state’s soldiers their lives.

About 3,000 members of the state’s 33rd Infantry Brigade started moving into Afghanistan last fall to train Afghan police and soldiers, just as the war there turned more violent and the country less stable. All but a handful are home.

**One of the Guard troops still in Afghanistan is Tony Wantland’s younger son, 22-year-old Kody, who volunteered to stay behind with another unit.**

**Tony Wantland says he would have stopped him if he could.**

**He has mixed feelings about the continuing mission in Afghanistan.**

**His sons “feel like they’re doing good and they’re protecting the people that are there,” Wantland said.**

**“I just wonder how long it’s going to take.”**

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## **Army Chief Of Staff Gets Grief From Military Families**

Oct 5, 2009 By Karen Jowers - Staff writer, Army Times [Excerpts]

When Army Chief of Staff Gen. George Casey Jr. asked families for an impromptu “thumbs up” or “thumbs down” on efforts to improve their quality of life, he got mixed results.

About 800 people, most of whom were family readiness group leaders, attended a session at the Association of the United States Army 2009 conference that included remarks by Casey and his wife, Sheila.

Casey told the group the Army is working on improving their quality of life, to include doubling the amount of money going into family programs over the last few years, and working to make many programs permanent.

Among the results of Casey’s impromptu poll:

- \* Increased access to quality health care — mostly thumbs down.
  - \* Quality of care once they get into health care — a lot of thumbs down.
  - \* Virtual family readiness groups — mostly thumbs down.
  - \* Housing — about half thumbs up.
  - \* Excellence in schools, youth services, child care — about half thumbs up.
  - \* Expanded educational and employment opportunities for spouses — more thumbs up than thumbs down.
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**Domestic Enemies At DoD  
Auditing Agency Let War  
Profiteers Run Wild:  
“Revised Audits To Curry Favor  
With Contractors”  
“The Fallout Can Ultimately  
Shortchange Our Troops In The  
Field”  
“Half Billion \$ Worth Of Contracts  
Questioned”**

**The agency, which last year was responsible for ensuring that taxpayers got good value for more than a half-trillion dollars in defense contracts, revised audits to curry favor with contractors, promoted a supervisor responsible for such revisions to a top position and rushed through other audits out of fear that the work would be outsourced if employees took too much time, the GAO said.**

October 5, 2009 By Shaun Waterman THE WASHINGTON TIMES

Some members of Congress are so disturbed by failures and malfeasance described in a recent government report that they are considering removing the agency that audits hundreds of billions of dollars in Defense Department contracts from Pentagon supervision.

The lawmakers were reacting to findings by the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the investigative arm of Congress, about the Defense Contract Auditing Agency (DCAA).

The agency, which last year was responsible for ensuring that taxpayers got good value for more than a half-trillion dollars in defense contracts, revised audits to curry favor with contractors, promoted a supervisor responsible for such revisions to a top position and rushed through other audits out of fear that the work would be outsourced if employees took too much time, the GAO said.

“Unbelievable problems at Def Contracting Agency (sic),” Sen. Claire McCaskill, Missouri Democrat, wrote on her Twitter account just before a recent hearing on the report. “Top of my head is about to pop off.”

“I read a summary of the GAO report last night and quite frankly got sick,” said Sen. Tom Coburn, Oklahoma Republican, adding that he would not use all his allotted time for questions because he was “a little bit too upset to go where I really want to go.”

**“Each and every audit that GAO reviewed for this report was out of compliance with auditing standards,” said Sen. Joe Lieberman, Connecticut independent and chairman of the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.**

The DCAA “has a unique role,” as a steward of taxpayer dollars, and consequently “needs to have independence. It needs to stand up to pressures from both agencies and contractors,” he said. “Perhaps it’s time for us to consider separating DCAA from the Department of Defense and ... making it an independent auditing agency.”

The flaws identified by the GAO “allow contractors to overbill the government in some cases for millions of dollars,” said the committees ranking Republican, Sen. Susan Collins of Maine.

Calling the DCAAs performance “completely unacceptable,” she noted that when the agency failed, “the fallout can cascade throughout the system and ultimately shortchange our troops in the field.”

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## OCCUPATION PALESTINE

### BROTHERS:

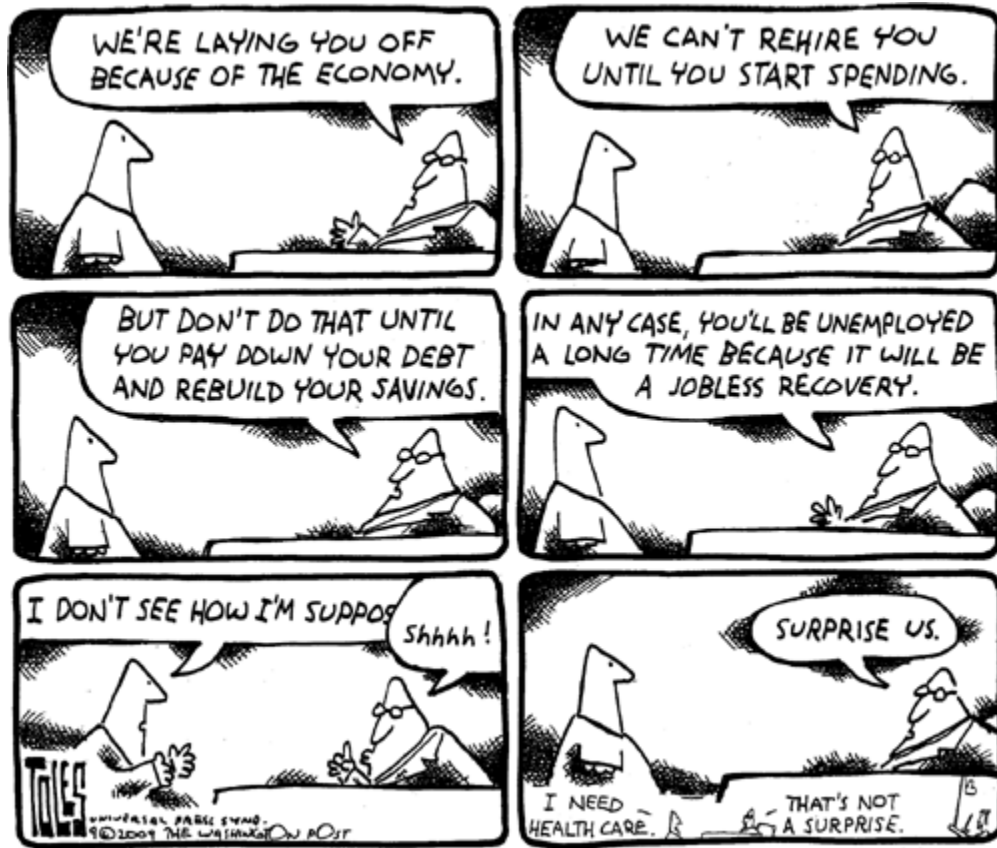


Arab-Israeli Sheikh Raed Salah, head of the Arab-Israeli Islamic Movement (L) and members of Neturei Karta, Orthodox Jews who oppose Zionism, sit in a protest tent in East Jerusalem. Zionist police arrested Salah on Tuesday over charges of incitement to violence in Jerusalem, occupied Palestine. (AFP/Ahmad Gharabli)





## CLASS WAR REPORTS



## Imagine Getting Sick, Getting Bills You Can't Pay, Then Being Sent To Jail

September 28, 2009 By Janell Ross, THE TENNESSEAN [Excerpts]

Kenneth Hoagland went to jail for what started as a cold.

Hoagland had refinanced his Nashville home to pay off the \$25,000 tab for his weeklong diabetes-related stay at Southern Hills Medical Center.

The new mortgage left Hoagland out of medical debt but afraid to get sick again.

Unfortunately, he did.

In 2004, Hoagland was in a health insurance waiting period on a new job when a cold turned into two days at Vanderbilt University Medical Center.

**This time, the bill was just over \$1,200.**

**When a collection attorney working for Vanderbilt filed suit in 2005, Hoagland was afraid to take time off from work to show up in court.**

**After a series of hearings, attempts to collect the debt and what Hoagland says were genuine efforts to pay it, an attorney working for Vanderbilt asked a judge to issue what's known as a body attachment.**

**One Friday in late 2008, a sheriff's deputy went to Hoagland's home. Because he was at work, Hoagland was allowed to turn himself in the following Monday.**

**"They fingerprinted me, took my picture and asked some questions about my medical history," he said.**

**"When the guy who tested (my blood sugar) asked me why I was there and I told him ... he said, 'I didn't know we did that in this country.'**

**I told him, 'Until now, I didn't either.' "**

**Hoagland, 36, is one of the hundreds of thousands of Americans — insured and uninsured — facing collection suits, wage garnishments and, more rarely, trips to jail because of medical debt.**

Medical debt isn't closely tracked by courts, but it's one of the many types of debt collection suits that keep Davidson County's General Sessions Courts so busy that the people at the center of those cases sometimes fill the courtroom's audience seating and even the jury box.

But it's the docket, the list of cases that will be heard in Courtroom 5D on any given day and the people with cases on it, that really tells the story. Some entries reveal the types of services rendered.

There are cases filed by Associates in Gastroenterology, the Anesthesia Medical Group and Nashville Bone and Joint PLLC. And then, there are the names of nearly all the area's hospitals.

The suits represent attempts to collect on bills that in cases examined this summer ranged from \$81 to \$22,000.

They are, in most cases, bills patients never expected to accumulate.

Judge Dan Eisenstein, one of the judges who hears these cases in Courtroom 5D, said debtors summoned to court often dispute just how much is owed to a landlord or whether a credit card debt is really theirs.

But debtors rarely dispute medical bills.



“There’s not a lot of dispute because people just have no choice,” he said.

“They needed the care, and the law says they have to cover their bills.

“But it’s certainly tough to come into this courtroom and see people who have been sick or hurt and cannot pay their bills.”

A study published in the American Journal of Medicine this year found that medical debt is deeply damaging the finances of American families.

**Based on a survey of 2007 filings, researchers estimate 62.1 percent of all bankruptcies that year were caused by medical debt and that 92 percent of these cases involved medical bills totaling more than \$5,000, or 10 percent of the family’s total pretax income.**

Other cases met the researchers’ criteria for “medical bankruptcy” because they had lost significant income from illness or mortgaged a home to pay medical debt.

And, researchers found, the issue of medical debt has grown over time.

**Between 2001 and 2007, the share of bankruptcies attributable to medical problems rose by 49.6 percent.**

Hoagland, who works in information technology, never filed bankruptcy or disputed his bill.

Instead, he made payment arrangements with Vanderbilt and tried to keep them.

Sometimes he and his fiancée, Sonya Davis, had to choose between paying their mortgage or \$200 a month on medical bills, Davis said. When that happened, they paid the mortgage. They figured the family had to have a place to live, and the house had belonged to Hoagland’s parents.

Then Vanderbilt filed suit.

When Hoagland missed a hearing because of a work emergency, the court ruled in his absence that Vanderbilt was due the full amount. He missed two more court dates aimed at determining his assets.

A judge issued a body attachment — a document issued in civil cases that demands defendants explain why they didn’t appear in court. Sheriff’s deputies find the defendants and, in many cases, take them to jail, where they are allowed to post bond quickly.

It’s a rare action — out of 32,126 debt cases in General Sessions Court in 2008, for example, judges issued 98 body attachments.

Hoagland made bond and the \$250 that he paid was applied to his debt. His wages were garnished for several months, and he thought he was paid up. Then a bill arrived several weeks ago for \$70 — one he said he’ll pay without question.

**Davis said the experience changed their lives.**

**“The choice now is, do I stay sick?”**

**“Because if I go run up this bill and can’t pay for it and then get arrested again, what then?”**

**“What are you supposed to do?” she said.**

**Two months ago, they faced that question.**

**Hoagland went to bed with a cold and woke up so listless that Davis knew immediately something was wrong.**

**His blood sugar was at 39. Hoagland’s blood sugar is supposed to stay between 80 and 120. He could barely speak.**

**“I called the ambulance,” Davis said. “And I hate to admit this, but as soon as they got here, I thought, ‘Oh God, I hope they aren’t going to have to take him.’ He was sick, but I know he was probably thinking, ‘We can’t afford another set of medical bills.’ “**

The ambulance crew wanted to take Hoagland to the hospital but agreed to let Davis make him some breakfast and see if his blood sugar levels would normalize. They wouldn’t leave until Hoagland drank some orange juice with a bit of sugar stirred in and his blood sugar surged.

As extreme as Hoagland’s attempt to avoid another hospital bill may sound, it’s not uncommon, said Shana Alex Lavarreda, the director of health insurance studies at the University of California, Los Angeles Center for Health Policy Research.

As a result of a study released by the center this year, Lavarreda began to hear troubling stories from people across the country who had delayed medical care because of existing medical debt.

**“Delays in care could be something as serious as reattaching a portion of a finger or not getting the respirator that you need,” she said.**

**The situation highlights the fact that many insurance policies carry a high deductible. This can turn out to be burdensome for families without significant savings if someone becomes ill, Lavarreda said.**

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What happens inside Courtroom 5D at General Sessions Court can pale in comparison to the high drama in the hallway outside.

There, hospital debt collectors pull defendants to the side for hushed conversations about what they can realistically pay. If they can figure something out, defendants don’t have to go back inside. The payment arrangement is entered into court records, and the person who owes the debt must pay it.

On Sept. 11, all the good hallway spots — with seating — were taken. So Centennial Medical Center’s attorney beckoned Stacy Grondin up to the long tables where prosecutors and defendants usually sit facing the judge during trials.

The conversation was about the \$997.74 bill Grondin incurred in 2006 at Centennial when her heart rate spiked.

**“I really thought I was having a heart attack,” she said.**

**Grondin, a grocery store manager, is insured. But she went to the hospital in an ambulance, and that required pre-approval from the insurance company.**

**So did her choice to seek care in an emergency room.**

**She didn’t have approval for that either.**

**So when it turned out the problem was anxiety or a condition doctors couldn’t precisely determine, her claim was denied.**

Tom Norris, Centennial’s attorney, leaned in close.

“What kind of payment can you make?” he asked.

“I think maybe \$50,” Grondin said.

Norris accepted but declined to comment about Grondin’s case or the collection process when approached by a reporter.

On that day, the bill was actually \$1,246.96 — the original amount plus \$161.75 in court costs and \$87.47 in interest fees. The court costs are tacked on after collection efforts fail and a suit is filed. Interest accrues on medical debt at up to 10 percent after a court issues an order to pay.

But for Grondin, 35 and a single mother of three, that’s not even the sum total of her medical debt.

While Grondin discussed her bill with Norris, her 9-year-old daughter, Emily, sat in the courtroom’s gallery waiting for her mom to finish and take her to the doctor. Grondin feared Emily might have swine flu.

The little girl with the robin’s-egg blue eyes and a pair of silvery scars on her forehead heard every word of the payment discussion.

**Emily barely survived a 2003 car accident with her father at the wheel. He’d been drinking. She wasn’t strapped in. A LifeFlight helicopter took her to Vanderbilt’s children’s hospital, where doctors saved her life.**

**Now Emily’s father is in prison because of that accident, and her mother is trying to pay \$2,115.25 in medical debt charged to a credit card.**

**That's the 20 percent of Emily's bill that insurance didn't cover, plus court costs and interest.**

**"They sent papers to my job a couple of months ago saying they are going to garnish my wages, I think for her accident," Grondin said. "But that hasn't started yet."**

Grondin said she's not sure how to feel. There's the reality that services were rendered. But then there's the fact that she is insured and still left with medical bills, collectors' phone calls and soon, maybe, a wage garnishment.

"I know it's our responsibility. It is ultimately my responsibility to pay," she said.

**"But ... when I first saw all the bills I was kind of mad because I am paying for this insurance which I barely use. Then, when it's needed, it's hardly there."**

Grondin's medical debt story doesn't end there.

**Her boyfriend, who has two children of his own, recently declared bankruptcy because he couldn't have afforded child support and other bills if his wages were garnished to collect more than \$7,000 in medical bills.**

**Michael Wade Taylor, 57, was in Courtroom 5D just after 9 a.m. Aug. 28 when Judge Eisenstein called his name and case. Wedged between two men with debt cases of their own, Taylor stood and answered clearly, "Here."**

**Southern Hills Medical Center's attorney waved him into the hallway to work something out.**

**Today, Taylor is an unemployed construction worker. He had a job but no insurance in 2006, when doctors initially thought he'd had a stroke.**

**He spent several days in intensive care at Southern Hills, having a stent threaded from his groin to his heart to check for blockages. Later, he took a stress test on a treadmill.**

**The eventual diagnosis: "They told me I had the heart of a teenager and didn't know what was wrong with me," Taylor said. "They sent me home, and since that time I kept going down and going down.**

**"Then I find out that for those four days they charged me \$33,000. Thirty-three thousand dollars for nothing."**

Hospital staff checked to see if he could qualify for TennCare — state-subsidized medical coverage — but his income was too high. Then they talked with him about financial aid and setting up a payment plan. Taylor said he didn't qualify because he didn't have a checking account.

The bills started coming, then the phone calls, then the loss of his job in 2008.

Turns out either he didn't have the heart of a teenager or it aged very quickly, Taylor said. Two months ago, he had open-heart surgery for an arterial blockage. This time, because he was unemployed, TennCare paid the tab.

He and Southern Hills' attorney reached an agreement that would let Taylor pay \$20 a month until he covers \$3,000 of the bill from three years ago.

"It's good to have some kind of plan," he said.

"Really having that hanging over me was just something that took a situation from bad to worse."

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