

**Military Resistance 7J9**  
[GI Special]

**“The Soldiers’  
Biggest Question  
Is: What Can We  
Do To Make This  
War Stop?”**

**“‘We’re Lost — That’s  
How I Feel. I’m Not  
Exactly Sure Why We’re  
Here,’ Said Specialist  
Raquime Mercer, 20”**

**“We Want To Believe In A  
Cause But We Don’t Know What  
That Cause Is”**

**“Asked If The Mission Was  
Worthwhile, He Replied: ‘If I Knew  
Exactly What The Mission Was,  
Probably So, But I Don’t”**

**“Lieutenant-Colonel Kimo Gallahue,  
2-87’s Commanding Officer, Denied  
That His Men Were Demoralised, And  
Insisted They Had Achieved A Great  
Deal Over The Past Nine Months”**

**But Sgt. Hughes Says: “The Only  
Soldiers Who Thought It Was Going Well  
‘Work In An Office, Not On The Ground.’  
In His Opinion ‘The Whole Country Is  
Going To Shit”**

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & Military Resistance; Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Resistance; Max Watts; Dennis Serdel, Poet and Vietnam Veteran & Phil G, who sent this in.]

October 8, 2009 Martin Fletcher at Forward Operating Base in Wardak province, The Times [Excerpts]

**American soldiers serving in Afghanistan are depressed and deeply disillusioned, according to the chaplains of two US battalions that have spent nine months on the front line in the war against the Taliban.**

Many feel that they are risking their lives — and that colleagues have died — for a futile mission and an Afghan population that does nothing to help them, the chaplains told The Times in their makeshift chapel on this fortress-like base in a dusty, brown valley southwest of Kabul.

“The many soldiers who come to see us have a sense of futility and anger about being here. They are really in a state of depression and despair and just want to get back to their families,” said Captain Jeff Masengale, of the 10th Mountain Division’s 2-87 Infantry Battalion.

“They feel they are risking their lives for progress that’s hard to discern,” said Captain Sam Rico, of the Division’s 4-25 Field Artillery Battalion.

“They are tired, strained, confused and just want to get through.” The chaplains said that they were speaking out because the men could not.

**“We’re lost — that’s how I feel. I’m not exactly sure why we’re here,” said Specialist Raquime Mercer, 20, whose closest friend was shot dead by a renegade Afghan policeman last Friday.**

**“I need a clear-cut purpose if I’m going to get hurt out here or if I’m going to die.”**

**Sergeant Christopher Hughes, 37, from Detroit, has lost six colleagues and survived two roadside bombs.**

**Asked if the mission was worthwhile, he replied: “If I knew exactly what the mission was, probably so, but I don’t.”**

**The only soldiers who thought it was going well “work in an office, not on the ground”. In his opinion “the whole country is going to shit.”**

The battalion’s 1,500 soldiers are nine months in to a year-long deployment that has proved extraordinarily tough.

Their goal was to secure the mountainous Wardak province and then to win the people’s allegiance through development and good governance. They have, instead, found themselves locked in an increasingly vicious battle with the Taliban.

**They have been targeted by at least 300 roadside bombs, about 180 of which have exploded.**

**Nineteen men have been killed in action, with another committing suicide.**

**About a hundred have been flown home with amputations, severe burns and other injuries likely to cause permanent disability, and many of those have not been replaced.**

**More than two dozen mine-resistant, ambush-protected vehicles (MRAPs) have been knocked out of action.**

Living conditions are good — abundant food, air-conditioned tents, hot water, free internet — but most of the men are on their second, third or fourth tours of Afghanistan and Iraq, with barely a year between each.

Staff Sergeant Erika Cheney, Airborne's mental health specialist, expressed concern about their mental state — especially those in scattered outposts — and believes that many have mild post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). "They're tired, frustrated, scared. A lot of them are afraid to go out but will still go," she said.

Lieutenant Peter Hjelmstad, 2-87's Medical Platoon Leader, said sleeplessness and anger attacks were common.

**A dozen men have been confined to desk jobs because they can no longer handle missions outside the base.**

One long-serving officer who has lost three friends this tour said he sometimes returned to his room at night and cried, or played war games on his laptop. "It's a release. It's a method of coping." He has nightmares and sleeps little, and it does not help that the base is frequently shaken by outgoing artillery fire. He was briefly overcome as he recalled how, when a lorry backfired during his most recent home leave, he grabbed his young son and dived between two parked cars.

The chaplains said soldiers were seeking their help in unprecedented numbers.

"Everyone you meet is just down, and you meet them everywhere — in the weight room, dining facility, getting mail," said Captain Rico. Even "hard men" were coming to their tent chapel and breaking down.

The men are frustrated by the lack of obvious purpose or progress.

"The soldiers' biggest question is: what can we do to make this war stop.

"Catch one person? Assault one objective?

"Soldiers want definite answers, other than to stop the Taleban, because that almost seems impossible. It's hard to catch someone you can't see," said Specialist Mercer.

"It's a very frustrating mission," said Lieutenant Hjelmstad. "The average soldier sees a friend blown up and his instinct is to retaliate or believe it's for something, but it's not like other wars where your buddy died but they took the hill.

"There's no tangible reward for the sacrifice. It's hard to say Wardak is better than when we got here."

Captain Masengale, a soldier for 12 years before he became a chaplain, said: "We want to believe in a cause but we don't know what that cause is."

The soldiers are angry that colleagues are losing their lives while trying to help a population that will not help them. "You give them all the humanitarian assistance that they want and they're still going to lie to you.

"They'll tell you there's no Taleban anywhere in the area and as soon as you roll away, ten feet from their house, you get shot at again," said Specialist Eric Petty, from Georgia.

Captain Rico told of the disgust of a medic who was asked to treat an insurgent shortly after pulling a colleague's charred corpse from a bombed vehicle.

The soldiers complain that rules of engagement designed to minimise civilian casualties mean that they fight with one arm tied behind their backs. "They're a joke," said one. "You get shot at but can do nothing about it. You have to see the person with the weapon. It's not enough to know which house the shooting's coming from."

The soldiers joke that their ISAF arm badges stand not for International Security Assistance Force but "I Suck At Fighting" or "I Support Afghan Farmers".

To compound matters, soldiers are mainly being killed not in combat but on routine journeys, by roadside bombs planted by an invisible enemy.

"That's very demoralising," said Captain Masengale.

The constant deployments are, meanwhile, playing havoc with the soldiers' private lives. "They're killing families," he said. "Divorces are skyrocketing. PTSD is off the scale. There have been hundreds of injuries that send soldiers home and affect families for the rest of their lives."

The chaplains said that many soldiers had lost their desire to help Afghanistan.

"All they want to do is make it home alive and go back to their wives and children and visit the families who have lost husbands and fathers over here. It comes down to just surviving," said Captain Masengale.

"If we make it back with ten toes and ten fingers the mission is successful," Sergeant Hughes said.

"You carry on for the guys to your left or right," added Specialist Mercer.

The chaplains have themselves struggled to cope with so much distress. "We have to encourage them, strengthen them and send them out again. No one comes in and says, 'I've had a great day on a mission'. It's all pain," said Captain Masengale. "The only way we've been able to make it is having each other."

Lieutenant-Colonel Kimo Gallahue, 2-87's commanding officer, denied that his men were demoralised, and insisted they had achieved a great deal over the past nine months. A triathlete and former rugby player, he admitted pushing his men hard, but argued that taking the fight to the enemy was the best form of defence.

He said the security situation had worsened because the insurgents had chosen to fight in Wardak province, not abandon it. He said, however, that the situation would have

been catastrophic without his men. They had managed to keep open the key Kabul-to-Kandahar highway which dissects Wardak, and prevent the province becoming a launch pad for attacks on the capital, which is barely 20 miles from its border. Above all, Colonel Gallahue argued that counter-insurgency — winning the allegiance of the indigenous population through security, development and good governance — was a long and laborious process that could not be completed in a year. “These 12 months have been, for me, laying the groundwork for future success,” he said.

**At morning service on Sunday, the two chaplains sought to boost the spirits of their flock with uplifting hymns, accompanied by video footage of beautiful lakes, oceans and rivers.**

Captain Rico offered a particularly apposite reading from Corinthians: “We are afflicted in every way but not crushed; perplexed but not driven to despair; persecuted but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed.”



## **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**

## **ACTION REPORTS**

# **“After Tabling (And Whenever) Have Something With You To Give A Traveling Soldier”**

From: Alan Stolzer, Military Resistance  
To: Military Resistance newsletter  
Sent: October 11, 2009  
Subject: Have something with you to give a traveling soldier.

Today members of Military Resistance tabled at Community Church's/Resistance Cinema's showing of "Rethink Afghanistan." After the informative film quite a few people came to the table and picked up publications. We took several signatures for Military Resistance newsletter as well, and one man signed up to do face to face outreach to armed forces members in the New York City Area.

But the REAL bonus of the day was afterwards when I saw a young soldier as I was walking toward the subway.

I engaged him and found out he's deploying to Afghanistan (he said it's a job when asked how he felt about it) in February. Once I told him who we were he responded by saying he has a lot of "battle buddies" and was willing to take publications for them (I had plenty left over from tabling).

I then emptied out, giving him all the Traveling Soldiers I had left (I'd say 25-30 of the last 3 issues), a dozen or so GI Rights Pamphlets, about 15 of our contact cards and one DVD apiece of "Sir! No Sir!" and "Querido Camilo."

I guess the moral of the story is after tabling (and whenever) have something with you to give a traveling soldier.

Solidarity,  
AS

**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.

### **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.**

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **Resistance Action**



A damaged police car at site of a bomb attack in Baghdad, October 12, 2009 that wounded a senior Interior Ministry official in the Karrada district of central Baghdad.

REUTERS/Saad Shalash



Oct 11 (Reuters) & Oct 12 (Reuters)

A roadside bomb wounded six policemen and five civilians when it struck a police patrol in central Tikrit, 150 km (95 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb injured a policeman when it struck a patrol in northern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A bomb attached to a car wounded a senior Interior Ministry officer and a policeman and in Karrada district in central Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded a senior police officer, when it struck a police convoy in Karrada district, police said.

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Minnesota Soldier Dies After Helmand IED Attack**

October 12, 2009 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 790-09

Spc. George W. Cauley, 24, of Walker, Minn., died Oct. 10 in Bagram, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his vehicle with an improvised explosive device on Oct. 7 in Helmand province. He was assigned to the 114th Truck Company of the Minnesota Army National Guard in Duluth, Minn.

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### **“The Taliban Say The Australians Will Shoot You As Well” “Now We Have To Go And Join Them”**

October 12, 2009 AAP

The father of an Afghan policeman shot dead by Australian troops insists his son was wearing his police uniform at the time.

The incident occurred in August when two men riding a motorcycle approached Australian troops at a vehicle control point north of the Australian base at Tarin Kowt in Afghanistan's dangerous Oruzgan province.

When they failed to comply with verbal and visual signals to stop, the soldiers opened fire, killing one man and wounding the other.

Abdul Ghani, the father of the dead man and also a policeman, says both men were wearing their police uniforms.

“They (Australian troops) told us that they thought they were suicide attackers,” he told ABC television.

“The Australians said they were very sorry and it was a mistake.

“I don’t accept the apology as he was wearing the uniform of the police.”

Mr Ghani said he believed he was at risk.

“You have to understand they killed my son and they will kill me as well. I am scared. I was a friend of the Australians. This is a huge loss of face in front of the Taliban.

“The Taliban say the Australians will shoot you as well.

“Now we have to go and join them.”

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## **Blinding Flash Of The Obvious**

October 10 By Jean MacKenzie, GlobalPost [Excerpt]

At present, despite Barack Obama’s toned-down rhetoric, the United States is still engaged in what amounts to a global war on terror, while the Taliban, the vast majority of whom are Afghan Pashtuns, are fighting a war of national liberation.

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## **“Overwhelming Majority” Of U.S. Civilian Occupation Staff “Never Leave Their Compounds”**

Oct. 12, 2009 By Elisabeth Bumiller and Mark Landler, The New York Times [Excerpts]

Afghanistan is now so dangerous, administration officials said, that many aid workers cannot travel outside the capital, Kabul, to advise farmers on crops, a key part of Mr. Obama’s announcement in March that he was deploying hundreds of additional civilians to work in the country.

“Right now, the overwhelming majority of civilians are in Kabul, and the overwhelming majority never leave their compounds,” said Mr. Crumpton [Henry Crumpton, an informal adviser to General McChrystal] who recently returned from a trip to Afghanistan.

“Our entire system of delivering aid is broken, and very little of the aid is getting to the Afghan people.”

The judiciary is so weak that Afghans increasingly turn to a shadow Taliban court system because, a senior military official said, “a lot of the rural people see the Taliban justice as at least something.”

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## **“U.S. Officials In Afghanistan Rarely Mention Al-Qaida”**

Oct 7, 2009 By Robert H. Reid - The Associated Press [Excerpts]

KABUL — Al-Qaida’s role in Afghanistan has faded after eight years of war.

Gone is the once-formidable network of camps and safe houses where Osama bin Laden and his mostly Arab operatives trained thousands of young Muslims to wage a global jihad.

U.S. national security adviser James Jones said last weekend that the al-Qaida presence has diminished and he did not “foresee the return of the Taliban” to power.

He said that according to the maximum estimate, al-Qaida has fewer than 100 fighters operating in Afghanistan without any bases or ability to launch attacks on the West.

U.S. officials in Afghanistan rarely mention al-Qaida in sharp contrast to Iraq, where the U.S. military was quick to blame the group for most attacks against civilians.

During the years of Taliban rule, many Afghans deeply resented the presence of swaggering young Arabs, who in turn looked upon their hosts as backward and primitive.

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## **Wanat: “What I’d Really Like To Know Is: What Did My Son And What Did Those Other Sons Die For?”**

## **“The Increasingly Potent Insurgency In Afghanistan Has**

# Forced U.S. Commanders To Concede That They Don't Have Enough Troops To Defend A String Of Isolated Outposts” “The Population There Is Just Not Listening To Us” “Assaults Have Risen In Each Of The Past Three Years”

October 6, 2009 By Greg Jaffe, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

Within days of the attack on the U.S. outpost in Wanat last year that killed nine soldiers, American troops withdrew from the Afghan village and the surrounding Waygal Valley. Fourteen months later, they have still not returned.

The increasingly potent insurgency in Afghanistan has forced U.S. commanders to concede that they don't have enough troops to defend a string of isolated outposts established in recent years near the border with Pakistan.

A few miles south of Wanat, the violent Korengal Valley shows the perils of persistence. Instead of leaving, U.S. troops have for the past several years battled the Taliban to a bloody stalemate.

The United States has spent millions of dollars on attempts to pave the road that leads into the valley in an effort to jump-start the local economy and provide residents with an alternative to fighting.

But the project has been stalled for more than two years because of violence. Last month, the United States paid a private Afghan security company \$2 million to protect construction workers in the valley. A few days into the contract, insurgents stormed the security company's outposts, killed six Afghan guards and took dozens of rifles and hundreds of rounds of ammunition.

“The Korengal really functions on its own,” Pearl [Lt. Col. Brian Pearl, the U.S. battalion commander for the area] said. “The people there don't want to be connected to the rest of the country. So roads don't mean anything to them. . . . The population there is just not listening to us.” **[Stupid, arrogant asshole. Nothing wrong with their “listening” at all. They just hate foreign occupation soldiers invading them, and believe it is their patriotic duty to take arms to fight the foreign Imperial army killing them. They are right to do so. T]**

After years of frustration, countless firefights and at least a dozen U.S. fatalities, Pearl has concluded that his best option is to leave the Korengal sometime next year.

"I have a full-sized company dedicated to a valley with a population of 4,200 people," he said. "I am sure there are valleys in Afghanistan with 100,000 people and no U.S. troops.

"You have got to ask yourself: Why? Why is this one valley so strategically important?"

The U.S. commander's main focus is the Pech River Valley, which is home to the vast majority of the people in his sector.

Pearl's hope is that Afghans in the Waygal, Korengal and other small valleys that feed the Pech River will see the progress in the main valley and want some of the same.

The danger remains that unrest in the smaller valleys will spill into the Pech River Valley, which is still a violent place.

**Afghan trucks, carrying supplies for U.S. and Afghan military bases, are regularly attacked when they travel without security on the main road.**

**Usually the truck drivers wait at the opening of the valley for a U.S. Army patrol to pass and then they follow it, a practice soldiers have dubbed "strap hanging." Lining the sides of the road are the remains of scorched trucks belonging to drivers too impatient to wait for an informal escort.**

Enemy fighters from the five smaller valleys along the Pech often descend to launch attacks on U.S. and Afghan forces from the high ground on either side.

Assaults have risen in each of the past three years, and during its first 75 days in Afghanistan, Pearl's battalion suffered four fatalities and 50 Purple Hearts were awarded to wounded soldiers.

The most recent of those deaths came in early September when insurgents, armed with rifles and rocket-propelled grenades, opened fire on a U.S. patrol and killed Sgt. Youvert Loney.

On Sept. 17, after meeting with the Wanat district governor, Pearl sped down the Pech valley's main road to attend Loney's memorial service.

About 100 soldiers had gathered in a large maintenance bay. Pictures of Loney, 28, were beamed onto a white sheet on a wall in the building. "In Loney's first six months in my squad, I think his only words were, 'Roger, Sergeant,' and 'I'm good,'" Sgt. 1st Class Daniel Shealy said. During winter, Loney, a native of Micronesia, was more expansive: "It's cold, Sergeant, but I'm good."

His friends described how a grenade slammed into his Humvee in 2006 during his first tour of Iraq, injuring his back.

At Fort Carson, Colo., he hid his pain from superiors because he was concerned he might be disqualified from deploying to Afghanistan. In late 2008, his wife gave birth to their first son, Youvert Jr. Six months later, he left for the war.

When the eulogies were done, an honor detail fired 21 shots. A flock of birds, startled by the noise, flew over the maintenance bay where Pearl tried to console Loney's fellow soldiers as they headed back to their base. "Stay strong," Pearl said as he placed his palm on the back of a distraught soldier's neck.

The Taliban fighters who had killed the sergeant came from one of the capillary valleys.

**"The Sergeant Loneys make it hard, but you can't let these small valleys become personal," Pearl said.**

He was determined to keep his battalion focused on the main Pech River Valley.

**For Brostrom, the father of the platoon leader killed at Wanat, the village and the surrounding Waygal Valley will always be personal.**

The last time U.S. forces were in the village, it was still smoldering from the battle. "That town was leveled. Buildings were destroyed. People's homes were gone, and then the military decided it wasn't important," Brostrom said.

"What I'd really like to know is: What did my son and what did those other sons die for?"

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## **OBAMA'S WAR: UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH: IT'S WORTH IT, RIGHT?**



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



Shortly after taking fire from Taliban militants, U.S. Marines with Bravo Company, 1st Battalion 5th Marines, fire an illumination grenade, during a patrol in Nawa district, Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, Oct. 1, 2009. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)



As their patrol takes fire from Taliban militants, U.S. Marines run for position in Nawa district, Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, Oct. 1, 2009. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)



Under fire from Taliban militants, a U.S. Marine with 5th Marines takes cover in Nawa district, Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, Oct. 4, 2009. Taliban militants opened up on the Marine patrol using assault rifles, medium machine guns, and snipers. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)



U.S. marines fire during a Taliban ambush in Helmand province, October 9, 2009. REUTERS/Asmaa Waguih





U.S. Marines attend a wounded colleague after a Taliban ambush in the southern Afghanistan Helmand province October 9, 2009. REUTERS/Asmaa Waguih

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

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

***Good News For The Afghan  
Resistance!!***

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



Oct 9, 2009: An Afghan family is forced to go out and sit in the dirt as foreign occupation soldiers from the U.S. search their home in Bhuji Bhasht Pass in southern Afghanistan. (AFP/David Furst)

**[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.**

**[But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?]**

Afghani citizens have no right to resist home invasions by occupation soldiers from the USA. If they do, they may be arrested, wounded, or killed.

## **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

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

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

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

## TROOP NEWS

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



The casket containing U.S. Army Cpl. Benjamin S. Kopp, of Rosemount, Mn., Arlington National Cemetery August 7, 2009. Kopp was killed on July 18, 2009 in Afghanistan. REUTERS/Larry Downing

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## **400 From Wisconsin National Guard Off To Obama's Imperial Slaughterhouse**

Oct 10, 2009 The Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. — Nearly 400 Wisconsin National Guard troops are headed to Iraq in March.

The troops are from the 724th Engineer Battalion which has companies based in Chippewa Falls, Hayward, Medford, Spooner and Superior.

The mobilization is expected to last about a year, with about 10 months of that time in Iraq.

The battalion last deployed to Iraq from March 2003 to July 2004.

About 3,700 Wisconsin National Guard members currently on active duty in Iraq, Afghanistan and other places around the world.

There are about 6,500 Guard members in the state.

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**“Soldiers Described How Pvt. Keiffer Wilhelm, 19, Was Hazed And Treated Roughly Before The Private Killed Himself Aug. 4”**

**“Two Non-Commissioned Officers Had Established A Pattern Of Cruelty And Mistreatment Of The Platoon’s Soldiers”**

**“The Unit’s Combat Medic Said He Warned Clements About His Methods”**

# **“He Didn’t Take My Advice And Said He Would Do As He Saw Fit”**

Oct 12, 2009 By Aamer Madhani, USA TODAY

CONTINGENCY OPERATING BASE ADDER, Iraq — The Army is weighing whether to prosecute two soldiers charged with maltreatment and cruelty of their troops, including a soldier who committed suicide just four days after joining the unit in Iraq.

Ten soldiers testified over the weekend that Staff Sgt. Bob Clements and Sgt. Enoch Chatman regularly punished them with verbal abuse and grueling exercise.

The soldiers also described how Pvt. Keiffer Wilhelm, 19, of Plymouth, Ohio, was hazed and treated roughly by Chatman and Clements before the private killed himself Aug. 4.

The two days of testimony were part of an Article 32 hearing, a military equivalent of a grand jury, to determine whether there is enough evidence for a court-martial. Maj. Gen. Richard Nash, the top U.S. commander in southern Iraq, should decide in a few weeks.

The investigation against the unit's leaders was launched in August after Wilhelm's suicide. The army has not accused Clements and Chatman of directly causing Wilhelm's death.

But the prosecution, headed by Capt. Matthew Grady, attempted to show that the two non-commissioned officers had established a pattern of cruelty and mistreatment of the platoon's soldiers that culminated with the abuse of Wilhelm.

If convicted, Clements, 29, of Eastland, Texas, would face up to 25 years in prison, while Chatman 30, of West Covina, Calif., could get up to 10 years.

Lawyers for both men said their clients are innocent and painted them as tough disciplinarians who pushed their soldiers to be their best while maintaining Army standards.

Soldiers from the unit, part of the 2nd Squadron, 13th Cavalry Regiment, said the harassment of Wilhelm began as soon as he arrived at a small outpost in Maysan province in southern Iraq. They said Wilhelm was ridiculed for being overweight and was mocked because he was trained to fire mortars but was sent to a platoon of mostly scouts.

Sgt. Branan Lawrence testified that Chatman and Clements told him even before Wilhelm arrived: “We got a new guy. Don’t go easy on him.”

Soon after arriving, Wilhelm was “smoked” — the term soldiers use to describe grueling exercises ordered for infractions — because he addressed Chatman while not standing at attention, Lawrence said.

Wilhelm underwent several other smoke sessions, including one that lasted about three hours after he apparently failed to keep his weapon on safe while inside the camp, Sgt. Stephen Ruth said.

Ruth said he made Wilhelm do several minutes of exercise before Clements took over and intensified the exercises. At a certain point, Ruth said, he became concerned that Clements was being too harsh.

"I knew what it was like to be smoked by Sgt. Clements," said Ruth, who also had been punished by Clements. "I tapped Sgt. Clements on the arm and said I'll take over. He turned around and said he'd handle it."

The next day, Wilhelm appeared exhausted and said he was scared to go near the platoon's living quarters because he might run into Clements and Chatman and get into more trouble, Pfc. Justin Baum testified.

One day later, Wilhelm was found dead from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Another soldier, Spc. Matthew Buchwitz, said he collapsed from dehydration after Clements made him go through a grueling smoke session in June.

The unit's combat medic, Sgt. James Thompson, said he warned Clements about his methods after that incident.

"I told him in no way did I want to tell him how to discipline his soldier or run his platoon, but ... I just couldn't have that anymore because it was dangerous," Thompson testified. "He didn't take my advice and said he would do as he saw fit."

Spc. Timothy Park said he was forced into a two-hour smoke session with Clements months earlier after lying about shaving.

During cross-examination, Capt. Sandra Paul, one of Clements' lawyers, noted the sergeant helped Park register his vehicle at the unit's home base at Fort Bliss in Texas, and tried to improve the soldier's self-esteem.

"Didn't he teach you how to walk tall with your chest out?" Paul asked. Park acknowledged that was true, but said it was only because he feared Clements would punish him if he didn't.

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## **Lawsuit Against Cop Rat Who Murdered Unarmed Special Forces Soldier Finally Goes To Trial**

Oct 12, 2009 The Associated Press [Excerpts]

GREENSBORO, N.C. — A lawsuit accusing a Moore County deputy of excessive force in a 2002 shooting that killed a soldier during Special Forces training in central North Carolina was scheduled to go to trial this week.

Stephen Phelps and the estate of Tallas Tomeny have sued the Moore County Sheriff's Department and the deputy, Randall Butler. Their lawsuit scheduled for trial Tuesday contends that Butler fired at the men without provocation after the deputy pulled over their truck.

Court documents portray a chaotic scene on Feb. 23, 2002, that remains in dispute.

The soldiers believed Butler was part of the annual role playing exercise called Robin Sage in which Green Beret candidates spend 19 days in the communities near Fort Bragg. Their lawsuit says Tomeny repeatedly used a common code word to indicate that they were part of the exercise.

**Butler shot Tomeny after searching him, according to the lawsuit. The complaint says the deputy shot Phelps as he tried to run from the scene. Neither was armed with a weapon at the time.**

Their lawsuit accuses Butler of “reckless indifference and callous disregard” for the rights of the men and it seeks unspecified damages.

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## “These Protestors Include Iraq And Afghanistan Vets”



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

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## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



**“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.**

**“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.**

**“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”**

**Frederick Douglass, 1852**

**“Hope for change doesn’t cut it when you’re still losing buddies.”  
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

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

**“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”  
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.**



# Standard And Poor School Of Economics



From: Mike Hastie  
To: Military Resistance  
Sent: October 11, 2009  
Subject: Standard and Poor School of Economics

## **Standard and Poor School of Economics**

**Full metal jacket investments  
that keep America strong.  
Support The Troops,  
it's in our best interests.**

**Mike Hastie  
U.S. Army Medic  
Vietnam 1970-71  
October 9, 2009**

**The only thing worse  
than death is betrayal.  
Malcolm X**

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: ([hastiemike@earthlink.net](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T)

**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

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

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

## Flashbacks

From: Dennis Serdel  
To: Military Resistance  
Sent: October 10, 2009  
Subject: Flashbacks  
Written by Dennis Serdel, Military Resistance 2009 Oct. 2009

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

\*\*\*\*\*

### Flashbacks

Who is that flashing in front of me  
Oh, it's Mom It's Dad and  
I still love you and my family  
but why are you staring back at me  
did I do something wrong  
fade to black  
I can see Uncle Hank and Auntie Ann

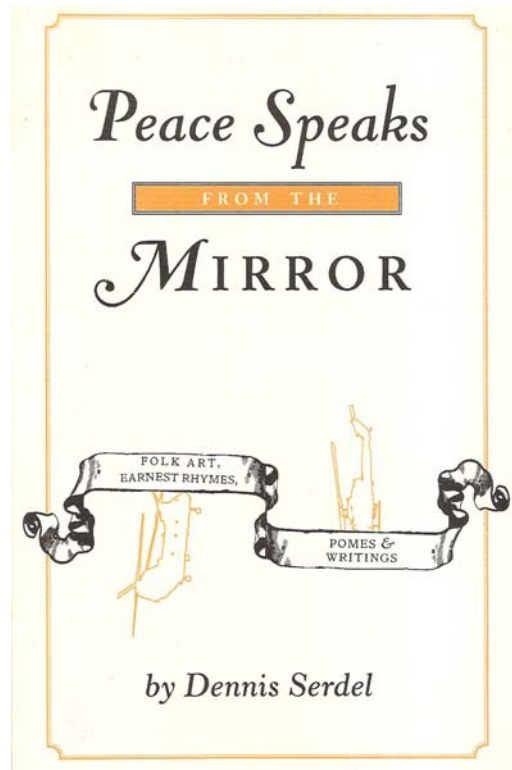
who lived to be 93 sitting on a couch  
in front of me smiling  
as you fade away  
Now it's Uncle Joe sitting there  
I went coon hunting as a kid  
with his blue blood hounds  
a lantern shining in the woods  
until two in the morning  
now you're staring back at me  
what do you want fade to black  
Wait, it's Uncle Sam and Aunt Jean  
they are staring back at me  
Aah, he had his polka band and played  
saxophone to crowds of a hundred  
but it seemed like a million people  
went to his funeral, I did but  
why are you staring back at me  
fade to black  
This is getting scary now, who's  
going to appear in front of me next  
Oh My God, it's Wilson and he's  
only 19 lying dead and looking at me  
I'm so sorry Brother,  
it was my job to keep you alive  
but I couldn't do it  
fade to black  
Christ, it's Paulson dead at 19  
played catch with him back at base camp  
he wanted to be a NY Yankee  
instead he's sitting there with no legs  
staring back at me and I was the one  
who missed the booby trap  
when it was my job to keep you alive  
I wish I was dead too  
fade to black  
I'm afraid as Don Love appears shot  
rolling down the hill then looks at me  
a few days ago he just turned 19  
fade to black  
Oh, Doctor you said the pills would  
make this go away but some people  
get old and some just stay 19  
fade to black  
as I awake in my sweat soaked pajamas  
my wife wakes up and says honey  
you're just having one of those dreams  
again OK

Written by Dennis Serdel  
Military Resistance Oct. 2009

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**MORE OF DENNIS SERDEL'S WORK IN *PEACE SPEAKS FROM THE MIRROR*:  
Get Some While There Still Are Some To Get:**

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



**DENNIS SERDEL:**

Shipped to Vietnam in November 1967.

Returned home in October 1968 to Kalamazoo, Michigan.

Joined Veterans For Peace in January 1990.

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

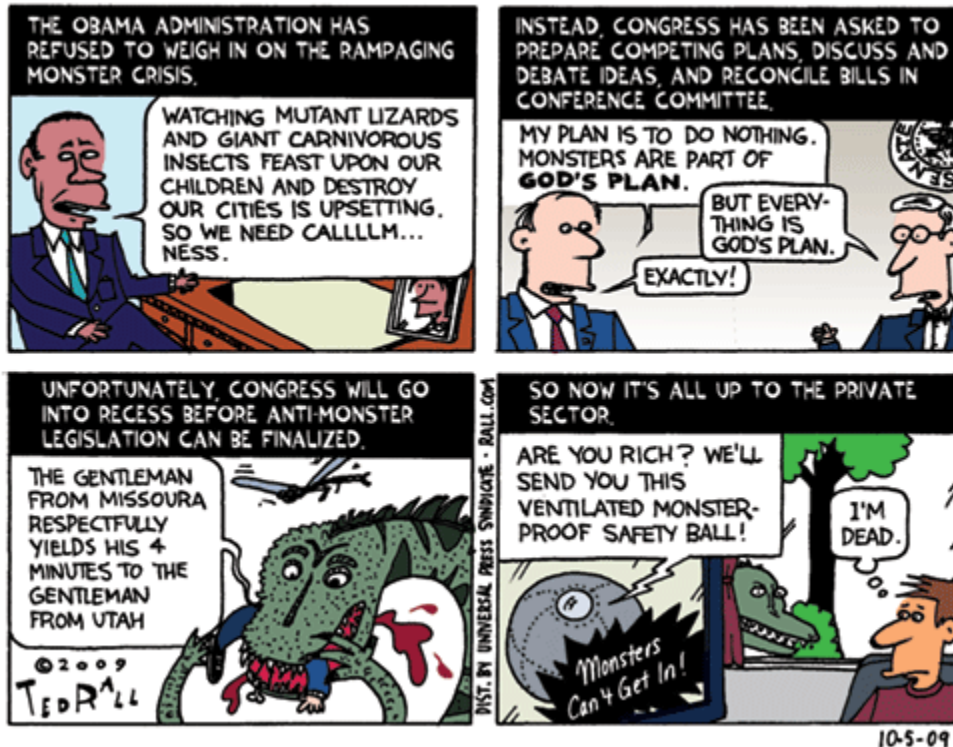
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