

## **Military Resistance 7K8**



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

**“We’ve Lost All Our Friends”  
“The Only Ones Who Are Alive Are  
On R&R, And They Have To Go Back,  
Too”**

**Brother Rice Grad Killed In Afghanistan**



October 30, 2009 BY AMY LEE AND LAUREN FITZPATRICK, Southtown Star

Just three weeks ago, Susan Stanker spoke to her 22-year-old son, Jared, for the first time since his July deployment to Afghanistan. "He said, 'We need help over here. There aren't enough troops,'" she said Thursday evening.

"I was so worried about him and he told me 'Don't watch the news, don't read the papers, don't focus on that, Mom. People come home.'"

However, Army Spc. Jared Stanker, a 2006 Brother Rice High School alum, was one of seven soldiers who died Tuesday in Arghandab Valley, Afghanistan, after enemy forces attacked their vehicle with an improvised explosive device, according to the U.S. Defense Department.

The troops were assigned to the 1st Battalion, 17th Infantry Regiment, 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, 2nd Infantry Division, out of Fort Lewis, Wash.

It was Stanker's first deployment. "He told me it was just so horrible for the women and children there. But they have a right to life, too," Susan Stanker said. "This is what he wanted to do. He believed in what he was doing."

He is survived by his parents and sister, Jordan Brandl, 29. The family recently sent out a box of goodies to mark Stanker's 22nd birthday on Oct. 13.

"He was there to help," his father, Kevin, said.

Stanker enlisted the day before his 18th birthday - while his mother was out of town and shortly after graduating from Brother Rice. He completed basic training in Fort Benning, Ga., and in March 2007 was assigned to the 5th Stryker Brigade.

All his life, Stanker was fascinated by the military and would spend hours watching films about war, his mother said.

"All that kid did when he was little was watch 'Kelly's Heroes' over and over and over, and that's a four-hour movie," she said.

Among his awards and decorations are the National Defense Service Medal and Army Service Ribbon. "The only thing necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing," Stanker posted on a prominent spot of his Facebook page.

His girlfriend, Abbey Oman, maintained a Facebook page called Southside Supporting Troops, where she kept tabs on Stanker's unit, including how many were killed and wounded.

After she got word Tuesday of the explosion, she pleaded with him to contact her and posted, "If you see this, please CALL OUT baby!!!! I love you!" on his Facebook wall.

Thursday evening, Oman stayed close to Stanker's mother as the two recalled his devotion to the military.

Many of Oman and Jared Stanker's friends have died in uniform.

"We've lost all our friends (to war)," Oman said as she choked back tears on Thursday evening. "The only ones who are alive are on R&R, and they have to go back, too."

The couple knew each other their entire lives and hoped to marry someday, Susan Stanker said.

"It shatters everyone's dreams," she said.

Evergreen Park Mayor Jim Sexton said Stanker is the first military casualty in Afghanistan for the village, which has about 20 to 25 soldiers overseas.

"Everybody here is praying for his family and for the rest of the troops out there keeping us safe," Sexton said.

On Tuesday, two separate bomb attacks in Southern Afghanistan killed eight American troops, making October the deadliest month for U.S. forces since the 2001 invasion.

Stanker was patrolling in an armored vehicle, U.S. forces spokesman Lt. Col. Todd Vician said. Six other American soldiers and an Afghan civilian were also killed in the attack.

The eighth American was killed Tuesday in a separate bombing elsewhere in the south, also while patrolling in a military vehicle, Vician said.

The military issued a statement saying the deaths occurred during "multiple, complex" bomb strikes. It said several troops were wounded and evacuated to a nearby medical facility but gave no other details.

Stanker and the other soldiers killed Tuesday were among 18 Americans whose remains were saluted by President Barack Obama during a dignified transfer ceremony early Thursday at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware.

The other 10, including three Drug Enforcement Administration agents, were killed Monday when a U.S. military helicopter crashed returning from a firefight with suspected Taliban drug traffickers in western Afghanistan.

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **U.S. Soldier Killed In Ad Dawr**

November 09, 2009 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 876-09

Spc. Tony Carrasco Jr., 25, of Berino, N.M., died Nov. 4 in Ad Dawr, Iraq, of a gunshot wound suffered when enemy forces attacked his unit. He was assigned to 2nd Battalion,

32nd Field Artillery Regiment, 4th Infantry Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division, Fort Riley, Kan.

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## Community Rallies Around Family Of Slain Soldier

October 24, 2009 By Ana Ley, The Monitor

ALTON — A long line of somber faces snaked around Magdalena Espinoza's tiny front lawn, each person waiting their turn to embrace the bleary-eyed woman and offer what little comfort they could.

Espinoza and her children sat quietly on a row of folding chairs as the procession moved before them. Some whispered words of encouragement into the woman's ear as they cradled her in their arms. Others just cried.

As many as a hundred people gathered in front of the family's trailer home Saturday evening for a flag-raising ceremony to honor 26-year-old Staff Sgt. Bradley Espinoza, a soldier who died in Iraq on Monday after enemy forces attacked his vehicle with an improvised bomb.

The Mission High School graduate was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 12th Cavalry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division based in Fort Hood. He entered the U.S. Army in July 2002 as a combat engineer and has been stationed at Fort Hood since November 2002, according to a statement from Fort Hood.

Relatives of Alex Gonzalez, a Mission soldier who died last year in Iraq, came to the event hoping to give solace to the family of another fallen soldier. The Gonzalezes wore black T-shirts with a printed image of Alex, who died from injuries sustained when a rocket-propelled grenade struck his armored personnel carrier.

"We wanted to pay our respects," said Norma Garza, Gonzalez's aunt. "We've been through it. We know how hard it's been."

Garza had just hugged Magdalena Espinoza, urging her to be strong and endure her son's loss.

"It's worse at night," Garza said, softly shaking her head. "When you're alone, it hits you."

Even neighbors who barely knew the bereaved mother attended the event, some shedding a few tears for the young man and his grieving family.

"I don't know her well, but she's very nice," Maria Garcia, 39, said in Spanish. "She's just devastated."

Friends and relatives of the fallen soldier shied from media attention at Saturday's event, several declining Monitor interview requests. But as the evening drew to a close,

Magdalena Espinoza was slowly guided by her family toward media cameras, stopping frequently to shut her eyes and lean on relatives.

“Somebody, help me,” she seemed to mouth, reaching at her side with trembling hands. The woman’s unfinished sentences trailed away at first, but she eventually thanked the crowd for their support as they formed a circle around her.

“It was very important for me that everybody be here,” she said. “When (Bradley) became a soldier, he became everyone’s soldier.”

The woman remembered her son — a married father of two young children — as a kind person who “always found a way to make you smile,” and she asked the community not to forget the young man.

“I haven’t done this before, but it was hard,” she said as she looked toward the cameras. “I love you, Bradley. I will always miss you.”

Espinoza’s stepfather, Miguel de Leon, said the family had previously declined interviews because relatives wished for the community to focus on Bradley’s death, not on their grief.

“He died doing what he wanted to do,” de Leon said in Spanish. “We don’t want anything. We just want people to remember him.”

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

**Three Miles:  
“Their Previous Visit Was Three  
Months Ago, And Now It Was Time  
To Put In Another Appearance”  
“They Walked Three Miles In A  
Riverbed Over Sand And Man-Sized  
Boulders”  
“The Firefight Lasted About Four Hours.  
The Entire Operation, From Dawn Until**

# The Return To Base, Went On For About Seven Hours”

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

November 05, 2009 Knight Ridder/Tribune [Excerpts]

QATAR KALA, Afghanistan -- The villagers said they just wanted to be left alone. They claimed they had asked the Taliban to stay away, and wished the Americans would do the same.

But now the Americans were back, determined to stop the Taliban from passing through the village to attack U.S. targets. And shortly afterward the gunfire from the hills above served notice that the Taliban had no intention of leaving.

What unfolded Tuesday, Nov. 3, would highlight the tug of war being waged for the loyalties of one village in eastern Afghanistan.

The story had begun with a clinic, built here with U.S. funds to demonstrate to Afghans that they have more to gain from the Americans than from the Taliban. Last spring the Taliban blew it up. But the Americans kept coming back.

Their previous visit was three months ago, and now it was time to put in another appearance.

The platoon of a couple dozen Soldiers, part of the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division, left their outpost before sunrise.

They walked three miles in a riverbed over sand and man-sized boulders to reach the heap of concrete and twisted iron that used to be the clinic.

There they met the village elders, who escorted them to a large shade tree in the center of Qatar Kala.

The platoon commander, a 6-foot-5 lieutenant named Thomas Goodman, sat among the villagers, took off his helmet and sunglasses and explained why they had come.

Anti-American fighters had been passing through Qatar Kala westward to attack U.S. outposts along the nearby Pech River, said Goodman.

“Unless this is stopped, you have to understand that you’ll be getting regular visits from coalition forces,” he said.

The elders were unswayed.

“We ask you not to come here,” one said. “It is better for us, and better for you.”

The atmosphere was tense. An attack was expected. Back at the ruined clinic, the squad's Afghan translator had asked if this journalist had a mobile phone.

"You should call your loved ones now to say that you care about them. I'm telling you, the walk home from here is not a joke," he said with a nervous smile.

As they left Qatar Kala, with U.S. helicopters buzzing overhead, Goodman split his men into two squads, one along the riverbed and one in an irrigation canal on higher ground.

About 500 yards outside the village gunfire whistled down from the eastern mountainside.

Soldiers dived stomach-down. The rushing canal water soaked boots and uniforms and jammed at least one weapon as Soldiers got up to shoot back.

From the riverbed, the second squad fired volleys over the men in the canal. U.S. helicopters shot rockets and bursts of gunfire onto visible Taliban muzzle flashes. Nearby bases launched mortar shells and artillery barrages, and huge plumes of smoke erupted on the ridge line. Taliban fighters began moving down the hillsides.

The pinned-down U.S. Soldiers shot back.

Two at a time, Soldiers bounded across open fields and behind the farm terraces for cover, heading for the river along which they had come. Several leaped down the steep river bank and slid behind the huge boulders to catch their breath. Gunfire popped from the opposite side of the river.

The Americans were being squeezed from both directions. The Taliban moved closer. Ammunition was running low.

A helicopter hovered by the river bank and a medical stretcher slid out, laden with grenades and machine gun bullets.

Helicopters continued to hammer the Taliban but repeatedly had to return to a nearby base to rearm and refuel.

Gradually the Soldiers made it to safety.

The firefight had lasted about four hours. The entire operation, from dawn until the return to base, went on for about seven hours.

The Soldiers were met in front of the bazaar of a friendly village by troops in military vehicles who gave them bottled water. They were caked in drying mud but with no casualties except for two sprained ankles.

Then they headed back to their outpost, which is named Honaker Miracle after two U.S. infantrymen, Sgt. 1st Class Christopher Honaker and Pfc. Joseph Miracle, killed in Afghanistan in 2007.

The platoon was later told by its company command that reports suggested up to five Taliban were killed in Tuesday's fighting.

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# Lathrop Remembers Fallen Son



October 29, 2009 Kansas City News

LATHROP, Mo. -- The flags have been lowered to half staff at Lathrop High School to honor one of its own.

A former student has sadly become a fallen hero. Isaac Jackson, 27, was killed on Tuesday fighting in Afghanistan. He was one of eight soldiers killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanabad.

"His mother called my mother the night it happened around 11:15 and then called me around midnight and told me," said Jackson's best friend, James McMillian.

McMillian said he will never forget the moment he heard his friend was dead.

"He is a hero," he said. "And he is a good father to his kid. He has a little girl on the way that's supposed to be born Dec. 23. That's just a few months from now."

The small-town hero received a presidential welcome late Wednesday night when President Barack Obama was on hand along with Jackson's family as the bodies of the fallen soldiers arrived in Dover, Del.

"He had some reasons not to be cheerful, but he was," said Brant Downey, Jackson's high school teacher. "He looked at the glass pretty much half full all the time."

Downey taught Jackson social studies in high school and remembers him starting to think about serving his country while he was a student. "He would keep the class exciting, but he liked history just because he was proud of the country," Downey said.

Jackson's wife, mother and mother-in-law are on their way back from Delaware. The family is waiting for his remains to be released before setting funeral arrangements. It's an event the entire community will likely attend.

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# Anchorage Marine Dies In Afghan Helicopter Crash Just Weeks Before Third Tour Was Up



Cpl. Gregory Fleury, 23, was a 2005 Service High graduate

October 27th, 2009 By JAMES HALPIN, The Anchorage Daily News

A Marine from Anchorage and three others, all in the final weeks of their deployment, died Monday in the Afghanistan province of Helmand when two helicopters collided before sunrise.

Marine Corps Cpl. Gregory Fleury was crew chief aboard a UH-1 Huey that collided midair with an AH-1 Cobra in the predawn dark, according to the Department of Defense.

“It was hard to accept,” said his grandfather, Albert Fleury, who lives in Anchorage. “We hoped against all hope that it wasn’t true.”

The 23-year-old Service High School graduate already had served two tours of duty in Iraq as a gunner and mechanic aboard combat helicopters before being shipped to Afghanistan, his family said.

“Because of this flare-up in Afghanistan, he accepted that,” his grandfather said. “We had to respect his willingness to serve and complete this mission. Some people would have tried to demand that they be let out, that they’ve already served. But he accepted the extra challenge and responsibility, which is typical of him.”

Also killed in the crash were the pilot of the Huey and two co-pilots aboard the Cobra, according to the Department of Defense. All were based out of Camp Pendleton, Calif., and with the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, which is on the tail end of its deployment, said Maj. William Allen, commander of Marine forces in Alaska. Some members of the unit are already back in California, he said.

Fleury enlisted in the Marines on June 6, 2005, and was awarded several medals, including the Iraqi Campaign Medal and Good Conduct Medal, said Cpl. Derek Carlson, a spokesman for the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing at Marine Corps Air Station Miramar.

His grandfather said Fleury, who was born in Sitka, got interested in being a Marine in high school, when he joined the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps.

“He said that what he wanted to do when he got out of school was go into the Marine Corps and serve his country,” the elder Fleury said. “We encouraged him because the military service is a good training and learning ground for young adult people. It gives them direction and something to give their daily life some meaning.”

But lately Fleury was thinking about getting out and going back to school, maybe to work on computers, according to his family. His grandfather said he was scheduled to get off of active duty after four years this past June, but that the government extended his service for the deployment.

Allen said Marine records indicated Fleury was on active duty until 2012. The discrepancy could not be resolved Tuesday.

Service High principal Lou Pondolfino said Fleury, who graduated in 2005, was in the orchestra and the Navy JROTC for four years. Teachers who remembered him thought of him as a good kid who tried hard and found a purpose as a cadet in the ROTC, Pondolfino said.

“When he decided to join the Marines, a recruiter took him away one weekend to make up all his work that he hadn’t turned in, even though it wouldn’t be counted,” he said, quoting the teacher. “But he came back and was real proud of himself that he accomplished the task.”

Fleury is the second Service High graduate to die in Iraq or Afghanistan in the line of duty, Pondolfino said. In 2005 Lance Cpl. Grant Fraser was killed in western Iraq when a roadside bomb tore through the amphibious, lightly armored transport vehicle he was in.

Next month the high school will rename its theater the Grant Fraser Memorial Auditorium in honor of Fraser, who graduated in 2001 and was active in the school’s drama department, Pondolfino said.

What caused the collision that killed Fleury remained under investigation; it was not clear whether the choppers were engaged in combat or another mission when they collided in the dark.

“There is an investigating crew over there with 1st Marine Expeditionary Brigade that will be looking into the circumstances to determine the cause of the crash,” Allen said. “From the initial casualty report, they weren’t able to rule out whether there was enemy contact at the time.”

Allen said Fleury’s remains arrived at Dover Air Force Base Tuesday and will likely arrive in Anchorage Monday. Gov. Sean Parnell ordered state flags to be lowered to half-staff Thursday in Fleury’s honor.

He will be buried at the national cemetery on Fort Richardson next weekend, his grandfather said. "Being a hero and a person that served admirably for his country, that would be a great place," Fleury said.

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## **Soldier With Local Ties Dies In Blast "The Public Needs To Know How Many We Lose Every Day,' Smith Said"**

10/28/2009 By Valerie Cranston, Current-Argus Staff Writer

CARLSBAD — Former Carlsbad resident Andrea (Kurinski) Steffey's husband was killed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan Sunday.

Army Specialist Brandon Steffey, 23, was a canine tracker handler for Forward Operating Base Fenty Kennel in the Laghman Province of Afghanistan. He was a native of Sault St. Marie, Mich., and based out of Fort Hood, Texas. He joined the Army in 2006, spending time as a K-9 handler in Afghanistan and a gunner in Iraq.

"While other dogs found bombs, his dog Maci would track the scent of the terrorist," said Geraldine Smith, Andrea Steffey's grandmother. "They haven't been officially told if Maci died with Brandon, but they're sure he did since they were never separated."

"He loved that dog and said it had become his best friend," she added, noting that the dog was leased to him, not the Army.

"The last time Andrea talked with him was Saturday, the day before he was killed. He told her he was going out on a mission," said Smith.

Smith was listening to CNN when a reporter told of two soldiers who had been killed, one by a roadside bomb and another in a fire fight. She heard of Brandon's death later that day from her daughter.

"Andrea heard the door bell ring on Sunday and looked out and saw an Army official and the chaplain," Smith said. "She ran upstairs to her mother saying, 'I can't do this - I can't do this.'"

"She knew and didn't want to hear it," she added.

Andrea was born and raised in Carlsbad. She is the daughter of David Kurinski and Crystal Gilg. She went to live with her mother in San Antonio to go to school while Brandon was deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan. The couple have an 18-month-old daughter, Abigail.

In an interview on Oct. 18, a week before his death, Brandon talked about Maci and other dogs that help find militants who build, place and detonate IEDs (improvised explosive devices). The interview took place in Laghman Province, and the story was written by Spc. Derek L. Kuhn.

“During my last deployment in Iraq, I couldn’t do my job,” Steffey said to the reporter. “I was a gunner, but here I’m doing my job. I like being able to get the bad guys with my dog. They (the dogs) are like soldiers. They risk their lives just like us. Their lives are in our hands and that is why we look out for them.

“Dealing with a dog, teaching a dog and watching him execute his job is very rewarding. I spend a lot of time with my dog and he is my best friend. We’re a team,” Steffey told the reporter.

The Army flew Andrea to Dover Air Force Base in Delaware to meet the plane carrying Brandon and others who were killed in the line of duty. He will be buried in Sault St. Marie some time next week. There will also be a memorial service held at a later date at Ft. Hood, explained Smith.

“No one was with her when he was brought off the plane at Dover,” Smith said.

She last saw Brandon in May before he left to go to Iraq in June.

“He was a fun loving young man and loved to make people laugh,” Smith said. “He adored his wife and his little girl Abby.”

“Every time Abby sees a cell phone she picks it up and says, ‘Hello, Daddy,’” she added.

Smith was a military wife, and when she thinks of Brandon and other fallen soldiers, she believes they need to televise every one of the soldiers’ bodies being taken off the planes.

“The public needs to know how many we lose every day,” Smith said.

“Instead of flowers we decided we’re going to buy Brandon a star online so Andrea can tell Abby - there’s your daddy’s star,” she said.

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## **The Explosion Of An IED Seriously Injures A French Soldier In Tagab**

November 2, 2009 Zone Militaire

A French soldier of the 3rd Infantry Regiment Marine (RIMA) Vannes was severely affected on Sunday, November 1, by the explosion of an improvised explosive device (IED) in the region Tagab, located in Kapisa.

The bomb was discovered during a reconnaissance mission. The incident occurred during the operation to defuse the bomb, “when the traps associated with the IED exploded,” said Lt. Col. Jackie Fougereau, spokesman of French gowns deployed in Afghanistan. “The severely wounded soldier was evacuated by helicopter Caracal cradles the military hospital in Kabul where he is receiving treatment and will be repatriated to France as soon as possible” still said Lieutenant-Colonel Fougereau.

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## UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; ALL HOME NOW



An impact crater in the side of a protective wall, where a Taliban rocket struck during an enemy barrage, sits inside a base held by U.S. soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division in the Pech Valley of Afghanistan's Kunar province Sunday, Nov. 1, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



U.S. soldiers return fire on Taliban positions as Taliban fighters ambush U.S. soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division during a patrol in the Pech Valley of Afghanistan's Kunar province Tuesday, Nov. 3, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



U.S. soldiers from the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 4th Infantry Division return fire after their patrol in the Pech Valley of Afghanistan's Kunar province was ambushed by Taliban fighters Nov. 3, 2009. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)

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## TROOP NEWS

### HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS?



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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**“The Army Routinely Deploys  
Soldiers Who Are Clearly Suicidal  
And Homicidal”  
JOINT STATEMENT:  
From Under The Hood Café And  
The Fort Hood Chapter Of Iraq Veterans  
Against The War**



Sat [11.7] at 6:08am

Our community is distraught by the tragic shooting at Fort Hood yesterday. We extend our condolences to the families and friends of the victims.

As upset as we are about this incident, this shooting does not come as a shock.

**Eight years of senseless wars have taken a huge toll on our troops and their families. It's time to admit that the wars in southwest Asia are in no one's best interests.**

**Bring the troops home now!**

The Army has also repeatedly demonstrated that it is more interested in making soldiers “deployable” than it is in helping them fully recover from PTSD and other mental health issues.

This often leaves soldiers with few options other than to self-medicate with drugs and alcohol.

The Army routinely deploys soldiers who are clearly suicidal and homicidal.

Yesterday was a gruesome reminder of the possible violent consequences of this policy. We hope the Army now takes its duty to take care of soldiers more seriously.

We demand transparency from the Army and other federal agencies involved with this investigation.

Under the Hood Café provides military service members support with referrals to legal, financial, and medical services. It is a space for troops to freely express their views on the wars and the military. It also offers GI rights counseling.

Iraq Veterans Against the War calls for the immediate withdrawal of all occupying forces in Iraq, reparations for the human and structural damages Iraq has suffered, and full benefits for returning military.

Under the Hood Café  
Iraq Veterans Against the War – Fort Hood Chapter

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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**

## **The Great Truth Has Great Silence**



Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. 1986: Taken by Mike Hastie Vietnam Veteran

From: Mike Hastie  
To: Military Resistance  
Sent: October 29, 2009  
Subject: The Great Truth Has Great Silence

### **The Great Truth Has Great Silence**

**“I hate it when they say, ‘He gave his life for his country.’**

**Nobody gives their life for anything. We steal the lives of these kids. We take it away from them. They don't die for the honor and glory of their country. We kill them."**

**Admiral Gene LaRocque**

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)

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

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

**“The Afghans Hate Foreign  
Intrusion, Always Have Done”  
“With Superior Firepower, The US  
Will Win All The Significant  
Engagements”  
“But The Insurgents Will Fade Only To  
Return”**

[Thanks to Linda O, who sent this in.]

November 08, 2009 by William P Polk, Intellibriefs [Excerpts]

When I first went to Afghanistan in 1962 to write a U.S. National Policy paper, I imagined a rocky hill, deeply gullied, on which were scattered 20,000 ping-pong balls, representing autonomous village-states.

These communities were united with others by religion and custom but ran their own affairs and were mostly self-sufficient. The Russians found, after the invasion of 1979 and a decade of fighting with the loss of 15,000 troops, that they could smash many of these villages and chase away thousands of people, but they could never win the war.

Even with their large forces and victory in most battles, they never controlled more than 20% of the country.

The British led the way here, fighting wars with the Afghans in 1842, 1878-80 and 1919, losing about as many English and British Indian soldiers as the Russians, before giving up. Zamir N Kabulov, who spent 30 years in Kabul as ambassador for the Soviet Union, then Russia, notes that the Americans have repeated all the Russian mistakes and are making new ones.

The U.S. is trying to smash the Taliban without incurring many American casualties, to split the Taliban leadership and break their links with the Afghan people, and work through a US-chosen native government of its choice.

In Afghanistan, the US-led coalition can exercise little if any influence on the politics or culture of the country.

The Afghans hate foreign intrusion, always have done.

Richard Opiel Jr, in The New York Times of 23 August 2009, described Khan Neshin province. Its governor told him he had “no body of advisers to help run the area, no doctors to provide healthcare, no teachers, no professionals to do much of anything. About all he does have are police officers who steal and a small group of Afghan soldiers who say they are here for ‘vacation’”. It may be better in some other areas, but it is certainly worse elsewhere.

So that leaves the US military intervention: with superior firepower, the US will win all the significant engagements.

But the insurgents will fade only to return.

In Afghanistan, the government we condoned and effectively installed is involved in the drug traffic, sells offices in the police, army and civil service, decides law cases by the size of bribes, steals everything its officials touch, and has been caught selling ammunition to the Taliban.

Everything is for sale.

The re-election of Hamid Karzai was not a travesty; it was a joke. The result was announced before the votes were counted.

**And the Karzai government has almost no effect outside of central Kabul.**

**US troops find that Afghan soldiers keep as far out of danger as possible; many go over to the Taliban. As in Vietnam, the US’s opponents, helped by the local population, “own the night”.**

What is different from Vietnam is the presence in Afghanistan of the warlords, hated and feared, who almost control the government. Karzai had to call back the notorious Uzbek warlord Rashid Dostum to “win” his election and now has made him effective co-ruler. These warlords, associated in the public mind with the US, are the Taliban’s greatest asset.

President Obama says we must win. Secretary of Defence Robert Gates says we must stay there “a few years” (the senior British general, Sir David Richards, says 40). The Spaniards, Canadians, Germans and Norwegians are reconsidering.

**My calculation, based on the Iraq campaign, is that the Afghan war will cost the US economy between \$3 and \$6 trillion, more than 25% of US GDP, making most of Obama’s domestic plans impossible.**

**Despite this, Obama has decided to stay the course, proclaiming that Afghanistan is the fountainhead of terrorism.**

**This is wrong.**

**Terrorism will be promoted rather than contained by military action in Afghanistan (especially as attacks have spilled over into Pakistan, Somalia and Iraq). More “boots on the ground” means increased danger.**

**Terrorists do not need Afghanistan, remote and poorly served by communications and transport: the 9/11 attackers were based in Europe, and future terrorists could attack from anywhere.**

Despite the US’s long experience with terrorism, back to its own revolution, it has not understood its nature and cause: terrorism is the weapon of the weak to be used when it is the only means to redress “wrongs”.

This story has been repeated over the past two centuries in South America, Ireland, Spain, Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy, France, Palestine, Turkey, South Africa, Kenya, India, Kashmir, Afghanistan, Burma, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Malaysia, China and Russia.

**When we approve of the terrorists’ aims we call them freedom fighters, but the difference is in our attitude toward their objectives, not their means of action.**

**We also confuse the Taliban and al-Qaida, yet they are very different: the Taliban form a national political organisation, a government in internal exile, based on the traditional leadership and the largest community in Afghanistan.**

**Al-Qaida is a loose amalgam of people from all over the world who act on their own; it is not an organisation and lacks central command.**

**Osama bin Laden is not a general but a guru.**

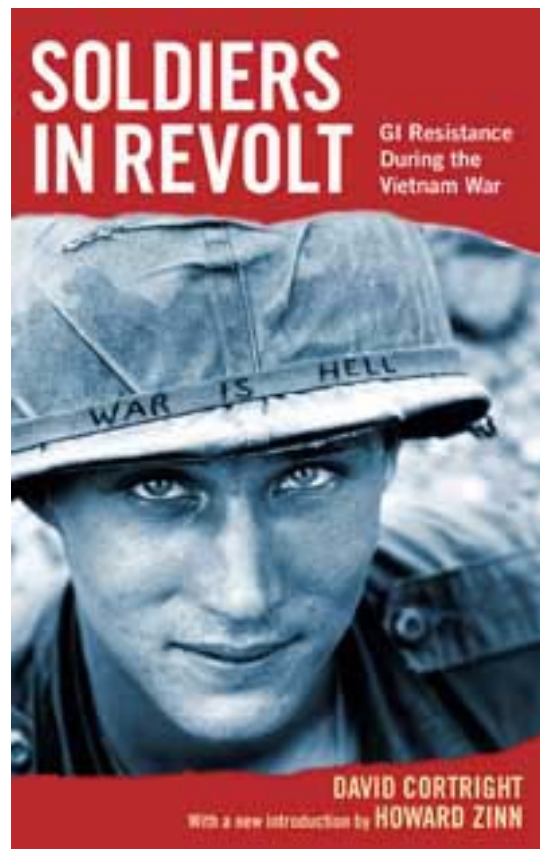
**The issues vary but, in general, they arise from the ragged, violent heritage of (mostly but not entirely western) imperialism.**

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## ***How To Stop A War:***

**“On April 27 [1968] A Group Of Forty Active-Duty People Marched At The Head Of An Anti-War Demonstration In San Francisco, The First Time GIs Led A Civilian Peace Rally”**

**“On February 16, 1969, The Alliance Sponsored A Peace Rally In Downtown Seattle, With Two Hundred Active- Duty People Leading A Crowd Of Several Thousand”**



[No, they didn't go to DC begging the Imperial Congress to stop the war. They weren't fools. They knew that when the army rebelled, the war would end. They did, and it did. Duh. T]

Excerpts from: SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975. **[Reprint available from Haymarket Books]**

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**The young people forced into the ranks by the Vietnam build-up expressed a sometimes articulate, sometimes desperate, opposition to an unwanted mission.**

The GI movement imbued the military with the voice of a troubled citizenry, providing a measure of democratic restraint on though otherwise unresponsive and imperious institutions of war.

The appearance of coffeehouses and a burgeoning GI press, in an atmosphere of mounting disillusionment over stalemate in Vietnam, set the stage for the first significant GI action.

The Army's huge armored training center at Fort Hood experienced a particularly rapid deterioration of troop morale, especially among combat returnees, and throughout the Vietnam period witnessed extensive unrest and drug use (the base's copious marijuana supplies earned it the sobriquet "Fort Head").

The civilians who opened the Oleo Strut in the summer of 1968 thus met with an enthusiastic response; with the founding of Fatigue Press, a long history of successful GI activism began.

The first political gathering of Fort Hood soldiers occurred in Killeen on July 5, 1968.

A "Love-In" and countercultural festival was held in Condor Park, featuring rock music and anti-war speeches; approximately two hundred soldiers attended, most of them white.

The atmosphere at the base grew considerably tenser in the following weeks, however, as thousands of troops were prepared for possible use against civilian demonstrators at the Democratic National Convention in Chicago — culminating in a dramatic and important act of political defiance among black troops.

On the evening of August 23, over one hundred black soldiers from the 1st Armored Cavalry Division gathered on base to discuss their opposition to Army racism and the use of troops against civilians.

After a lengthy, all-night assembly, which included a visit from commanding general Powell, forty-three of the blacks were arrested for refusal to follow orders.

The action of the blacks was spontaneous and unrelated to the work of the white soldiers (reflecting a common pattern of parallel but separate development of dissent among blacks and whites), but the Oleo Strut GIs supported the brothers and helped with their legal defense.

Because of widespread support for the resisters, especially among blacks, the Army's treatment of the Fort Hood 43 was not as harsh as it might have been; most received only light jail sentences.

The San Francisco Bay Area has been in the vanguard of most of the radical movements in the United States during the past decade, and the GI movement was no exception.

With the support of two local GI newspapers, *The Ally* and *Task Force*, area servicepeople were among the first to speak out in 1968.

**On April 27 a group of forty active-duty people marched at the head of an anti-war demonstration in San Francisco, the first time GIs led a civilian peace rally.**

Two months later, also in San Francisco, nine AWOL enlisted men (five soldiers, two sailors, one airman, and one Marine) publicly took sanctuary at Howard Presbyterian Church in moral opposition to the war. After a forty-eight-hour “service of celebration and communion,” they were arrested by MPs on July 17.

\*\*\*\*\*

**In the fall, the growing network of GI activists in the area laid plans for the largest servicemen’s peace action to date — an active-duty contingent for the scheduled October is anti-war rally in downtown San Francisco.**

**Among the efforts to mobilize area soldiers and distribute literature about the march was Navy nurse Susan Schnall’s daring feat of dropping leaflets from an airplane onto five area military bases (for which she was later court-martialed).**

**As the demonstration date approached, military authorities became nervous that a large number of GIs might become involved, and, in a manner that became standard whenever protests were planned, sought to prevent servicemen from attending.**

A communication from the Military Airlift Command in Washington, later anonymously released to *The Ally*, depicted the military’s attitude toward even lawful dissent: it urged that “this demonstration be quashed if possible because of possible severe impact on military discipline throughout the services.”

**On the Saturday of the actual march, soldiers at the nearby Presidio were detained for mandatory company formations, while special maneuvers and other diversions were held at several West Coast bases.**

**Despite such obstruction, two hundred active-duty GIs and some one hundred reservists marched at the head of the demonstration, in what was the largest gathering yet of the expanding GI movement.**

Two days later, in an incident partly inspired by the show of antiwar strength on October 12, twenty-seven inmates of the Presidio stockade held a sit-down strike to protest the shooting death a few days earlier of fellow prisoner Richard Bunch and to call attention to unbearable living conditions—what became known later as the Presidio mutiny. (For a sensitive and penetrating account of the Presidio incident see Fred Gardner’s *Unlawful Concert*.)

As the GI movement emerged, civilian radical organizations played an important role in helping to sustain rank-and-file dissent. One of the first agencies to recognize the changes taking place within the Army was the Student Mobilization Committee (SMC) and its closely allied counterpart, the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA).

One of the first examples of this co-operation was the GI-Civilian Alliance for Peace (GI-CAP) and the newspaper Counterpoint at Fort Lewis.

**Aided by SMC activists, GI-CAP developed into one of the most successful early GI-movement groups, with as many as fifty servicemen at regular weekly meetings.**

**On February 16, 1969, the Alliance sponsored a peace rally in downtown Seattle, with two hundred active- duty people leading a crowd of several thousand.**

A few months later, the servicemen formed their own organization apart from the civilians and continued their work as an all GI group.

**MORE:**

## **Vietnam GI: Reprints Available**



**Vietnam: They Stopped An Imperial War**

**Not available from anybody else, anywhere**

**Edited by Vietnam Veteran Jeff Sharlet from 1968 until his death, this newspaper rocked the world, attracting attention even from Time Magazine, and extremely hostile attention from the chain of command. The pages and pages of letters in the paper from troops in Vietnam condemning the war are lost to history, but you can find them here.**



The Military Project has copied complete sets of Vietnam GI. The originals were a bit rough, but every page is there. Over 100 pages, full 11x17 size.

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Cost for others: \$15 if picked up in New York City. For mailing inside USA add \$5 for bubble bag and postage. For outside USA, include extra for mailing 2.5 pounds to wherever you are.

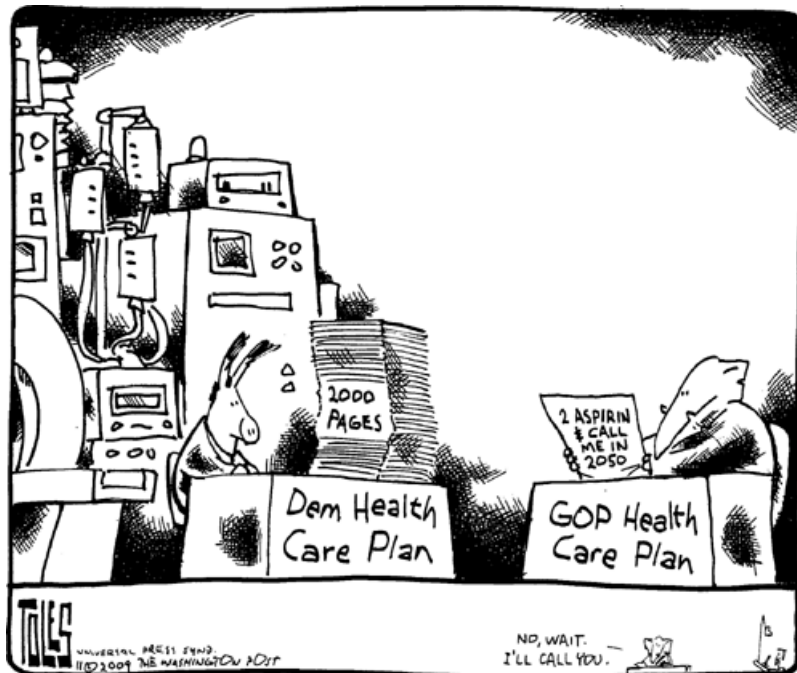
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All proceeds are used for projects giving aid and comfort to members of the armed forces opposed to today's Imperial wars.

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## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

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

## **CLASS WAR REPORTS**



**“There Is Very Strong Support Around  
The World For Governments To  
Distribute Wealth More Evenly”**

2009/11/09 By James Robbins, BBC News

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

More than 29,000 people in 27 countries were questioned.

In only two countries, the United States and Pakistan, did more than one in five people feel that capitalism works well as it stands.

Almost a quarter - 23% of those who responded - feel it is fatally flawed. That is the view of 43% in France, 38% in Mexico and 35% in Brazil.

And there is very strong support around the world for governments to distribute wealth more evenly.

That is backed by majorities in 22 of the 27 countries.

## **DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?**

**Forward Military Resistance 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 Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550**

## **RECEIVED**

**[New Orleans]**

**Tell Kurt Weigle And The Downtown Development  
District:  
HANDS OFF IBERVILLE!!!!**



*"It's going to make people feel the area is safer than it may be perceived to be today, and will make the area one of the most attractive for the entire city."*

*-- Downtown Development District head Kurt Weigle on the 'benefits' of demolishing the Iberville Public Housing development*

Downtown Development District (DDD) representative Henry Charlot must resign as a member and chair of the Iberville Advisory Committee.

Unbelievably, the Housing Authority of New Orleans' top lawyer, Wayne Woods, appointed a representative of the DDD to the Iberville Advisory Committee (IAC). The IAC is commissioned with developing a plan for the future of the development.

Yet, the DDD, and its director Kurt Weigle, have long made clear they want to eliminate Iberville as a Public Housing development.

Not only is Henry Charlot, the DDD representative, on the IAC, but he is the chair!!

Nevertheless, Wayne Woods rejected C3/Hands Off Iberville's participation since "we have an agenda".

Yes we do: To defend Iberville as Public Housing.

**Join us as we fight for this people's agenda, by demanding that 1. Kurt Weigle remove his outfit from the IAC. 2. All the units at Iberville remain as Public Housing. 3. The Federal government immediately implement a massive, national Public Works plan to rebuild and expand Public Housing and the Public Sector.**

**Saturday, November 14**

**4 PM--Gather at corner of Basin and St. Louis Streets**

**4:30 PM--Caravan to Kurt Weigle's House, 4516 Perrier St.**

Sponsors: C3/Hands Off Iberville; MayDay New Orleans. For more info call 504-587-0080 or 504-520-9521

**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/))

### 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



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