

Military Resistance 8B15

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



U.S. Marine, 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, after a patrol in Marjah, Helmand province Feb. 19, 2010. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)

**“Only 21% Say U.S.
Government Has
Consent Of The
Governed”**

“75% Of Voters Are Angry At The Policies Of The Federal Government”

“Those With The Lowest Incomes Are The Most Skeptical”

“The American People Are ‘United In The Belief That Politicians Are Corrupt, And That Neither Major Political Party Has The Answers’”

“Nearly Half Of All Voters Believe That People Randomly Selected From The Phone Book Could Do As Good A Job As The Current Congress”

[Thanks to Sandy Kelson, Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

February 18, 2010 Rasmussenreports.com [Excerpts]

The founding document of the United States, the Declaration of Independence, states that governments derive “their just powers from the consent of the governed.”

Today, however, just 21% of voters nationwide believe that the federal government enjoys the consent of the governed.

A new Rasmussen Reports national telephone survey finds that 61% disagree and say the government does not have the necessary consent. Eighteen percent (18%) of voters are not sure.

However, 63% of the Political Class think the government has the consent of the governed, but only six percent (6%) of those with Mainstream views agree.

Seventy-one percent (71%) of all voters now view the federal government as a special interest group, and 70% believe that the government and big business typically work together in ways that hurt consumers and investors.

That helps explain why 75% of voters are angry at the policies of the federal government, and 63% say it would be better for the country if most members of Congress are defeated this November. Just 27% believe their own representative in Congress is the best person for the job.

Those who earn more than \$100,000 a year are more narrowly divided on the question, but those with lower incomes overwhelmingly reject the notion that today's government has the consent from which to derive its just authority.

Those with the lowest incomes are the most skeptical.

[T]hat view is shared by 65% of voters not affiliated with either of the major parties.

In his new book, *In Search of Self-Governance*, Scott Rasmussen observes that the American people are "united in the belief that our political system is broken, that politicians are corrupt, and that neither major political party has the answers."

He adds that "the gap between Americans who want to govern themselves and the politicians who want to rule over them may be as big today as the gap between the colonies and England during the 18th century."

Sixty percent (60%) of voters think that neither Republican political leaders nor Democratic political leaders have a good understanding of what is needed today.

Thirty-five percent (35%) say Republicans and Democrats are so much alike that an entirely new political party is needed to represent the American people.

Nearly half of all voters believe that people randomly selected from the phone book could do as good a job as the current Congress.

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

One "Service Member" Killed In Marjah;

Nationality Not Announced

February 21, 2010 By ALFRED de MONTESQUIOU Associated Press Writer

NATO said one service member involved in the Marjah offensive was killed Sunday in a roadside bombing in southern Afghanistan, bringing the number of allied soldiers killed in the operation to 13.

Marjah: A View From Afghanistan: “This Is Just About The Americans And The British Trying To Show Something To Get The Support From Their Own People”

February 18, 2010 By Joshua Partlow, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpt]

“Let’s say there were 100 Taliban in Marja, or even 200 Taliban. They’re just the local people,” said Bismillah Afghanmal, a politician from Kandahar province.

“They just hide their Kalashnikovs in their home, and, instead of a Kalashnikov, they put a shovel on their shoulder and say they’re a farmer. What will you accomplish?”

He added: “This is just about the Americans and the British trying to show something to get the support from their own people.

“They are throwing soil in the eyes of their own people.

“But not in our eyes. We can see the reality.”

The Chaman Crossing: “Taliban Fighters And Smugglers Control Much Of The Rugged 1,500- Mile Frontier Between Afghanistan And Pakistan, Creating A Fluid Battle Space For The Insurgents”

“They Don’t Cross With Weapons, So How Will You Separate Them From Ordinary People?”



The Friendship Gate at the Chaman crossing between Afghanistan and Pakistan draws heavy traffic. Imran Mukhtar for The New York Times



The Taliban have a presence on either side of Chaman. The New York Times

February 4, 2010 By SOUAD MEKHENNET and RICHARD A. OPPEL Jr., The New York Times [Excerpts]

CHAMAN, Pakistan — The thick brown sack that a man named Abdulmalek carried over his shoulder on a recent afternoon might have contained anything: weapons, drugs or explosives.

But crossing back and forth between Afghanistan and Pakistan was no problem, he said.

Afghan border guards never search him, even though he passes through this bustling crossing four or five times a week.

“What searching?” said Mr. Abdulmalek, a 34-year-old clothing store owner who like many Afghans has only one name. “There is no searching.”

Other Afghans say they can easily enter Pakistan by bribing guards on either side of the border with the equivalent of less than a dollar, or by paying taxi drivers a similarly token amount to drive them across.

The guards do not ask those in the taxi for identification or search the trunk.

The way the Taliban use Pakistan’s tribal areas to launch cross-border attacks inside Afghanistan is perhaps the most contentious issue between Pakistan and the United States. But the problem is hardly contained to Pakistan’s lawless tribal areas.

Gaping holes in security checks along the border also remain at heavily trafficked crossings, like this one, in Baluchistan Province, where, American officials say, the Taliban’s leaders have taken refuge, out of reach of American and NATO forces.

The Chaman crossing — marked on the Pakistani side by the three-story Friendship Gate — should presumably be among the most secure in the country: it is the sole crossing between Kandahar, the birthplace of the Afghan Taliban, and Baluchistan, which is, according to American officials, home to Taliban commanders who control many Afghan fighters.

But Taliban fighters — anyone, really — can cross and smuggle weapons and drugs, underscoring the challenge to the American war effort in Afghanistan, for which the border presents a much firmer barrier, as Pakistan does not allow NATO or American military forces to cross.

The result is that Taliban fighters and smugglers control much of the rugged 1,500-mile frontier between Afghanistan and Pakistan, creating a fluid battle space for the insurgents as the Taliban conduct an increasingly coordinated fight in both countries.

Pakistani and Afghan officials blame one another for the lack of border security and the threats it poses, typical of the distrust and lack of coordination between the governments.

American and NATO forces are faulted as well. “The Afghans are indeed of no real help there, but neither are the NATO or U.S. troops,” a senior Western intelligence official said.

Pakistani commanders complain that the United States and other NATO governments have given them almost none of the equipment needed to improve security or prevent Taliban fighters from crossing easily.

“They may be crossing through Chaman, all right,” said Maj. Gen. Salim Nawaz, the commander of the Pakistani Frontier Corps, the paramilitary force responsible for securing the border here, referring to the Taliban.

He said Pakistani forces had arrested militants elsewhere in the province, but he added, “They don’t cross with weapons, so how will you separate them from ordinary people?”

A senior American military official who tracks border issues did not dispute the Pakistanis’ impression of border problems and said more equipment would be sent. But the official added that there were shortcomings on the Pakistani side as well.

“There are probably enough problems to go around on both sides,” the official said.

The situation is even more stark along more rural stretches of the 700-mile border between Afghanistan and Baluchistan, which has 276 posts on the Pakistani side.

At one post near the city of Nushki, a Pakistani border commander, Col. Javed Nasir, admitted that trucks full of hashish, opium and heroin regularly eluded border security officials and entered Pakistan. Many shipments are later sold for millions of dollars that end up paying for Taliban weapons and salaries.

“There is a lot of narcotics smuggling going on,” Colonel Nasir said. “But our biggest concern are the weapons that are coming in from Afghanistan.”

During his yearlong assignment at the border, Colonel Nasir said, he has never seen an American or NATO soldier on the other side.

Peering across the border at an Afghan outpost — one of only two Afghan posts, he said, for one 120-mile stretch of border — he said that the handful of Afghan soldiers on the other side showed little interest in patrolling.

Meanwhile, for the Americans, the border crossing poses another problem: with the pending arrival of 30,000 more troops in southern Afghanistan as part of President Obama’s military buildup, American commanders want to increase the traffic of supplies through Chaman by 30 percent.

On a typical day, 60 to 100 NATO and American supply trucks pass through the crossing.

But that effort has been seriously hampered by a detour that has shifted vehicle traffic to a one-lane dirt road across the border that can handle only one truck at a time, in either direction.

The main gate has been closed to vehicles — but not pedestrians — because of problems with the infrastructure.

American officials want to improve the bypass, but those efforts have suffered delays.

Military officials also fear having supply trucks backed up at the crossing, leaving them vulnerable to an attack.

“My worry is that we have a four-lane highway that ends up leading to a dirt road,” the senior American military official said, noting that the crossing needed improvements on both sides.

The problems are further complicated by the commander on the Afghan side, Col. Abdul Raziq, according to Pakistani and Western officials.

They say that Colonel Raziq, who is politically close to the government of President Hamid Karzai, uses his control of the border region around the city of Spinbaldak to reap millions of dollars from smuggling.

In exchange for securing the road from Spinbaldak to Kandahar and keeping the Taliban at bay, Pakistani officials say, Colonel Raziq is allowed to operate with impunity and can manipulate the border to benefit his smuggling interests.

He sometimes shuts the border, they say, charging smugglers to cross.

Colonel Raziq sharply disputed the allegations, saying that his men vigorously searched people coming through the border.

He also blamed a land dispute with Pakistan for the delay in improving the border crossing.

“I have never closed the border, nor will I,” he said. “I am very strict with smugglers.”

“Nothing Demonstrates Humanitarian Concern More Profoundly Than Numerous Press Releases”

02/16/2010 by Peter Hart, FAIR

From one of today's New York Times stories (2/16/10) about the NATO/U.S. campaign in Marja, Afghanistan (emphasis added):

“The heavy civilian toll highlighted the stressful and confusing nature of the fighting, especially in Marja, and of the difficulties inherent in conducting military operations in a guerrilla war, where insurgents can hide easily among the population.

“Still, the deaths are troubling to the American and NATO commanders, who have made protecting civilians the overriding objective of their campaign--even when doing so comes at the expense of letting insurgents get away. **The stream of news releases**

flowing from NATO headquarters detailing the episodes is testament to how seriously military commanders here take the problem.”

Indeed, nothing demonstrates humanitarian concern more profoundly than numerous press releases.

BEEN ON THE JOB TOO LONG: COME ON HOME, NOW



U.S. Marines from the 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment after patrol at a base camp outside Marjah, Helmand province, Feb. 11, 2010. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



A U.S. Marine from 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment walks past an Afghan cemetery in Marjah in Afghanistan's Helmand province on Feb. 16, 2010. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



A U.S. Marine from Bravo Company of the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines during an operation in the town of Marjah, in Nad Ali district of Helmand province February 16, 2010. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic



U.S. Marines from 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment after a battle with the Taliban in Marjah, Helmand province Feb. 20, 2010. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)

TROOP NEWS

HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS?



A US Army Sgt. of Falmouth, Mass. stands with fellow members of the Massachusetts National Guard's 379th Engineer Company moments before a departure ceremony in Brockton, Mass., Feb. 19, 2010. Approximately 165 soldiers attended the ceremony, a couple of days before the start of their year-long deployment to Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Gretchen Ertl)

“I’m Not Your Hero”

**“While In Iraq I Heroically Stood
By Watching An Entire Nation
Being Subjugated By Bush’s War
Machine”**

**“When I Am Thanked For My Service
I Often Feel Like Asking What Service
They Are Thanking Me For”**

“Perhaps I Am Being Thanked For Seeing That Military Contractors Have A Safe Place To Profit From War”



I would listen to our Battalion Commander tell us how important our mission was. How each of us was making a difference in the lives of Iraqis. I distinctly remember making said difference when I did guard duty at the detention center in Tal Afar. Heroically making sure my prisoner, who was not convicted of anything, received his halal MRE and bottle of water.

02/18/2010 by Brett McFann, Iraq Veterans Against The War

I was at McDonald's the other day when something quite peculiar happened to me. I was standing in line waiting for my food when an older veteran, obvious by his Vietnam Veteran hat, and his wife approached me.

He extended his hand and said he would like to shake my hand and thank me for my service. He said that I and others like me were his hero. He said he was proud of me and all that I had done in service to my country. His wife looked at me and smiled broadly.

She said "we are all so proud of you boys," and that "more young men should be just like you." Not wanting to be offensive, I shook the old vets hand and nodded my acknowledgment. The couple smiled and left knowing they had done their patriotic duty by thanking a veteran.

After they left, the magnitude of what that man said really hit me.

He thanked me for serving. He thanked me and told me I was his hero! After it sunk in I was sort of embarrassed. I didn't know what to think so I took my food and went back to work. All day that was all I could think about. What exactly was that man thanking me for? What had I done that was *really* heroic?

While in Iraq I heroically stood by watching an entire nation being subjugated by Bush's war machine.

Like a true hero, I bravely did KP duty and burned shit. I displayed my heroism even further by doing daily police calls around my motor pool. In the face of all adversity I would heroically play Call of Duty on my XBOX 360 for several hours each night.

I would listen to our Battalion Commander tell us how important our mission was. How each of us was making a difference in the lives of Iraqis. I distinctly remember making said difference when I did guard duty at the detention center in Tal Afar.

Heroically making sure my prisoner, who was not convicted of anything, received his halal MRE and bottle of water.

Nothing I did in the Middle East seems particularly heroic to me.

When I am thanked for my service I often feel like asking what service they are thanking me for.

Are they thanking me for making sure Iraqis cannot possibly live in a democratically elected state because of American interests that, by nature, prevent this?

Perhaps I am being thanked for seeing that military contractors have a safe place to profit from war.

To me, being a hero would mean making sure Iraqis had clean drinking water instead of watching a truck drive around a FOB dumping fresh water on the ground so dust doesn't get too thick.

Being a hero would be redirecting the manpower and resources used to repave the roads on our FOB in Basra to repave and clean up the roads in the city of Basra.

So next time I am thanked for my service maybe I will ask if they know what they are thanking me for.

I would like to see if the average person knows just what goes on in Iraq. Maybe if they knew their tax dollars were going to pay the six figure salary of a contractor who does, basically, the same job as I do with half the risk involved.

Perhaps if they saw the pain and suffering in the eyes of Iraqi children when they watch us drive by in our trucks and tanks.

I am not proud of my service.

I am not happy with the things I did and the atrocities I bared witness to. I am not content with my life knowing I stood by and did nothing while countless innocent people died every day because of my indifference.

Because I was launched into an illegal and unjust war of occupation.

For this... I am not your Hero.

Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 888.711.2550

**Command Negligence And
Stupidity Killed Five U.S.
Soldiers In Afghanistan:
Army Keeps Secret Names Of
Officers Responsible:
Soldier Writes “I Saw This Crap
During My First Tour Of Duty In Iraq”
“The Joke In Our Unit Was That Our
Unofficial Motto Was ‘Death Before
Decision’”**

[Thanks to Sandy Kelson, Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

Feb 18, 2010 by: Jonathan S. Landay, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON --- The absence of experienced senior leaders and inadequate action by officers in a tactical operations center, including a failure to provide effective artillery and air support, contributed to the deaths of five U.S. troops and nine Afghans in a Sept. 8 battle, an official investigation has found.

Three unidentified officers from the 10th Mountain Division from Fort Drum, N.Y., received official reprimands following the inquiry into the clash, which erupted after Afghan security forces and U.S. Army and Marine trainers were ambushed in the Ganjgal Valley, near the border with Pakistan in northeastern Kunar province.

Eight Afghan troops and an Afghan translator also were killed. Two U.S. Marines and 19 Afghan troops and border police were wounded.

The investigation found that numerous oversights contributed to the deaths of the U.S. and Afghan forces.

Most involved 10th Mountain Division officers assigned to Forward Operating Base Joyce, the U.S. outpost that had tactical control of the operation.

The base commander was on leave, his deputy was deployed elsewhere and the response to the ambush by the officers who manned the tactical operations center in their absence was “inadequate and ineffective, contributing directly to the loss of life,” the report said.

Two majors, the senior officers there, “were not continually present” in the operations center.

They left a captain who’d been on the overnight shift in charge of the center for more than four hours after the fighting began.

Another major factor, it said, was the operations center officers’ failure to provide “effective” artillery fire on the insurgents, despite repeated requests from the battlefield.

Only four artillery salvos were fired in the first hour of the operation; three were ineffective and no more salvos were authorized from 6:39 a.m. to 4:15 p.m., the report said.

One of the majors told the investigators that he denied further requests for fire support “for various reasons including: lack of situational awareness of locations of friendly elements; proximity to the village; garbled communications; or inaccurate or incomplete calls for fire.”

The inquiry, however, found that too many calls over a radio network “may account for some confusion in the conduct of fires, but in our judgment is not an adequate explanation for the complete lack of fires from 0639 until 1615.”

The report found that the failure to provide adequate artillery support wasn’t due to a tactical directive issued by Army Gen. Stanley McChrystal that was designed to avert civilian casualties, as officers involved in the battle had believed.

“A second key failure was the lack of timely air support,” the report said.

An unidentified officer denied requests from the battlefield to send a helicopter gunship that was minutes away because the requests weren’t sent through his brigade headquarters and the aircraft was assigned to another operation, the report said.

The “probability is high” that Marine 1st Lt. Michael E. Johnson of Virginia Beach, Va.; Marine Gunnery Sgt. Edwin W. Johnson of Columbus, Ga.; Marine Staff Sgt. Aaron M. Kenefick of Roswell, Ga., and Navy Petty Officer James R. Layton of

Riverbank, Calif., were killed during the more than an hour that it took for air support to be properly authorized and arrive on the scene, the report said.

Army Sgt. Kenneth W. Westbrook of Colorado Springs, Colo., was wounded at the same time and died in October at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington.

“This decision, while technically correct on procedural grounds, was devastating in its consequences,” the report said.

“The correct tactical decision was clearly to divert (the helicopter). It was at this point in the fight that experienced, decisive senior leadership was most lacking.”

A “third key failure” was a decision by the two majors not to send a relief force into the valley, said the report.

Comment on the story by Amerivet:

**Service: Army
Status: Active Duty
Paygrade: O-5**

I saw this crap during my first tour of duty in Iraq.

Career officers more worried about their careers than the lives of their men and thus not wanting to make ANY hard decisions.

The joke in our unit was that our unofficial motto was “Death before Decision”.

**Semper Lies:
Marine Master Sgt. Says “The
Government Knowingly Exposed
Military Families To Carcinogenic
Contaminates” That Killed His 9-
Year-Old Daughter At Lejeune:
“Environmental Contractor
Dramatically Underreported The
Level Of A Cancer-Causing Chemical**

Found In Tap Water At Camp Lejeune, Then Omitted It Altogether” “Ex-Lejeune Residents Questioning Anew The Honesty Of A Military They Accuse Of Endangering Their Lives”



Feb. 16, 2009: retired Marine Master Sgt. Jerry Ensminger with documentation related to contaminated water at Camp Lejeune, at his home in Elizabethtown, NC. Ensminger lost his 9-year-old daughter Janey, seen in photo at left, to leukemia and believes the government knowingly exposed military families to carcinogenic contaminants. (AP Photo/Logan Wallace)

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier & Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

“It is a shame that an institution founded on honor and integrity would resort to open deceit in order to protect their reputation at the cost of the health, safety and welfare of its service men, women and their families,” said Mike Partain, a 42-year-old who lives in Tallahassee, Fla., but was born at Lejeune and diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007.

Feb 17 By KEVIN MAURER, Associated Press Writer [Excerpts]

WILMINGTON, N.C. – An environmental contractor dramatically underreported the level of a cancer-causing chemical found in tap water at Camp Lejeune, then omitted it altogether as the Marine base prepared for a federal health review, an Associated Press review has found.

The Marine Corps had been warned nearly a decade earlier about the dangerously high levels of benzene, which was traced to massive leaks from fuel tanks at the base on the North Carolina coast, according to recently disclosed studies.

For years, Marines who served at Camp Lejeune have blamed their families' cancers and other ailments on tap water tainted by dry cleaning solvents, and many accuse the military of covering it up. The benzene was discovered as part of a broader, ongoing probe into that contamination.

When water was sampled in July 1984, scientists found benzene in a well near the base's Hadnot Point Fuel Farm at levels of 380 parts per billion, according to a water tests done by a contractor.

A year later, in a report summarizing the 1984 sampling, the same contractor pointed out the benzene concentration "far exceeds" the safety limit set by federal regulators at 5 parts per billion.

The Marines were still studying the water contamination in 1991 when another contractor again warned the Navy of the health hazards posed by such levels of benzene.

By 1992, the federal Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease, an arm of the Department of Health and Human Services, showed up at the base to begin a health risk assessment.

That's when a third contractor, the Michael Baker Corp., released a draft report on the feasibility of fixing the overall problem.

In it, the 1984 level on the well of 380 parts per billion had changed to 38 parts per billion.

The company's final report on the well, issued in 1994, made no mention of the benzene.

Not only hasn't the benzene disappeared from the now-closed wells, it's gotten much worse over time.

One sample from a series of tests conducted from June 2007 to August 2009 registered 3,490 parts per billion, according to a report from a fourth contractor.

Kyla Bennett, who spent 10 years as an enforcement officer for the Environmental Protection Agency before becoming an ecologist and environmental attorney, reviewed the different reports and said it was difficult to conclude innocent mistakes were made in the Baker Corp. documents.

"It is weird that it went from 380 to 38 and then it disappeared entirely," she said. "It does support the contention that they did do it deliberately."

News of Baker Corp.'s handling of the benzene levels has ex-Lejeune residents questioning anew the honesty of a military they accuse of endangering their lives.

"It is a shame that an institution founded on honor and integrity would resort to open deceit in order to protect their reputation at the cost of the health, safety and welfare of its service men, women and their families," said Mike Partain, a 42-year-old who lives in Tallahassee, Fla., but was born at Lejeune and diagnosed with breast cancer in 2007.

David Higie, a spokesman for Baker Corp., declined to discuss the company's reports or why its employees might have revised the benzene levels.

He referred questions to the military.

The discrepancies in the reports were tucked inside thousands of documents the Marines released last year to the Agency for Toxic Substances as part of the Marines' long-running review of water supplied to Camp Lejeune's main family housing areas.

That water was contaminated by fuel and cleaning solvents from the 1950s through the 1980s, and health officials believe as many as 1 million people may have been exposed to the toxins before the wells that supplied the tainted water were closed two decades ago.

The newly discovered records, first reported Sunday by McClatchy News Service, show that a water well contaminated by leaking fuel was left functioning for at least five months after a sampling discovered it was tainted with benzene in 1984.

Benzene, a carcinogen, is a natural part of crude oil and gasoline. Drinking water containing high levels of it can cause vomiting, dizziness, sleepiness, convulsions, and death and long-term exposure damages bone marrow, lowers red blood cells and can cause anemia and leukemia, according to the EPA.

Camp Lejeune environmental engineer Robert Alexander was quoted in 1985 as saying no one "had been directly exposed" to contaminants, including benzene.

The records indicate the military knew a lot of specifics.

For years the Marine Corps knew the fuel farm, built in 1941, was leaking 1,500 gallons a month and did nothing to stop it, according to a 1988 memo from a Camp Lejeune lawyer to the base's assistant facilities manager.

"It's an indefensible waste of money and a continuing potential threat to human health and the environment," wrote Staff Judge Advocate A.P. Tokarz.

Minutes of a 1996 meeting with Moon Township, Pa.-based Baker Corp., the third contractor, indicate the fuel farm had lost 800,000 gallons of fuel, of which 500,000 gallons had been recovered. Benzene was "in the deeper portion of the aquifer" and the "fuel farm is definitely the source," the minutes quote a Michael Baker employee as saying.

The Coast Guard categorizes any coastal oil spill larger than 100,000 gallons as major.

Former Marines and Camp Lejeune residents continue to fight for a compensation program and to fund a mortality study that would determine if Marines and sailors who were exposed to these contaminants suffer from a higher death rate.

The Senate passed legislation in September backed by Sens. Richard Burr, R-N.C., and Kay Hagan, D-N.C., preventing the military from dismissing claims related to water contamination pending completion of the several studies, including the mortality study.

“These people knowingly exposed us to these high levels of contaminants and now they don’t want to know if their negligence caused harm to the people they say they care so much about?” said Jerry Ensminger, a retired master sergeant who lived at the base and lost his 9-year-old daughter to leukemia.

“There is definitely something wrong with this picture.”

“When I Came Home, I Didn’t Expect To Have To Fight On The Home Front”

“Guard Members Across The Country Have Continued To Wait For Their Money”



Feb. 12, 2010: Staff Sgt. Katie Blackwell with medals she was awarded, including the Purple Heart and Bronze Star, while were deployed in Iraq, at her home in Champlin, Minn.

Brig. Gen. David Elicerio of the Minnesota National Guard said the benefit was supposed to give Guard and Reserve troops paid time off to reconnect with their families and civilian lives after extended deployments. But they didn’t get it when they got back from the surge.

Feb 17 By Martiga Lohn, Associated Press Writer [Excerpts]

ST. PAUL, Minn. – Thousands of National Guard soldiers who served extra-long deployments in Iraq, Afghanistan and other conflicts were supposed to get paid time off when they came home three years ago.

Now, they may finally be about to get their money after years of frustration.

An Army spokesman said Wednesday that 6,800 Army National Guard soldiers are in line to receive the tardy checks. Among those still waiting: About 2,500 of Minnesota's Red Bulls with the 34th Infantry Division, who served the longest tour of any military unit in Iraq as part of the 2007 troop surge. A Minnesota Guard spokesman said that group should get \$10 million.

Staff Sgt. Katie Blackwell of Champlin, Minn., who spent 16 months in Iraq as part of a nearly two-year deployment with the Minnesota Red Bulls from 2005 to 2007, estimates she and her husband, also a Guard soldier, together are owed \$8,000.

"We've been overseas to fight for our country. When I came home, I didn't expect to have to fight on the home front," she said.

The Pentagon didn't announce when the soldiers would be paid, but U.S. Rep. John Kline, R-Minn., said Defense Secretary Robert Gates' office told him the checks will go out by March 19.

Since the Iraq war started in 2003, the military has relied heavily on National Guard and Reserve troops, sending them into combat more frequently and for longer tours than ever before.

The soldiers were promised the paid leave — called Post Deployment Mobilization Respite Absence — for deployments that lasted more than a year. The program also recognized frequent deployments. Beninato said Army National Guard soldiers earned the leave at a rate of \$200 a day.

The U.S. Department of Defense started the program in January 2007. The benefit was easy to give to active-duty troops, but there was no policy created to pay Guard and Reserve members until August 2007. Guard and Reserve troops who returned between Jan. 19 and Aug. 18, 2007, fell into a gap, and the military didn't have authority to pay them retroactively until Congress changed the law in October last year.

"In this case we called up all these members of the reserve component, mobilized them, sent them to a combat zone, extended them, and they should be compensated for that," Kline said.

He added: "It didn't reward the very people it was supposed to help."

The Army National Guard soldiers were the largest group eligible for the paid leave, but the program applied to all branches of the military.

Army Reserve spokesman Lt. Col. Bernd Zoller said officials there are still calculating how many reservists are eligible for the back pay. Officials with the Navy Reserve, Marine Forces Reserve and Air Force Reserve could not immediately answer questions from AP about the number of eligible troops.

Meanwhile, Guard members across the country have continued to wait for their money.

Brig. Gen. David Elicerio of the Minnesota National Guard said the benefit was supposed to give Guard and Reserve troops paid time off to reconnect with their families and civilian lives after extended deployments.

But they didn't get it when they got back from the surge.

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.

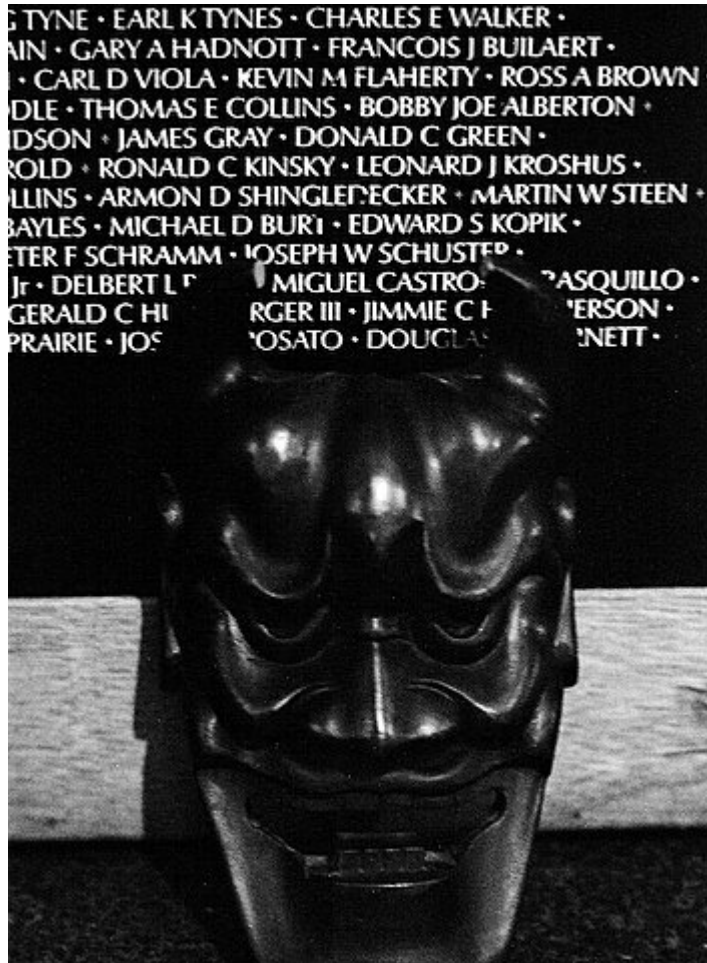
“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

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

The Devil Is In The Details



From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance
Sent: February 16, 2010
Subject: The Devil Is In The Details

The Devil Is In The Details

An angry Vietnam veteran left a Devil's mask at the Moving Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Salem, Oregon in 1988.

As I read the current news about the U.S. invasion in Marjah, Afghanistan, I wonder if the United States Government

will ever stop being the global terrorist.
My government is a non-stop killing machine.
What America is doing in the Middle East will
have a profound effect on the moral fiber of
this country.
We are a country that is obsessed with killing!
We teach our children to kill other human beings
in a thousand different ways.
America,
you have lost your soul.
You have entered an era of great violence,
and the end result of that great violence
will be great suffering.
Empire is turning on you,
with great vengeance.
The Devil is in the
details of greed.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
February 16, 2010

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) 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

**“How Is It That So Many People
Feel Free To Talk About Empire
When They Mean A United
States Empire?”**

**“Even Conservatives Started
Using The Word”
“The Empire Uses Its State Power To
Gather Private Wealth For Its Investor
Class” “It Uses Its Public Wealth To
Shore Up Its State Power”
“As The Empire Grows More Menacing
And More Murderous Toward Others, It
Grows Sick And Impoverished Within
Itself”**

[Thanks to Sandy Kelson, Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

February 13, 2010 by Michael Parenti, CommonDreams.org [Excerpts]

When I wrote my book *Against Empire* in 1995, as might be expected, some of my U.S. compatriots thought it was wrong of me to call the United States an empire.

It was widely believed that U.S. rulers did not pursue empire; they intervened abroad only out of self-defense or for humanitarian rescue operations or to overthrow tyranny, fight terrorism, and propagate democracy.

But by the year 2000, everyone started talking about the United States as an empire and writing books with titles like *Sorrows of Empire*, *Follies of Empire*, *Twilight of Empire*, or *Empire of Illusions*--- all referring to the United States when they spoke of empire.

Even conservatives started using the word.

Amazing.

One could hear right-wing pundits announcing on U.S. television, “We’re an empire, with all the responsibilities and opportunities of empire and we better get used to it”; and “We are the strongest nation in the world and have every right to act as such”---as if having the power gives U.S. leaders an inherent entitlement to exercise it upon others as they might wish.

“What is going on here?” I asked myself at the time.

How is it that so many people feel free to talk about empire when they mean a United States empire?

The ideological orthodoxy had always been that, unlike other countries, the USA did not indulge in colonization and conquest.

The answer, I realized, is that the word has been divested of its full meaning. "Empire" seems nowadays to mean simply dominion and control. Empire---for most of these late-coming critics--- is concerned almost exclusively with power and prestige.

What is usually missing from the public discourse is the process of empire and its politico-economic content.

In other words, while we hear a lot about empire, we hear very little about imperialism.

Now that is strange, for imperialism is what empires are all about.

Imperialism is what empires do.

And by imperialism I do not mean the process of extending power and dominion without regard to material and financial interests. Indeed "imperialism" has been used by some authors in the same empty way that they use the word "empire," to simply denote dominion and control with little attention given to political economic realities.

But I define imperialism as follows: the process whereby the dominant investor interests in one country bring to bear their economic and military power upon another nation or region in order to expropriate its land, labor, natural resources, capital, and markets-in such a manner as to enrich the investor interests. In a word, empires do not just pursue "power for power's sake."

There are real and enormous material interests at stake, fortunes to be made many times over.

So for centuries the ruling interests of Western Europe and later on North America and Japan went forth with their financiers---and when necessary their armies---to lay claim to most of planet Earth, including the labor of indigenous peoples, their markets, their incomes (through colonial taxation or debt control or other means), and the abundant treasures of their lands: their gold, silver, diamonds, copper, rum, molasses, hemp, flax, ebony, timber, sugar, tobacco, ivory, iron, tin, nickel, coal, cotton, corn, and more recently: uranium, manganese, titanium, bauxite, oil, and--say it again--oil.

(Hardly a complete listing.)

Empires are enormously profitable for the dominant economic interests of the imperial nation but enormously costly to the people of the colonized country.

In addition to suffering the pillage of their lands and natural resources, the people of these targeted countries are frequently killed in large numbers by the intruders.

This is another thing that empires do which too often goes unmentioned in the historical and political literature of countries like the United States, Britain, and France.

Empires impoverish whole populations and kill lots and lots of innocent people.

As I write this, President Obama and the national security state for which he works are waging two and a half wars (Iraq, Afghanistan, and northern Pakistan), and leveling military threats against Yemen, Iran, and, on a slow day, North Korea. Instead of sending medical and rescue aid to Haiti, Our Bomber sent in the Marines, the same Marines who engaged in years of mass murder in Haiti decades ago and supported more recent massacres by proxy forces.

The purpose of all this killing is to prevent alternative, independent, self-defining nations from emerging.

So the empire uses its state power to gather private wealth for its investor class.

And it uses its public wealth to shore up its state power and prevent other nations from self-developing.

Sooner or later this arrangement begins to wilt under the weight of its own contradictions.

As the empire grows more menacing and more murderous toward others, it grows sick and impoverished within itself.

From ancient times to today, empires have always been involved in the bloody accumulation of wealth.

If you don't think this is true of the United States then stop calling it "Empire."

And when you write a book about how it wraps its arms around the planet, entitle it "Global Bully" or "Bossy Busybody," but be aware that you're not telling us much about imperialism.

“The Only People Capable Of ‘Enacting Regime Change’ Or Of ‘Liberating Women’ Are The People Who Actually Live And Work In These Societies Themselves”

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

18 February 2010 By Tim Black, Spiked [Excerpt]

What's missing in today's anti-war movement is not something ineffably present back in 2003.

Rather what is missing today was also missing then; that is, a genuine opposition to purpose-giving militarism, an argument in favour of sovereignty, and, at its heart, a conviction that the only people capable of 'enacting regime change' or of 'liberating women' are the people who actually live and work in these societies themselves.

Sadly, since too many critics of the Iraq war were – and still are – perfectly happy to sign up to the creed of humanitarian intervention, whether in Kosovo or, initially, Afghanistan, such a principled stand seems unlikely.

Instead it seems that, for apparent opponents of the Afghanistan or Iraq conflicts, the real problem is that these messy, bloody conflicts have tarnished the ideal of humanitarian intervention.

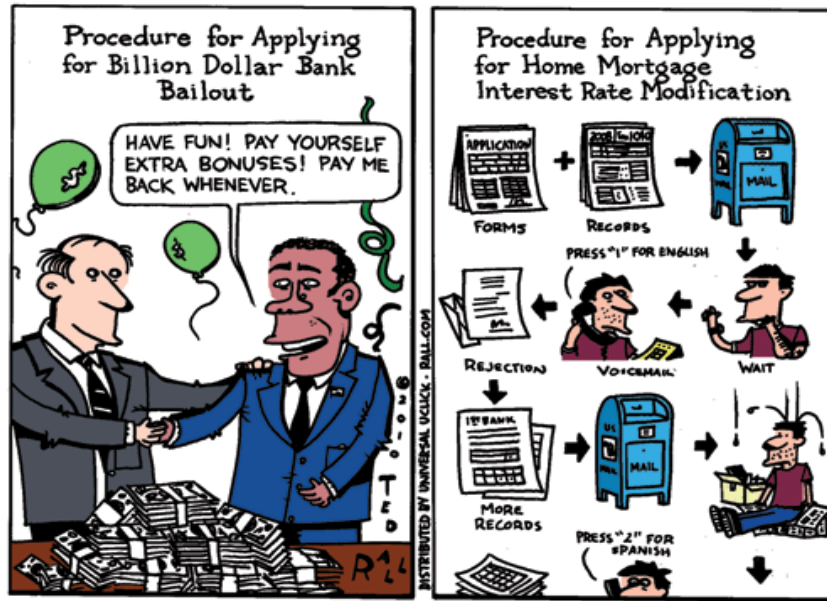
Despite the anti-war pose, they remain militarists at heart.



[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, Military Resistance, who sent this in.]

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS



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