

Military Resistance 8B3

MILITARY RESISTANCE NEWSLETTER RAFFLE: THANKS:
To everyone who participated in the Military Resistance Newsletter fund-raising raffle. Final pick up for mail-in support will be 2.9 to catch all letters sent in by the 2.6 deadline. Drawings for winners will begin 2.10.10.

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



The remains of Private 1st Class Zachary Lovejoy of Albuquerque, N.M. Dover Air Force Base in Del., Feb. 5, 2010, killed in Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana)

Misspent Youth

From: Dennis Serdel
Date: February 4, 2010
To: Military Resistance
Subject: Misspent Youth

Written by Dennis Serdel, Military Resistance 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.

Misspent Youth

Roger I wish I could have been like you
going to college and all the demonstrations
getting gassed and thumped on the head
then fucking a hippie girl and listening to the Dead
Instead I was on the wrong side of the war
they drafted me and took my youth away
marching and hollering kill kill
then off to Vietnam trying not to get killed
fighting a fucked up war I didn't understand
seeing dead bodies on both sides wishing
I could get out of this mess I was in
we heard all about you peace people back home
the music we were missing we could hear
sometimes on a transistor radio all about peace
I know you are proud of what you did
and I would be too but I was on the wrong side of the war
afterwards with a purple heart I finally came home
but the Army had taken my youth away
somehow the innocent years were gone
I tried but I never fit in with all of you
longhair and peace were beyond my control
my youth was spent and somehow I was old
I did all the drugs which just got me in trouble
but at least they made me forget for a while
nobody wanted a vietnam veteran especially
one that had blood on his hands
Roger I wish I could have been like you
maybe today I wouldn't feel so guilty
I joined veterans for peace and vvw
but after a while it didn't change anything
there will always be wars and Soldiers on the wrong side
all we can do is try to educate the Soldiers
Soldiers coming home patted on the back
and coming home scorned by the rest
the only thing I did well was not kill many people
and fake night patrols when we hid with our radio
pointed my gun at a sarge that I would not go
on a suicide mission shot a luey in the back
took care of my guys though one was killed
trying to stop the insanity the best I knew how
but all in all the army spent my youth
and took it away to a far off place
where I became old and didn't fit in back home
Roger I wish I could have been like you

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two Swedish Officers Killed West Of Mazar-E Sharif, Soldier Wounded

7 Feb 10 TT/The Local

Two Swedish military officers and a local interpreter were killed on Sunday when their unit came under fire west of Mazar-e Sharif in Afghanistan.

A Swedish soldier was also injured in the attack and was taken to a field hospital located at Camp Marmal, home of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) Regional Command for the north of Afghanistan, according to the Swedish military, which is now working to notify relatives of the soldiers involved.

The Swedish officers, a captain and a lieutenant, and the interpreter were killed in an ambush 40-50 kilometres west of the Swedish army base, in an area where Swedish and Finnish peace-keepers confiscated 70 kilogrammes of narcotics and a quantity of explosives earlier in the week.

It was also the same area in which five Swedish soldiers were injured in a roadside bomb explosion in November.

Swedish forces have been operating in Afghanistan since 2002.

The Swedish ISAF-led force (FS17) is based in Mazar-e Sharif, 400 kilometres northwest of Kabul.

Fort Carson Soldier Remembered

January 20, 2010 LANCE BENZEL, THE GAZETTE

A 19-year-old Fort Carson soldier who died in a gunbattle in Afghanistan on Saturday is being remembered as a fighter who spoke his mind and kept his softer side carefully guarded.

Spc. Robert Donevski was killed near Abad in Farah province, in western Afghanistan, the Department of Defense announced today.

A fellow soldier told Donevski's family that he was shot in the head when his unit came under fire by gunmen. His brother, Christopher Donevski, said he was told that Donevski fought bravely to protect himself and his comrades.

“During a battle, he was always the guy up front. He got shot saving his buddies,” Christopher Donevski said.

The native of Peoria, Ariz., in suburban Phoenix, died a few hours later after being taken to a hospital, family members said.

He was the 39th soldier from Fort Carson to die in Afghanistan. An additional 255 of the post’s soldiers have died in Iraq since 2003.

He reportedly was the unit’s only casualty in the firefight. He served in the 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team.

Donevski is survived by his brother and parents, Linda and John Donevski, of Sun Valley, Ariz.

An avid sports fan, he played intramural basketball and had a 4-0 record in an amateur boxing league before entering the military. He followed the Phoenix Suns and the Buffalo Bills — his mother’s home team — and loved partying, playing Xbox games and hanging out with his friends.

He was intense and occasionally intimidating — a born debater with strongly felt convictions, a friend said.

“Even if he was wrong, he’d argue with you until he convinced you he was right,” said Stephen Northrop, of Scottsdale, Ariz. “You definitely had to have self-confidence to be around him.”

At the same time, his friend Sally Deadman knew him as a “softy.”

“He would always text me and be so hard on himself when he would cry or get emotional about leaving all of his friends and family,” she said in an e-mail. “I don’t think many people got to see that side of him, but I’m glad I did.”

The son of a Vietnam veteran, Donevski knew from an early age that he wanted to join the military, motivated more by a sense of obligation to his country than following in his father’s footsteps.

Although he dropped out of Sunrise Mountain High School in Peoria, he cruised to his GED diploma once he learned it was required to join the Army, earning the equivalent of a B-plus average, Northrop said.

He joined the Army in the summer of 2008, over the objections of his brother and mother, who worried about his safety.

“He said, ‘Momma, this is something I want to do. I want to serve,’” Linda Donevski said.

To his friends, he laid out the decision as a no-brainer: “He said, ‘I don’t want to push pencils. If I’m going to die, I’m going to die doing something,’” Northrop said.

Before leaving for Afghanistan, he made his friends swear they would be there for his family if anything happened to him. After news of his death reached suburban Phoenix, Northrop and another friend took his mother a dozen red roses.

Donevski's body is expected to arrive in the U.S. on Saturday. A memorial service with military honors is being planned for Phoenix Memorial Park.

Airman Died Trying To Save Lives

Jan 23, 2010 BY JOHNNY WHITFIELD - Staff Writer; The News & Observer

COATS -- Air Force Tech Sgt. Adam K. Ginett had a reason for pursuing one of the most dangerous missions in the military, his mother said.

"He told me, 'Mom, I don't go out there on the battlefield with a gun and shoot any body. I find these bombs that are going to take someone else's life. I'm saving people's lives, not taking them,'" said Christina Kazacavage of Coats.

Ginett, a 1999 East Wake High School graduate, died Tuesday near Kandahar Air Field in Afghanistan. He had been wounded when a buried improvised explosive device went off near him.

According to his grandfather, Jim Haslam of Cary, Ginett's unit was walking toward a location where a cache of IEDs was thought to be hidden. One other person was killed in the incident and three were wounded, Haslam said.

Ginett opted for explosive ordnance duty after he graduated from boot camp.

Though he had planned for a career in the military since he was in high school, he had other interests, too. He interned for four summers during high school with cartoonists at Walt Disney World in Florida, and he worked in Nancy Redman's pottery studio in Knightdale during his last year at East Wake.

Redman remembers him as an artistic friend of the family.

"He just had a big interest in art," she said.

Ginett was based at Aviano Air Base in Italy before deploying to Afghanistan in September. It was his second tour of duty there. He won the Bronze Star for his role in a firefight on his first tour in Afghanistan. He also served two tours in Iraq.

Ginett's body will return to North Carolina on Tuesday, his mother said. Visitation will take place Thursday at Thomas Funeral Home in Fuquay-Varina. Funeral Mass will be held Friday at St. Bernadette Catholic Church in Fuquay-Varina. He will be buried with military honors in Raleigh Memorial Park.

Resistance Action



Wreckage of a police vehicle hit by a remote control bomb in Kandahar, south of Kabul, Afghanistan Kabul, Afghanistan Feb. 7, 2010, killing four policemen. (AP Photo/Allauddin Khan)

2.1.10 by Sardar Ahmad, AFP & 07 February 2010 Quqnoos

Two bombers armed with automatic weapons tried to storm a police station in the southern province of Zabul on Monday, authorities said. Police shot dead one of the bombers while the second managed to escape, Afghan authorities and ISAF said. The interior ministry said the attackers tried to kill a senior police official but said only one officer was wounded.

A roadside bomb struck a police vehicle in Kandahar city on Sunday, killing four policemen. The "very big bomb" was placed under a bridge and exploded as the police vehicle was passing, a senior local police official, Col Abdul Ahmad, told AFP. "Four policemen who were bringing food to their post were killed" in the blast," Col Abdul Ahmad added.

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

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED
THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: ALL HOME NOW



U.S. Army soldiers from Dagger Company, 2-12 Infantry, on patrol outside Kolack, a village in the Korengal Valley, Kunar province, northeastern Afghanistan, Jan. 19, 2010. The soldiers from Task Force Lethal regularly exchange fire with Taliban militants who operate in the hillsides of the Pech and Korengal valleys. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)



U.S. soldiers of the 2-12 Infantry in the Pech Valley, Kunar province, northeastern Afghanistan, Jan. 23, 2010. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

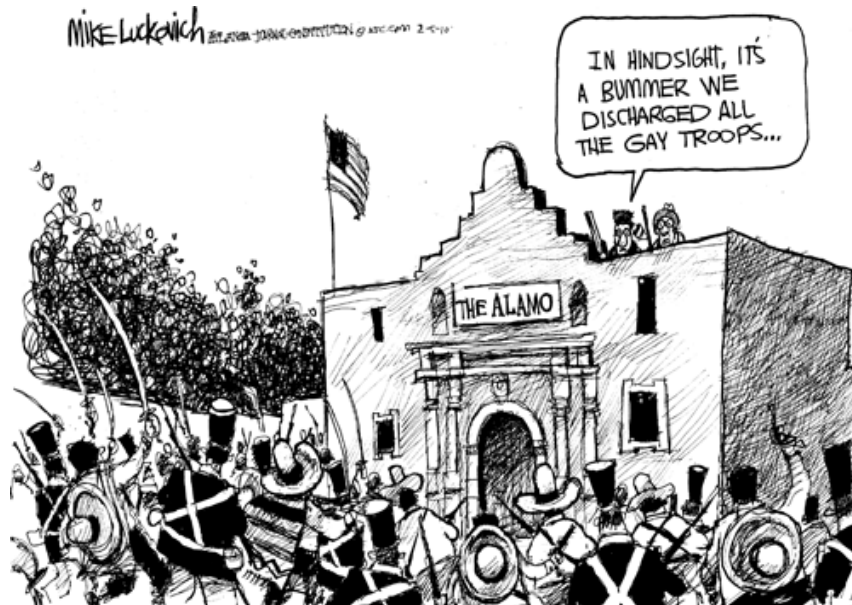


U.S. soldiers on patrol in the Pech Valley, Kunar province, northeastern Afghanistan, Jan. 23, 2010. The soldiers of Task Force Lethal regularly receive small and large-arms fire from Taliban militants who operate in the hillsides of the Pech Valley. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)



A U.S. soldier jogs down a dangerously-exposed alley carrying food on paper plates past sandbags and concrete protection against attack from the mountains above, at Combat Outpost Michigan, in the Pech Valley, Kunar province, northeastern Afghanistan, Jan. 25, 2010. The U.S. and Afghan soldiers at COP Michigan regularly receive fire from Taliban militants who operate in the hillsides overlooking the base. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

TROOP NEWS



Army Goes Ahead With Piece Of Shit Plate Carrier Rejected By Soldiers; Corrupt Congressman Murtha Gets His Way; Soldiers Will Die, As If He Gives A Shit

[For the background on Murtha's bloody hands, see the original report just below this update from the January 4, 2010 issue of Military Resistance. T]

January 25, 2010 Army Times [Excerpts]

The Army has started outfitting soldiers headed to Afghanistan with the first of the service's new lightweight armor plate carriers.

Army equipment officials plan to field almost 57,000 of the new plate carriers, made by KDH Defense Systems, in an effort to lighten the heavy loads soldiers carry in the mountains of Afghanistan.

The plan is to field 20,000 of the new plate carriers to specific units in Afghanistan beginning Jan. 20, Col. Scott Mills, clothing and individual equipment chief for Army G4, told Army Times.

Equipment officials are currently fielding the new plate carriers to units from the 10th Mountain Division at Fort Drum, N.Y., Mills said.

“The purpose of that is for (the units) to have time to train with them,” Mills said.

The \$18.6 million contract awarded in October proved controversial because 92 percent of soldiers who participated in a “soldier protection demonstration” at Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz., told Army officials they preferred the Eagle Industries’ Modular Body Armor Vest, which has been standard issue to the 75th Ranger Regiment since 2003.

MORE:

[From Military Resistance 8A4: January 4, 2010]

A Military Resistance Exclusive:

**Congressman John Murtha
Linked To War Profiteer Chosen
By Army To Supply Inferior
Plate Carrier Protection For
Soldiers In Combat:
KDH Defense Systems “Had The
Assistance Of A Lobbying Firm That
Employed Both Murtha’s Brother And
His Former Appropriations Aide”**

Part 1: The Plate Carrier

“During A Raging Conflict In Afghanistan, The SSB Chose A New And Inferior System ... Over A Proven, Superior And Currently Fielded System”

“Army Armor Experts That Have Used The MBAV In Afghanistan Told Army Times They Agree With Miller That The Gap In KDH’s Soft Armor Is A Serious Concern”

Sgt. Miller Says “This Decision Points To A Lack Of Common Sense”

Pentagon Fool Says “We Can’t Just Go With MBAV Because It’s Out There And Battle-Proven”

Miller questioned why the source selection board in charge of choosing a new plate carrier tapped KDH after soldiers who participated in a “soldier protection demonstration” at Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz., told Army officials they preferred the Eagle Industries’ Modular Body Armor Vest, “a proven system” that is issued to the 75th Ranger Regiment.

December 28, 2009 By Matthew Cox, Army Times [Excerpts]

The Army is trying to quell criticism of its decision to buy an unproven plate carrier for soldiers in Afghanistan rather than the combat-tested model special operations forces wear today.

Soldiers have been questioning why equipment officials chose KDH Defense Systems to make the Army's new plate carrier.

Launched in May, the plate carrier effort came as the Army's Asymmetric Warfare Group and other Army commands searched to find ways to reduce the 130-pound loads soldiers shoulder in the mountains of Afghanistan.

The most vocal critic so far has been Sgt. 1st Class Jonathan Miller, who asked Sgt. Maj. of the Army Kenneth Preston to look into the issue, Miller wrote in a Nov. 5 Internet forum post on www.lightfighter.net.

Miller questioned why the source selection board in charge of choosing a new plate carrier tapped KDH after soldiers who participated in a "soldier protection demonstration" at Yuma Proving Ground, Ariz., told Army officials they preferred the Eagle Industries' Modular Body Armor Vest, "a proven system" that is issued to the 75th Ranger Regiment.

"This decision points to a lack of common sense," Miller wrote.

"During a raging conflict in Afghanistan, the SSB chose a new and inferior system ... over a proven, superior and currently fielded system — the MBAV."

Program Executive Office Soldier officials, however, said KDH's proposal won the \$18.6 million contract in early October because it finished first in terms of performance, delivery schedule and cost.

PEO Soldier officials say they have 1,200 KDH carriers so far and will begin fielding in early January. They expect to have all 57,000 carriers before the Feb. 28 delivery deadline, Cole said.

One of the biggest concerns soldiers have voiced is over the differences in soft armor protection between the KDH and the MBAV.

Miller wrote in his post that "the KDH system has two-inch gaps in protection on either side of the cummerbund where it attaches to the front of the carrier, which means it provides less protective coverage than the MBAV.

The MBAV has a wrap-around cummerbund with integrated soft armor that creates overlapping protection from fragmentation."

Miller said he doesn't own an MBAV or a KDH carrier but wrote that his concern over the gap in armor in the KDH was based on conversations with an "individual with intimate familiarity with the program."

Army armor experts that have used the MBAV in Afghanistan told Army Times they agree with Miller that the gap in KDH's soft armor is a serious concern.

Another concern among soldiers is that the KDH is unproven compared with the combat-tested MBAV, which elite units have worn since 2003.

Fred Coppola, deputy project manager for Soldier Protection and Individual Equipment, said he is confident that the Army selected the right plate carrier.

"We can't just go with MBAV because it's out there and battle-proven," he said.

Part 2: Soldier-Killers At Work: The Smoking Gun In Murtha's Hand Aimed Straight At Our Soldiers: [From His Own Website]

The Online Office of Congressman John Murtha – December 16, 2009 [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Congressman John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, announced today that the U.S. House of Representatives has passed a \$636.3 billion fiscal year 2010 Defense Appropriations Bill **which includes funding for numerous local businesses, organizations, and universities working with the Defense Department on research and procurement programs.**

"I'm proud to secure funding for local programs that are providing our troops and the Defense Department with advanced technology, quality equipment, and other important services," added Murtha.

"These programs showcase the talent of small businesses, the skills of our local employees, and in many cases save the government money."

Murtha announced today that approximately \$75 million in funding is coming to western Pennsylvania:

The appropriations bill includes \$4,000,000 for Advanced Acoustic Concepts, located in Lemont Furnace, to improve submarine navigation, including route planning and vulnerability management, on the U.S. Navy's Virginia Class submarines.

Also included in the appropriations bill is \$6,400,000 for Argon ST, located in Smithfield, to continue working with the U.S. Navy on upgrading torpedo defense capabilities which are crucial to enhancing ship survivability against torpedo attack.

Compass Systems of Johnstown will receive \$2,800,000 to provide the Defense Department with a hand-held mobile mapping communications device that will enable a more rapid, accurate, efficient, analysis and dissemination of digital data from multiple sensors.

Also included in the appropriations bill is \$1,760,000 for KDH Defense Systems, located in Johnstown, to continue research and development of improved light

body armor that provides greater underarm, side, arm, and leg protection against both high velocity rounds and explosives.

MORE:

KDH “Had The Assistance Of A Lobbying Firm That Employed Both Murtha’s Brother And His Former Appropriations Aide”

July 7, 2009 By Paul Singer, Roll Call Staff, Roll Call newspaper [Excerpt]

For the past several years, Rep. John Murtha (D-Pa.) has funneled more than \$3 million in earmarks to a company in his district to build an underwater “swimmer detection” sonar system for the Navy to use to protect its docks and ships.

But the company, KDH Defense Systems, sews bulletproof vests.

It had never built a sonar system and had no expertise in sonar engineering. The sonar project was to be the first product of a new “startup” company.

Documents indicate the company did have a plan — which never came to pass — to partner with other local defense contractors close to Murtha, and it also had the assistance of a lobbying firm that employed both Murtha’s brother and his former appropriations aide.

Criminals In Command Defied Army Regulations To Bring Death By Burn Pit To Their Soldiers In Iraq: Balad Burn Pit Wreaked Havoc On Soldiers At Housing Unit A Mile Away:

The Military's Own Regulations State That Burn Pits Are "Not To Be Used For More Than A Few Months Before Being Replaced By Incinerators"

"Most Of The Burn Pits In Iraq And Afghanistan Have Operated Since The Wars Began"

Many troops who have spent time near burn pits talk about similar, odd symptoms — a crackly or deeper voice, waking in the middle of the night because they've stopped breathing, constant headaches, a general sense of fatigue, and an inability to pull enough oxygen into their lungs. Neurological complaints include numbness and, in two cases in one unit, paralyzed facial muscles.

"I saw a lot of smoke," Curtis told Army Times. "The smoke, especially at night, would sink right to the ground and hover. It was just thick, and it would settle over H6."

January 25, 2010 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]

As Wendy McBreairty hiked up a 20-foot bluff in her hometown of Cheyenne, Wyo., her thigh muscles felt heavy, as if she had been climbing for hours.

She breathed deeply, trying to fill her lungs but, as usual, she felt as if she could not get enough of the clear, cold air. Fatigue overwhelmed her, just as it does every other day of her life.

The 32-year-old Air National Guard staff sergeant sat on a rock, leaned toward the setting sun, and pondered her future.

"I had a lot of plans," she said, biting her lip and wiping back tears. "I wanted a 20-year career in the military and I don't see how I'm going to be able to do another 13. I'm working on my master's degree — I'll get that done, but I don't know if it will do me any good.

"I don't plan on having kids anymore."

The root of her radical change in plans, she and her doctor believe, is the open-air burn pit at Joint Base Balad, Iraq. Before its Oct. 1 closure, the pit spanned 10 acres, consumed a wide array of potentially toxic materials and spewed a near-constant plume of thick black smoke that could be seen from miles away.

When McBreairty got back from Iraq in 2004, she desperately tried to understand what was causing her symptoms: shortness of breath, muscle fatigue, muscle spasms, fatigue and dry eyes.

She found that others had similar, often equally puzzling, problems.

Among the 40 people in her shop alone, five have neurological or respiratory issues.

One thing they had in common was that they all lived in the housing area at Balad known as H6 during their tours of duty in Iraq.

H6 sat a mile southeast of the burn pit, and on many days was downwind of the plume.

Burn pits operate on U.S. bases throughout Iraq and Afghanistan, and troops in both theaters have reported respiratory problems, cancers, neurological diseases, heart problems and other issues that they believe are linked to exposure to smoke from the pits.

Cases of respiratory illnesses among active-duty troops have risen steadily since 2001.

More than 400 veterans have contacted Disabled American Veterans, which is compiling a data-base of troops who believe they are ill from burn-pit smoke.

Of those, 39 say they lived in H6.

Fifteen of the 39 have been diagnosed with asthma; 18 have undiagnosed breathing problems. Five have chronic cough, seven have chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, five have constant headaches, five suffer from sleep apnea, two have brain tumors and 13 have cancer. Several have multiple symptoms.

H6 houses about 1,000 people at a time in two-person trailers and eight- to 10-person dorms. In one way, it was considered a good place to live because it was thought to be a less likely target for enemy mortar rounds.

But H6 sat closer than any other housing area to Balad's burn pit at the northeast corner of the base.

At one time, the raging plume of smoke and flame devoured 240 tons daily of every imaginable form of trash — plastics, petrole-um, paint thinner, even amputated limbs and other medical waste.

And while Defense Department officials say it is now shut down, replaced by three cleaner-burning incinerators, another 50 pits in Iraq and 34 in Afghanistan are still in operation — compared with a total of only 27 incinerators in the two theaters.

At Balad, the burn-pit smog seemed particularly attracted to H6. A health risk assessment conducted in 2007 by Army medical experts noted that H6 saw its "highest

level of contaminant concentrations” when prevailing winds were out of the north, which is about 21 percent of the time.

In the H6 courtyard, particulate matter with a diameter of 10 micrometers or less — about 1/30th of a human hair — reached a concentration of 221 micrograms per cubic meter on one day of test-ing. Military exposure guidelines for such particulates say such levels shouldn’t go above 50 micrograms per cubic meter, although in reality, most desert areas top that level during dust storms.

At Balad, only a mortar pit and guard tower right next to the burn pit came even close to the concentrations measured in H6 housing — and the particulate matter there included chemical-laden ash. As particulate matter grows smaller than 10 micrometers — as it does in a fire — it becomes even more dangerous because it can settle further into the lungs.

Johann Engelbrecht of the Desert Research Institute, who in December was awarded a \$1.2 million Defense Department contract to study the effect of desert dust on troops, found in a 2008 study that fine particulate matter at Balad and 14 other deployment sites is well above both World Health Organization and U.S. military standards.

The military’s safety standard for a one-year period is no more than 15 micrograms of fine particulate matter per cubic meter per day. Balad averaged 56 micrograms per cubic meter.

The Environmental Protection Agency links fine and superfine particulate matter with increased respiratory symptoms, decreased lung function, aggravated asthma, chronic bronchitis, irregular heartbeat, nonfatal heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease — which is why the EPA has pushed for a ban on backyard burning of any materials, including yard rubbish such as leaves and branches.

That is also why retired Air Force bioenvironmental engineer Lt. Col. Darrin Curtis is not surprised by the problems many troops say they’re having: He predicted it.

In fact, he knows about it first-hand — he lived in H6 himself during his tour at Balad.

“In my professional opinion, there is an acute health hazard for individuals,” he wrote in an oft-quoted memo that he sent up the chain of command in 2007.

“There is also the possibility for chronic health hazards associated with the smoke.”

His memo detailed the long list of toxins produced by the burning plastics, Styrofoam, paper, wood, rubber, petroleum products and chemicals in the Balad burn pit.

He also noted that the military's own regulations state that burn pits are meant to be an initial, short-term waste disposal option, not to be used for more than a few months before being replaced by incinerators.

Most of the burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan have operated since the wars began.

"I saw a lot of smoke," Curtis told Army Times. "The smoke, especially at night, would sink right to the ground and hover. It was just thick, and it would settle over H6."

Curtis was concerned enough to set up sampling equipment to check for chemicals, collect dioxin levels, and measure the amount and fineness of the particulate matter to which he and other troops were exposed.

Defense officials often quote these data as proof that troops were not exposed to enough toxins to cause harm. But Curtis said he had problems getting the collection points to work properly because he had to guess at the wind patterns and which way the smoke would blow.

"It was very difficult to collect data," he said. "I think it's more than difficult — it's impossible."

Army 1st Sgt. Lynette Streitfield, diagnosed with asthma and chronic bronchitis after a tour at Balad, said that when she lived in H6, she saw Curtis' equipment set up outside the barriers that ringed the housing area. Inside the barriers, smoke weaved in and out of the trailers, trapped by the concrete walls.

But as she emerged from the barriers, she saw clear air around Curtis's equipment.

"That's probably my fault," Curtis acknowledged.

"We had to set up the equipment where there were power sources."

The issues Curtis predicted and that service members report are in line with what experts say they would expect to see after people have been exposed to large amounts of smoke, as well as with what a doctor hired to examine soldiers complaining of shortness of breath found when he biopsied their lungs.

Many troops who have spent time near burn pits talk about similar, odd symptoms — a crackly or deeper voice, waking in the middle of the night because they've stopped breathing, constant headaches, a general sense of fatigue, and an inability to pull enough oxygen into their lungs. Neurological complaints include numbness and, in two cases in one unit, paralyzed facial muscles.

"People say they just don't feel right," said Air National Guard Maj. Jerry Molstad as he sipped a beer after a weekend drill day at Fort Carson, Colo., last fall. He and Master Sgt. Jonathan Hilliard fiddled with a pulse oximeter, which can quickly tell if their oxygen blood saturation levels are low — and they are.

Both are obsessive about the tiny machines since returning from their tours at H6 housing in January 2009.

“I’m a volunteer firefighter,” said Molstad, 52, a physician assistant in the Guard. “You know you don’t go into a burning house without a pack.”

At Balad, he said, “They had security guards pulling 12-hour shifts right over the burn pit with no protection.” He said six of the 25 people who deployed with his aeromedical unit returned home sick.

That “really raised my eyebrows,” he said, adding that he’s living it himself.

“I feel short of breath just talking to you,” he said.

His voice has turned gravelly, he has problems breathing and, for the first time in his life, he has begun snoring. A nonsmoker, he worries that he has developed chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. X-rays taken after he returned show the bronchi in his lungs are more prominent than they should be, which suggests early COPD. “I have an X-ray from 2005 that looks totally different,” he said.

Tests later revealed a mass in his abdomen, causing him to fear a more immediate issue: cancer. He’s still waiting for the results.

He pulled out a photo that he took outside the door of his trailer at H6 at midday — but it looks like night.

“I wore my gas mask all day that day,” he said.

But he could not fully protect himself from the daily dusting of soot that covered everything inside his trailer, he said.

“What did I immerse myself in?” he said. “It’s haunting.”

After the drill weekend ended, Hilliard returned to the home he fears he will lose if his symptoms become worse — in the old mining town of Victor, Colo., with oxygen-thin air about 10,000 feet above sea level.

“I was working out at Balad — spin class three days a week,” he said. “All of sudden back here, I’m severely short of breath with a moderate workout.” He failed his most recent military physical fitness test “heinously.” Hilliard spent 30 years as a career firefighter and said he could recognize what was being burned at Balad by the smell:

Plastic. Styrofoam. Tires.

He said the pit actively burned only during the day; at night, the blaze was allowed to go down in intensity.

In his firefighter training, he learned that federal air studies have found the smoldering stage of a fire is twice as toxic as when it burns at its hottest, when more material is consumed.

“In the smoldering phase, it’s just nasty,” he said.

McBreairty said she was healthy before she served at Balad in 2004 with the New Mexico Air National Guard, loading bombs on F-16s.

She has since been diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

Fatigue came first. Then muscle spasms. Her jaw hurt. Her arm hurt if someone brushed it. Her joints ached. She had headaches.

Tests all came back normal.

“By the middle of 2007, I thought I was losing my mind,” she said.

Finally, an MRI showed brain lesions — the telltale sign of MS.

Almost immediately, her dreams of working as a sheriff’s deputy disappeared. She stopped playing softball. She gave up plans to become a military officer.

“I told my neurologist about the reports that had come out about the burn pits,” she said.

“She was just amazed they were burning the stuff that they were. These are biohazards.” McBreairty pulled a letter from a stack of medical paperwork on her parents’ kitchen table.

“I received the fax transmittal from the Department of the Air Force regarding the burn-pit hazards,” wrote Mary Kerber, McBreairty’s neurologist at Cheyenne Medical Specialists.

“We believe that there are environmental triggers that can cause the manifestation of multiple sclerosis. ... As we learn more about multiple sclerosis, we may be able to identify some of the environmental triggers and there may have been some environmental hazards associated with the open burn pit that could have triggered the manifestation of your disease.”

Knowing that someone believes her offers some comfort. But it’s not enough, she said.

“Stopping the burn pits is my biggest concern. I don’t want to see more of my friends be sick.”

MORE:

Death By Burn Pit #2: “More Than Eight Years After The Start Of The Afghanistan War And Almost

Seven Years After The Start Of The Iraq War, 84 Burn Pits Still Operate In The War Zones”

January 25, 2010 Editorial, Army Times

Burn-pit stonewalling:

Military regulations state that open-air burn pits should be used only as a short-term waste disposal solution in forward areas until cleaner-burning, but costlier, incinerators can be brought online.

But more than eight years after the start of the Afghanistan war and almost seven years after the start of the Iraq war, 84 burn pits still operate in the war zones.

Mounting anecdotal evidence suggests that these open-air burn pits are making troops sick, and it's not hard to connect the dots.

The pits have consumed well over a million tons of plastics, fuel, medical waste and a variety of other hazardous materials.

They produce a persistent, potentially toxic haze that hangs over troops' living and working spaces — a likely cause, experts say, of rising numbers of active-duty respiratory and neurological disorders since 2001 to levels above the norm for such a young and fit population.

Even so, it has only been very recently that Pentagon officials have softened their long-held insistence that burn-pit smoke carries “no known long-term health effects.”

Not that they are copping to a problem, mind you. But they are, at last, acknowledging that the pits may cause “untoward health effects” in some deployed troops.

That's progress of a sort, even if it is long overdue.

The Pentagon's long, sorry history on environmental health issues remains a cause for concern, however.

Congress should demand a full accounting of all existing environmental test data related to burn-pit plumes in Iraq and Afghanistan — and an explanation of why, after years of combat deployments, burn pits still outnumber incinerators by a ratio of more than 3-to-1 on U.S. bases in the war zones.

MORE:

Death By Burn Pit #3:

How The Scum In Congress Took Inaction To Make Sure Soldiers Would Keep On Getting Poised By The Burn Pits

January 25, 2010 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]

The potential health effects of exposure to burn-pit smoke in the war zones has attracted the attention of Congress.

As part of the 2010 Defense Authorization Act, lawmakers have requested a Pentagon report on current burn-pit operations in the war zones — but that is far short of what Rep. Tim Bishop, D-N.Y., originally sought.

Bishop introduced legislation last year that would have ordered the military not to operate burn pits beyond six months at bases expected to exist for longer than that — what military regulations already call for — and identify all troops who may have been exposed to the pits, notify them and examine them every year for symptoms.

But the report requested by the final Defense Authorization Act merely seeks an overview of what is being burned in open-air pits in the war zones, alternatives for dealing with the millions of tons of military waste created in Iraq and Afghanistan every year, and the potential health hazards related to the burn pits.

The act does order a ban on burning “hazardous” waste.

It does not define what that is — yet goes on to say hazardous waste may still be burned in open pits if military officials determine there is no “feasible” alternative.

Bishop, who launched a Web site, www.burnpits.org, is not giving up.

He said Jan. 13 that he will reintroduce legislation in the new session of Congress to again seek stronger restrictions on burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan.

He said he will push to have the Pentagon provide a history of all burn pits in Afghanistan and Iraq, create a registry of service members exposed to pit smoke, conduct complete examinations of those combat vets, and halt any burning of plastic waste.

His draft bill also defines a “hazardous disposal site” as “the use of open pits to burn waste.” “It is critical to have an official registry documenting the tens of thousands of troops exposed to toxic burn pits in order to remove obstacles to accessing VA benefits many of them will need as a result of exposure,” Bishop said.

“In addition, we are pushing for a ban on the open-air burning of large quantities of plastics, which has been widely documented to occur, despite the clear health dangers.”

“The M16, From Its Inception, Was A Problem. Today’s Troops Find It Still Jams”

“Some Feel It’s Politics That Put It In And Politics That Keep It In Now”

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
January 25, 2010

During my past years in uniform, I trained with the M1 Garand, M1 Carbine, M14 and M16. The Army even threw in the AK-47 to be familiar with Soviet weapons. Two different mechanical categories were represented. One proved more reliable than the other.

The Garand carbine, M14 and AK-47 are the gas piston type and proved to be completely reliable under almost all hazards.

The M16, from its inception, was a problem because of its gas-bolt face system.

Today’s troops find it still jams.

Some feel it’s politics that put it in and politics that keep it in now.

As the cliché goes, “Why reinvent the wheel?”

Possibly one of the most reliable shoulder weapons has proven to be the AK-47. Israel removed the rear sight from the barrel and placed it eight inches to the rear. The improved sight radius eliminates the inaccuracy complaint of the AK-47.

Former Staff Sgt. James Abell
Manvel, Texas

“The Old Timers And Higher-Ups Made A Mistake With The Cool-Looking And Flashy Digital Camo We’ve All Grown To Hate”

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
January 25, 2010

In regard to the new uniform issue affecting the Army: I've bit my tongue long enough.

First, the old timers and higher-ups made a mistake with the cool-looking and flashy digital camo we've all grown to hate.

So why are we spending even more money to research and fix the problem when the MultiCam pattern has already been tested and proven by special operations forces? Maybe it's because we have to have a conventional Army unit use it first.

Maybe we're too stubborn to acknowledge special ops for doing the work for us.

Sgt. Rich Allen
Fort Knox, Ky.

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**

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**

February 8, 1968: KIA For Freedom The Orangeburg Massacre



Carl Bunin Peace History February 4-10

Three black students were killed and 50 wounded in a confrontation with highway patrolmen at a South Carolina State rally supporting arrested civil rights protesters.

The town's only bowling alley, the All Star, was still segregated years after the Civil Rights Act of 1964 outlawed discrimination based on race in such public accommodations.

On the previous two days, college students had entered the bowling alley, refusing to leave after they were not allowed to bowl. Fifteen of the second group were arrested.

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

OCCUPATION HAITI



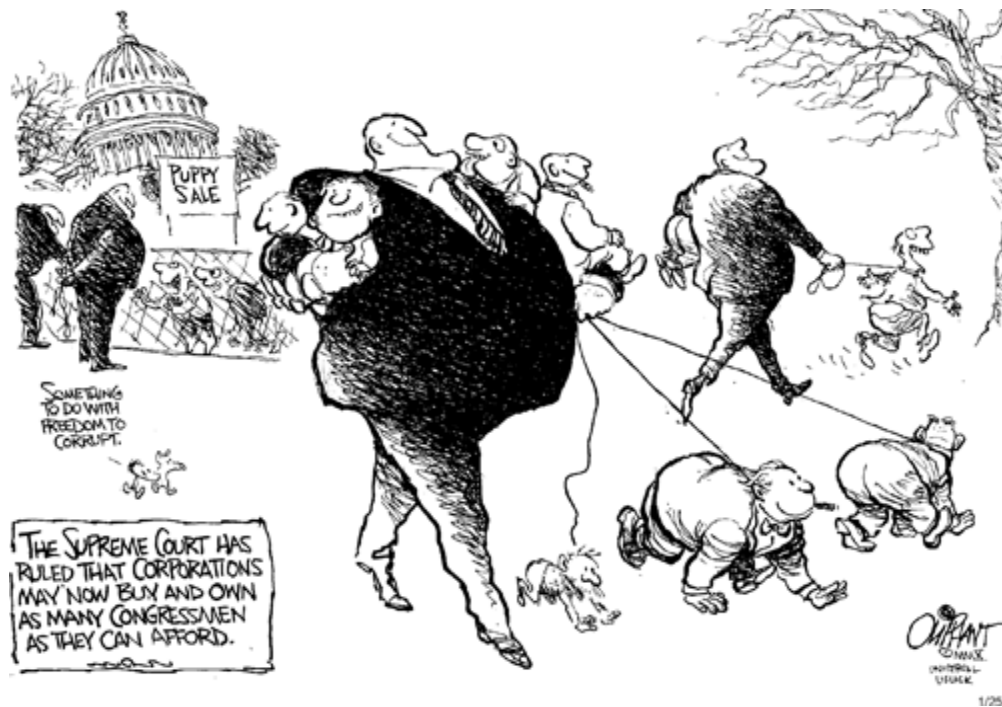
NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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/)**

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Government Budget 2010: The Traitor Obama Demands More Money For Imperial Wars And War Profiteers; [Jobless Americans Can Eat Shit And Die]

"In essence," economist and New York Times columnist Paul Krugman wrote, "the administration is accepting mass unemployment as just one of those things we have to live with...What we're witnessing is an awesome national failure."

February 3, 2010 By Lee Sustar and Alan Maass, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

BARACK OBAMA'S budget contains a message to everyone concerned about mass unemployment, ramped-up military spending and social service cutbacks: Get used to it.

"We simply cannot continue to spend as if deficits don't have consequences, as if waste doesn't matter, as if the hard-earned tax money of the American people can be treated like Monopoly money," Obama said.

But under the \$3.8 trillion proposal, the Pentagon war machine is exempt from the freeze.

So military outlays would continue the upward curve begun under George W. Bush to pay not only for endless war in Iraq and Afghanistan, but to maintain the U.S.'s military grip on its worldwide empire.

Just in case some Pentagon contractors whose profits have grown fat off the "war on terror" got the wrong message from the talk about the government tightening its belt, Defense Secretary Robert Gates invited top defense company executives to a meeting last week.

Gates emphasized "the need for a closer partnership with them and to work with the White House to secure steady growth in the Pentagon's budgets over time, according to his spokesman," the Politico reported.

And by settling for a small jobs creation program, Obama has thrown in the towel on ambitious measures to drive down joblessness.

"In essence," economist and New York Times columnist Paul Krugman wrote, "the administration is accepting mass unemployment as just one of those things we have to live with...What we're witnessing is an awesome national failure."

Meanwhile, in all the talk about the deficit, neither Republicans nor the Obama White House will discuss the measures that could have a real effect on it--raising taxes on the rich and derailing the Pentagon gravy train.

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

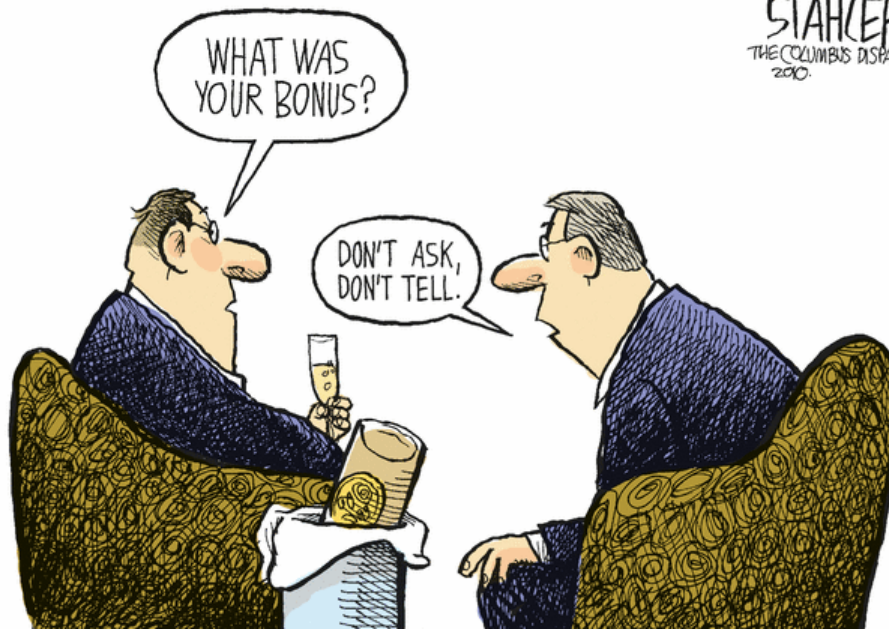
"The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops." Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

Military Resistance Available In PDF Format

If you prefer PDF to Word format, email contact@militaryproject.org

CLASS WAR REPORTS

WALL STREET BANKERS WOULD LIKE TO ADAPT 'DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL.'



Military Resistance Looks Even Better Printed Out

Military Resistance/GI Special are archived at website

<http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/index-2009.html>; news@uruknet.info;

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/

Military Resistance distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **Military Resistance has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is Military Resistance endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

If printed out, a copy of this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.