

Military Resistance 8B6

#1:

The Most Outstanding Words From The War On Vietnam: “It Became Necessary To Destroy The Town To Save It”

[A]ttributed to an unnamed U.S. officer by AP correspondent Peter Arnett. Writing about the provincial capital, Bến Tre, on February 7, 1968, Arnett said: “It became necessary to destroy the town to save it,’ a United States major said today. He was talking about the decision by allied commanders to bomb and shell the town regardless of civilian casualties, to rout the Vietcong.” -- Wikipedia

#2:

The Most Outstanding Words From The War On Afghanistan, So Far: “It’s Harder To Separate The Enemy From The People,” A Pentagon Planner Says, “When They Are The People”

Feb. 09, 2010 Tyler Hicks, The New York Times [Excerpts]

U.S. and allied commanders in Afghanistan are preparing for the biggest battle of the eight-year war, knowing that its outcome will reveal the chances of success for President Obama’s revamped Afghan strategy.

About 20,000 U.S., British and Afghan troops will soon storm Marja, the Taliban's final redoubt in the southern province of Helmand.

But U.S. and Afghan officials know that die-hard Taliban forces have been burying hundreds of improvised explosive devices around the town in recent weeks.

The offensive, when it begins in earnest, will largely be conducted on foot.

That's because the terrain surrounding Marja is latticed with canals built by the U.S. a generation ago to expand agriculture to 250,000 acres in the Helmand River valley. It also gave the region the nickname "Little America."

The canals and ditches created a network of bridges unable to support armored vehicles and gives the Taliban good places to hide IEDs — the top killer of U.S. troops in Afghanistan — and snipers.

Both sides predict the fight for Marja could be brutal, with belts of IEDs believed to be buried along all major approaches to the town.

Unlike earlier battles over towns and villages further east, where many Taliban are from Pakistan, the enemy in Marja is largely local, which will further complicate the fight.

"It's harder to separate the enemy from the people," a Pentagon planner says, "when they are the people."

MORE:

As Attack On Marjah Nears, 78,000 Afghans Refuse To Leave The Area

February 9, 2010 By Saeed Shah, McClatchy Newspapers [Excerpts]

KABUL, Afghanistan — As U.S.-led coalition troops prepare for a long-awaited offensive against the Taliban in southern Afghanistan, few civilians have managed to escape the town at the center of the operation, raising the risk of civilian casualties that could undermine the Obama administration's military strategy for the country.

The U.S.-led force said Tuesday that fewer than 200 families — around 1,200 people — had left the town of Marjah and the surrounding area, which have a population of about 80,000.

"Commanders in the area are reporting no significant increase in persons moving out of Nad-e Ali district in the last month," the U.S.-led International Security Assistance Force said in a statement.

"Despite reports of large numbers of civilians fleeing the area, the facts on the ground do not support these assertions."

The presence of a large number of civilians could make the operation much trickier and provide a test of the new coalition military doctrine of protecting the population.

A large media contingent from around the world will accompany the troops, recording their progress.

“If (NATO forces) don’t avoid large scale civilian casualties, given the rhetoric about protecting the population, then no matter how many Taliban are routed, the Marjah mission should be considered a failure,” said Candace Rondeaux, an Afghanistan-based analyst at the International Crisis Group, an independent research and campaigning organization.

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Resistance Bombs Baghdad Oil Pipeline

February 10, 2010 By QASSIM ABDUL-ZAHRA, The Associated Press

Attackers bombed an oil pipeline north of Baghdad, cutting production in half at a refinery in the capital, the Oil Ministry said Wednesday.

There were no injuries in Tuesday night’s bombing in Rashidiya, just north of Baghdad.

Production at the Baghdad refinery was cut from 140,000 barrels per day to 70,000, said Oil Ministry spokesman Assem Jihad.

The pipeline runs from oil fields in northern Kirkuk province to Baghdad. It has been the target of attacks for years, and has been bombed multiple times since 2004.

More Resistance Action

Feb 7 (Reuters) & Feb 10 (Reuters) & Feb 11 (Reuters)

Insurgents booby trapped a house of a government-backed militia leader, wounding his wife and his two children in Rawa, 260 km (160 miles) northwest of Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents killed a local official of a district in eastern Mosul when they stormed his office on Saturday, police said.

BAGHDAD - A car bomb targeting a police patrol wounded two policemen in northwestern Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents wounded a policeman when they hurled a hand grenade at a police checkpoint in central Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

A sticky bomb attached to a car killed an Iraqi soldier in eastern Mosul, police said.

A roadside bomb targeting a police patrol killed two policemen and wounded four others on the western outskirts of Baghdad, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded a district official in eastern Mosul, police said.

Clashes between militants and police wounded three policemen including a former police chief and two attackers on Wednesday in central Haditha, 190 km (120 miles) northwest of Baghdad, police said.

Guerrillas attacked a police checkpoint, killing a policeman in western Mosul, police said.

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

So Much For That “Sovereign” Iraq Bullshit: U.S. Military Officers Go Neck Deep Into Local Iraqi Politics

February 10, 2010 By STEVEN LEE MYERS and ANTHONY SHADID, The New York Times [Excerpts]

TIKRIT, Iraq — Iraq’s Fourth Army Division cordoned off the provincial council building here overnight Tuesday and showed no sign on Wednesday of leaving. It was the latest in a series of actions by the government of Prime Minister Nuri Kamal al-Maliki that have infuriated his political opponents, while raising doubts about the strength of the country’s laws and democratic institutions.

Mr. Maliki ordered in the military here— for the second time — to exert his influence in choosing a new governor. American military commanders and diplomats expressed alarm at his willingness to use force to resolve a simmering dispute over the provincial council’s legal powers to appoint a governor.

“You have the law on your side,” Col. Henry A. Arnold III, commander of the First Infantry Division’s Fourth Brigade, told a council member outside the besieged building on Wednesday morning.

“Maliki knows it. The Americans know it. And they’re going to keep reminding him of it.”

By emphasizing the provincial council’s new powers and calling for respect for the rule of law, however, the Americans have in effect put themselves in direct opposition to Mr. Maliki’s government.

Mr. Maliki, who once enjoyed unwavering support from the United States, has increasingly taken to accusing the Americans of interfering in Iraq’s internal affairs.

On Wednesday morning, Colonel Arnold called the new cordon by the Army “a desperate act.”

“They’re losing,” he told Mr. Ejbarah. “That’s why they’re doing this.”

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/)

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

**U.S. Military Dictatorship Finally
Frees Imprisoned Reporter
Charged With Nothing At All:**

Occupation Command Still Holds 6,000 More Iraqi Prisoners; “Who Is Going To Compensate Ibrahim For The 17 Months He Spent In Prison”



Ibrahim Jassam Mohammed, Reuters freelance TV cameraman and photographer, kisses his mother after his release at his home in Mahmudiya, south of Baghdad February 10, 2010. The U.S. military freed Jassam in Iraq on Wednesday, almost a year and a half after snatching him from his home in the middle of the night and holding him without charge. REUTERS/Thaier al-Sudani

Feb 10, 2010 By Suadad al-Salhy, Reuters

BAGHDAD

The U.S. military freed a Reuters photographer in Iraq on Wednesday, almost a year and a half after snatching him from his home in the middle of the night and holding him without charge.

The U.S. military never has said exactly why its forces detained Ibrahim Jassam Mohammed -- who worked for Reuters as a freelance TV cameraman and photographer -- and locked him away for so long, saying the evidence against him was classified.

“How can I describe my feelings? This is like being born again,” Jassam told Reuters by telephone as he was greeted emotionally by his family.

U.S. and Iraqi forces smashed in the doors to Jassam's house in Mahmudiya town, south of Baghdad, in September 2008 and whisked him away.

He spent time in a desert prison on the Iraq-Kuwait border, called Camp Bucca, and the smaller Camp Cropper detention centre near Baghdad airport.

Jassam was one of several Iraqi journalists working for foreign news organisations who have been detained by the U.S. military, often for months at a time, since the 2003 U.S. invasion.

None has ever been charged, triggering criticism from international journalism rights groups.

"I am very pleased his long incarceration without charge is finally over," Reuters editor-in-chief David Schlesinger said.

"I wish the process to release a man who had no specific accusations against him had been swifter."

The U.S. military has asserted that Jassam was a "security threat."

The accusations had to do with "activities with insurgents," it said last year, without giving any specifics.

Under a U.S.-Iraqi security pact that gave Iraq back its sovereignty this year, the U.S. military has handed over thousands of Iraqis it had detained.

It still holds almost 6,000 detainees.

The Iraqi Central Criminal Court has ruled that there was no case against Jassam.

A month before arresting him, U.S. forces detained Reuters cameraman Ali Mashhadani and held him for three weeks without charge, the third time he was detained. Mashhadani was held for five months in 2005.

"This is happy news but at the same time sad news," said Ziad al-Ajili, head of the Iraqi press lobby group The Journalistic Freedoms Observatory.

"Who is going to compensate Ibrahim for the 17 months he spent in prison innocent of all the accusations the American army made against him?"

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Chaos In Command:

Deputy Commander Of Marine Expeditionary Brigade In Helmand Condemns Gen. McChrystal's Strategy: "I Haven't Seen Any Evidence It's Working"

Another "U.S. Official" Says Marine Offensive In Nimruz Province A Pointless Waste Of Resources: "There Is Nobody Out There"

February 9, 2010 By Joshua Partlow, Washington Post Foreign Service [Excerpts]

ZARI, AFGHANISTAN -- Four of the Army's hulking mine-resistant armored vehicles had just been bombed into submission.

They stood immobilized off of Highway 1, southern Afghanistan's most important thoroughfare, at the point where an earlier bomb had blown out the asphalt, forcing traffic to bypass through the dirt.

At the same time, Taliban fighters were reeling a wire used to detonate bombs into a mud-walled compound.

But right at the top of Lt. Col. Jeffrey French's list of concerns that perilous day, when 14 bombs either exploded or were found in the same area, was the row of Afghan cargo trucks waiting to get past this complicated mess.

"I don't want to be piling up massive amounts of coalition force vehicles," French radioed to his soldiers before leading his convoy out of the congestion.

Not everyone is sold on Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal's "protect the population" mantra.

Some military officials think an expansionary push by the Marines into Taliban territory in neighboring Helmand province is more effective than hunkering down to the slow work of improving governance.

“I’m not a big fan of the population-centric approach. We can’t sit still. We have to pursue and chase these guys,” said Col. George Amland, deputy commander of the Marine expeditionary brigade in Helmand province.

“I haven’t seen any evidence it’s working. The only thing that’s working is chasing them.”

Marines in Helmand province, where thousands of new troops have already arrived, plan to start moving into Taliban strongholds such as Marja.

The town is without a functioning government, and is ringed by what Marine commander Brig. Gen. Lawrence Nicholson, who has led the Marines in Helmand since last spring, described as the thickest belt of buried bombs he has seen in Afghanistan.

But some U.S. officials are worried about the value of the Marines pushing into desolate areas in pursuit of the Taliban, particularly in Nimruz province, which borders Helmand to the west.

“There is nobody out there,” said one senior U.S. official who works in southern Afghanistan. “The preference would be to remain focused on civilian population centers.”

The Strykers came to their new highway mission after difficult months last summer and fall in the Argandab River Valley of Kandahar province, fertile farmland where the vehicles had difficulty maneuvering through narrow lanes and were pounded by roadside bombs.

Twenty-one soldiers from the battalion that fought in the Argandab were killed through December, more than any other Army battalion in Afghanistan.

“Back in the summer, it was awful. They had a bad time of it,” said Brig. Gen. Frederick B. Hodges, the deputy commander in southern Afghanistan.

““They’re Trying To Bait Us; Don’t Get Sucked In,’ Yelled A Marine Sergeant”

“This May Be The Largest IED Threat And Largest Minefield That NATO Has Ever Faced”

“Automatic Rifle Fire Rattled In The Distance As The Marines Dug In For The Night With Temperatures Below Freezing”



Feb 11: A US marine mortar crew ducks for cover from the threat of sniper fire in the North East of Marjah. (AFP/Patrick Baz)

Feb 10, 2010 By Alfred de Montesquiou and Robert H. Reid, The Associated Press [Excerpts] & Feb. 11 AP

U.S. Marines and Taliban insurgents exchanged gunfire Thursday on the outskirts of Marjah, a southern militant stronghold where American and Afghan forces are expected to launch a major attack in the coming days.

No casualties were reported in the scattered clashes, which broke out as Marines moved ever closer to the edge of the farming community of 80,000 people, the linchpin of Taliban influence in the opium poppy producing province of Helmand.

Through much of the day, insurgents repeatedly fired rockets and mortars at the American and Afghan units poised in foxholes around the town, 380 miles southwest of Kabul.

“I am not surprised at all that this is taking place,” said the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Brian Christmas. “We are touching their trigger-line,” referring to the outer rim of the Taliban defenses.

About 400 U.S. troops from the Army’s 5th Stryker Brigade and about 250 Afghan soldiers moved into positions northeast of Marjah before dawn Tuesday as U.S. Marines pushed to the outskirts of the town.

Automatic rifle fire rattled in the distance as the Marines dug in for the night with temperatures below freezing.

The occasional thud of mortar shells and the sharp blast of rocket-propelled grenades fired by the Taliban pierced the air.

“They’re trying to bait us; don’t get sucked in,” yelled a Marine sergeant, warning his troops not to venture closer to the town.

In the distance, Marines could see farmers and nomads gathering their livestock at sunset, seemingly indifferent to the firing.

Marjah will serve as the first trial for the new strategy implemented last year by the top U.S. commander in Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley McChrystal. He maintains that success in the eight-year conflict cannot be achieved by killing Taliban fighters, but rather by protecting civilians and winning over their support.

To accomplish that, NATO needs to take the town without causing significant damage or civilian casualties.

That would risk a public backlash among residents, many of whose sons and brothers are probably among the estimated 400 to 1,000 Taliban defenders.

The major threat is expected to come from thousands of mines and roadside bombs, which the military calls improvised explosive devices, which the Taliban are believed to have planted in the area.

“This may be the largest IED threat and largest minefield that NATO has ever faced,” said Brig. Gen. Larry Nicholson, commander of Marines in southern Afghanistan.

The U.S.-Afghan force led by the 5th Strykers found it slow going through the mines and roadside bombs as they pushed south toward Marjah, delaying their linkup with the Marines.

When the Army force reached the rendezvous area, Marines popped violet-colored smoke grenades to mark their positions for the American soldiers.

Canadian advisers with the Afghan units set off yellow smoke so the Marines would know they were friendly forces.

Soldier From Coldstream Guards Killed In Babaji

11 Feb 10 Ministry of Defence

It is with sadness that the Ministry of Defence must announce that a soldier from 1st Battalion Coldstream Guards was killed in Afghanistan today, Thursday 11 February 2010.

The soldier died as a result of an explosion that happened in the Babaji district of central Helmand province this morning.

5 American “Service Members” Wounded In Attack On US Base At Dand Aw Pata

Feb 11 AP

A bomber wearing an Afghan border policeman’s uniform blew himself up Thursday at a U.S. base near the Pakistani frontier, wounding five Americans, an Afghan official said.

The spokesman for Paktia province, Roullah Samoun, said the attack occurred after sundown in a barracks at a U.S. facility in the Dand aw Patan district in eastern Afghanistan, about 35 miles (70 kilometers) east of Gardez.

He did not identify the base by name or say what kind personnel are stationed there.

A U.S. statement said “several” U.S. service members were injured in an explosion at a joint U.S.-Afghan outpost in Paktia but gave no further details.

Hornell Marine Zach Smith Killed In Afghanistan



Zach Smith, a 2008 graduate of Hornell High School, was the community’s first military casualty in the ongoing conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan.

January 25, 2010 Victoria E. Freile, Staff writer, Democrat and Chronicle.com

Flags are flying at half-staff in Hornell, Steuben County, in memory of a young Marine killed over the weekend. Hornell Mayor Shawn Hogan said Zach Smith, 19, was the community’s first military casualty in the ongoing conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Officers with the U.S. Marine Corp informed Smith’s family of the news yesterday morning. Hogan, a neighbor and family friend, said Smith was on his first tour of duty in Afghanistan when he was killed.

Lance Corporal Smith, a 2008 graduate of Hornell High School, was deployed in December. He enlisted in the Marines while still in high school, and left for training in the summer of 2008.

Details on Smith's unit and details of the incident were not available. The U.S. Department of Defense has not released any information about the deaths.

"It's really a dark day here in Hornell," said Gene Mastin, family friend and athletic director for the Hornell City School District. "We've lost one of our finest."

Mastin, described Smith as an outgoing, comical and caring young man, who was also a gifted athlete. Smith was on the Hornell football and golf teams throughout high school. Mastin said he coached Smith for four years as a high school football player, but knew Smith since he was "just a small child."

"He was one of the friendliest, happiest, most respectful kids," Mastin said. "Whatever your day was going like, it got better when you saw Zach."

Smith was survived by his wife Anne. The couple, high school sweethearts, married in July, Mastin said. Smith was also survived by his parents, Christopher and Kim, an older brother and a younger sister.

"I watched him grow up over the years and you just can't say enough about Zach," Hogan said. "He brought a smile to everyone's face and a skip to their hearts."

Hogan described Smith as a genuine, vibrant young man who "embraced life" and went out of his way to help others. Hogan said Smith always wanted to be a Marine and serve his country.

"He was more concerned about (helping) everyone else than he was about himself," Mastin said. "He's not one who will be defined by his deeds or achievements, but by how he treated others."

Many older students and staff members at Hornell High School have taken the news "quite hard," Mastin said. "He will be missed," Hogan said. "This is a tragedy for his family, but also for this community. His death really has rocked the foundation of this community."

Smith's parents flew to Dover Air Force Base today, Mastin said. It was not known how soon they could return home with their son's remains, Mastin said. No funeral arrangements have been set. Hogan said flags will remain lowered until after his memorial service.

British General In Afghanistan Calls Obama "Immoral"

February 9, 2010 By Tony Perry and Laura King, Los Angeles Times [Excerpt]

“We are up against a cunning, immoral enemy who will try to exploit war among the people,” said British Maj. Gen. Nick Carter, commanding general of NATO’s Regional Command South, which includes Helmand province.

Taliban Use Bloody Pieces Of British Uniforms As Battle Flags

February 11, 2010 The Daily Telegraph [UK] [Excerpts]

Bloodstained uniforms taken from British troops as gruesome trophies have been hung from trees by the Taliban ...

The tactic has been used in the area of Helmand province that will be targeted by a 15,000-strong allied force, including 4,000 British troops, in an upcoming offensive against the insurgents.

Shirts, combat jackets and water carriers covered in blood were hung from trees with the Taliban’s white flag emblem flown above them.

It is understood the items were either torn off bodies during a bomb blast or when medical staff cut off clothing, which was left on the ground.

NEW GENERAL ORDER NO. 1: PACK UP GO HOME



U.S. soldier on guard during a clearing operation in farm land in Kandahar City, southern Afghanistan Jan. 19, 2010. (AP Photo/Kirsty Wigglesworth)



U.S. Marines push a car at a checkpoint at Delaram district in Nimroz province, southern Afghanistan January 21, 2010. REUTERS/Marko Djurica



U.S. Marines obscured by a dust storm in their base near the town of Marjah in Nad Ali district of Helmand province February 8, 2010. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

TROOP NEWS

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



Service for Marine Sgt. David J. Smith at Arlington National Cemetery Feb. 9, 2010. Sgt. Smith was critically wounded Jan. 23 during an attack in Helmand province, Afghanistan. He died of his injuries three days later. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

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

**In Balad, Smoke And Fire:
“As A Member Of The Public Affairs
Team, I Was Surprised The Obvious
Health Concerns The Burn Pit
Caused Had Not Reached The Media”
“Stories Of Soldiers, Veterans And
Widows Who Attribute Cancers And Life-**

Threatening Illnesses To Exposure To The Burn Pit Are Coming To Light”



Burn pit at Balad Air Base, Iraq. U.S. Air Force photo/Senior Airman Julianne Showalter

[Thanks to John Gingerich, who sent this in.]

January 20, 2010 By Dan Clare, New York Times [Excerpts] Dan Clare is a former Marine who enlisted in the Air National Guard in 2001. He serves as Assistant National Director of Communications for the non-profit Disabled American Veterans (D.A.V.). In 2007-2008, he served at Balad Air Base, Iraq, as an Air Force public affairs specialist.

Balad Air Base in northern Iraq was once nicknamed “Mortaritaville” by the soldiers and airmen who called it home. When I was there from 2007 to 2008, mortar attacks were so common and seemingly ineffective that the frequent interruptions were often a welcome break from the daily grind.

For most airmen on base, a trip beyond guarded gates of Balad was unthinkable. Beyond the usual mortar or rocket attack, I know it’s strange to say, one would have to go to the hospital to be sure there was a war going on.

Yet, a dark cloud loomed above us, never letting us forget that we were not on home station.

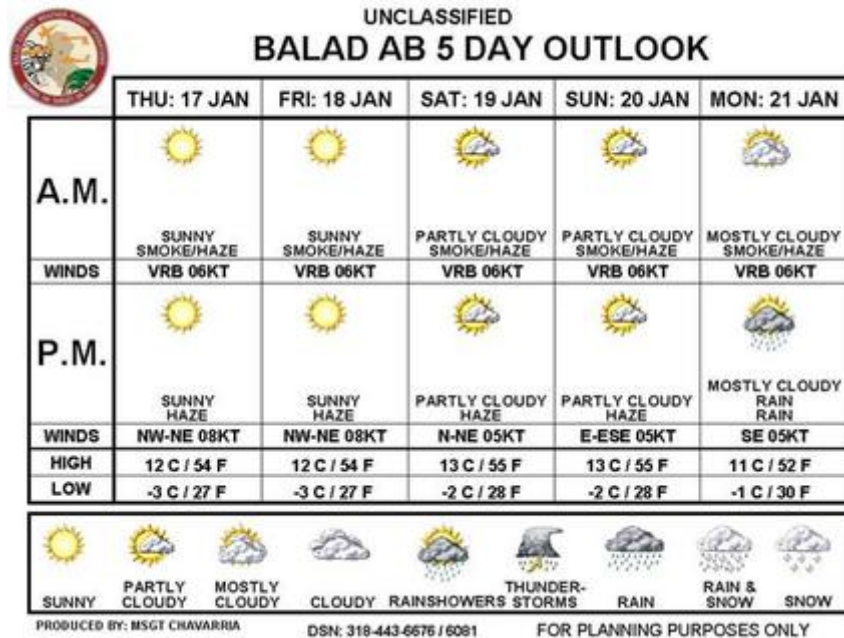
Balad, like bases throughout Iraq and Afghanistan, burned its own waste. Hundreds of tons of Styrofoam, plastic, uniforms, oil, fuel and other trash went into the air from an open, smoldering pit.

When I first arrived in Iraq, I thought a portion of the base was under attack.

We later learned the floating plume was the source of Balad's signature stench.

At times, the wind would change directions and a toxic cloud would hang low and overwhelm the housing area. It could influence flight line operations, limit visibility and make eyes and lungs burn.

It was inescapable. More than once it made me sick.



A military weather forecast from 2008

I went to medical for help and was told that my nausea and symptoms were minor compared to people who were coughing up black phlegm and having constant attacks.

As a member of the public affairs team, I was surprised the obvious health concerns the burn pit caused had not reached the media. The release of information was inevitable.

Long before our deployment, in late 2006, Lt. Col. Darrin Curtis, then bioenvironmental flight commander at Balad, wrote a letter analyzing the situation.

He spoke of acute and possibly chronic health hazards associated with the smoke. Like hundreds who deployed before me, I came off of active duty with Colonel Curtis' letter.

Since details from the burn pit were brought to light by Military Times reporter Kelly Kennedy, then subsequently by CNN and other news sources, hundreds of veterans have come forward who have mild to severe health concerns that they attribute to burn pit exposures in Iraq and Afghanistan. (Kelly Kennedy's latest update on Balad's burn pit appeared in the Military Times this week.)

Stories of soldiers, veterans and widows who attribute cancers and life-threatening illnesses to exposure to the burn pit are coming to light, as are more numerous reports of unexplained shortness of breath, asthma-like symptoms, respiratory issues and other problems. Nearly 500 have come to the Disabled American Veterans to be counted.

The military initially dismissed its own reports on any longtime exposure concerns associated with the burn pit. It has since relented and is looking closer at the matter.

Recent headlines reported the president saying burn pits would not be another Agent Orange — harkening to the exposure hazard that plagued Vietnam veterans. I'm hopeful that he is right.

Especially because that exact comparison was made by a military official when I was in Iraq.

Recently, I was contacted by a Navy chief who was stationed a quarter-mile from the burn pit at Balad from November 2005 to March 2006.

He told me about a helicopter pilot he knew during his deployment who was diagnosed with unspecified asthma-like conditions.

He wanted to be on the record also, and said he was diagnosed with Hodgkin's Lymphoma in June 2007 and underwent five months of chemotherapy and one month of radiation.

He has no family history of the disease and was exposed to cancer-causing agents in paints early in his Navy career — but he feels nearly certain the burn pit was the cause of his illness. He said his physicians just shrugged their shoulders when he asked about the burn pit.

His illness cost him \$400 a month in military flight pay. There's no telling how much time it will take off of his life.

It makes me feel fortunate that my V.A. diagnosis is minor — shortness of breath. My inhaler is working and aside from a persistent cough and sinus problems, I can hope that any exposure I faced won't cost days or months of my life.

Vets Face Blizzard Of Insane Stupid Bullshit: “The Report Says Troops Wounded In Service Can Face Delays At Every Step”

“More than 35,000 troops have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. Hundreds of thousands of them have suffered injuries not recorded in the official military tally,” the report says. “These new veterans and their families are shouldering an unacceptable burden, recovering from their injuries while navigating antiquated and deeply flawed military and veterans’ health care and disability systems.”

Feb 5, 2010 By Rick Maze - Staff writer; Army Times [Excerpts]

Combat veterans returning to the U.S. often find themselves facing a new, complex and frustrating enemy: red tape.

That is the assessment of a new report released Friday by Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. Here are some examples of the problems faced by veterans:

• Drew Brown, an Iraq veteran who returned from a 2004 deployment struggling with anxiety and depression, says he asked the military five times over 16 months for mental health counseling before he got a call back.

When he tried to get help from the Veterans Affairs Department, he says he was told it would take three weeks to schedule an appointment — which could only be at a far-off location between 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., requiring the former Army sergeant first class to take time off work.

• Air Force veteran Aimee Sherrod, medically retired in 2005 as a result of post-traumatic stress related to a mortar attack on her unit on her second day in Iraq in 2003, received a 10 percent disability rating that she accepted because she thought she would get better.

But when she got worse in 2008 during a pregnancy, she discovered that a VA hospital would not admit her as an inpatient because they weren't prepared for maternity care.

Instead, they told her to drop out of school and relax.

• Navy veteran Richard Sanchez, a veteran of Operations Enduring Freedom, Noble Eagle and Iraqi Freedom, left the service in 2006 on disability with a recommendation for back surgery for treatment of injuries suffered when heavy equipment fell on him.

It took three years for VA to schedule the surgery, about the same amount of time he has been struggling with a disability claim related to post-traumatic stress.

• Army veteran Matthew Hamilton, who did two tours in Iraq, is one of about 1,500 student veterans still waiting to receive their fall GI Bill payments. "My claim has been with the VA over 200 days," said the graduate student at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. "They have acknowledged they have all the information needed but cannot give me a reason why it has not been processed," he said, calling it a "nightmare."

VA officials confirmed Hamilton's claim has languished, apparently because of a dispute involving how to count credit hours for graduate students.

"No one at VA wants a student veteran waiting for their check instead of focusing on their studies," said VA spokeswoman Katie Roberts. The department "will do everything it can to resolve any outstanding issues and make sure this veteran gets the benefits he has earned."

The report says the four examples are not isolated but are representative of the kind of bureaucracy that the nation's newest generation of combat veterans is facing.

“More than 35,000 troops have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan. Hundreds of thousands of them have suffered injuries not recorded in the official military tally,” the report says. “These new veterans and their families are shouldering an unacceptable burden, recovering from their injuries while navigating antiquated and deeply flawed military and veterans’ health care and disability systems.”

The report says troops wounded in service can face delays at every step, beginning with a military medical tracking system that doesn’t always have updated information available to treating physicians, which can result in redundant tests, misdiagnoses and delayed treatment.

Other conclusions:

- **Troops placed in medical holding units can find themselves lingering without purpose if they arrive during a surge of wounded.**
- **The military’s disability evaluation process seems to be aimed at making things hardest for those with the most complex injuries by generally rating only one condition when deciding a disability, so that a person with several problems may not get a fair rating.**
- For those leaving the military and needing care from VA, the transition is “anything but seamless,” in part because neither the Defense Department nor VA maintains complete records.
- **The wait for VA benefits and care can be lengthy because demand already exceeds capacity and is increasing as a result of the flood of new Iraq and Afghanistan veterans and the downturn in the economy.**

More than 450,000 veterans have waited more than 30 days for a doctor’s appointment, and more than 423,000 veterans are waiting for compensation claims to be paid.

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

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

**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

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 Myth That Our Generals
Are Infallible Persists Even
Though Everything They’ve
Done Proves Otherwise”**

**“Petraeus’s Successes Have Been
A Sham; That He’s Managed To
Thrive Is A Testimony To His
Genius For Self-Serving
Hucksterism”**

**“McChrystal’s Only Real Combat
Command Experience Involved
Assassinating Suspected Bad Guys
Along With Whatever Civilians
Happened To Be Within The Frag
Pattern”**

**“But These Two Brass-Hatted Humbugs
Know How To Manipulate The Media”**

To this day, despite credible and available evidence and testimony that Iraq’s government and security forces are corrupt and incompetent, that political reconciliation is nowhere in sight, that political violence and intimidation is rampant, that attacks still take place at a frequency and intensity that would not be acceptable in any nation we don’t happen to be occupying, the Long War propagandist apparatus continues to tout the “success of the Iraqi surge.”

January 29, 2010 By Commander Jeff Huber, U.S. Navy (Retired), Pen And Sword
[Excerpts]

Candidate Obama stepped into a steaming pile of gotcha when he promised to “finish the job” in Afghanistan. He did so in response to heat he was taking for having voted in the Senate against the surge that turned out to be such a “success” and that, as FOX News noted, his presidential opponent “John McCain courageously fought for.” The “successful surge” in Iraq has been one of the warmongery’s most successful PR ploys to date.

As official stenographer to the General David Petraeus and former journalist Thomas E. Ricks has artlessly blabbed, “King David” did, indeed, “betray us.”

Petraeus misled Congress and the public into believing he was trying to create conditions in Iraq “that would allow our soldiers to disengage” when he was actually creating conditions that would support the Pentagon’s Long War, a stratagem that will keep America’s military, especially its Army, engaged in low level, indecisive conflicts against numerically and technologically inferior opponents for 50 years or longer.

To pacify critics of the war, Petraeus artificially reduced violence statistics through bribery and by cooking the figures: Sunnis killed by Sunnis, Shiites killed by Shiites, Iraqis killed by car bombs and people shot in the front of the head instead of the back of the head didn’t count.

High-ranking officials at the five-sided echo chamber repeated the “successful surge” mantra at every opportunity, as did Republican politicians and wonks hoping to put McCain in the White House.

The rabid right media amplified the message, and the bovine mainstream media, petrified at the prospect of losing more audience share to AM radio and FOX News hate jockeys, meekly crawled aboard the bandwagon, promulgating brainwash disguised as news.

To this day, despite credible and available evidence and testimony that Iraq’s government and security forces are corrupt and incompetent, that political reconciliation is nowhere in sight, that political violence and intimidation is rampant, that attacks still take place at a frequency and intensity that would not be acceptable in any nation we don’t happen to be occupying, the Long War propagandist apparatus continues to tout the “success of the Iraqi surge.”

Where Do We Find Such Men?

Much of the war mafia’s conquest of the narrative has been its success in promoting our four-star generals into five star deities.

Otherwise hard-nosed media pundits and moderators across the political spectrum turn into blubbing idolaters in the presence of a Petraeus or a Stanley McChrystal.

Congressional testimony from these guys should be X-rated: lipstick neocon Joe Lieberman and his hawkish buddies go into states of full blown estrous, and everybody else, mainly the Democrats, are afraid to ask the generals any tough questions for fear of being called a pack of limp-wristed peace pansies.

The Rovewellian rhetoric of the Bush years insisted that the commander in chief was wisely doing what his generals recommended.

As any slow child could tell you, that merely meant Bush picked generals that told him what he wanted to hear.

When it was time to deflect criticism that we hadn't committed enough troops to Iraq, the generals in charge said we had plenty of troops. When Bush got desperate after the drubbing his party suffered in the 2006 election, and decided to send more troops to Iraq, he got him a general (Petraeus) who told him he needed more troops.

The myth that our generals are infallible persists even though everything they've done proves otherwise.

Petraeus's successes have been a sham; that he's managed to thrive is a testimony to his genius for self-serving hucksterism.

You can't count the number of times you've heard that Petraeus "wrote the book" on counterinsurgency. The only part of legendary Field Manual 3-24 Petraeus wrote was his name at the bottom of the cover letter. (Though we should give the devil his due. Petraeus's signature is pretty much the only part of the manual that wasn't plagiarized.)

The Pentagon sold Petraeus protégé McChrystal to the Senate as a counterinsurgency expert.

McChrystal's only real combat command experience involved assassinating suspected bad guys along with whatever civilians happened to be within the frag pattern at Dick Cheney's behest.

Image-makers have toiled Herculean to make Petraeus and McChrystal seem superhuman.

Tom Ricks gushed like Joe Lieberman in a 2007 NPR interview as he recounted the spectacle of Petraeus besting teen-age privates in one-arm pushup contests, and McChrystal's public relations staff made a point of ensuring the world knows that he only eats one meal a day and sleeps just a few hours a night.

That should have told everyone paying attention that Petraeus's military genius consists of penchant for staging flashy displays of chickenshit and that McChrystal is permanently goofy from the effects of long-term malnourishment and sleep deprivation.

But these two brass-hatted humbugs know how to manipulate the media and baffle Congress and the public with bull feathers, as does Joint Chiefs chairman Admiral Mike Mullen, whose father was a high profile Hollywood publicity agent.

The way they polluted the information environment to mousetrap Obama into going along with the Afghanistan surge was eye-watering. In another era — most notably the

Truman administration days — an insubordinate stunt like that would have gotten Petraeus, McChrystal and Mullen transferred to Civilian Command.

However, the three amigos currently at the top of the armed forces pile are connected and valued in high places, especially in the defense industry and the Congress, both of which have a vested interest in making the Long War as long as possible.

That's the most frightening part of the recent Supreme Court ruling that allows politicians to guzzle every last drop of campaign financing that corporations can afford to pour down their throats.

The ruling is an all's-in-free for the military-industrial-congressional-media complex to keep us in never-ending counterproductive wars that we get to pay for.

Homeless Vet In America



From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance
Subject: Homeless Vet in America
Date: Feb 10, 2010

Homeless Vet In America

**In war,
what happens in the field,**

stays in the field.
It never happened.
Everything is a cover up,
to protect the public back home.
As the years go by,
veterans become homeless in the mind.
Their lives become classified,
to make room for the next generation.
It's all about lies,
and the betrayal that destroyed a generation.
A Vietnam vet friend hung himself in a motel room.
Another one died homeless on the streets.
Then there was the unexplained car accident that
killed another vet friend.
All of them had honorable discharges from the military.
All of them dishonorably destroyed by the U.S. Government.
Everything is a cover up.
What happens after the war,
stays in the field.
It never happened.
The whole war was a war crime.
That is the deep dark secret that absolutely
has to be kept from the American public.
Here rests in silence,
an American veteran know but to God.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
February 10, 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

***February 11, 1937:
A Victory For Our Side***

“They Faced Tear Gas Attacks, Heat Shutoffs, And Battled With Police And Company Security Guards. Michigan Governor Frank Murphy Sent In The National Guard”



Michigan National Guard confronting union supporters outside GM plants in Flint, 1937

Carl Bunin Peace History February 11-17

February 11, 1937:

Forty-eight thousand General Motors workers won a 44-day sit-down strike in Flint, Michigan.

Walter P. Reuther Library:

The Great Flint Sitdown: On February 11, 1937, several hundred members of the United Automobile Workers Union (UAW) emerged from three General Motors (GM) factories in Flint, Michigan to the sounds of cheering crowd.

These workers had just completed a 44-day sitdown strike. Less than two years old, the UAW had won its first major victory.

Auto factories were tough places to work during the early years of the industry. The pace of work was controlled by the ever-increasing speed of the assembly line and the foreman held the power to hire or fire workers at will. Many jobs were physically demanding, machines had few safety devices, and industrial accidents were common. On August 26, 1935, auto workers organized the UAW to bargain for better wages and working conditions.

The Flint Sitdown began on December 30, 1936 when UAW leaders decided to call a strike against GM. The goal of the strike was simple: GM recognition of the UAW.

For over six weeks members of the UAW stopped production and refused to leave the plants they occupied. They slept on unfinished car seats, eating food their families and friends slipped through factory windows.

They faced tear gas attacks, heat shutoffs, and battled with police and company security guards. Michigan Governor Frank Murphy sent in the National Guard.

Faced with an enormous loss of production, GM conceded to the strikers' demands and signed a one-page document, agreeing to bargain with the UAW. This was one of the key events in American labor history.



The Flint Sitdown Strikers win February 11, 1937

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