

Military Resistance 8C7

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



U.S. Marines help a wounded comrade onto a helicopter in Helmand province, Afghanistan March 5, 2010. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

**No Help For Zabul:
“Taliban Fighters Are Moving
In”
Occupation Command
Abandoning Most Of Afghanistan
To The Resistance:
Only 80 of 364 Districts Considered
“A Priority”**

40,000 U.S., Foreign And Afghan Troops To Concentrate “In One 60-Mile Stretch Of The Helmand River Valley”

Of the 364 districts in the country, NATO considers 80 of them a priority, he said. They form a patchwork that roughly corresponds to the circle formed by the “ring road,” or Highway 1, which hits the country’s biggest cities, including Kabul, Kandahar, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat.

March 9, 2010 By Joshua Partlow, Washington Post Foreign Service

QALAT, AFGHANISTAN -- To work in Zabul province these days is to feel forsaken.

The Americans pulled a battalion out in December. The Afghan government promises help but sends little.

Meanwhile, Taliban fighters continue to pour in.

“I am alone,” said Abdul Qayoom Khan, who has watched it all from his lonely perch as a district governor.

This sparsely populated swath of desert and scrub brush does not feature prominently in the plans of Afghanistan or NATO to combat the insurgency, despite its 40-mile border with Pakistan and historical importance for the Taliban.

U.S. commanders acknowledge the troubles here, but the math is simple: The cost of consolidating tens of thousands of troops for major operations in neighboring Helmand and Kandahar is that other volatile parts of Afghanistan must do without.

“You can’t spread yourself completely thin everywhere,” said Air Force Lt. Col. Andy Veres, commander of the Provincial Reconstruction Team in Zabul. “This operation requires some really difficult decisions be made.”

Though an additional 30,000 U.S. troops are to arrive in Afghanistan this year, their geographic focus is narrow.

By the end of the buildup, there will be 40,000 coalition and Afghan troops just in one 60-mile stretch of the Helmand River valley, according to a senior U.S. military planner in Kabul.

Of the 364 districts in the country, NATO considers 80 of them a priority, he said. They form a patchwork that roughly corresponds to the circle formed by the “ring road,” or Highway 1, which hits the country’s biggest cities, including Kabul, Kandahar, Mazar-e Sharif and Herat.

The road also bisects the province of Zabul, but for the most part U.S. troops have shifted their attention elsewhere.

Late last year, commanders transferred a battalion of U.S. soldiers with the 5th Stryker Brigade Combat Team from Zabul to Helmand to patrol key roads and prepare to help in the offensive on Marja.

That reduced the U.S. presence in Zabul from approximately 1,800 troops to 1,000, in a province that is home to 300,000 people, U.S. military officials say.

With Zabul's population sprinkled in about 2,500 remote villages, U.S. military officials argue that protecting the people is not only exceedingly difficult but also peripheral to a new American strategy in Afghanistan, which focuses on protecting more densely populated areas.

But the move to pull out the Stryker battalion has left the weak and underfunded provincial government increasingly concerned about battling the Taliban.

The provincial governor, Alhaj M. Ashraf Naseri, said that about 2,000 Taliban fighters, operating in more than 100 groups, use motorbikes to crisscross his province at will.

One of the 11 districts, Khak-e-Afghan, has been abandoned to the Taliban by both NATO and Afghan troops.

"This is the main gateway for the Taliban," Naseri said. "Why are they neglecting Zabul?"

Naseri helped lead the effort to persuade NATO commanders to revise plans that had called for an even more dramatic retreat -- consolidating the remaining troops in a tighter knot in towns and abandoning some districts. He and others threatened to withdraw the Afghan police, army and local governments from the outlying districts if NATO went through with its initial plan. According to a senior U.S. military official, Naseri called President Hamid Karzai, who passed along his concerns to Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal, the top U.S. and NATO commander in Afghanistan.

This debate, as well as the tension it created even between U.S. units with differing goals in Zabul, rose to the level that the secretary of the Army visited Zabul to help hash it out. "It got pretty heavy," said a senior U.S. military official in Zabul.

In response to the protest, NATO commanders in southern Afghanistan agreed to leave small groups of U.S. troops in the districts, which "allayed the local leaders' concern," said one U.S. official.

Brig. Gen. Frederick B. Hodges, director of operations for southern Afghanistan, said the battalion's rapid withdrawal, to beat the winter snows, should have been better explained.

"I personally failed to fully appreciate the psychological impact in moving forces away from there over toward Helmand," he said.

“But if you ever want to concentrate somewhere, you have to take from somewhere else.”

Hodges said additional Special Forces were sent to Zabul to shore up Afghan police and army outposts near the Pakistani border. In addition to the U.S. troops that remain, there are about 800 Romanian soldiers, who patrol Highway 1, and a Jordanian special operations unit in the province.

Zabul has long been one of Afghanistan’s poorest and most underdeveloped corners -- the Afghan equivalent of “central Nevada,” Veres said.

There is one paved road. No sewer system. The only electricity apart from generators comes from a USAID-funded power plant that serves about 60 percent of the residents in the provincial capital of Qalat for a quarter of the day. Of more than 100 schools on the books, no more than about 25 offer classes.

Before Naseri became governor last year, he held the same post in Badghis province, in northwestern Afghanistan, and taught geography at Kabul University.

The United Nations recently hired 10 advisers to augment his five-man office, although two of them left. Eighty percent of the slated jobs in his office remain unfilled.

Naseri has survived two close calls with bombings, and much of his work takes place in an office adjoined to a U.S. base.

But some U.S. officials think Naseri is not as popular as a Taliban leader who calls himself the shadow governor.

The people of Zabul still come to Naseri in waves. When 16 bearded and turbaned men from the outskirts of Qalat sat down at his lacquered conference table last week, he assured them that “you will never be disappointed.”

Soon, though, the conversation deteriorated into a dispute over Naseri’s promise to build a new school in the village. The villagers said they wanted an Islamic school because the Taliban would not take kindly to anything else.

“Just be a man and help me build the school,” the governor pleaded to one villager.

“If you insist on coming with that idea,” said Mohammad Kareem, “the village may still be there, but all the people will be gone.”

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Remember Obama's Lying Bullshit About How All U.S. Troops Have Been Withdrawn From Urban Areas? Guess What: Baghdad



A US soldier patrols the area near the Independent High Electoral Commission (IHEC) headquarters in Baghdad on March 8. (AFP/File/Ahmad al-Rubaye)



U.S. Army in a Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle on a street in Baghdad, Iraq, March 8, 2010. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)



U.S. soldiers walking away from their Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAP) vehicle on a street in Baghdad, Iraq, March 8, 2010. (AP Photo/Karim Kadim)

Remember Obama's Lying Bullshit About How All U.S. Troops Have Been Withdrawn From Urban Areas? Guess What: Mosul



A U.S. Army soldier from B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment stands guard in Mosul, north of Baghdad, Iraq, March 7, 2010. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)



U.S. Army soldiers from B Troop, 3rd Squadron, 7th Cavalry Regiment guard an Iraqi prisoner after polls closed for the national election in Mosul, north of Baghdad, Iraq, March 7, 2010. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two U.S. Soldiers Killed By Attack Inside Their Base at Chergotah; “A Number Of Others” Wounded

March 10, 2010 By NISHANUDDIN KHAN, Associated Press Writer

KHOST, Afghanistan - The Taliban claimed responsibility Wednesday for a bombing inside a U.S.-Afghan base in eastern Afghanistan that killed two foreign service members.

A Taliban operative wearing an Afghan police uniform infiltrated the base Tuesday night and detonated his explosive vest next to a group of soldiers who were warming their hands beside a fire, Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid told The Associated Press by phone.

U.S. troops command most of the eastern area bordering Pakistan, and local officials said they only knew of U.S. soldiers and Afghan border police on Chergotah base.

A number of others were wounded in the attack, the military alliance said.

Tuesday's attack was along the porous Pakistan border, about 25 miles (40 kilometers) east of Khost city, the provincial capital.

A resident who lives near Chergotah base, Sayed Gul, told The Associated Press he heard a large explosion just after sunset and saw two helicopters land in the area of the base and then fly back toward Khost city.

Provincial police chief Yaqoub Khan said he could not give details on the base that was attacked, but said all the NATO bases in the area are run by Americans.

On Monday, international and Afghan forces in Khost city repelled an insurgent attack on the provincial government headquarters, NATO said.

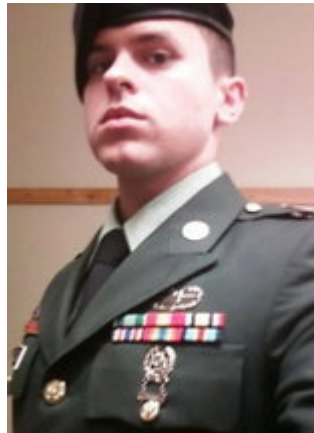
Foreign Soldier Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan; Nationality Not Announced

Mar 11 AFP

A bomb attack killed a foreign soldier in Afghanistan on Thursday, the military said.

The soldier, whose nationality was not released, was killed when a makeshift bomb exploded in southern Afghanistan, NATO's International Security assistance Force (ISAF) said.

Oklahoma Soldier Killed In Afghanistan



Sgt. Vincent L.C. Owens

3/5/2010 By MANNY GAMALLO, World Staff Writer

SPIRO - A soldier from Oklahoma who was killed this week in Afghanistan was described by family Friday as an easygoing young man, who joined the Army out of a sense of patriotism and a desire to climb the military ladder.

According to the Pentagon, Sgt. Vincent L.C. Owens, 21, died Monday at Forward Operating Base Sharana, Afghanistan, of wounds suffered earlier that day when enemy forces attacked his transport vehicle using direct fire in Yosuf Khel.

He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division (Air Assault), Fort Campbell, Ky.

The Pentagon listed his hometown as Fort Smith, Ark., but the family said he had spent most of his life growing up in the Sprio-Keota area in northern LeFlore County.

Owens had been in Afghanistan just two weeks when his family received the grim news Tuesday of his death, according to his uncle, Gary Hope of Spiro.

Hope said Owens had left for Afghanistan for his second tour there on Valentine's Day, and he'd only been married for a few weeks when he left. He married a Fort Smith woman, and the couple had established a home there.

Hope described his nephew as an athletic youngster, who played football in high school.

"He was a great kid. He was never in trouble, and he was very smart, a good student. "He could just look at a textbook and take a test," Hope said.

Hope said his nephew was easygoing; very kind, never mean nor mischievous; a young man who always had high standards.

"He joined Army, because he thought it would be great to climb the ladder, to be somebody, and also out of a sense of patriotism," Hope said.

"Once he got in, he took his Army career seriously, and he climbed that ladder quickly," the uncle said.

Owens held the rank of specialist when he died, but was promoted to sergeant posthumously, according to the military.

Hope said his nephew was the oldest of five children, and he noted that most of the family lives in LeFlore County.

According to a spokeswoman at Fort Campbell, Owens joined the Army in August 2007 and arrived at Fort Campbell the following January.

His awards and decorations include: two Army Commendation Medals; two Army Achievement Medals; a Valorous Unit Award; the National Defense Service Medal; the Iraq Campaign Medal; the Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; the Army Service Ribbon; Overseas Ribbon; Combat Action Badge; Driver and Mechanic Badge with Driver-Wheeled Vehicles; and Weapons Qualification: M4, expert.

Owens' death was the first for the 3rd Brigade Combat team, only a week after it assumed control of three Afghanistan provinces, a Fort Campbell spokeswoman said.

His death was the first in six months for the 101st Airborne Division, which is deploying some 20,000 of its troops to Afghanistan this year.

Hope said his nephew's body has already been returned to Dover, Md.

Funeral arrangements are pending at Mallory-Martin Funeral Home at Spiro.

Hope said Owens is survived by his wife, Kaitlyn Owens, of Fort Smith, Ark.; his mother, Sheila Real of Keota; his father, Keith Owens of Berryville, Ark.; A sister, Destiny Owens of Keota; brothers Seth and Slade Owens, and half-brother Dalton Real, all of Keota.

Another Utah Marine Is Killed

03/08/2010 By Matthew D. LaPlante, The Salt Lake Tribune

Salem: The Olsen family hadn't been in its new home for long. But in this tight-knit town in southern Utah County, it doesn't take long for strangers to feel like friends and for friends to feel like family.

And Kim and Todd Olsen made it easy to get close.

So when the news came Thursday morning that the Olsens' youngest son, Nigel, had been killed in Afghanistan's volatile Helmand province the previous day, word spread quickly throughout the town. Flags were lowered at government buildings and raised along Main Street. Neighbors adorned the Olsen family's home in red, white and blue. A group of teenage girls taped heart-shaped messages of love and support to the family's front door.

And as family members traveled to Dover Air Force Base, in Delaware, to await the arrival of the 21-year-old Marine's body, the residents of Salem gathered together to mourn.

And to pray.

"It has been difficult for this entire town," said Bret MacCabe, bishop of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ward that the Olsen family has attended since moving to Salem shortly after Nigel's 2007 graduation from Mountain View High School in Orem.

MacCabe said that just about everyone in this predominantly Mormon community knew Nigel Olsen, who made many of the local girls swoon when he attended church in his dress blue uniform and broke from his usually quiet demeanor to share his testimony with fellow parishioners.

"Any guy looks good in dress blues, but he looked particularly good," said 16-year-old Adeline Lamb, who described the young man she adored as "sweet and caring and really proud of what he was doing."

But it was Olsen's quiet nature that was striking to so many of those who got to know him.

"He was very unassuming," said family friend Mark Bracken. "He was fun to be with, but he didn't say much. When you'd ask him a question, you would get a very short response. It wasn't rude or anything, just always to the point."

"He was so, so quiet," remembered Karen Taylor, a neighbor who volunteered to sew the patches onto Olsen's uniforms. "His mom always said it was because she was quiet and his dad was a quiet person too."

But the silence from Afghanistan -- where her son's unit was sometimes cut off from communications for long periods of time -- was worrisome to Kim Olsen, who wrote on her Facebook page that she once went three weeks without hearing from her forward-deployed son.

After news came that another Marine from the Camp Williams-based Charlie Company of the 4th Light Armored Reconnaissance Battalion -- fellow Mountain View High School graduate Carlos Aragon -- was killed in an improvised explosive attack on Monday, Kim Olsen worried even more.

As she waited for word from her son, Olsen wrote that she was having a "hard time keeping it together when I heard about," Aragon's death. "He and his family are in our prayers."

Within 24 hours, it was her family that was being prayed for by friends, acquaintances and perfect strangers across the country -- and by just about everyone in Salem.

"We're all just praying so hard for them right now, that they will have some peace," MacCabe said. "They have made such a tremendous sacrifice. And so now what we want to do is to be here for them, however they need us to be."

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

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

**All In A Days Work For The Soldier-
Killer Gates:**

He Promises Stryker Brigade With 22 Dead In Afghanistan He Will Make Sure More Die Soon



U.S. Defense Secretary Gates in Afghanistan, March 10, 2010. (AP Photo/Jim Watson, Pool)

Mar 9 By Phil Stewart, (Reuters) [Excerpts]

FORWARD OPERATING BASE FRONTENAC, Afghanistan

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates told troops in southern Afghanistan on Tuesday they would soon be part of a “decisive phase” in the war -- an operation to impose control over the Taliban heartland of Kandahar province.

“You all have had a very tough tour,” Gates told troops with a Stryker brigade at Forward Operating Base Frontenac, about 48 km (30 miles) north of Kandahar city.

Twenty-two troops have been killed and 62 wounded in the area since July last year.

“Here in the environs of Kandahar, you’re in an area that once again is going to be an important part of the decisive phase of this campaign.

“Once again, you will be the tip of the spear,” he said.

Bomber Kills 5 Inside Afghan Military Base

Mar 10, 2010 Reuters

A bomber killed five members of the Afghan security forces when he drove a truck carrying explosives hidden under firewood into an Afghan military base on Wednesday, police said.

Dawlat Khan Zadran, police chief of southeastern Paktika province, said the bomber had driven the small truck inside the base in the remote Bermel district near the border with Pakistan. He said another four people were wounded.

A Taliban spokesman, Zabihullah Mujahid, said by telephone from an undisclosed location the truck had been able to enter the base after fighters infiltrated the Afghan border police.

Mujahid claimed the truck was carrying thousands of kilograms of explosives and that the bomber had inflicted heavy casualties among Afghan and foreign troops. The International Security Assistance Force said no foreign troops were hurt.

Resistance Action

March 4, 2010 AP & 03/08/10 Pakistan Times & March 09, 2010 People's Daily Online & 3.10 by Waheedullah Massoud, AFP

Kandahar: Five Pakistani road construction workers were shot dead Thursday in Afghanistan's restive southern city of Kandahar, police said.

The workers were traveling to their construction site when two guerrillas on motorbikes opened fire on their minivan at about 7 am, said Kandahar's deputy police chief, Mohammad Shah Faroqi. Five of the laborers were killed and one was wounded.

The Pakistanis worked for Saita Construction Co., a Japanese joint-venture with a contract to repair the road from Kandahar to Punjwai district, Faroqi said.

HERAT: A homemade bombs exploded in an increasingly volatile part of northwestern Afghanistan, police said on Monday. The blast struck a police car, killing two policemen.

On Wednesday, a rocket attack killed an Afghan soldier at a security post in Paktika, the eastern province which has become a flashpoint for a Taliban insurgency and which borders militant strongholds in Pakistan.

Three police and one civilian were killed as a roadside bomb struck a police vehicle in Kandahar on Tuesday. "This afternoon, a roadside bomb hit a police van in Spin Boldak

district killing four people including three police constables and a passerby,” commander of Border Police in the district General Abdul Razaq told Xinhua.

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

**“Solving The Problems Of This
Country Is Not In The Hands Of
Afghans But In Hands Of Other
Nations Who Meddle And Cause
Trouble Here”**

**“Instead Of Sending 15,000 Soldiers To
Fight In Marja, Why Didn't The U.S.
Spend Those Millions Of Dollars
Creating Jobs?”**

March 10, 2010 By Jeffrey Fleishman, The Los Angeles Times [Excerpts]

Reporting from Kabul, Afghanistan - The men come at dawn, a ragged, anxious collection of faces peeking through scarves and hoping for work as they stand in a traffic circle beneath billboards advertising war heroes and washing machines.

They are bricklayers, gardeners, hole diggers and carpenters. Sometimes they are tapped on the shoulder, most times they are not, so they hunch amid the cars and fruit stands, knowing that the higher the sun climbs the lower their chances of returning home with money in their pockets.

“One day we work, three days we don't. How can life be good?” said Ahmed Jalal, poking his red-bearded chin through a crowd of laborers.

“The Americans are sending cash to Afghanistan to build factories, but our officials are taking it for themselves. If there were factories do you think we'd be standing in this dusty place?”

As war with the Taliban rattles in the provinces, here in the capital, unemployment, poverty and corruption are regarded as more potent enemies.

The national government extols the recent success of U.S. and Afghan troops pushing back militants in Marja, but jobless computer technicians and laborers who can't buy bread have folded away all the pretty promises they have heard.

"If the U.S. and other countries want a stable Afghanistan, they don't need war, they need to build industries," said Ahmad Morid Rahimi, a coordinator with a relief and job placement agency.

"People join the Taliban. Why? To feed their families. Instead of sending 15,000 soldiers to fight in Marja, why didn't the U.S. spend those millions of dollars creating jobs?"

"Things are getting worse, not better," said one man whose white cap matched his beard.

"There's fighting across the land. Solving the problems of this country is not in the hands of Afghans but in hands of other nations who meddle and cause trouble here."

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

**NO MISSION;
POINTLESS WAR:
ALL HOME NOW**



Feb 11: A US marine mortar crew under sniper fire in the North East of Marjah.
(AFP/Patrick Baz)



U.S. Marines from 3rd Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment patrol in Marjah in Afghanistan's Helmand province Feb. 19, 2010. (AP Photo/David Guttenfelder)



U.S. Marines from Bravo Company of the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines during an operation in Marjah, Helmand province February 21, 2010. REUTERS/Goran Tomasevic

Who You're Dying For:

**Corrupt Narco-Shitbag Welcomes
Bloody Dictator To Afghanistan:
“And Over There, On Our Right, Are My
Family’s Opium Warehouses”**



Iranian President & murdering tyrant Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, right, and corrupt, useless Afghan President Hamid Karzai hold hands at the presidential palace in Kabul, Afghanistan March 10, 2010. (AP Photo/Sorkhabi, Pool)

TROOP NEWS

**“There Is Discontent In The Ranks,
Which Is A Very Scary Thing For The
Services”**

**“A Lot Of My Colleagues Who Are
Serving Now, And Some Of Them Are In
Afghanistan And Iraq, Are Equally
Disillusioned”**

March 09, 2010 Ploughshares

British War Resister Sentenced to Nine Months in Jail

A British soldier who refused to return for a second tour of duty in Afghanistan has been sentenced to nine months in military prison.

Twenty-seven-year-old Lance Corporal Joe Glenton served seven months in Afghanistan. After he returned, he began openly speaking out against the war.

Joe Glenton: "I came back feeling quite ashamed. I felt I couldn't see what we'd achieved by being there, and I felt very disillusioned. And I think that disillusionment isn't isolated to me.

"A lot of my colleagues who are serving now, and some of them are in Afghanistan and Iraq, are equally disillusioned.

"There is discontent in the ranks, which is a very scary thing for the services."

HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS?



The funeral procession for Marine Lance Cpl. Kielin T. Dunn of Chesapeake, Va. March 4, 2010, at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va. Lance Cpl. Dunn, 19, was killed during combat operations in Afghanistan. Dunn was part of the 1st Battalion, 6th Marine Regiment, 2nd Marine Division, II Marine Expeditionary Force based at Camp Lejeune, N.C. (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

Brand New U.S. Army M-ATVs Brilliantly Designed To Assist Taliban:

**“One External Door Latch Has
Failed On All Of 2nd Battalion,
12th Infantry Regiment’s M-ATVs”
“If It Closes, Reich Said, The Only
Way To Get The Door Open Is To
Have Someone Crawl Through The
Vehicle And Use The Inside Handle”
“From Then On, Begley Said, He’s Been
Riding In The Unit’s MRAPS Instead”**



Staff Sgt. Dave Reich tries to open the door on one of his unit’s M-ATVs during a stop near Asad Abad, Afghanistan. ROB CURTIS/STAFF

During the first engagement he ran from inside the M-ATV, he had to kick the door open so he could see where his rounds were landing.

March 15, 2010 By Rob Curtis, Army Times [Excerpts]

KUNAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan — Since getting the new vehicles in January, at least one external door latch has failed on all of 2nd Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment’s M-ATVs.

“When we get out of the vehicle to shoot a rocket or something, we have to make sure the door stays open,” Staff Sgt. Dave Reich said.

If it closes, Reich said, the only way to get the door open is to have someone crawl through the vehicle and use the inside handle.

On his truck, it's the driver's side door, Reich said, but on other trucks, it's different.

Other members of the platoon were quick to confirm busted latches were a critical problem with the new trucks.

The Pentagon has shipped more than 1,000 of the new Mine Resistant Ambush Protected All-Terrain Vehicles to Afghanistan.

Oshkosh Corp. won a \$1 billion contract last summer to produce up to 10,000 of the new M-ATVs for off-road use in Afghanistan.

The trucks don't get stuck and have protected the occupants from small-arms fire, soldiers said.

On the downside, they would have liked more cargo room in the passenger cab because they have to get out and grab ammo cans from the truck bed during a firefight.

Sgt. Clint Begley, a forward observer with the unit, said the side windows are too small for him to direct fires.

During the first engagement he ran from inside the M-ATV, he had to kick the door open so he could see where his rounds were landing.

From then on, Begley said, he's been riding in the unit's MRAPs instead.

Coroner Finds Four British Troops Killed In Afghanistan Were Poorly Equipped:

“You Drive Over A Landmine In A Very-Lightly Armoured Land Rover Snatch – It's Not Much Different From Driving Over It In A Ford Escort”

The Vehicles Are Dubbed “Mobile Coffins” By Troops



Snatch LandRover

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

9 March 2010 Steven Morris, Guardian News and Media Limited [Excerpts]

Four soldiers who were killed when their Snatch LandRover was destroyed by a roadside bomb in Afghanistan were “inadequately trained” and poorly equipped when they died, the coroner at the inquest into their deaths said today.

Sarah Bryant, the first British woman soldier to be killed in the conflict, and three colleagues died while helping to mentor police in Helmand province when their vehicle triggered a huge improvised explosive device.

Their six-day inquest heard that their special forces unit was inadequately trained, had the wrong vehicles for the terrain they were working in and were having to deal with a shortage of metal detectors used to trace bombs.

The Wiltshire and Swindon coroner, David Masters, said he would be writing to the Ministry of Defence to try to ensure that such an incident was not repeated. He said he was concerned that the soldiers had been forced to use the lightly armoured Snatch Land Rovers, though their commanding officer had asked for a different kind of vehicle to be made available.

Masters also expressed alarm that a shortage of metal detectors meant that troops did not use them to train before deployment.

On the day of the tragedy, in June 2008, the multiple – group of three vehicles – in which the soldiers were travelling was equipped with only one metal detector rather than the two recommended.

After the hearing at Trowbridge in Wiltshire, relatives of the soldiers paid tribute to their loved ones and called for the MoD to learn lessons from the tragedy.

The family of Private Paul Stout, 31, said in a statement: “There’s not a second of the day that our brave son Paul is not in our thoughts and hearts. Hopefully there must be lessons learnt.” They said their hearts were with the families of the other three who were killed.

The families of Corporal Sean Reeve, 28, and Lance Corporal Richard Larkin, 39, said: “Though nothing can bring back a husband to his wife, a father to his children or a son to his parents and family, we are at least comforted by the fact there has been careful and open consideration of the circumstances in which they died so that lessons may be learnt.

“We hope that the lack of resources and shortcomings of their training and planning, which have been exposed in the evidence that we have heard will not be repeated. We hope the MoD will heed the recommendations made by the coroner and, by reason of the changes they make, no other families will have to stand in the position we stand today.”

The coroner recorded a narrative verdict, in which he spelled out the sequence of events that led to the four’s deaths.

He described how while helping mentor Afghan police officers, they had strayed from the metalled road, where the Snatch Land Rover worked well, into a marshy area where it struggled.

As it was driven through a narrow gap between two compounds it hit a massive IED and was destroyed.

Masters said it was “significant” that none of the soldiers who had given evidence had hands-on experience of metal detectors before deployment.

“In my judgement there was an inadequacy in training,” he said. Masters said “all the evidence” suggested there was a “shortage” of metal detectors at the time of the tragedy.

Turning to the Snatch Land Rovers the unit was using, Masters flagged up the concerns of soldiers of all ranks.

He recalled how one man who gave evidence, identified only as Soldier O, expressed “disbelief” that Snatch Land Rovers were to be used because they were considered hard to operate in soft ground, top heavy, lightly armoured and lightly armed. “There was concern they were not suitable for the job,” he said.

Controversy has long dogged the suitability of Snatch Land Rovers in current conflicts. Designed to combat the small arms fire and petrol bomb attacks common during the Northern Ireland Troubles, at times they have been a favourite of special forces.

But their limited armour has proved unable to withstand the blasts of rocket-propelled grenades and improvised road bombs in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The vehicles are dubbed “mobile coffins” by troops who blame them for more than 35 deaths caused by roadside bombs in Afghanistan.

“You drive over a landmine in a very-lightly armoured Land Rover Snatch – it’s not much different from driving over it in a Ford Escort,” a former member of the Royal Green Jackets in Iraq, Steve McLoughlin, said in 2008.

MPs on the Commons defence committee were critical in 2006 about the vehicle and urged the government to immediately purchase a replacement.

“It is unsatisfactory that the lack of capability was not addressed with greater urgency much earlier,” their report said. James Sturcke

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

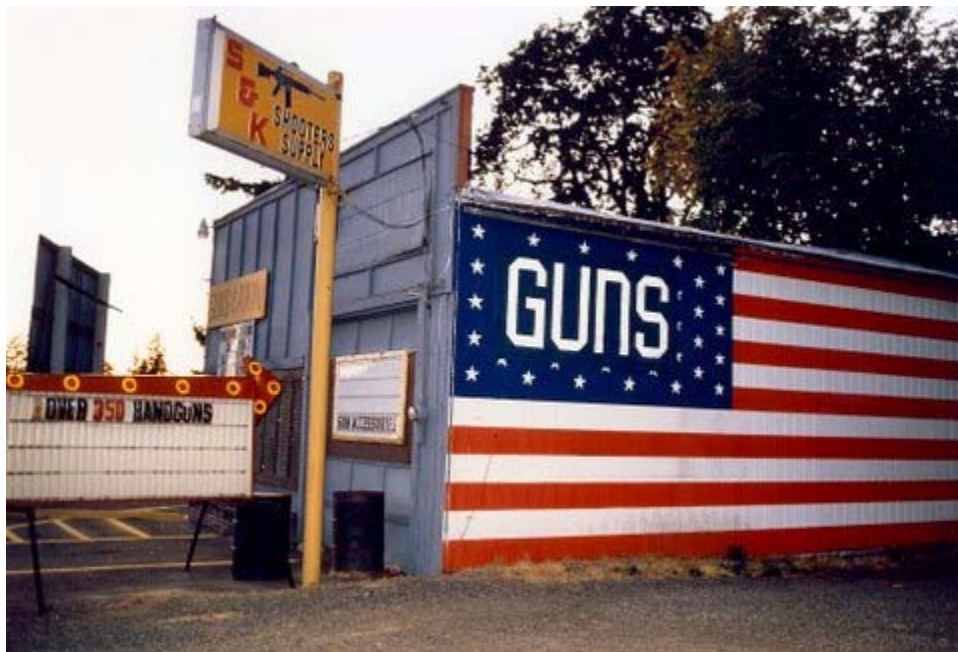
Hope for change doesn’t cut it when you’re still losing buddies.

-- 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

Inconvenient Truth



Newberg, Oregon: Photograph by Mike Hastie

From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance
Sent: March 06, 2010
Subject: Inconvenient Truth

Inconvenient Truth

During the first 48 hours of the American invasion of Iraq beginning March 19, 2003, Baghdad was hit with 800 Cruise Missiles.* This was not "Shock and Awe" warfare. This was full throttle U.S. Terrorism. And the reason the vast majority of the American people would never believe this, is because this truth would terrorize their belief system.
America,
you will get away with nothing.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
March 6, 2010

Lying Is The Most Powerful Weapon In War

* From the book: "Bombing Civilians."
Edited by Yuki Tanaka and Marilyn B. Young
The New Press 2009 (page 171)

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)

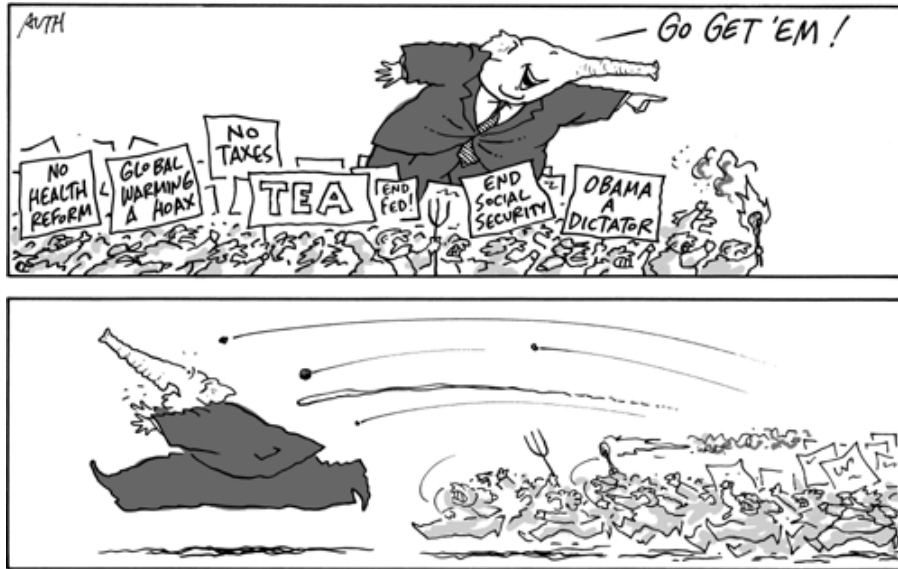
One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth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

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

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



“A Tour Of The United States Arranged By The State Department To Improve Ties To Pakistani Legislators Ended In A Public Relations Fiasco” Invited To Visit By U.S. Government, Pakistani Political Leaders Go Home After Being Singled Out For Special Airport Body Search

March 9, 2010 By JANE PERLEZ, NYTimes [Excerpts]

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan — A tour of the United States arranged by the State Department to improve ties to Pakistani legislators ended in a public relations fiasco when the members of the group refused to submit to extra airport screening in Washington, and they are now being hailed as heroes on their return home.

Meetings with the Obama administration's top policy makers on Pakistan, including the president's special representative, Richard C. Holbrooke, and visits to the Pentagon and the National Security Council, did not allay the anger the politicians said they felt at being asked to submit to a secondary screening on Sunday before boarding a flight to New Orleans.

They declined to be screened and did not board the flight.

The leader of the parliamentary group, Senator Abbas Khan Afridi, said in an interview on Tuesday that before they were to board the flight for New Orleans, he and his colleagues were selected from a crowd of passengers at the airport and asked to stand aside.

They were then asked to accept a full-body scan by a machine, he said.

One of Mr. Afridi's colleagues, Akhunzada Chitan, told Mr. Mir on his "Capital Talk" program [in Pakistan], "Going through a body scan makes you naked, and in making you naked, they make the whole country naked."

The lawmakers were chosen to visit the United States by the Political Section of the American Embassy.

American officials are eager to reach out to political figures from the underdeveloped and isolated tribal areas where the Pakistani Army is now fighting to reclaim territory from the Taliban.

"Our people were very disturbed we were going to America," Mr. Afridi said. "We were under threat for going to the United States. We took the risk to see if America was interested in solving the problems."

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

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Mark Irish*
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Marie Wallace*

*Member of Actors Equity Association

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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.

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Military Resistance www.militaryproject.org

*This is how Obama brings the troops home,
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.*



*Military Resistance is a near-daily news bulletin for service members
www.militaryproject.org*

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