

Military Resistance 8H17



“We’re Surrounded”
“It’s Like Squirrels Gathering Up Nuts
For The Winter”
“They’ve Put The IEDs Out There, And
Just Sit Back And Wait”

Aug 19, 2010 By Denis D. Gray - The Associated Press [Excerpts]

FORWARD OPERATING BASE WILSON, Afghanistan — “May you have a blessed Ramadan,” reads a poster greeting U.S. troops outside a base mess tent. It refers to Islam’s holiest month, a time of good deeds, prayer and purification of the spirit through sunrise-to-sunset fasting.

But on the western approaches to the strategic city of Kandahar, neither side is taking a spiritual time-out from the war.

"Ramadan? Every time you step outside the wire, the war is real. We're surrounded," says Lt. Douglas Meyer, commanding a platoon at Ghundy Gar, a desolate, sun-seared hilltop outpost ringed by Zhari's deceptively bucolic landscape.

"It's like squirrels gathering up nuts for the winter," says Meyer, of Baltimore, Maryland, looking out across a neat patchwork of green fields and grazing sheep from his hilltop post.

"They've put the IEDs out there, and just sit back and wait."

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Tollesboro Soldier Killed In Iraq

August 19, 2010 By MISTY MAYNARD, Staff Writer, Ledger Independent

TOLLESBORO -- A 2005 graduate of Lewis County High School has been killed in Iraq.

Christopher Wright's family was informed of his death Thursday morning, according to sources close to the family. Details were limited, though a family friend said it was Wright's second tour in Iraq and that a career in the military was all the young man ever dreamed.

"He was dead serious and dedicated about what he was doing," said Tollesboro resident Terri Wright. Terri Wright is not related to Christopher Wright but they attended the same church and she is a friend of the family. "He really wanted to do it. He saw it as an honor."

Terri Wright said there are no better people than Christopher Wright and his family, calling the young man a "sweetheart," and a "kind, good kid."

Terri Wright said the church sent care packages to Christopher Wright while he was overseas and he often sent his thanks and encouragement to "keep them coming" through his family.

"Chris wasn't a good writer," Terri Wright said. "But he was a good visitor and a good hugger."

John Moore, pastor of Tollesboro Christian Church, said he received word on Christopher Wright's death Thursday morning, after military officials tracked down his father at Tollesboro Supply, a family-owned business.

According to reports, Christopher Wright died on the operating table after being hit in the chest with shrapnel.

Attempts to reach Christopher Wright's father, Jim Cochran were unsuccessful. Moore said he was traveling to meet his wife, Michele, and two younger children who were attending the state fair.

Army Times Understands Perfectly: “Combat Brigades In Iraq Under Different Name” “7 Advise And Assist Brigades, Made Up Of Troops From BCTs, Still In Iraq” [Army Times Headline]

Aug 20, 2010 By Kate Brannen - Staff writer, Army Times & LA Times end note

As the final convoy of the Army's 4th Stryker Brigade Combat Team, based at Fort Lewis, Wash., entered Kuwait early Thursday, a different Stryker brigade remained in Iraq.

Soldiers from the 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team of the 25th Infantry Division are deployed in Iraq as members of an Advise and Assist Brigade, the Army's designation for brigades selected to conduct security force assistance.

So while the “last full U.S. combat brigade” have left Iraq, just under 50,000 soldiers from specially trained heavy, infantry and Stryker brigades will stay, as well as two combat aviation brigades.

Compared with the 49,000 soldiers in Iraq, there are close to 67,000 in Afghanistan and another 9,700 in Kuwait, according to the latest Army chart on global commitments dated Aug. 17. Under an agreement with the Iraqi government, all U.S. troops must be out of Iraq by Dec. 31, 2011.

There are seven Advise and Assist Brigades in Iraq, as well as two additional National Guard infantry brigades “for security,” said Army spokesman Lt. Col. Craig Ratcliff.

Last year, the Army decided that rather than devote permanent force structure to the growing security force assistance mission, it would modify and augment existing brigades.

The Army has three different standard brigade combat teams: infantry, Stryker and heavy.

To build an Advise and Assist Brigade, the Army selects one of these three and puts it through special training before deploying.

The Army selected brigade combat teams as the unit upon which to build advisory brigades partly because they would be able to retain their inherent capability to conduct offensive and defensive operations, according to the Army's security force assistance field manual, which came out in May 2009.

This way, the brigade can shift the bulk of its operational focus from security force assistance to combat operations if necessary.

To prepare for their mission in Iraq, heavy, infantry and Stryker brigades receive specialized training that can include city management courses, civil affairs training and border patrol classes. As far as equipment goes, the brigades either brought their gear with them or used equipment left behind that is typical to their type of brigade, said Ratcliff.

The first Advise and Assist Brigade — the 4th Brigade Combat Team of the 1st Armored Division from Fort Bliss, Texas — deployed last spring to Iraq, serving as a “proof of principle” for the advisory brigade concept.

Of the seven Advise and Assist Brigades still in Iraq, four are from the 3rd Infantry Division, based at Fort Stewart, Ga. The 1st Heavy Brigade of the 1st Armored Division, based at Fort Bliss, and the 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the 4th Infantry Division, based at Fort Carson, Colo., are also serving as Advise and Assist Brigades.

The 2nd Stryker Brigade Combat Team of the 25th Infantry Division is based at Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. A combat medic from that unit was killed Aug. 15 when his Stryker combat vehicle was hit with grenades, according to press reports.

Two combat aviation brigades also remain in Iraq, according to Dan O'Boyle, Redstone Arsenal spokesman. Three more are deployed in Afghanistan, where there are currently no Advise and Assist Brigades.

Fighter jets and attack helicopters will remain, as will about 4,500 Special Forces members who will continue to carry out counter-terrorism missions alongside Iraqi counterparts.

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

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

Mosul: “He Described The Situation As Getting Worse” “Distrust And Poor Coordination Between The City’s Army And Police Units Have Been Weaknesses Exploited By Insurgents”

August 19 2010 By Andrew England in Mosul, The Financial Times Limited [Excerpts]

At a checkpoint along a highway once dubbed “Death Street,” Brigadier General Majid al-Zubydi brings his convoy of Humvees to a halt and hops out to inspect Iraqi forces who have been taking increasing responsibility for security in one of Iraq’s most volatile cities.

With traffic blocked on either side to ward off potential attacks, he checks their weapons and berates an officer for carrying a magazine that is half empty. It is a scene repeated at other checkpoints through Mosul as Brig Gen Zubydi finds fault with troops of his Federal Police division, a paramilitary force that plays a key role in Iraq’s battle with militants.

Since deploying to the city nearly two years ago, some 2,000 of the Federal Police division’s men have been wounded and about 160 killed, causing the force to operate at just over 50 per cent capacity, with a current strength of 3,400.

Signs of conflict abound, from the crumbling skeleton of a building destroyed by a truck bomb to streets lined with bullet-scarred houses and sandbags forming firing positions from the balconies of abandoned apartments.

While inspecting his men, Brig Gen Zubydi boasts that “Death Street” would have been deserted before the Federal Police deployed, saying his forces pushed the extremists out.

Yet earlier in his office, he described the situation as getting worse.

“I don’t know (why), but probably it’s because of the withdrawal of US forces,” he says.

However, no replacements for the dead and wounded have been dispatched to the Federal Police division.

And distrust and poor coordination between the city’s army and police units have been weaknesses exploited by insurgents, US officers say.

A regular police force has deployed in Mosul, but it is at only 40 per cent capacity and requests for an additional 8,000 police officers have not been met.

“Milicias Including The Mahdi Army Remain Armed And Continue To Attack U.S. Troops” “Rocket Attacks Targeting The Green Zone And U.S. Military Facilities Have Spiked”

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

August 18, 2010; By Leila Fadel, Washington Post [Excerpts]

NAJAF, IRAQ -- The followers of [nationalist] cleric Moqtada al-Sadr call this plot of land on the edge of this holy Shiite city the Freedom Cemetery.

It is barren, nondescript desert ground, a two-acre section within the Sadrist Martyrs' cemetery.

The graves have not been excavated. But it is reserved for a purpose: the possibility that U.S. forces might stay beyond the Dec. 31, 2011, departure deadline mandated by a security agreement between the United States and Iraq.

If that happens, members of the Mahdi Army, a militant group that bills itself as a resistance force against the U.S. occupation, have promised to rise up and fight to the death. Their bodies would be buried in the cemetery.

"If the Americans leave, which we don't think they will, we'll make it a burial site for our parents," said Abu Mohammed, who oversees the Sadrist cemetery, where 4,250 fighters and Sadr supporters are buried. "If their exit is delayed, we will fight and give our blood.

"This will be our solution," he said as he waved toward the reserved plot.

The cemetery is a reminder that even as the United States is about to declare the end of its combat mission in Iraq, armed groups still see U.S. troops as combatants.

Milicias including the Mahdi Army remain armed and continue to attack U.S. troops.

Assassinations are on the rise, and rocket attacks targeting the Green Zone and U.S. military facilities have spiked.

U.S. troop levels have decreased to about 59,000 from a high of more than 165,000. By Sept. 1, there will be 50,000; by the end of next year, U.S. troops are to fully withdraw from Iraq, which has no new government more than five months after inconclusive national elections.

The Obama administration says the United States is on track to withdraw all of its forces, despite concerns from some Iraqi officials who say they worry that the drawdown is premature.

Regardless of the assurances, many Iraqis say they're convinced that the Americans will never leave.

U.S. military officials say that militias will remain a threat to Iraq's security and U.S. troop security. They are working with the Iraqi government to arrest militia members.

"They are outside the security mechanism, and they have said they will continue to attack the U.S. forces," said Maj. Gen. Stephen Lanza, the top U.S. military spokesman in Iraq. The U.S. military is on track to end its mission at the end of next year, he said, calling the cemetery in Najaf "rhetoric" and "propaganda."

The Mahdi Army, created in 2003, is the militant wing of Sadr's movement; he inherited a grass-roots following from his father, an influential Shiite ayatollah. After fighting with U.S. forces in 2004, the group grew out of control in the worst days of Iraq's sectarian war in 2006 and 2007.

Sadr froze the militia's activities in 2008 and has since divided most of his men into two unarmed civic organizations called Mumahidoon, Arabic for "those who pave the way," and Munasiroon, "the supporters." The groups provide services to the poor Shiite communities that make up their base, protect mosques and study religion.

Although the militia is armed, only a small and extremely secretive armed wing called the Promised Day Brigade, whose purpose is to attack U.S. troops, is permitted to fight.

DVDs of their attacks are often distributed after Friday prayers at Sadr-controlled Shiite mosques.

"The war is different now; it's intellectual, political, and we have a military wing," said Sheik Kadhim al-Saadi, a prominent Sadrist sheik in Baghdad.

He sat recently in a Shiite mosque in eastern Baghdad, under a woven rug depicting Mahdi Army fighters carrying AK-47s beneath the watchful eye of Sadr's visage.

The militia has largely laid down its weapons, and the movement made a powerful political showing in the March 7 elections by winning 40 seats, the largest showing by a Shiite coalition.

"We cannot predict what happens in the future," Saadi said. "But if anything comes up, Sayed Moqtada wants to ensure that all the men of the Sadr trend are prepared physically and mentally." Sayed is an honorary title used to refer to Sadr.

The Sadrist Martyrs cemetery is divided into plots by battles.

One plot is for fighters who rose up in Najaf in 2004 to fight U.S. forces in the holy city. One is for Sadr supporters killed in insurgent attacks, and another is for those who were killed after Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki ordered an offensive against the militia in the southern port city of Basra.

A handful of graves in a separate part of the cemetery are the resting places of the Promised Day Brigade fighters. No one speaks of them. Only recently did people begin to mark the graves, after hesitating because of fear about repercussions against martyrs' families by government security forces.

Abu Moqtada, a Mahdi Army fighter from Baghdad who laid down his weapons and joined the Mumahidoon, recently walked through the graveyard to mourn his fallen brothers. Every grave is marked with the words "The Happy Martyr." He said he has lost as many as a dozen friends since the 2004 Najaf battle.

Abu Moqtada, who used a nickname to protect his identity, was imprisoned by the U.S. military for more than two years. He was arrested at a friend's funeral and accused of attacking U.S. troops. The detention intensified his anger toward the United States. He is free now. He no longer fights U.S. troops because Sadr has forbidden him to. But he is ready to fight again.

One day, he could be buried in Freedom Cemetery.

"We are ready at any moment, but we are waiting for one word from the Sayed," Abu Moqtada said.

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Two Foreign Soldiers Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan; Nationality Not Announced

8.20.2010 AFP

Two foreign soldiers were killed in a bomb attack in southern Afghanistan.

The nationalities of Friday's casualties were not disclosed.

US Soldier Killed Thursday Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan

8.20.2010 AFP

A U.S. soldier died following a Taliban-style bomb attack in the south of the country.

An ISAF statement said the attack took place on Thursday, but gave no further details.

Ga. Guardsman Succumbs To Afghan Bomb Injuries

Aug 19, 2010 The Associated Press

SWAINSBORO, Ga. — Army officials said Thursday that a Georgia Army National Guardsman injured during an explosion in Afghanistan has died.

Officials said Sgt. 1st Class Edgar N. Roberts, 39, died Tuesday at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., as a result of wounds received during a July 26 roadside bomb at Sayed Abad, Wardak province.

A mix up earlier this month led suburban Chicago family members of Roberts to believe he had died when he was in fact, alive in Bethesda. At the time, a Pentagon spokesman could find no record of Roberts' death.

Roberts was assigned to the 810th Engineer Company, in Swainsboro.

Ark-La-Tex Soldier Laid To Rest

Aug 07, 2010 (KSLA)

Wake Village, TX: An Ark-La-Tex soldier was laid to rest today in his hometown Wake Village, Texas.

Friends and family of twenty-five-year old Kyle Stout gathered Saturday morning in his hometown of Wake Village, Texas to say their final goodbyes.

According to the Department of Defense, Stout died on July 30th in Kandahar, Afghanistan when insurgents attacked his unit with an explosive. Stout's body was returned home on Thursday.

"He had called his mom on Tuesday and told her that they were doing good things over there and I know they have been fearful since day one that this could happen," said family friend Angie Walthal.

Support riders with the Patriot Guard escorted Sgt. Stout on Thursday through the streets of Texarkana to Chappelwood Funeral Home in the neighboring Wake Village.

Stout was a graduate of Texarkana, Texas High School and has been in the military since 2006.

Solider With Local Family Dies In Afghanistan

August 12, 2010 By Naomi King, Staff Writer; Houma Today

HOUMA — A nurturing father who always opened doors for women, Master Sgt. Jared Van Aalst, the soldier son-in-law of a Houma family, died a week ago while serving in Afghanistan.

The 34-year-old leaves behind his wife, Katie, a 29-year-old Houma native, and two daughters, 7-year-old Kaylie and 22-month-old Ava.

Katie, who is three months pregnant, is the daughter of Mona LeBoeuf Dove and stepdaughter of Gordon Dove Sr., a state representative and Houma businessman. The family lost Gordon Dove Jr., 23, more than a year ago in a wreck on Interstate 310 near Destrehan.

Van Aalst, 34, was killed Aug. 4 during what Army officials say was "a combat operation in Afghanistan." He was assigned to the U.S. Army Special Operations Command out of Fort Bragg, N.C., and on his sixth overseas deployment.

The New Hampshire-born soldier and his wife met at a mutual friend's wedding about three years ago, Mona Dove said.

"They were dancing," the mother said. "Just watching them, I knew they would be good together."

The family was instantly smitten with Van Aalst, she said. They married in October 2009.

"The first time I met him I really thought he was a unique person. I liked everything about him," Mona said. "They started dating, and I was hoping he would be the one."

Gordon Dove said he admired Van Aalst's dedication to the military and his pursuit of terrorists. "Thank God we have soldiers like Jared to keep us free," Dove said, adding that he once asked Van Aalst about his tours. "He said, 'I go where my country sends me.' ... Our grandchildren, we'll never let them forget Jared."

Van Aalst graduated from Plymouth Regional High School in Plymouth, N.H., in 1993 and enlisted in the Army two years later.

He completed various training, including Ranger and Sniper schools. He was also selected as an instructor and a shooter in the U.S. Army Marksmanship Unit at Fort Benning, Ga.. He served in other positions and participated in five previous combat operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

In 2008 he was selected for the U.S. Army Special Operations Command in Fort Bragg.

In addition to his numerous medals, Van Aalst was posthumously recognized with a second Bronze Star, a third Purple Heart and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal.

Funeral arrangements are pending, but the service will be at Fort Benning where Van Aalst served 13 years. A burial is being planned in Arlington National Cemetery.

Soldier With Local Ties Dies In Afghanistan

August 11, 2010 By Lori Kersey, The Tribune

A soldier with ties to Lawrence County has died from injuries while fighting in Afghanistan.

Max Donahue, 23, of Highlands Ranch, Colo., died Saturday from wounds sustained three days earlier in combat, the Associated Press has reported.

Donahue was the grandson of Max Donahue, Sr., and the son of Greg Donahue, both of whom lived in Coal Grove. Max Donahue Sr. is the former pastor of Memorial United Methodist Church in Coal Grove, where he served from 1970 to 1982. He now serves at Slab Fork United Methodist Church.

Coal Grove resident Carol Gool spoke with the soldier's grandfather last week after his grandson had been injured.

"When I talked to Max (Sr.) they were told that he had both legs amputated and an arm and they were waiting to hear about brain and eye damage," Gool said.

Gool said she has not talked to the family since then and assumes that they are traveling to Colorado for the funeral service.

Max Donahue was a military policemen and working dog handler who enlisted in the Marine Corps July 17, 2006, according to the AP.

Donahue's personal service awards include: Navy Unit Commendation, Marine Corps Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Two Iraq Campaign Medals, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon and Certificate of Commendation

“Locals Throw Rocks, Curse Troops In Kandahar”

“Children Gave American Troops The Finger”

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

August 16th 2010 BY James Gordon Meek, DAILY NEWS WASHINGTON BUREAU

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan - It only takes a few minutes cramped inside a heavily-armored vehicle, rumbling through this decrepit city where the Taliban was born, to understand what President Obama's troop surge is up against here.

"Did you see that?" a G.I. asked a buddy over the headsets inside a vehicle at the rear of the armored column one recent morning.

"Yeah, he just threw a rock," his sergeant replied from the front passenger seat.

The children of Kandahar don't greet U.S. and NATO trucks with flowers. They often hurl rocks in the crumbling mud-brick neighborhoods where the U.S. aims to crush the insurgency by year's end.

In the heart of the city, where Osama Bin Laden and his henchmen plotted the Sept. 11 attacks a decade ago, children gave American troops the finger.

"Fuckin' Kandahar," the young soldier at the wheel muttered.

The sergeant commanding the patrol was nervous that suicide bombers might try to get close enough to attack the convoy by posing as Afghan police.

Several pickup trucks belonging to the Afghan National Civil Order Police (ANCOP) were recently stolen, he said.

"If you see something, gunner, don't be afraid to talk," he instructed.

Minutes later, an Afghan police pickup truck raced past the American vehicle. The sergeant screamed the gunner's name into the headsets and barked, "You gotta let me know when people are passing us!"

"My bad," the turret gunner replied. "I thought they had the right of way."

Taliban Roll Up Security Posts On Sangin – Gereshk Highway: 30 Security Guards Killed, 15 Wounded, More Taken Prisoner: “We Requested Help From Afghan And Foreign Forces But No One Helped”

Aug 20 by Nasrat Shoaib, AFP

Afghan police said Friday that 30 security guards had been killed in a clash with Taliban fighters and that another 15 had been wounded.

"The Taliban attacked and during the fighting, which lasted the whole day, 30 guards were killed, around 15 were injured and some others were taken by the Taliban," said the deputy police chief of southern province Helmand.

The clashes took place in Helmand's volatile Sangin district on Thursday, Kamaludin Sherzai told AFP.

Officials earlier said they believed that around 12 guards had been killed when the heavy gunbattles broke out between insurgents and guards working for a road construction company in Sangin.

Helmand provincial spokesman Daud Ahmadi said a dozen bodies were evacuated Friday to a hospital in the provincial capital of Lashkar Gah.

"We launched an attack on the road construction company along the Sangin and Gereshk road," Zabihullah Mujahed, a rebel spokesman, said by telephone, referring to the region where authorities said the fighting took place.

"We took more than 30 checkpoints along the road and killed more than 50 guards," he said, speaking from an undisclosed location.

Abdul Mohammad, an employee of the road construction company, said he accompanied the bodies to the hospital.

He described the fighting as "fierce" and said at least another 20 bodies had been either left behind or removed from the battle scene.

"Yesterday the Taliban attacked us. We requested help from Afghan and foreign forces but no one helped.

"Lots of people were killed, I think more than 20 other bodies were left in the area or have been taken elsewhere," he said.

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



Soldiers with the 101st Airborne Division during a patrol in the village of Saidon Kalacheh in Arghandab Valley north of Kandahar July 28, 2010. REUTERS/Bob Strong



U.S. soldier at COP Nolen after a mission: Arghandab Valley, Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, July 29, 2010. (AP Photo/The Volatile Rodrigo Abd)

MILITARY NEWS

HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS?



Funeral services for Sgt. Andrew Nicol, a U.S. Army Ranger from Kensington, N.H., at Holy Family Parish in Amesbury, Mass., Aug. 18, 2010. Sgt. Nicol died from wounds sustained from an improvised explosive device while on a tactical mission in Southern Afghanistan earlier this week. (AP Photo/Cheryl Senter)

Nearly 6 In 10 Americans Oppose War In Afghanistan: Only 38% Say They Support Obama's Expanded War

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

August 20, 2010 The Associated Press

A majority of Americans see no end in sight in Afghanistan, and nearly six in 10 oppose the nine-year-old war as President Barack Obama sends tens of thousands more troops to the fight, according to a new Associated Press-GfK poll.

With just over 10 weeks before nationwide elections that could define the remainder of Obama's first term, only 38 percent say they support his expanded war effort in Afghanistan -- a drop from 46 percent in March.

Just 19 percent expect the situation to improve during the next year, while 29 percent think it will get worse. Some 49 percent think it will remain the same.

Strong dissent -- 58 percent oppose the war -- could depress Democratic turnout when the party desperately needs to energize its supporters for midterm congressional elections.

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 Afghanistan, 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

**“Members Of Two Different Units Heading To Iraq And Afghanistan Are Calling On Their Commanders Right Now To Halt Their Deployments Because They Are Not Physically Or Mentally Ready To Deploy”
Will You Stand With Them?**



From: IVAW
To: Military Resistance
Subject: Iraq - It's Not Over
Date: Aug 20, 2010

It's Not Really Over

Mainstream television news yesterday made a big show of the withdrawal of America's "last combat troops" from Iraq, but the painful saga continues for our service members.

Many returning home to their tearful and joyous families in the coming days will ultimately be sent to serve more tours of duty in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

In fact, members of two different units heading to Iraq and Afghanistan are calling on their commanders right now to halt their deployments because they are not physically or mentally ready to deploy.

Will you stand with them?

President Obama makes it sound like the troops remaining in Iraq will be serving largely administrative and 'advisory' functions.

But in reality, 50,000 "combat capable" troops will remain in Iraq to:

- **Train the Iraqi military, including accompanying them on dangerous patrols;**
- **Support special forces operations in their continued hunt for terrorists; and**
- **Provide air support to the Iraqi military (a.k.a overhead artillery and bombing).**

In an Iraq which grows increasingly violent each month, does this sound like desk duty?

The 3rd ACR at Fort Hood:

This Sunday, the 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment (3rd ACR) at Fort Hood will be shipped out to Iraq. The military wives and family members of 3rd ACR soldiers say that hundreds of the 5,000 about to go to Iraq are suffering from PTSD and other ailments, and are not fit to deploy. This week they demanded that those wounded warriors stay home.

IVAW's Fort Hood chapter and Fort Hood's military families are asking the civilian community to join their calls for the military to stop deploying traumatized troops.

Call 3rd ACR Commanders and tell them not to deploy soldiers who have PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury.

3rd ACR Commanders:

Regimental Commander - Col. Allen (254) 553-3526

Command Sgt. Major Jonathan J. Hunt (254) 287-0598

Call between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m. Monday through Friday and ask for whatever commander you're ringing by name. If they won't speak to you, leave them a message

or call back. If you get anyone else's ear, tell them to stop deploying soldiers who are medically unfit.

After you've made your call, send us an email at feedback@ivaw.org to let us know you've called.

The 656th Transportation Company

The 656th is an Army Reserve unit based in Indiana, made up of reservists from several midwestern states. Due to deploy this weekend for Afghanistan, members within the unit have cited lack of training and mental health problems among the reasons they are not fit to go.

IVAW member, Alejandro Villatoro, a Sergeant in the Company, has raised concerns that they have not been trained on the weapons they will be using, and do not know how to operate the vehicles they will have to drive, once in Afghanistan. There are also serious mental health issues among some of the troops set to deploy.

After Alejandro first exposed this crisis, others in the unit also came forward.

They are now pushing for a Congressional inquiry into their unit's readiness. We will keep you posted next week with steps you can take to support their efforts.

For a full explanation of the situation facing the 656th, click [here](#).

Your financial [support](#) will help IVAW members stop the war machine which feeds off of injured, exhausted, and ill-prepared troops.

Members of IVAW who serve at Fort Hood and in the 656th Transportation Company are counting on your support.

Make a [donation](#) today.

In Solidarity,

Iraq Veterans Against the War

Traitors In Command: Their Campaign To Create An Explicitly Christian Army Gives Aid And Comfort To Forces

Recruiting To Kill U.S. Troops In Iraq And Afghanistan: Domestic Enemies Of The U.S. Constitution Punishing Soldiers Who Refuse To Bow Down Before Their Personal Christian Crusade: Arrest, Court Martial, And Prison Overdue For Taliban Recruiter Maj. Gen. James E. Chambers

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

“At that point the NCO issued us a punishment. We were to be on lock-down in the company (not released from duty), could not go anywhere on post (no PX, no library, etc). We were to go to strictly to the barracks and contact maintenance.

“If we were caught sitting in our rooms, in our beds, or having/handling electronics (cell phones, laptops, games) and doing anything other than maintenance, we would further have our weekend passes revoked and continue barracks maintenance for the entirety of the weekend.

Aug 19, 2010 Chris Rodda, Talk To Action [Excerpts]

Talk To Action contributor Chris Rodda is Head Researcher for the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that combats illegal and unconstitutional religious coercion in the United States military. Rodda is also author of Liars For Jesus: The Religious Right's Alternate Version of American History.

For the past several years, two U.S. Army posts in Virginia, Fort Eustis and Fort Lee, have been putting on a series of what are called Commanding General's Spiritual Fitness Concerts.

As I've written in a number of other posts, "spiritual fitness" is just the military's new term for promoting religion, particularly evangelical Christianity. And this concert series is no different.

On May 13, 2010, about eighty soldiers, stationed at Fort Eustis while attending a training course, were punished for opting out of attending one of these Christian concerts.

The headliner at this concert was a Christian rock band called BarlowGirl, a band that describes itself as taking "an aggressive, almost warrior-like stance when it comes to spreading the gospel and serving God."

Any doubt that this was an evangelical Christian event was cleared up by the Army post's newspaper, the Fort Eustis Wheel, which ran an article after the concert that began:

"Following the Apostle Paul's message to the Ephesians in the Bible, Christian rock music's edgy, all-girl band BarlowGirl brought the armor of God to the warriors and families of Fort Eustis during another installment of the Commanding General's Spiritual Fitness Concert Series May 13 at Jacobs Theater."

The father of the three Barlow sisters who make up the band was also quoted in the article, saying, "We really believe that to be a Christian in today's world, you have to be a warrior, and we feel very blessed and privileged that God has given us the tool to deliver His message and arm His army."

A few days later, some of the soldiers punished for choosing not to attend this concert contacted the Military Religious Freedom Foundation (MRFF).

The following is from the account sent by one of those soldiers to MRFF, detailing what transpired that night.

"The week prior to the event the (unit name and NCO's name withheld) informed us of a Christian rock event that was about to take place on Thursday the 13th.

"On Thursday 13th at 1730 we were informed that instead of being dismissed for the day, the entire company (about 250 soldiers) would march as a whole to the event.

"Not only that, but to make sure that everyone is present we were prohibited from going back to the barracks (to eliminate the off chance that some might 'hide' in their rooms and not come back down).

"We were marched as a whole to chow and were instructed to reform outside the dining facility. A number of soldiers were disappointed and restless.

"Several of us were of different faith or belief. A couple were particularly offended (being of Muslim faith) and started considering to disobey the order.

"From the dining facility we were marched back to the company area. There was a rumor circulating that we may be given a choice later on to fall out or attend. Though it was only a rumor it was also a small hope enough to allow us to follow along a little longer before choosing to become disobedient.

"We were marched back to the company area. To our dismay there was still no sign of as having a choice.

"We started marching to the theater. At that point two Muslim soldiers fell out of formation on their own. Student leadership tried to convince them to fall back in and that a choice will be presented to us once we reach the theater.

"At the theater we were instructed to split in two groups; those that want to attend versus those that don't.

"At that point what crossed my mind is the fact that being given an option so late in the game implies that the leadership is attempting to make a point about its intention. The 'body language' was suggesting that 'we marched you here as a group to give you a clue that we really want you to attend (we tilt the table and expect you to roll in our direction), now we give you the choice to either satisfy us or disappoint us.'

"A number of soldiers seemed to notice these clues and sullenly volunteered for the concert in fear of possible consequences.

"Those of us that chose not to attend (about 80, or a little less than half) were marched back to the company area.

"At that point the NCO issued us a punishment. We were to be on lock-down in the company (not released from duty), could not go anywhere on post (no PX, no library, etc). We were to go strictly to the barracks and contact maintenance.

"If we were caught sitting in our rooms, in our beds, or having/handling electronics (cell phones, laptops, games) and doing anything other than maintenance, we would further have our weekend passes revoked and continue barracks maintenance for the entirety of the weekend.

At that point the implied message was clear in my mind 'we gave you a choice to either satisfy us or disappoint us.

"Since you chose to disappoint us you will now have your freedoms suspended and contact chores while the rest of your buddies are enjoying a concert.'

"At that evening, nine of us chose to pursue an EO complaint.

"I was surprised to find out that a couple of the most offended soldiers were actually Christian themselves (Catholic). One of them was grown as a child in Cuba and this incident enraged him particularly as it brought memories of oppression."

The account of another soldier who did not attend the concert, which relates the same sequence of events and punishment that occurred, also adds that some of the soldiers who did decide to attend only did so due to pressure from their superiors and fear of repercussions.

"At the theater is the first time our options were presented to us. And they were presented to us in a way that seemed harmless, we could either go to the show, or go to

the barracks. But at that point, I felt pressured. As a person, I know that I can't be pressured into anything, I'm much stronger than that. But I also know that a lot of people aren't that strong, and that pressure was present. I could hear people saying, 'I don't know about going back to the barracks, that sounds suspicious, I'm going to go ahead and go to the show' and many things that sounded a lot like that. Now, like I said, I don't get pressured into things, but I also don't think that anybody should have to feel that kind of pressure.

"Making somebody feel that pressure is a violation of human rights, we are allowed to think what we want about religion and not have to feel pressured into doing things, and at that moment there was definitely pressure to go to that concert simply because people don't want to have their free time taken away."

The Commanding General's Spiritual Fitness Concert Series was the brainchild of Maj. Gen. James E. Chambers, who, according to an article on the Army.mil website, "was reborn as a Christian" at the age of sixteen.

According to the article, Chambers held the first concert at Fort Lee within a month of becoming the commanding general of the Combined Arms Support Command and Fort Lee in June 2008. But he had already started the series at Fort Eustis, as the previous commanding general there.

The concerts have continued at Fort Eustis under the new commanding general, as well as spreading to Fort Lee under Maj. Gen. Chambers. The concerts are also promoted to the airmen on Langley Air Force Base, which is now part of Joint Base Langley-Eustis.

In the Army.mil article, Maj. Gen. Chambers was quoted as saying, "The idea is not to be a proponent for any one religion. It's to have a mix of different performers with different religious backgrounds."

But there has been no "mix of different performers with different religious backgrounds" at these concerts. Every one of them has had evangelical Christian performers, who typically not only perform their music but give their Christian testimony and read from the Bible in between songs.

Another problem with these concerts, besides the issues like soldiers being punished for choosing not to attend them, is that they are run by the commanders, and not the chaplains' offices.

It is absolutely permissible for a chaplain's office to put on a Christian concert. It is not permissible for the command to put on a Christian concert, or any other religious event. Having a religious concert series that is actually called and promoted as a Commanding General's Concert Series is completely over the top.

And then there's the cost.

These concerts aren't just small events with local Christian bands. We're talking about the top, nationally known, award-winning Christian artists, with headline acts costing anywhere from \$30,000 to \$100,000, and even many of the opening acts being in the \$10,000 range.

The cost of these concerts led MRFF's research department to start looking at some of the DoD contracts for other "spiritual fitness" events and programs, and what we found was astounding. One contract, for example, awarded to an outside consulting firm to provide "spiritual fitness" services, was for \$3.5 million.

MRFF was already aware that exorbitant amounts of DoD funding were going to the hiring of civilian religious employees by military installations, the expenses of religious (almost exclusively evangelical Christian) programs, and extravagant religious facilities, but the extent of this spending goes far beyond what we had initially thought it amounted to.

Therefore, MRFF has decided to launch an investigation into exactly how much the military is spending on promoting religion.

Do the recently announced plans of Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to trim defense spending include any trimming of the military's outrageous spending on the promoting of religion and evangelizing of our troops? This alone could save the DoD untold millions every year, and go a long way towards upholding our Constitution at the same time.

Army Command Slime Defy Law: They're Throwing Wounded Soldiers Out On The Street With No Benefits: "It's Very Common," Perry Said. "And It's Completely Illegal"

August 16, 2010 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]

Two years ago, Congress enacted rules to curb the military's practice of separating troops with combat stress for pre-existing personality disorders — an administrative discharge that left those veterans without medical care or other benefits.

Now, veterans advocates say, the military is using a new means to the same end: giving stressed troops administrative discharges for "adjustment disorders," which also carry no benefits.

Sen. Christopher "Kit" Bond, R-Mo., plans to ask President Obama to have the Pentagon provide details on discharges for adjustment disorder in recent years.

In the meantime, Bond's office has been gathering more general data that show discharges for "other designated physical or mental conditions not amounting to disability" — which includes adjustment disorder — have shot from 1,453 in 2006 to 3,844 in 2009.

Over the same time, personality disorder discharges dropped from a peak of 1,072 in 2006 to just 260 last year.

Shana Marchio, an aide to Bond, said the issue was brought to the senator's attention by Steve Robinson, a former Army Ranger who is now a veterans advocate.

According to the DSM-IV, the psychiatric manual for mental health issues, adjustment disorder may occur when someone has difficulty dealing with a life event, such as a new job or a divorce — or basic training.

It also may occur after exposure to a traumatic event.

The symptoms can be the same as for post-traumatic stress disorder: flashbacks, nightmares, anger, sleeplessness, irritability and avoidance.

According to military and Veterans Affairs Department rules, if symptoms last longer than six months, the diagnosis should change to PTSD. Under the law enacted in 2008, that means medical retirement, an honorable discharge, a 50 percent disability rating and medical care.

That is not always happening, Robinson said.

“This is a case of inappropriate discharges. There are hundreds of cases.”

During a deployment to Iraq with the 4th Infantry Division in 2008, former Army Pfc. Michael Nahas, 22, said he survived two roadside bomb explosions and one rocket-propelled grenade attack, and watched people die in another explosion in Mosul.

Two months after returning to Fort Carson, Colo., he began feeling anxious and guilty about people he believed had died needlessly. He went to the post mental health clinic.

Over three weeks, he said he had three appointments — and a lot of medication, including 14 milligrams of Xanax a day.

“I was drooling on myself,” he said. “I could barely function.” His mother and veterans advocates verified his doses.

As enlisted supervisors in his unit chain found out he was going to behavioral health, Nahas said some made fun of him, calling him “crazy” and telling him to kill himself so he would not be a problem.

Veterans advocates who worked on Nahas' case verified his information, citing police and medical records as well as conversations with commanders.

In February, Nahas said he had a reaction to his medication that, coupled with the stress he was under, led him to try to commit suicide by sticking IV needles in his arms to bleed out.

In a photo of the aftermath provided by Nahas' family, blood fills the bathtub and a red smiley face gazes from the tiles above.

His wife found him and called for help, and Nahas survived.

After his suicide attempt, he said he spent time in an inpatient clinic where he was diagnosed with PTSD, then went back to his unit.

But rather than beginning the medical retirement process for PTSD, in late April his unit gave him an administrative discharge for adjustment disorder and sent him back to civilian life.

“I was told I had PTSD, and then I was told I didn’t,” he said.

His situation is not unique, according to people familiar with the military disability system.

Jason Perry, a former Army judge advocate who helps troops going through medical retirement, said he has seen dozens of such cases.

“It’s very common,” Perry said. “And it’s completely illegal.”

More Insane VA Bullshit: VA Won’t Let VA Approved Service Dogs For Disabled Veterans Go Inside VA Facilities

Aug 19, 2010 By Rick Maze - Staff writer, Army Times [Excerpts]

An inconsistent policy that can sometimes bar a veteran from entering a Veterans Affairs Department hospital or clinic accompanied by a service dog — even one approved by VA — has prompted a Florida lawmaker to demand a change in regulations.

The problem, according to Rep. Ron Klein, D-Fla., is that current law and policy prohibits animals other than guide dogs for the blind from entering VA facilities without written permission. Rules require exceptions to be approved on a case-by-case basis, and some medical centers and clinics have been reluctant to provide permission.

In a Wednesday letter to VA Secretary Eric Shinseki, Klein said VA’s restrictions seem especially outdated because the Americans with Disabilities Act — which does not apply to VA — requires civilian hospitals and clinics to allow guide dogs and other service animals to accompany disabled people if the animals are specially trained.

Service dogs are different than guide dogs for the blind or deaf. Instead of hearing or seeing, service dogs are trained to help with mobility, to help pick up or set down objects, to provide warnings for some medical conditions such as seizures and to do daily chores. They also can be trained to get help in an emergency.

"I believe that this regulation is outdated and does not reflect the needs of veterans with service dogs," Klein said in the letter. "It would be shameful if veterans with service dogs could access any public building in the United States except for VA."

Christina Roof, national deputy legislative director for the veterans group AmVets, said she knows of a paralyzed veteran who was prohibited in March from bringing a service dog into Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center in Augusta, Ga., although he had been allowed to bring the dog into other VA facilities.

After Klein interceded, the Augusta hospital has rescheduled an appointment for September where the dog will be allowed to enter, Roof said.

Roof, who has helped 11 veterans receive partial reimbursement for service dogs in the last month, agreed that the policy is outdated, especially in an era when VA approves of having dogs help severely disabled veterans and even pays for part of the costs.

"Everyone needs to understand that it creates problems and hurdles for veterans seeking care when policies vary from facility to facility. There should be one policy, it should apply everywhere and it should allow service dogs to accompany disabled veterans."

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**

August 21, 1831: Honorable Anniversary: Nat Turner’s Rebellion



Carl Bunin, Peace History Aug 21-27

August 21, 1831

Nat Turner, a 30-year-old man legally owned by a child, and six other slaves began a violent insurrection in Southampton County, Virginia.

They began by killing the child’s stepfather, Joseph Travis, and their family. Within the next 24 hours, Turner and ultimately about 40 followers killed the families of adjacent slaveholding properties, nearly 60 whites, while freeing and inciting other slaves to join them.

Militia and federal troops were called, and the uprising was suppressed with 55 African Americans including Turner executed by hanging, and hundreds more killed by white mobs and vigilantes in revenge.

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DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Traveling Soldier is the publication of the Military Resistance Organization.

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/)

CLASS WAR REPORTS



Troops Invited:

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This is how Obama brings the troops home,
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