

Military Resistance 8H20

**“A War With No Clear
Objective”**

**“Why Are They Building
Permanent Barracks And
Facilities In A Country We Are
Planning On Leaving?”**

**“It’s Hard For Me To Care When
My Own Children Suffer Emotional
Trauma Because Of My
Deployments”**

**“And Where Is The Money For The
Counseling They Are Supposed To
Receive?”**

**“It’s In The Bank Account Of The Clean
Civilian Contractor Who Looks Down On
Me From His SUV As He Blows Dirt All
Over My Buddies And Me”**

Featured on the cover of Time magazine this month is the picture of a disfigured Afghan woman, the result of Taliban cruelty.

As upsetting as the image may be, I wonder what the result would be if they covered their pages with pictures of disfigured soldiers, parentless children and shattered families.

The result would be more anger over a war with no clear objective, no clear borders and no one clearly in control.

Why are they building permanent barracks and facilities in a country we are planning on leaving?

Why do high-paid civilian contractors stand around watching Afghan workers make three dollars a day, doing all of the labor?

Why do U.S. soldiers wait for hours in line to use a phone or computer in a Morale, Welfare and Recreation facility? They do because it is packed with contractors. The same contractors who treat us like second-class citizens in the bubble of security we provide.

In the wake of revelations about misplaced funds throughout the war, why is no one answering for this?

I'm sorry that bad things happen in the world.

But it's hard for me to care when my own children suffer emotional trauma because of my deployments.

And where is the money for the counseling they are supposed to receive?

It's in the bank account of the clean civilian contractor who looks down on me from his SUV as he blows dirt all over my buddies and me while we wait for a bus to take us to chow.

Staff Sgt. Stephen Rogers
Big Rock, Tenn.

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Texas Soldier Killed In Afghanistan



Pfc. Alexis V. Maldonado, 20, of Wichita Falls, Texas, died Aug. 21, 2010, of wounds suffered in an insurgent attack on his unit in Afghanistan. He was assigned to the 510th Clearance Company, 20th Engineer Battalion, 36th Engineer Brigade, Fort Hood. (AP Photo/U.S. Army)

Two French Soldiers Killed Near Tagab; Three More Wounded

23 August 2010 BBC & CHRISTOPHER BODEEN, Associated Press Writer

Two French soldiers were killed and three more have been wounded in fighting in Afghanistan, President Nicolas Sarkozy's office has said.

The deaths bring the total number of French soldiers killed in Afghanistan since 2001 to 47.

The dead personnel were an officer and soldier from the 21st Marine Regiment based in Frejus, southern France.

They were fatally shot during a night operation near Tagab, 55km (34 miles) north-east of Kabul.

Foreign troops are increasingly skirmishing in the vast south and mountainous east, where insurgents have long held sway.

Militants also are attacking coalition forces in parts of the north and west where they were not previously active.

U.S. Soldier Killed By IED Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan

23 August 2010 (AP)

KABUL, Afghanistan - NATO says a roadside bomb killed one American. The attack Monday came in the north.

Hungarian Soldier Killed In Baghlan; Three More Badly Wounded

2010.08.23. 17:42 / hm.gov.hu

The Hungarian Army for the province of Baghlan Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT MH): a Hungarian convoy on Monday morning 3:30 am time was attacked during which a Hungarian soldier was killed on the spot.

A companion life-threatening, while two others seriously injured.

MH PRT 8th the change in stock return home in the heart of ISAF's northern region, held in Mazar-e Sharif city, when the Pol-e Khumritól northwest, 20 km from the explosion, after a number of sources were subject to firing them.

After the incident, the convoy returned to the PRT camp, where the wounded have received medical care.

The convoy was one of the vehicle near the IED (home-made explosive device, Explosive Improvised Device, IED) explosions and rear anti-tank grenade (RPG with) the shot.

Subsequently, three sides have been under fire several times.

The attack in this armored vehicle is a Toyota for her positions, information pieces of an RPG grenade fired by the attackers. A total of 15 motor vehicle convoy in Hungary stood at the head of 4 pieces of armored reconnaissance HMWEE (High Mobility Multipurpose wheeled vehicle) passed, which was responsible for the way ensure the convoy's passage.

The motor vehicle of the convoy, the fourth bombing. A so-called road side. improvised explosive device and the bombing was carried out immediately after the three directions

in three different locations of small armed attack was sent to the Hungarian soldiers, against the convoy.

The convoy commander reported that the PRT commander, who immediately took action that forces arrive at the scene of ratification. Subsequently, German and Afghan soldiers, police officers rushed to help the Hungarian team.

The attack on the convoy returned to the starting position into the Pol-e-Khumri. 29 people before the repatriation of soldiers, as well as providing 63 soldiers took part in the task. The figures also show that the living forces assigned to protect, so. "Force Protection" forces return home number several times higher than the stock number.

Currently, the Afghan National Army (ANA), the Afghan Police (ANP) is also present on the spot where the German soldiers with nearly 1 kilometer front line trying to stifle the attackers.

There are currently uncertain how long it lasts.

This morning in a sand storm raging in the province that critically injured soldiers because of weather conditions could not be frontloaded, so his camp in Pol-e Khumri advanced surgery center and had settled in America in conjunction with the other victims.

The critically injured soldier in a coma, the condition has been stabilized.

The airlift is being organized in order to továbbszállíthassák of Mazar-e Sharif-i, a higher level of care, under German leadership of the hospital.

The other two injured - although repeszszérüléseik are healing beyond eight days - is in satisfactory condition.

Fallen Hero Derek Farley: The Explosive Ordinance Disposal Specialist Was Only Weeks Away From Coming Home

Aug. 20, 2010 By XORJE OLIVARES, ABC News

Staff Sgt. Derek Farley lived an action-packed life, and loved every minute of it.

"He was someone who could see a situation and know he could handle it. He could see his way through it," said his father Kenneth Farley, 53. "He loved to make things go bang."

At age 17, Derek Farley already had made up his mind about his future, telling his parents that he had contacted a military recruiter who would speak to them about his

choice. According to his father, the motivation was the feeling of camaraderie with other soldiers who shared his son's passion.

A Vietnam War veteran himself, Kenneth Farley knew there was no stopping his son.

"We saw that's what he wanted to do; we knew that," Kenneth Farley said. "He always made that clear, so we weren't really surprised. We respected his wishes. We wanted him to be what he wanted to be."

What Farley became was an explosive ordnance disposal specialist, or EOD. It was Farley's job to try and defuse or disarm IEDs, or improvised explosive devices. Early on in his career, he preceded dignitaries, including the president, to locations to secure them and check for bombs.

"Derek traveled all over the country. He saw a lot, he experienced a lot," said his mother Carrie Farley. "Derek called me one time he was on the tarmac as Air Force One was flying in. He was amazed at what was going on."

But soon, Farley deployed to Iraq, where, according to his father, he took on his job with seriousness and pride.

"He grew up there fast. He learned early on that this was serious business and that he had a task at hand to do," Kenneth Farley said. "He went over there as a young soldier and he came back a seasoned man."

Despite the grueling 12-hour-long missions, Kenneth Farley said his son was fond of the time he was kept busy. But in doing so, he always found himself in the line of the danger.

He even was awarded a Purple Heart after blowing out his eardrum while detonating an explosive during his deployment.

"He said, 'Mom, I'm going over there, I'm doing a job, I'm saving soldiers' lives so these boys can come home to their moms just like I'm going to come home to you,'" Carrie Farley said. "He was very proud of that. He saved many."

After having left Iraq for Germany at age 22, Farley remained in the European country for about a year before eventually deploying to Afghanistan. Just two months ago, he spoke to his parents from Italy, where he was on leave with his girlfriend Maria.

He was scheduled to return from Afghanistan in two weeks to meet Maria in Germany before returning to the States in October.

But the Farleys soon learned that the homecoming they were expecting was not going to happen.

"All we know is that he was on a mission," Kenneth Farley said. "He was attempting to disarm an IED, and it detonated while he was in close proximity to it, and that's all we know. He was doing his job."

To fulfill his wish, the Farleys will eventually spread his ashes on a demolition field, which is where his mother believes her son belongs. But for now, the grief continues.

“My son was brave enough to give his life to his country,” she said. “I need to be brave enough and strong enough for him to honor him and his life.”

Maria is now flying to visit the family she was about to meet for the first time, though under entirely different circumstances.

“We’re going to embrace Maria,” Carrie Farley said. “She deserves to be here to meet his family, to sleep in Derek’s house, to know where Derek grew up.”

Though his death remains painful, Carrie Farley said she has always been proud of her son, even more so after reading a recent e-mail he sent her.

“I know I never said it when I was home, but I loved what I am doing in life, and my job is my life,” he wrote. “If something were to happen to me, just remember: I do the most dangerous job because it is the most rewarding payoff. My life is EOD, and if I get hit, then I do it as an EOD tech.

“There would be no greater honor if it comes to it, but I keep fighting because there are thousands of other mothers out there just like you who want their sons and daughters again. That is my motivation to be an EOD guy.”

But for his parents, Farley was so much more.

“I think he would want people to remember him as a soldier who did his job and he did it the best he could right to the end,” Kenneth Farley said. “His belief was that he was there to save other people’s lives and even when he lost his own, I’m sure he probably thought, ‘Well, I may be going, but I’m keeping somebody else here.’ I don’t doubt for a minute he didn’t have a problem doing it.”

Two Successive Taliban Attacks In Force Wipe Out Military Road Construction Camp: “The Area Is Full Of Taliban And The Taliban Have Deep Influence There”

“The Taliban Can Walk And Do Their Activities Freely”

“Coalition Forces Have Never Been To These Places To Patrol”

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

After a sporadic gunfight that lasted until 7 a.m., the Taliban attacked again; this time in larger numbers, said Abdul Qahir, who commanded 400 Khushal company guards.

“They came with eight Toyota Land Cruisers and drove fast toward us and broke the first security belt,” he said, “and we were all firing on them, but they kept driving towards us and broke the second and third belts and drove over our concertina wires.”

August 20, 2010 By ALISSA J. RUBIN and SHARIFULLAH SAHAK, New York Times
[Excerpts]

KABUL, Afghanistan — Taliban fighters in a rural area near the Helmand River staged an audacious nighttime raid early Thursday, swooping down on several hundred sleeping Afghan private security guards who were securing a road construction project, and killing at least 21, according to guards who escaped.

The attack was striking not only for its scale and viciousness but because it took place in the Helmand River Valley, where thousands of British troops have been stationed for the past three years and where now American troops have entered to try to rout the Taliban.

The attack began at 3 a.m. on Thursday as most of the guards slept, said Mohammed Tahir, a guard for the Khushal Civil Construction Company, the subcontractor charged with guarding the road and the supplies for the project. It was unclear whether the Americans or one of the many other foreign governments involved in reconstruction here was the primary contractor. Security for the project involved about 1,200 guards, according to two Khushal employees.

Mr. Tahir painted a scene of chaos as his fellow guards woke to gunshots and ran for their lives.

“When the Taliban attacked, they were killing everyone, whoever was sleeping, and our guards were running away from their posts and Taliban were hitting them with their vehicles,” he said. “My brothers were working there, and I do not yet know what happened to them.”

After a sporadic gunfight that lasted until 7 a.m., the Taliban attacked again; this time in larger numbers, said Abdul Qahir, who commanded 400 Khushal company guards.

“They came with eight Toyota Land Cruisers and drove fast toward us and broke the first security belt,” he said, “and we were all firing on them, but they kept driving towards us and broke the second and third belts and drove over our concertina wires.”

The death toll is likely to rise once all of the dead are recovered, Mr. Qahir said. Some of the victims were at the security company’s checkpoints, which the Taliban seized.

Local elders said that the Taliban opposed the road — a strategic 21-mile connector between the cities of Sangin and Greshkh — fearing the increased access to an area they currently dominate, the elders said.

That meshed with opposition from villagers, who were upset that the contractor had not consulted them about building the road or asked what services they needed, nor offered local people jobs on the project.

“One of the big problems that the contractors face and one reason they get attacked is because they bring people from other villages as laborers and security guards,” said Haji Abdul Ahad Khan, an elder who on Friday was attending the funeral of one of the slain security guards. “They do not ask our villagers to participate in these projects or hire them to do any of the labor.

“This makes our people angry,” he said. “And they start projects in our area without consulting the village elders. They start cleaning our canals for us or building a road for us. I don’t want a road, why would you build that? We need a school or a clinic.”

He added that the government was weak in the area, and that, adding to the general distrust, Afghan security forces behaved badly when they came.

“The forces steal money and jewelry from houses, and sometimes when they see a boy, they take the boy with them,” he said. “These are the things that make people hate the government forces.”

Zemary Khan, the district police chief, said that the Taliban were strong in the area, but that the security guards were naïve to think they could protect themselves. “At the beginning they told us that ‘We can take care of this road and ourselves,’ “ he said. “Now, see they cannot even take care of themselves.

“The area is full of Taliban and the Taliban have deep influence there,” he added.

Despite the length of time foreign forces have been fighting in Helmand, it is large, with a porous southern border, and troops have yet to fight in many places. The last was the case here, said the police chief.

“Coalition forces have never been to these places to patrol, and neither have the Afghan police,” he said, “so this can be the reason that the Taliban can walk and do their activities freely.”

“To Activate The Lethal Bombs, Insurgents Bury The Crockpots In The Ground Next To A Road Or Footpath And Set The Switch To ‘Cook’”

“‘It’s Not Random. All Their Stuff Is Thought Out,’ Said A Special Forces Captain”

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

August 22nd 2010 BY James Gordon Meek, DAILY NEWS WASHINGTON BUREAU

KANDAHAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan - The Taliban throw in everything but the kitchen sink when they cook up deadly improvised explosive devices.

Even electric cooking pots become weapons of mass destruction. To activate the lethal bombs, insurgents bury the crockpots in the ground next to a road or footpath and set the switch to “cook.”

“They also use old artillery shells stuffed with spoons, forks and belt buckles, or any other metal they can find,” said a Canadian soldier who’s been wounded by three IED blasts in this rural southern Afghanistan province. “It’s like a big grenade.”

The Taliban’s increasing improvisation on IEDs - which account for most U.S. war casualties - is a worrisome trend in the Afghan war.

They can be turned on or off with switches, cell phones or connecting a wire, such as during nighttime when U.S. patrols are often mounted.

“It just blew up in my face,” recalled a Special Forces team sergeant one recent afternoon at a base near Kandahar, describing how an IED hit him on patrol.

His team was on foot with Afghan commandos when someone stepped on a pressure-plate activated bomb hidden on a trail. The blast tore apart one of the Afghan troops and gave the sergeant a concussion.

“I was completely out of it,” said the Green Beret, who cannot be named because of his classified missions.

A week later, half his face was covered with whiskers where the brunt of the blast hit him. He can't shave the wound yet.

The team sergeant, from Oakland, Calif., talks out of the other side of his mouth, and his right eardrum is likely permanently damaged.

Four U.S. operators on his team have been wounded in the past two missions by IEDs or gunfire.

"There's my replacement," the team sergeant said, pointing to a wounded comrade hobbling across the compound on a cane. "You see some gnarly shit out there."

Unlike Iraq, or earlier in this war, the Taliban prefer to bomb individual soldiers undertaking "dismounted" patrols rather than in vehicles.

"It's mostly pressure plate IEDs now. It takes too much manpower to build an IED to take out a truck," another Canadian trooper said.

The Taliban have had years to study U.S. tactics, techniques and procedures and even know the most likely spots on the ground an American will drive or walk across, soldiers say.

"It's not random. All their stuff is thought out," said a Special Forces captain.

After observing troopers from the Ft. Drum-based 10th Mountain Division drive the same piece of road southwest of Kandahar, the Taliban hit a patrol on July 5 with a sophisticated IED.

Pfc. Edwin Wood and Sgt. Christopher Cabacoy were killed when a pressure plate bomb wired with a 600-ft. cord attached to a cell phone obliterated the cab of their truck.

Insurgents Launch Rocket Attack On Ghazni City Government Buildings



23 August 2010 TOLONews

Insurgents launched 6 missiles on the southern Ghazni city Monday dawn, in which an Afghan police was wounded, local officials say

The missiles targeted the governor's office, the city's municipality building, the Peace Building Commission's office and a park in Ghazni city, the provincial capital of the southern Ghazni province, local officials said.

"Six missiles hit different locations in Ghazni city, in which a police officer was killed," Zorawar Zahid, the Police Chief of Ghazni told TOLONews.

Meanwhile, the head of the Afghan Independent Election Commission (IEC), in his trip to the province on Sunday had voiced concern over a surge in insecurity in the province.

Head of the IEC, Fazel Ahmad Manawi, had earlier said that almost 1,000 polling centres will be closed due to the increasing insurgency in the country.

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

**THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR
HEALTH;
ALL HOME, NOW**



A U.S. Marine injured by an Improvised Explosive Device is transported to a military hospital onboard a medevac helicopter near the town of Marjah in Helmand Province August 19, 2010. REUTERS/Bob Strong

MILITARY NEWS

HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS?



The casket of Army Sgt. Andrew R. Looney at Arlington National Cemetery Aug. 4, 2010. Looney was killed in Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

The Radio

“This August 24th, Remember Jeremy King”



[From: GI SPECIAL 5H19: 8.24.07]

07/25/2007 by Justin C. Cliburn
[Iraq Veterans Against The War] [www.ivaw.org/]
Branch of service: Army National Guard of the United States (ARNG)
Unit: 1st Battalion 158th FA Oklahoma ARNG
Rank: SPC

Home: Lawton, Oklahoma

Served in: LSA Anaconda: MSR Patrol, one month. Camp Liberty, Baghdad: PSD/IP Training, ten and a half months.

When I was in Mrs. Riner's junior English class at MacArthur high school, we were required to read a short story titled "The Radio."

The premise was simple. A couple in the 1930s were given a special radio that allowed them to hear all their neighbors' conversations. At first they were elated, but, ultimately, they were haunted by the miracle of their ability. They could hear all the horrors of society that usually go unnoticed or are covered up and sterilized . . . and they couldn't turn it off.

They couldn't change the channel.

It took seven years, but I eventually went back to that story in my head and felt their horror.

August 24th, 2006 was a routine day for my squad in Baghdad. We had gone to Traffic Headquarters and I had gotten to visit with Ali. Business taken care of, we started to make the familiar trek back to Camp Liberty.

It was a hot day, over 120 degrees, and I stood up just a little higher than usual with my sleeves unbuttoned to let the air circulate inside my body armor and clothing. It had been a good day.

Back on Route Irish, we were on the home stretch when the call came out over the radio:

"Eagle Dustoff, Eagle Dustoff, this is Red Knight 7* over"

"This is Eagle Dustoff, over"

"Eagle Dustoff, I need MEDEVAC; my gunner has been shot by a sniper."

The voice went on to recite the nine line MEDEVAC report and I marveled at how cool, calm, and collected he sounded. My squad leader plotted the grid coordinates and found that this had occurred only a couple blocks away from one of our two main destinations on Market Road.

"Cliburn, go ahead and get down; someone might be aiming at your melon right now", CPT Ray said. Sergeant Bruesch concurred and I sat down, listening intently to the radio transmissions that I couldn't turn off if I wanted to.

Five minutes in, the voice on the radio was losing his cool.

"Have they left yet?! He's losing a lot of blood; we need that chopper now!"

In the background, you could hear other soldiers yelling, screaming, trying to find anyway to save their friend's life. At one point, I swear I heard the man gurgle.

Ten minutes in, the voice on the radio was furious.

“Where’s that fucking chopper!? We’re losing him! He’s not fucking breathing! Where the fuck are you!?”

Every minute to minute and a half the voice was back on the radio demanding to know what the hold up was. Every minute to minute and a half the other voice on the radio, a young woman’s voice, tried to reassure him that the chopper was the way from Taji. She was beginning to tire herself; I could hear it in her voice. She was just as frustrated as he was.

All the while, there I sat.

Sitting in the gunners hatch, listening life’s little horrors with no way to turn the channel.

No one in the truck was speaking.

The music was on, but no one heard it. There was just an eerie silence.

All I heard was the radio transmissions; I watched as the landscape passed me by in slow motion.

I didn’t hear wind noise or car horns or gunfire or my own thoughts. I was only accompanied by the silence of the world passing me by, interrupted only by the screams of the voice on the radio.

At this point, I was as frustrated as I had been all year. Where the fuck was that goddamn chopper and why was it taking so long?! What if it were me?

Would I be waiting that long? Would this pathetic exchange be included in the newscast if the guy dies?

I was angry, upset, frustrated, and anticipating the next transmission in this macabre play by play account. Forget about TNT, HBO, and Law and Order: THIS was drama. This was heart wrenching.

Seconds seemed like hours; minutes seemed like days.

Finally, after several more non-productive transmissions where Eagle Dustoff attempted to reassure the voice, after twenty minutes and a few more frantic, screaming transmissions by the voice, the man’s voice was calm again.

“Eagle Dustoff, cancel the chopper. He’s dead.”

. . . and that was that. The voice had gone from being the model for the consummate soldier (cool, calm, collected, professional) to the more human screams and frantic pleading for help to solemn resignation.

Now, the voice was quiet.

“Eagle Dustoff: requesting recovery team. We can’t drive this vehicle back; we need someone to come get the vehicle and body. Over.”

“Do you have casualty’s information?”

“Yes. SGT King, over.”

I sat in that gunners sling in a fit of rage that I couldn’t let out.

I had to be a soldier; I had to keep my cool.

We all did.

I was so angry, I still am, about being an unwilling voyeur, forced to listen to the gruesome play by play of another soldier’s life and death.

We had been told that the insurgency was in its last throes, that they were just a bunch of dead enders. No, not this day.

Today, SGT King was in his last throes, and I was there to listen to the whole thing, whether I liked it or not.

A soldier’s death isn’t anything like the movies. There was no patriotic music; there was no feeling of purpose. It’s just . . . death.

I wasn’t there physically; I didn’t see him, but I was there.

Any sane person would have wanted to turn the channel. No one wants to hear the screams of a man losing his friend, but I couldn’t turn it off. We were required to monitor that channel.

Either way, it didn’t take long to become emotionally invested in it; was he going to make it? I hung on every word until I got the final, sobering news.

My truck was the only one in the convoy monitoring that net. When we got back to base, no else had heard it, and SSG Bruesch, CPT Ray, and I didn’t discuss it. I don’t think we ever did.

A few days later, I felt like I had to find out more about his soldier. I felt like I had lost a friend, yet I didn’t know anything but his name and rank.

Looking back on it, I should have just let it go, but I didn’t. Using the miracle of the Internet, I found out all I needed to know about the young man.

SGT Jeremy E. King was 23 years old. He was from Idaho, where he played high school football. He had joined the army to get out of Idaho and see the world.

He was one year younger than I was, and he was dead. He sounded like any of a number of teammates I played high school football with.

I’ve replayed that scene in my head more times than I’d ever want since that day.

I don't believe in fate or karma or any type of pre-destined events, but I often wonder what made that sniper hole up on North Market Road instead of South Market Road, where I often found myself.

I was fortunate enough in my time there to never have to call in MEDEVAC.

I didn't bury any of my comrades, but I will always remember what it was like listening to the miracle of modern communications, the radio, and for the first time in my life being terrified, much like the couple in the story over eighty long years ago.

This August 24th, remember Jeremy King:



Jeremy King

Wednesday, August 30 2006 @ 04:20 AM EDT

Contributed by: River97

Views: 621

Star Telegram -- KILLEEN, Texas - A Fort Hood soldier from Idaho has died in Iraq of injuries sustained when troops came under fire during combat, the Department of Defense said Friday.

Sgt. Jeremy E. King, 23, of Meridian died Thursday in Baghdad.

He was assigned to the 8th Squadron, 10th Cavalry Regiment, 4th Brigade, 4th Infantry Division at Fort Hood.



“I Cannot Believe The Defense Department Is Once Again Trying To Renege On The Promise To Spouses”

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
August 23, 2010

I cannot believe the Defense Department is once again trying to renege on the promise to spouses enrolled in the My Spouse Career Advancement Accounts program.

My wife is enrolled in a two-year registered nurse program with support from MyCAA. But because I am a chief warrant officer 4 she will lose her MyCAA benefits after this fall semester.

Am I wrong?

Or did DoD enter into a contract with my wife when she was accepted into the program? DoD should not be allowed to break that contract.

Chief Warrant Officer 4 Paul M. Steele
Fort Rucker, Ala.

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.

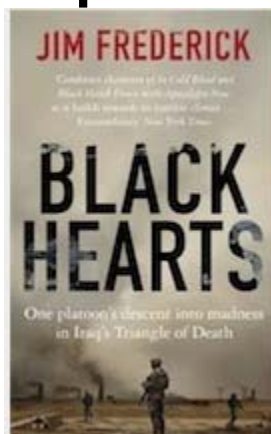
“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“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**

**Black Hearts:
One Platoon’s Descent Into Madness,
Rape And Murder In Iraq’s Triangle
Of Death:
“Black Hearts Is The Best Book By Far
About The Iraq War – A Rare
Combination Of Cold Truth And Warm
Compassion.”**



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

21 August 2010 Bt Edward Wilson, The Guardian. Edward Wilson is a veteran of the Vietnam war.

This isn't a book for armchair war junkies.

It's about what Wilfred Owen called "the pity of war".

The centre and the pity of Jim Frederick's account is the murder of the Janabis, an Iraqi family, and the rape of their 14-year-old daughter by four US soldiers.

The most chilling aspect of the crime was the casual manner in which it was carried out. It was almost a jape – something to break the boredom of endless hours at a checkpoint.

The soldiers did it because they had the power to do it; they didn't need a reason why – almost the invasion of Iraq in microcosm.

The rapists were from an infantry platoon in the US army's most elite division, the 101st Airborne, which provided "the Band of Brothers". It was the division sent by Eisenhower to enforce civil rights legislation and ensure that nine African-American children could attend Little Rock Central High School.

It is associated with honour, not atrocity. It was only natural that it would be tasked with the most dangerous area of operations in the Iraq of 2005-06: the "Triangle of Death".

There are three basic things to avoid in war: getting killed, being convicted of war crimes and having a commanding officer who thinks you are useless.

B Company's ill-fated 1st Platoon avoided none of these.

By the end of their deployment, 11 of 1st Platoon's 33 members were dead or in jail for murder.

Why?

According to their commander, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas Kunk, it was all their fault: "You 1st Platoon are fucked up. Fucked up! Every single one of you!"

Colonel Kunk was straight out of Catch-22. His officers referred to his control-freak outbursts as "getting Kunked" or being under the "Kunk gun". He seemed to have had every tact and empathy instinct removed: 1st Platoon's seven killed in action "were dead because of their failings", and the survivors were "quitters, crybabies and complainers". Such leadership is not unknown in the US military. Sometimes it works, but when it doesn't, the results can be bloody.

Everything that could go wrong did go wrong.

The platoon's best leaders were killed early on, and the remaining soldiers were a mixture of seething resentment, indiscipline and combat exhaustion. Young soldiers on a battlefield packed with civilians need constant and close supervision. This didn't happen.

The best of 1st Platoon's lost leaders was Sergeant Kenith Casica. A photo shows James Barker, one of the rapists, with his arms around gentle giant Casica. The expression on Barker's face as he hugs Casica is pure bliss. Barker has found a replacement for the father who died when he was 15, but soon afterwards the surrogate father is dead as well.

Casica was openly friendly to the Iraqis. When he was teased as a "hadji hugger" he reminded his men that they were there to help the Iraqis. If Casica had lived, Abeer Janabi and her family would also be alive today.

The most toxic of 1st Platoon's leaderless soldiers was Steven Green. His psychosis seemed obvious to all except the army's mental health professionals.

On a combat stress report, Green's statement of "interests" as "none other than killing Iraqis" was dismissed as "normal". The alarm bells began to ring only when he killed a puppy by throwing it off a roof.

At every step the army failed to protect the Iraqis from Green and Green from himself. His discharge papers, citing a pre-existing personality disorder marked by "indifference to the suffering of others", came too late.

He had already committed rape and quadruple homicide.

In retrospect, it was obvious that Green was a troubled youngster whom the army couldn't redeem. There was something that went beyond drug offences, ADHD diagnosis and his mother kicking him out of the house at 14. Before dropping out of high school, Green entertained classmates at lunchtimes by smashing drinks cans on his forehead.

After the murder-rape it was reported that: "Green was jumping up and down on a cot and they all agreed that that was awesome, that was cool."

Frederick acknowledges the adrenaline buzz of battle but does not attempt to gloss over war's inherently brutal and dehumanising nature. He is also a master at describing the psychological effects.

The most feared weapon of today's wars is the ubiquitous IED (improvised explosive device). "There is nothing you can do . . . no release for the anger and adrenaline." The IED saps morale and spawns hate for the population: "How could you not want to kill them, too, for protecting the person who just tried to kill you?"

Inevitably, there are echoes of Vietnam, the most chilling of which comes from a 1st Platoon soldier: "You can't think of these people as people."

The same dehumanisation that led to My Lai led to the murder of the Janabis.

And in both wars, the soldiers who refused to tolerate dehumanisation were the real heroes. To his credit, Colonel Kunk, unlike his Vietnam predecessors, acted quickly and decisively. He may not have handled the matter tactfully – he immediately revealed the names of the whistleblowers, Justin Watt and John Diem, who risked retribution and scorn by reporting the murders – but he did the right thing.

Black Hearts is the best book by far about the Iraq war – a rare combination of cold truth and warm compassion.

1945: The Morotai Mutiny



Caldwell (fourth from left) talking to No. 452 Squadron Spitfire pilots at Morotai in January 1945

[Thanks to Max Watts, Australia, who sent that in.]

Excerpt from Wikipedia:

The “Morotai Mutiny” was an incident in April 1945 involving members of the Australian First Tactical Air Force based on the island of Morotai, in the Dutch East Indies.

Eight senior pilots, including Australia’s leading flying ace, Group Captain Clive Caldwell, tendered their resignations to protest what they perceived as the relegation of Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) fighter squadrons to strategically unimportant ground attack missions against Japanese positions that had been bypassed in the Allies’ “island-hopping” campaign.

A government investigation vindicated the “mutineers”, and three high-ranking officers at First Tactical Air Force Headquarters, including the commander, Air Commodore Harry Cobby, the Australian Flying Corps’ top-scoring ace during World War I, were relieved of their posts.

George Odgers summed up the cause of the incident in the official history of the RAAF in World War II as “the conviction of a group of young leaders that they were engaging in operations that were not militarily justifiable — a conviction widely shared also by many Australian soldiers and political leaders.”

Odgers concluded that the ensuing inquiry “made it clear that almost everyone concerned acted from the highest motives, and was convinced that, in the crisis, he acted wisely”.

Against Imperial War: [1915]

**“Imperialism Is The Progressing
Oppression Of The Nations Of The
World By A Handful Of Great
Powers”**

**“Basing Ourselves On Democracy As It
Already Exists, Exposing Its
Incompleteness Under Capitalism, We
Advocate The Overthrow Of Capitalism”**

We demand the freedom of self-determination, i. e., independence, i. e., the freedom of separation for the oppressed nations, not because we dream of an economically atomized world, nor because we cherish the ideal of small states, but on the contrary because we are for large states and for a coming closer, even a fusion of nations, but on a truly democratic, truly internationalist basis, which is unthinkable without the freedom of separation.

1915, By V. I. Ulyanov: Excerpts from Right To Self Determination, November 1915 & Imperialism And World Economy, 1915 [The writer used the pen name “Lenin” to keep the government from terrorizing his family.]

The proletariat cannot become victor save through democracy, i. e., through introducing complete democracy and through combining with every step of its movement democratic demands formulated most vigorously, most decisively.

It is senseless to contrast the Socialist revolution and the revolutionary struggle against capitalism to one of the questions of democracy, in this case the national question.

On the contrary, we must combine the revolutionary struggle against capitalism with a revolutionary program and revolutionary tactics relative to all democratic demands: a republic, a militia, officials elected by the people, equal rights for women, self- determination of nations, etc.

While capitalism exists, all these demands are realizable only as an exception, and in an incomplete, distorted form.

Basing ourselves on democracy as it already exists, exposing its incompleteness under capitalism, we advocate the overthrow of capitalism, expropriation of the bourgeoisie as a necessary basis both for the abolition of the poverty of the masses and for a complete and manifold realization of all democratic reforms.

Some of those reforms will be started prior to the overthrow of the bourgeoisie, others in the process of the overthrow, still others after it has been accomplished.

The Socialist revolution is by no means a single battle; on the contrary, it is an epoch of a whole series of battles around all problems of economic and democratic reforms, which can be completed only by the expropriation of the bourgeoisie.

It is for the sake of this final aim that we must formulate in a consistently revolutionary manner every one of our democratic demands.

It is quite conceivable that the workers of a certain country may overthrow the bourgeoisie before even one fundamental democratic reform has been realised in full.

It is entirely inconceivable, however, that the proletariat as an historical class will be able to defeat the bourgeoisie if it is not prepared for this task by being educated in the spirit of the most consistent and determined revolutionary democracy.

Imperialism is the progressing oppression of the nations of the world by a handful of great powers; it is an epoch of wars among them for the widening and strengthening of national oppression; it is the epoch when the masses of the people are deceived by the hypocritical social-patriots, i. e., people who under the pretext of "freedom of nations," "right of nations to self-determination," and "defence of the fatherland" justify and defend the oppression of a majority of the world's nations by the great powers.

This is just why the central point in a programme of Social-Democrats must be that distinction between oppressing and oppressed nations, since the distinction is the essence of imperialism, and is fraudulently evaded by the social-patriots ...

This distinction is not important from the point of view of bourgeois pacifism, or the petty-bourgeois Utopia of peaceful competition between independent nations under capitalism, but it is most important in the point of view of the revolutionary struggle against imperialism.

From this distinction there follows *our* consistently democratic and revolutionary definition of the "right of nations to self-determination," which is in accord with the general task of the immediate struggle for Socialism.

It is in the name of this right, and fighting for its unequivocal recognition, that the Social-Democrats of the oppressing nations must demand the freedom of separation for the oppressed nations, for otherwise recognition of the equal rights of nations and international solidarity of the workers in reality remains an empty phrase, a hypocritical gesture.

Russia is a prison of peoples not only because of the military, feudal character of tsarism, not only because the Great-Russian bourgeoisie supports tsarism, but also because the Polish, Lettish, etc., bourgeoisie has sacrificed the freedom of nations and democracy in general for the interests of capitalist expansion.

The proletariat of Russia, marching at the head of the people, cannot complete the victorious democratic revolution (which is its immediate task); neither can it fight together with its brothers, the proletarians of Europe, for a Socialist revolution, without demanding at once full and “unreserved” freedom of separation from Russia for all the nations oppressed by Russia.

This we demand not as something independent from our revolutionary struggle for Socialism, but because this struggle would remain an idle phrase if it were not linked up with a revolutionary approach to all the questions of democracy, including the national question.

We demand the freedom of self-determination, i. e., independence, i. e., the freedom of separation for the oppressed nations, not because we dream of an economically atomized world, nor because we cherish the ideal of small states, but on the contrary because we are for large states and for a coming closer, even a fusion of nations, but on a truly democratic, truly internationalist basis, which is unthinkable without the freedom of separation.

In the same way as Marx in 1869 demanded the separation of Ireland, not for the purpose of splitting England, but for a subsequent free alliance of Ireland with England, not for the sake of “justice to Ireland,” but for the interests of the revolutionary struggle of the English proletariat, so we at present consider the refusal by the Socialists of Russia to demand freedom of self-determination for the nations, in the sense indicated by us above, as a direct betrayal of democracy, internationalism, and Socialism.

[H]e who rejects the hard tasks of today in the name of dreams about easy tasks of the future becomes an opportunist.

Theoretically it means to fail to base oneself on the developments now going on in real life, to detach oneself from them in the name of dreams.

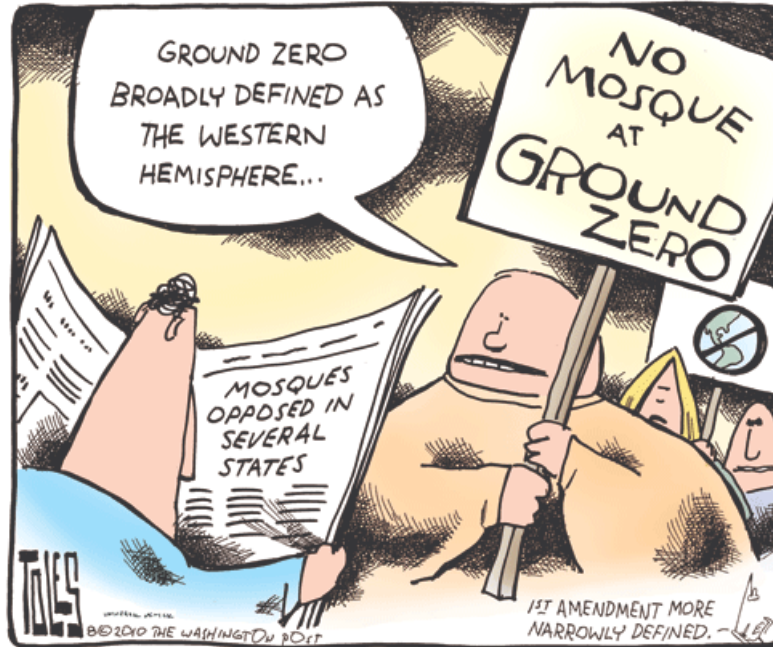
War is a “terrible” thing? Yes.

But it is a terribly profitable thing.

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.

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.

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And join with Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

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Military Resistance www.militaryproject.org

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THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
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