

Military Resistance 8J9



“Insurgents Are Creating More Destructive Roadside Bombs This Year By Packing Them With Nails, Screws, Bolts, Metal Coils, Ball Bearings And Other Materials”

“The Number Of Casualties Suffering Multiple Wounds From These Objects Has Increased From About A Dozen In March To Around 100 Each Month This Summer”



This X-ray shows a bolt in the brain of an Afghan soldier injured by shrapnel from an IED. A surgeon at a NATO hospital successfully removed it, and the soldier survived. JACK GRUBER/USA TODAY

9/23/2010 By Gregg Zoroya, USA Today

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — Doctors at the NATO hospital here were shocked by what they saw on the brain image of an Afghan soldier flown in following a roadside bomb explosion.

A 3-inch-long, threaded steel bolt was buried deep inside the man's head.

"I thought, this poor guy is doomed," recalls Navy Cmdr. Steven Cobery, 44, a U.S. military neurosurgeon in Afghanistan.

Insurgents are creating more destructive roadside bombs this year by packing them with nails, screws, bolts, metal coils, ball bearings and other materials, according to doctors treating wounded U.S. and coalition troops here.

The number of casualties suffering multiple wounds from these objects has increased from about a dozen in March to around 100 each month this summer, according to Navy Capt. Michael Mullins, spokesman for the NATO hospital operated by the U.S. Navy outside Kandahar.

The casualties include not only U.S. soldiers and Marines, but also coalition and Afghan troops and Afghan civilians hurt by roadside bombs, Mullins says. About half of the casualties are American servicemembers, he says.

Cobery says he has seen several instances of household objects used in bombs. An Afghan soldier lost his left eye to shrapnel made of leather from the tongue of a shoe, he says.

"I've taken (centimeter-wide) ball bearings out of someone's spine," he says. "It's crazy."

The wounds complicate treatment and can cause excessive bleeding and infection, says Canadian Air Force Maj. Cathy Mountford, an emergency room doctor who has worked at the NATO hospital for five months.

"Through July definitely we've noticed that there are more objects and things, coils and stuff that would become implanted in the body" of a casualty, Mountford says.

"They (wounded troops) just get peppered."

Marines fighting in nearby Helmand province report the same trend, uncovering roadside bombs stuffed with ball bearings, nails, screws and bullets, says Lt. Col. Michael Manning, a battalion commander.

The U.S. military is preparing new medical guidelines for the treatment of these wounds, says U.S. Air Force Maj. Randy Snoots, a trauma specialist here who tracks trends in casualties.

The bombs, he says, "are getting bigger and bigger and more full of stuff."

In July, Cobery spent six hours in surgery removing the 3-inch-long bolt blasted into the skull of the Afghan soldier.

It entered through the right side of the soldier's face near his nose and lodged in the second vertebra of his spinal column. Destruction of the spinal column at that high level would result in death instantly, Cobery says.

"The guy turning his head could end up killing himself," he says.

With the patient immobilized, "I took a chisel and gently tapped it out of the spinal canal," Cobery says.

He then used a clamp to slowly pull the bolt through the man's face, out the direction it had entered.

When the soldier regained consciousness, he shook the doctor's hand. The soldier had to wear a metal framework to keep the head stable and allow the spinal column bones to heal, but he eventually was able to walk out of the hospital for further care at another medical center.

"I told him that if the bolt had gone 2 to 3 millimeters more to the right or if his head was turned in a different way, he wouldn't be standing there talking to me," Cobery says.

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Fallen Army Ranger Left Lasting Mark On TJ High



Sgt. 1st Class Lance Vogeler: Courtesy Photo

October 06, 2010 By Megan Eckstein, News-Post Staff

Sgt. 1st Class Lance Vogeler left quite a mark on his Army Ranger unit, deploying 12 times in nine years and completing specialized training courses to better lead his platoon.

But before embarking on his military career, Vogeler left an equally impressive imprint on Gov. Thomas Johnson High School.

Teresa Wilson has taught French at the high school since 1982 and remembers having Vogeler as a student.

"I just remember him being such a great young man," Wilson said of the 1999 graduate. "He just always had a smile on his face and was enjoyable to have in class. He liked doing all the silly little French skits we would do, he just had such a great good nature."

Wilson recalled one particular skit where Vogeler played an obnoxious waiter. His classmates kept ordering different dishes, and "he kept saying 'no no no,'" she said. Vogeler took French 1 and 2 with Wilson and was an enthusiastic student, she said.

"Some of the teachers were trying to remember if they had him and I said 'Oh, you'd remember Lance,'" Wilson said. Vogeler was "always smiling, he just had a bubbly, effervescent personality, so I'm sure that served him well leading the troops."

Vogeler was assigned to the Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 75th Ranger Regiment in December 2001 after graduating from the Ranger Assessment and Selection Program, according to an Army news release. Since joining that unit, he worked as a gunner, fire direction chief, fire direction computer, squad leader and mortars section leader.

Vogeler was serving his eighth deployment to Afghanistan and had served four deployments to Iraq.

Wilson said she was devastated to hear on her television that Vogeler had been killed Friday when his unit was attacked in Helmand province in Afghanistan.

"I saw the picture and thought 'Oh, that looks ...' and then when I heard the name it took me about 30 seconds and I realized who it was, and it was just a real shock," Wilson said. She didn't know he had joined the military and said her first thought was his death was a big loss for the community and the military and his family.

"I know his poor children are just really going to miss him," she said.

Vogeler had a daughter, Madison, 11, and a son, Kyle, 10. His wife, Melissa, is pregnant.

Vogeler is also survived by his parents, Tim and Donna, and his younger brother, Chris, who live in Frederick.

Wilson said Vogeler was active in the deaf community, as his parents are deaf. He would translate for his parents during parent-teacher conferences, and Wilson joked that "I would always make sure, 'You're telling them exactly what I'm saying, aren't you, Lance?' and he'd say 'Oh, oui, madame.'"

Vogeler was also involved with his church, the Frederick Church of the Brethren, and he played on the varsity soccer team as a goalkeeper starting in 10th grade.

"I think he had a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of passion for whatever he did, so it looks like that was the way his life turned out: that he had passion for his family and for his country and for everyone who was close to him."

The high school held a moment of silence for Vogeler at the end of school Tuesday, and Wilson said the school has been supportive even though she is the only one left who taught Vogeler. She made a point of telling her students about him in the hopes they could learn from his life.

"I said 'This is a wonderful guy, he really had goals in his life and I hope you all will also,'" she said. "I said 'You all leave a legacy, you all will be remembered for something, so just think about how you want people to remember you.'"

Wilson spent part of her day digging through the late 1990s yearbooks and her own photo collection, looking at old photos of her student.

"Even though it's been so many years, I can just see him coming down the hall, coming to class -- he made that much of an impression on me," she said. "He was a good

student, he wasn't a stellar student but he was solid, an enjoyable student to teach. You can have students that are really fabulous but you don't enjoy teaching them all the time, but he was one that you would really enjoy."

Montcalm County Mother Discusses Loss Of 20-Year-Old Son In Afghanistan Bomb Blast: 'You Want To Shut The Door And Pretend It Hasn't Happened'



U.S. Army Specialist Joseph "Joey" Prentler

October 05, 2010 John Agar, The Grand Rapids Press

FENWICK -- As he left for Afghanistan in June, U.S. Army Specialist Joseph "Joey" Prentler told his mom he would be OK.

His reassurances really didn't help.

It got worse when an Army buddy was killed in August.

"His mom and I are friends," Tammy Prentler recalled Tuesday of the other soldier.

"She said it was the hardest thing to see, when the military car pulls in your yard.

"And it was."

Prentler's 20-year-old son, a graduate of Carson City High School, was killed Monday by an improvised explosive device, or roadside bomb. Others, including his sergeant, a close friend, were injured when their vehicle hit the bomb, Prentler said.

On Tuesday, Prentler said thousands of friends and acquaintances flooded social networks with condolences, a touching tribute. She said many in the small town let her family know her son's death was felt throughout the community.

"He's just an all-around sweet person, just concerned about everybody and anybody. He's just a good kid, friendly. He tried to make everybody laugh. Everybody loved him."

She never wanted to think about losing her son. He had always talked about joining the military, following in his grandfather's footsteps. He signed up during his junior year in high school.

On his Facebook page, he defined heroes: "All the other soldiers that are doing (their) job even though they might not make it home."

Prentler said she and family members take note of military deaths, and said so many seem so young.

"I just wish it would end. I mean, 19-year-olds, 20, 21, getting killed."

She had concerns early Monday when she got word that her son's friend had been injured in a blast, and she couldn't find anything about her son.

When military officials showed up at her home, she knew her son was gone.

"You want to run ... you want to shut the door and pretend it hasn't happened," she said.

She and her husband, Joseph, have another son, Dakota, 13, who is taking the loss hard.

Dakota stayed home from school Monday after getting hurt Sunday at a church function. He got the news the same time as his parents. The parents didn't have a chance to prepare.

Tammy Prentler said the boys always got along, but scrapped like brothers do. During his last visit home in May, Joey Prentler said he missed his little brother while in the service. He told his parents he needed to take a bigger role in his brother's life.

Joey Prentler grew up on a hobby farm, and always liked the outdoors. He, his dad, and uncle, Scott Cunningham, loved to go hunting together. He also liked to play practical jokes on a cousin, Sonya Marsh-Jakeway, by slipping into her Facebook site and inserting goofy information. In turn, she bought him a pink thong for his 18th birthday.

They have many good memories. But it is a time to grieve, too.

"I thought losing my father at 14 was hard, but losing my nephew who was one of my best buddies is harder than hell," Cunningham said on his Facebook site.

Services have not yet been set. It was uncertain when the soldier's body will return to the U.S.

Tammy Prentler said her son, as he became a young man, put others' needs ahead of his own.

"He made sure that we were always taken care of."

Tunica Soldier Killed In Battle

Sept. 28, 2010 by SHELIA BYRD, The Associated Press

Army Pvt. William Brandon Dawson's younger brothers looked up to him as a man with the characteristics of a good soldier.

"He never talked back to his mother or father. He was always respectful," said Joseph Dawson. "He was a perfect man."

William Dawson, 20, from Tunica, was killed Friday in Kabul, Afghanistan, his relatives confirmed.

The military informed Quita Weeden Dawson of Tunica her eldest son was driving the lead truck in a convoy that was struck by a missile, Joseph Dawson said.

Joseph Dawson said his brother was based in Anchorage, Alaska. Maj. William Coppernoll of the U.S. Army Alaska Public Affairs Office declined to comment Monday, pending completion of the next of kin notification process.

William Dawson, a 2009 graduate of Rosa Fort High School in Tunica, was the eldest of his mother's four sons.

Joseph Dawson, 18, said the family last saw his older brother about four months ago when he was on leave from Alaska.

Six Afghan Militia Butchered By U.S. Air Attack: Villagers Shout "Death To America, Long Live The Taliban"

Oct 8, 2010 The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — Firing from U.S. helicopters in an eastern province Friday killed six Afghan militiamen, an Afghan official said.

The incident in Khost province sparked angry protests. Hundreds of villagers shouting "Death to America" and "Long live the Taliban" carried the bodies to the provincial

governor's home to protest, Youqib Khan, the deputy provincial police chief, told The Associated Press.

"What I confirm now is six local security forces were killed by U.S. helicopters," Khan said.

The militiamen, part of a community security force, were not affiliated with the Afghan government. The attack came in a mountainous region of Khost, though it was unclear exactly where, he said.

**“The Mostly Afghan Force Of
Private Security Guards The U.S.
Military Depends On To Protect
Supply Convoys And Bases In
Afghanistan Is Rife With Criminals,
Drug Users And Insurgents”
“Some Local Warlords Who Have
Emergded As Key Labor Brokers For
Private Security Firms Are Also
Taliban Agents”
“Marines Interviewed By The Committee
Said This ‘Was Not The First Time They
Had Taken Fire From Private Security
Personnel,’ The Report Said”**

OCTOBER 8, 2010 By NATHAN HODGE, Wall St. Journal & Oct. 10, 2010 By Rick Maze - Staff writer, Army Times [Excerpts]

WASHINGTON—A yearlong investigation by a Senate panel has found evidence that the mostly Afghan force of private security guards the U.S. military depends on to protect supply convoys and bases in Afghanistan is rife with criminals, drug users and insurgents.

The Senate Armed Services Committee inquiry, based on interviews with dozens of military commanders and contractors and a review of over 125 Pentagon security contracts, found evidence of "untrained guards, insufficient and unserviceable weapons, unmanned posts" and other failings that put U.S. troops at risk.

More alarming, the report alleges that some local warlords who have emerged as key labor brokers for private security firms are also Taliban agents.

Sen. Carl Levin (D., Mich.), the chairman of the committee, said failures to adequately vet private security contractors in Afghanistan poses "grave risks" to U.S. and allied troops.

The majority of the private security contractors are Afghan; companies employing them are both international and locally based. The Senate inquiry focuses on the role of Department of Defense contractors, but the State Department also employs private guards.

According to U.S. Central Command figures cited in the report, Afghanistan has more than 26,000 private security personnel, 90% of whom are working under U.S. government contracts or subcontracts.

Doug Brooks, the president of International Peace Operations Associations, a group that represents security firms, said the report highlights the difficulty in complying with contract requirements to provide local hires.

"There's not a huge amount of choice in the local hires they can use," he said. "Where are they going to get guys who have never smoked hashish, who have never worked for the Taliban or who have never considered joining the Taliban?"

The investigation, quoting a Naval Criminal Investigative Service report, said "contractors have been known to shoot at Marines" and that Afghan security personnel were often "high on drugs" while at their posts.

In one case, Senate investigators found, a Marine was killed earlier this year by U.S.-funded security contractors who opened fire on a Marine foot patrol in Farah province.

The inquiry singles out two security firms—ArmorGroup, a subsidiary of U.K.-based G4S PLC, and EOD Technology Inc., or EODT, of Lenoir City, Tenn.—for relying on dubious local power brokers, including individuals described in U.S. military reports as Taliban affiliates and criminals.

A contractor interviewed by investigators described the local guard force recruiters as "straightforward 1920s Chicago."

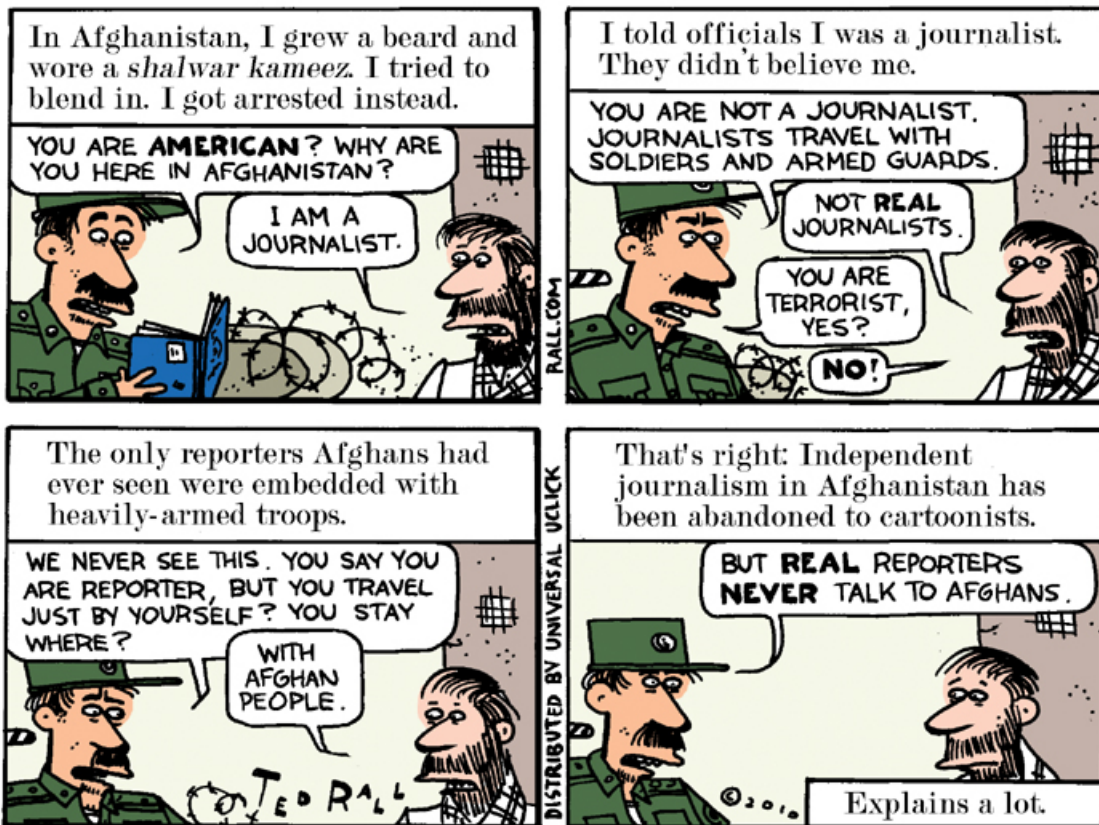
Investigators found examples of security guards using their access to bases to steal weapons and plan attacks against U.S. and coalition forces, and also found that the contracts were funneling U.S. taxpayer money into the hands of people responsible for murder, kidnappings and unrest.

Many of the problems uncovered in the committee investigation involve problems in 2007 and 2008.

But there are recent examples as well, like a Feb. 19 incident in Farah province in southwest Afghanistan when a Marine patrol came under fire by someone who was later discovered to be a contract security guard.

One Marine was killed in the incident, and seven Afghan nationals working as security guards were detained, with their weapons and a cache of opium seized as evidence, according to the report.

Marines interviewed by the committee said this “was not the first time they had taken fire from private security personnel,” the report said.



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

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

ENOUGH OF THIS SHIT; ALL HOME NOW



Members of a U.S. military medic team unload a U.S. soldier who was injured by a roadside bomb blast from a "Dustoff" Task Force Shadow medevac helicopter in Kandahar September 18, 2010. REUTERS/Erik de Castro



A U.S. soldier being evacuated on a medevac helicopter after a roadside bomb attack struck him on patrol in Kandahar province, Afghanistan September 28, 2010. REUTERS/Erik de Castro

MILITARY NEWS

HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS?



U.S. Marines carry a wounded comrade to a medevac helicopter near the town of Marjah in Helmand Province, August 20, 2010. REUTERS/Bob Strong

Benning Soldier Convicted Of Having Himself Shot To Get Med Discharge

Oct. 4, 2010 Army Times

A Fort Benning, Ga., soldier was convicted of charges that involved having a fellow recruit shoot him in the leg so he could get a medical discharge.

Pvt. Jonne T. Wegley was convicted Sept. 13 at a court-martial on charges including solicitation to commit aggravated assault, intentionally inflicting self-injury and conspiracy. He was acquitted of maiming.

Wegley was sentenced to four months' confinement and a dishonorable discharge.

The Columbus Ledger-Enquirer reported that William M. Hudgins, who served with Wegley during basic training last year, testified that Wegley offered him \$5,000 and a job in exchange for shooting him.

Hudgins was convicted earlier and served 10 months in confinement.

Veterans Called For A Stop To The Redeployment Of Traumatized Troops During A Rally In Washington, D.C.



Washington DC: October 7, 2010

Oct 9, 2010 Giulia Lasagni - Medill News Service

A group of veterans called for a stop to the redeployment of traumatized troops during a rally in Washington, D.C., Thursday, the ninth anniversary of the beginning of the war in Afghanistan

Service members who suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury are often sent back to combat without receiving proper medical care, said members of Iraq Veterans Against the War, who marched from Walter Reed Army Medical Center to Capitol Hill to launch their new campaign, "Operation Recovery."

In the military, several members of the group said, mental health issues are still surrounded by stigma, which prevents troops from receiving adequate treatment.

“Soldiers don’t like to admit they have trauma,” said 22-year-old Brock McIntosh, a specialist in the National Guard.

Army Sgt. Maggie Martin said that situation is even worse for women because “they are already seen as the weaker sex.”

Martin, 28, deployed three times to Iraq. “I didn’t feel OK, but I didn’t know what to do.” she said.

Army Spc. Zach Choate, 26, was injured by a roadside bomb in Iraq in 2006. He said that after being diagnosed with PTSD and TBI, he was given the option to go back to Iraq.

“Out of guilt and lack of better knowledge, I deployed back to a combat zone,” he said.

The departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs have acknowledged that mental health treatment stigma is preventing troops from receiving the care they need. In 2007, in cooperation with the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury, they launched the “Real Warriors Campaign,” an initiative aimed at creating awareness around trauma-related issues in the military.

McIntosh said that when he was deployed to Afghanistan he saw a fellow soldier, who suffered from PTSD, have a breakdown.

“I remember looking in his eyes and seeing nothing,” he said.

If that soldier had had that breakdown behind his weapon, McIntosh said, he would have put the lives of other soldiers and the Afghan people at risk.

“We want to give soldiers a chance to heal,” McIntosh said.

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

Federal Judge Refuses To Dismiss Suit Against War Profiteers For

**Burn Pit Poisoning Of Troops And
Civilian Workers In Iraq And
Afghanistan:
KBR Inc. And Halliburton Co.
“Ignored The Terms Of Their
Government Contracts Requiring
Them To Dispose Of Waste Safely,
And Instead Burned Everything From
Tires To Human Body Parts In
Massive Pits”
“The Department Of Veterans Affairs
Issued A Letter In April Saying It Would
Accept Claims For Burn Pit-Related
Illness”**

Oct. 03, 2010 By Renee Dudley, The Herald [Excerpts]

More than a dozen South Carolina veterans and defense contractors who allege their exposure to noxious fumes from burning waste dumps in Iraq and Afghanistan led to grievous health issues may proceed with their class-action lawsuit, a U.S. District judge ruled recently.

The suit, filed in South Carolina in June 2009, is among 43 suits across the country that allege fumes from "burn pits" caused cancer, respiratory problems and other illnesses.

Alex Harley of Goose Creek is among the Palmetto State's plaintiffs.

The 34-year-old father had a clean bill of health before leaving for work as a contractor in Iraq in 2006. Harley was exposed to what he called the "indescribably horrific" fumes during the course of his work and returned to the U.S. with myriad health problems.

"They check you out completely before they send you over there," he said. "I was completely healthy before I went. Now, I can't work. I can't fish. I can't play backyard football. I can't do any of the things I used to do."

Plaintiffs in the 43 cases say Texas-based defense contractors ignored the terms of their government contracts requiring them to dispose of waste safely, and instead burned everything from tires to human body parts in massive pits.

The Houston contractors, KBR Inc. and Halliburton Co., who received billions of dollars from the federal government, deny the allegations and involvement.

The Sept. 8 ruling by a U.S. District Court judge in Maryland came in response to the defendants' motion to dismiss the suits.

Harley installed radios in Humvees and trained personnel in Iraq in 2006 and 2007 while working as a contractor, though not for one named in the suits. Sometimes twice a day, he transported cardboard boxes and other assorted household trash from his work to the burning dump sites.

Flames, ignited with diesel fuel and sustained with a variety of accelerants, shot hundreds of feet into the sky from pits that were about 10 feet deep, 15 feet wide and about a quarter-mile long, according to Harley and the suit.

The father of two said he had no health problems before the first of his two six-month contracts.

Following the first trip, though, he had pneumonia and eventually developed severe bronchitis, according to the suit.

After returning home from the second stint, Harley's respiratory symptoms worsened, and he lost the skin on his hands, which looked like "raw meat," he says in the suit.

Now, he suffers a host of illnesses, including asthma, chronic bronchitis, severe muscle and joint pain and various skin rashes, he said. His health has deteriorated so much that Harley stopped working last December and now collects disability benefits, which account for just a fraction of his former pay, he said.

Harley called the odor from the flames and smoke "overwhelming."

"They burned human waste from port-a-potties and medical waste from the hospital on base," he said. "Tractor loads of everything and anything."

Smoke, which blew in shades from green to black, burned his eyes, he said.

Harley said he had difficulty breathing, coughed incessantly and couldn't speak at all for a week while overseas. He constantly felt light-headed, had muscle spasms and cramps and lost his leg hair below the knees, he said.

Harley said he has more than \$30,000 in medical bills that his insurance does not cover.

He has created a website, www.fightforamericans.org, and is trying to start a nonprofit group to raise awareness about illness caused by burn pits.

Harley was one of three South Carolina residents last year to file the suit, which requests a jury trial and unspecified damages and attorney's fees to compensate for allegations that include negligence and breach of contract. Since then, more than a dozen plaintiffs have signed on, according to Melissa Allan, a spokeswoman from Mount Pleasant-based Motley Rice, one of two firms handling the suits nationally.

The first of the 43 class-action suits involving burn pits were filed about two years ago, said attorney Joseph Rice, of Motley Rice.

Because they were similar, the 43 suits were consolidated for a U.S. District Court judge in Maryland to review in April.

Attorneys for the defendants asked that the case be dismissed. The request was denied last month.

Litigants will appear before the judge in Maryland again later this month, according to court documents.

The plaintiffs include a combination of military veterans and defense contractors, Rice said.

The Department of Veterans Affairs issued a letter in April saying it would accept claims for burn pit-related illness.

Traveling Soldier

Posted at:

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/TS32.pdf>

THIS ISSUE FEATURING:

**INDIANA SOLDIERS ORGANIZING OPEN RESISTANCE
TO AFGHAN DEPLOYMENT, "CHARGING THEIR
COMPANY IS NOT PROPERLY TRAINED OR MENTALLY
FIT FOR BATTLE"**

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/9.10.Indiana.php>

ARMY LIFE:

"UNFORTUNATE TRUTH"

**By Soldier R, Traveling Soldier Correspondent
Reporting from Germany**

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/9.10.untruth.php>

**MORE ARMY LIFE:
“SUICIDE”**

**By Soldier R, Traveling Soldier Correspondent
Reporting from Germany**

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/9.10.suicide.php>

**WHY ARE US TROOPS KILLING THEMSELVES?
ARMY PRESCRIPTION OF SUICIDE-LINKED
ANTIDEPRESSANTS, ANTIPSYCHOTICS AND
ANTISEIZURE DRUGS EXACTLY PARALLELS THE
INCREASE IN US TROOP SUICIDES SINCE 2005**

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/9.10.suicide2.php>

AND MORE!

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/>

Traveling Soldier is the publication of the Military Resistance Organization

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.

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

**Highly Intelligent Majority Of
U.S. Citizens Get It Right:
“Nearly Half Of The 2,054 Adults
Polled Say The Federal**

Government Threatens Their Personal Liberties” “Half Say The Government Has A Big Effect On Their Daily Lives But Most Of Those Say The Impact Is A Negative One” Majority Favor “Electoral Laws To Make It Easier For Third Parties To Compete With Democrats And Republicans”

“Fifty-six percent of those polled say things would be better if there were a national referendum system enabling all citizens to vote on major national issues”

Nearly two-thirds of Americans say the government should be doing more to fight poverty. Nearly six in 10 say they want their congressional representatives to fight for additional government spending in their districts to spur job creation; fewer (39 percent) want their member of Congress to cut spending, even if that means not as many local jobs.

October 10, 2010 By Jon Cohen and Dan Balz, Staff Writers, Washington Post
[Excerpts]

If there is an overarching theme of election 2010, it is the question of how big the government should be and how far it should reach into people’s lives.

More broadly, a nationwide report card on the government shows barely passing grades: Washington was a C student in a poll 10 years ago.

Today, more than four in 10 people give the government a D or F.

Most of those who see the country as headed off-course put "a great deal" of blame on the government.

Overall, 55 percent of Americans say the government is not paying attention to the biggest issues. Similar percentages say the government does not use tax money wisely, is out of sync with their values and has not helped their families.

Half say the government has a big effect on their daily lives - up significantly from 10 years ago - but most of those say the impact is a negative one.

Nearly half of the 2,054 adults polled say the federal government threatens their personal liberties.

Nearly six in 10 say they want their congressional representatives to fight for additional government spending in their districts to spur job creation; fewer (39 percent) want their member of Congress to cut spending, even if that means not as many local jobs.

This is a turnabout from September 1994, when 53 percent said they wanted their representative to battle against spending and 42 percent were on the other side.

Despite evident public dissatisfaction with the growth of the federal deficit, 50 percent of those polled say they would prefer more government spending to try to boost the economy.

Eight years ago, roughly six in 10 Americans expressed confidence in Washington to solve economic problems. Today, less than half express faith.

But even at a time of reduced confidence overall and conservative criticism of social welfare spending, nearly two-thirds of Americans say the government should be doing more to fight poverty.

Carol Santos, 55, of Providence, R.I., sees the government as trying to help people like her, but the benefits she receives don't go far enough.

"When all these big companies gave their high-ranking officials pay raises, it took away from the low to moderate community," she said. "The big-name companies . . . have done it to us little people. The government is trying to help, but it's fighting a losing battle."

A more radical proposition also has broad appeal: Fifty-six percent of those polled say things would be better if there were a national referendum system enabling all citizens to vote on major national issues.

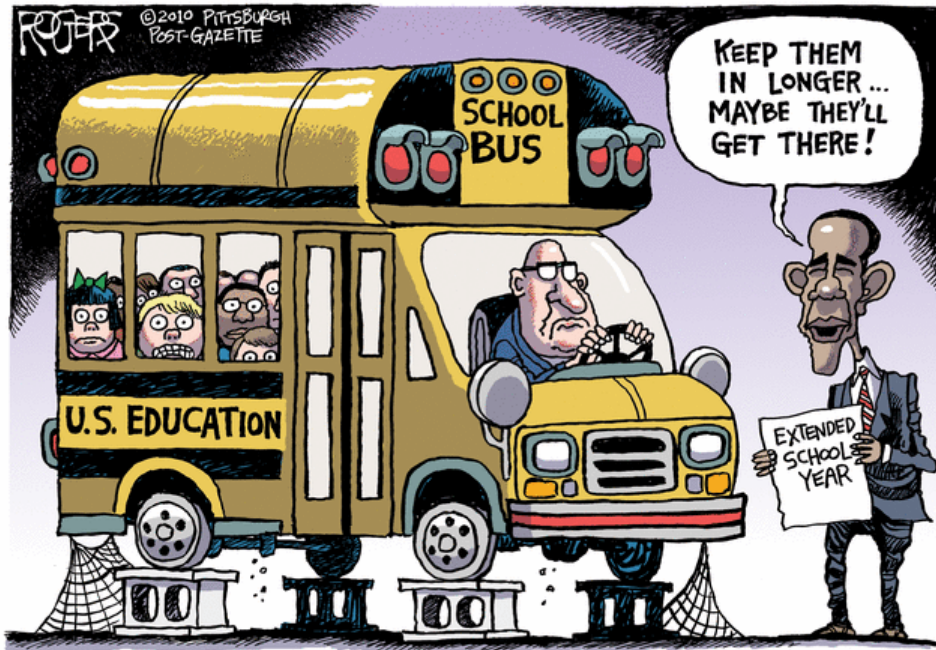
At least on this point, there is rare general agreement among Democrats, Republicans and independents.

When it comes to possible reforms, 60 percent say a constitutionally mandated balanced budget would make government in Washington work better.

Just over half say the same about easing electoral laws to make it easier for third parties to compete with Democrats and Republicans.

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DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Domestic Enemies Busy Busy Busy:

“A California Student Got A Visit From The FBI This Week After He Found A Secret GPS Tracking Device On His Car, And A Friend Posted Photos Of It Online”

“Half-A-Dozen FBI Agents And Police Officers Appeared At Yasir Afifi’s Apartment Complex In Santa Clara,

California, On Tuesday Demanding He Return The Device” “The FBI. Placed A Surveillance-Tracking Device On The Car Of A 20-Year-Old American Citizen Who Has Done Nothing More Than Being Half-Egyptian”



Photo of tracking device courtesy of Yasir Afifi

October 7, 2010 By Kim Zetter, Wired.com [Excerpts]

A California student got a visit from the FBI this week after he found a secret GPS tracking device on his car, and a friend posted photos of it online. The post prompted wide speculation about whether the device was real, whether the young Arab-American was being targeted in a terrorism investigation and what the authorities would do.

It took just 48 hours to find out: The device was real, the student was being secretly tracked and the FBI wanted its expensive device back, the student told Wired.com in an interview Wednesday.

The answer came when half-a-dozen FBI agents and police officers appeared at Yasir Afifi's apartment complex in Santa Clara, California, on Tuesday demanding he return the device.

Afifi, a 20-year-old U.S.-born citizen, cooperated willingly and said he'd done nothing to merit attention from authorities.

Comments the agents made during their visit suggested he'd been under FBI surveillance for three to six months.

An FBI spokesman wouldn't acknowledge that the device belonged to the agency or that agents appeared at Afifi's house.

Afifi, the son of an Islamic-American community leader who died a year ago in Egypt, is one of only a few people known to have found a government-tracking device on their vehicle.

His discovery comes in the wake of a recent ruling by the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals saying it's legal for law enforcement to secretly place a tracking device on a suspect's car without getting a warrant, even if the car is parked in a private driveway.

Brian Alseth from the American Civil Liberties Union in Washington state contacted Afifi after seeing pictures of the tracking device posted online and told him the ACLU had been waiting for a case like this to challenge the ruling.

"This is the kind of thing we like to throw lawyers at," Afifi said Alseth told him.

"It seems very frightening that the FBI have placed a surveillance-tracking device on the car of a 20-year-old American citizen who has done nothing more than being half-Egyptian," Alseth told Wired.com.

Afifi, a business marketing student at Mission College in Santa Clara, discovered the device last Sunday when he took his car to a local garage for an oil change.

When a mechanic at Ali's Auto Care raised his Ford Lincoln LS on hydraulic lifts, Afifi saw a wire sticking out near the right rear wheel and exhaust.

Garage owner Mazher Khan confirmed for Wired.com that he also saw it.

A closer inspection showed it connected to a battery pack and transmitter, which were attached to the car with a magnet. Khan asked Afifi if he wanted the device removed and when Afifi said yes, Khan pulled it easily from the car's chassis.

"I wouldn't have noticed it if there wasn't a wire sticking out," Afifi said.

Later that day, a friend of Afifi's named Khaled posted pictures of the device at Reddit, asking if anyone knew what it was and if it meant the FBI "is after us." (Reddit is owned by CondeNast Digital, which also owns Wired.com).

"My plan was to just put the device on another car or in a lake," Khaled wrote, "but when you come home to 2 stoned off-their-asses people who are hearing things in the device and convinced it's a bomb you just gotta be sure."

A reader quickly identified it as an Orion Guardian ST820 tracking device made by an electronics company called Cobham, which sells the device only to law enforcement.

No one was available at Cobham to answer Wired.com's questions, but a former FBI agent who looked at the pictures confirmed it was a tracking device.

The former agent, who asked not to be named, said the device was an older model of tracking equipment that had long ago been replaced by devices that don't require batteries. Batteries die and need to be replaced if surveillance is ongoing so newer devices are placed in the engine compartment and hardwired to the car's battery so they don't run out of juice.

He was surprised this one was so easily found.

"It has to be able to be removed but also stay in place and not be seen," he said. "There's always the possibility that the car will end up at a body shop or auto mechanic, so it has to be hidden well. It's very rare when the guys find them."

Afifi considered selling the device on Craigslist before the FBI showed up.

He was in his apartment Tuesday afternoon when a roommate told him "two sneaky-looking people" were near his car.

Afifi, already heading out for an appointment, encountered a man and woman looking at his vehicle outside. The man asked if Afifi knew his registration tag was expired. When Afifi asked if it bothered him, the man just smiled.

Afifi got into his car and headed for the parking lot exit when two SUVs pulled up with flashing lights carrying four police officers in bullet-proof vests.

The agent who initially spoke with Afifi identified himself then as Vincent and told Afifi, "We're here to recover the device you found on your vehicle. It's federal property. It's an expensive piece, and we need it right now."

Afifi asked, "Are you the guys that put it there?" and the agent replied, "Yeah, I put it there." He told Afifi, "We're going to make this much more difficult for you if you don't cooperate."

Afifi retrieved the device from his apartment and handed it over, at which point the agents asked a series of questions – did he know anyone who traveled to Yemen or was affiliated with overseas training?

One of the agents produced a printout of a blog post that Afifi's friend Khaled allegedly wrote a couple of months ago. It had "something to do with a mall or a bomb," Afifi said. He hadn't seen it before and doesn't know the details of what it said. He found it hard to believe Khaled meant anything threatening by the post.

"He's a smart kid and is not affiliated with anything extreme and never says anything stupid like that," Afifi said. "I've known that guy my whole life. "

The agents told Afifi they had other agents outside Khaled's house.

“If you want us to call them off and not talk to him we can do that,” Afifi said they told him. “That was weird. [...] I didn’t really believe anything they were saying.”

When he later asked Khaled about the post, his friend recalled “writing something stupid,” but said he wasn’t involved in any wrongdoing. Khaled declined to discuss the issue with Wired.com.

The female agent, who handed Afifi a card, identified herself as Jennifer Kanaan and said she was Lebanese.

She spoke some Arabic to Afifi and through the course of her comments indicated she knew what restaurants he and his girlfriend frequented.

She also congratulated him on his new job. Afifi recently got laid off from his job, but on the same day was hired as an international sales manager of laptops and computers for Cal Micro in San Jose.

The agents also knew he was planning a short business trip to Dubai in a few weeks. Afifi said he often travels for business and has two teenage brothers in Egypt whom he supports financially. They live with an aunt. His U.S.-born mother, who divorced his father five years ago, lives in Arizona.

Afifi’s father, Aladdin Afifi, was a U.S. citizen and former president of the Muslim Community Association here, before his family moved to Egypt in 2003. Yasir Afifi returned to the United States alone in 2008, while his father and brothers stayed in Egypt, to further his education he said. He knows he’s on a federal watchlist and is regularly taken aside at airports for secondary screening.

Six months ago, a former roommate of his was visited by FBI agents who said they wanted to speak with Afifi.

Afifi contacted one agent and was told the agency received an anonymous tip from someone saying he might be a threat to national security. Afifi told the agent he was willing to answer questions if his lawyer approved. But after Afifi’s lawyer contacted the agency, he never heard from the feds again until he found their tracking device.

“I don’t think they were surprised that I found it,” he told Wired.com. “I’m sure they knew when I found it. [...] One of the first questions they asked me was if I was at a mechanics shop last Sunday.

“I said yes, that’s where I found this stupid device under my car.”

Afifi’s attorney, who works for the civil liberties-focused Council on American Islamic Relations, said this kind of tracking is more egregious than the kind her office usually sees.

“The idea that it escalates to this level is unusual,” said Zahra Billoo. “We take about one new case each week relating to FBI or law enforcement visits (to clients). Generally they come to the individual’s house or workplace, and there are issues that arise from that.”

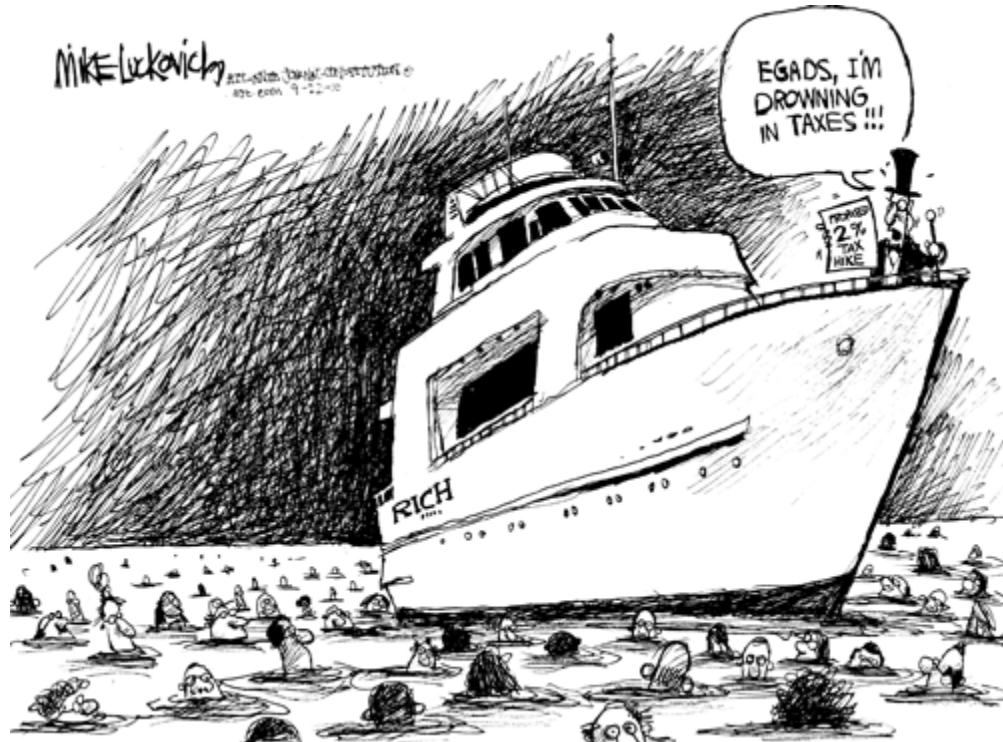
However, she said that after learning about Afifi's experience, other lawyers in her organization told her they knew of two people in Ohio who also recently discovered tracking devices on their vehicles.

Afifi's encounter with the FBI ended with the agents telling him not to worry.

"We have all the information we needed," they told him. "You don't need to call your lawyer. Don't worry, you're boring."

They shook his hand and left.

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