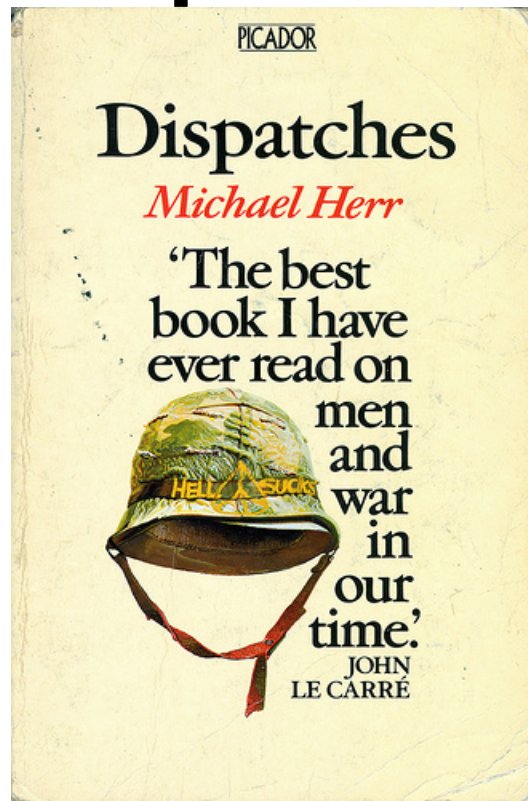


Military Resistance 8K18

Dispatches



[Farm4.static.flickr.com]

**“What They Understood And Their
Leaders Refused To Acknowledge
Was That Battles And ‘Victories’
Didn’t Add Up To Anything”
“The Number Of Communist Dead
Meant Nothing, Changed Nothing”**

“The United States Got Involved In The Vietnam War, Commitments And Interests Aside, Simply Because We Thought It Would Be Easy”

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

While a colonel in Saigon was declaring that the enemy “no longer maintains in our view capability to mount, execute or sustain a serious offensive action,” out in the countryside soldiers were looking around uneasily, saying, “Charlie’s up to something. Slick, slick, that fucker’s so slick. Watch!”

By Wendy Smith, The American Scholar [Excerpts]

Michael Herr’s brilliant, bitter, and loving book was hailed as a masterpiece when it was published in 1977, and the critical consensus has held steady ever since.

Somehow, a young journalist whose previous experience consisted mostly of travel pieces and film criticism managed to transform himself into a wild new kind of war correspondent capable of comprehending a disturbing new kind of war.

“Herr is the only writer I’ve read who has written in the mad-pop-poetic/bureaucratically camouflaged language in which Vietnam has lived,” wrote playwright and Vietnam draftee David Rabe.

It created enough of a sensation to prompt me to shell out \$8.95 for the hardcover, a lot of money for a college undergraduate in 1978. That was less than three years after North Vietnamese troops had marched into Saigon, during the odd political lull between Richard Nixon’s resignation and Ronald Reagan’s election.

I read Dispatches then through particularly rose-colored glasses, confident that we had learned the lessons of Vietnam and Watergate. In the ensuing 29 years, my awe at Herr’s achievement has never lessened, but each of the three times I’ve re-read it, I’ve found new things.

The book hasn’t changed, of course, but I have.

ON FIRST READING, the images Dispatches implanted in my mind were unquestionably harrowing: the corpse-strewn streets of ruined Hue, Vietnam’s imperial city; the spooky vistas of Khe Sanh, where the Marines endured near-perpetual fire from ghostly North Vietnamese divisions invisible in the jungle. But those blasted landscapes painted in swaggering rock ‘n’ roll brushstrokes were as remote from my own experiences as the implacable rituals of guilt and expiation in Greek drama — indeed, I

naively thought the book offered overdue catharsis for the Vietnam tragedy and expressed a new national consensus about it.

Herr's contempt for the authorities who had dumped American troops into combat, his matter-of-fact depiction of that combat as senseless, dehumanizing, and futile, seemed like givens.

Didn't everyone feel that way by 1978?

My liberal, urban friends certainly did, and few voices anywhere were being raised in defense of a military and political strategy whose ultimate fruits (helicopters evacuating the last Marines from the roof of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon while desperate, abandoned Vietnamese civilians swarmed the grounds below) were a painful recent memory.

What impressed me most forcefully about Dispatches was the window it opened on the surreal texture of ordinary soldier's lives.

Liberated from deadlines by his freeform assignment from Esquire magazine, Herr spent much of his time hanging around with grunts like the exhausted kid who replied to the standard question, "How long you been in-country?" by half-lifting his head and saying, very slowly, "all fuckin' day," or the soldier detailed on reconnaissance patrol who told the reporter that the pills he took by the fistful "cooled things out just right" and that "he could see that old jungle at night like he was looking at it through a starlight scope."

Unlike his colleagues working for mainstream media, Herr was under no obligation to solicit and report the military command's unwaveringly optimistic statements; instead, he listened to "grungy men in the jungle who talked bloody murder and killed people all the time," men who despised sugar-coated official platitudes about what they were doing there as much as the most committed antiwar activist did.

Dispatches made it clear, I assumed, that hating the war didn't mean hating those stuck with fighting it.

The virtually unanimous praise lavished on this searing text, the general conviction that it was a definitive portrait of the American experience in Vietnam, suggested that Vietnam was behind us now.

How young I was, and how much I missed.

I still didn't get it in 1982, when I stood weeping in front of Maya Lin's memorial lined with the names of Americans killed or missing in Vietnam from 1959 to 1975. Looking at the flowers and the handwritten notes placed along its black granite wall, testament to the anguish we still felt over the loss of so many lives, I couldn't understand the veterans who angrily viewed the unconventional memorial as a "black gash of shame," one more example of the way their service had been stigmatized.

I didn't realize it then, but Vietnam was on its way to becoming the war we weren't allowed to win.

During the 1980s, I heard that revolting phrase uttered with increasing frequency by people who sought to erase our national trauma, not by acknowledging the mistaken analysis that entangled us in Vietnam and the stubbornness that kept us there, but by shoehorning it into a conventional saga of courage and sacrifice in an honorable cause betrayed by the weak and the disloyal.

Every scathing word in Dispatches belied this pat scenario.

WHEN I PICKED UP Herr's book again in the late '80s, however, I became uncomfortably aware that it also belied my blithe collegiate certainties. The first time through, I had breezed right over Herr's description of the questions people asked him upon his return as "political, square, innocent . . . I'd practically forgotten the language." I didn't even remember the troubling passage in which his pal Tim Page, solicited by a publisher to write a book that would "take the glamour out of war," erupted with glee: "The very idea! Ohhh, what a laugh! Take the bloody glamour out of bloody war!"

Herr and his fellow misfits among the press corps, dope-smoking longhairs though they might have been, not so secretly saw themselves as belonging to the time-honored, movienourished image of the swashbuckling war correspondent. They hailed helicopters like taxis, hitching rides into places like Dak To and the Ia Drang Valley, where they risked their lives to observe the nightmare reality buried underneath words like body count and pacification.

Then they grabbed the next chopper out, heading back to Saigon to print their photos and write it all down. There was glamour in war, and they got to experience the buzz of combat from a uniquely privileged position.

"Whatever else, I'd loved it there," Herr admitted.

Soldiers felt that way too, William Broyles Jr. acknowledged in "Why Men Love War," a 1984 essay in Esquire, which I read not long before I tackled Dispatches for the second time.

Broyles probed war's "great and seductive beauty," the enduring comradeship created among men who trusted each other with their lives, the knowledge that in battle you touched the fundamentals of human existence.

A Vietnam vet, he didn't scant the uglier aspects: the sense of power inherent in killing, the covert joy when someone else got wasted instead of you, the unpalatable fact that being surrounded by death was, in some weird ways, a turn-on.

His polished, articulate prose was light years removed from the pop-apocalyptic urgency with which Herr tried to capture the particular nature of Vietnam. And yet both conveyed a message I hadn't been able to hear in 1978.

For those who were there, the Vietnam War, like every war, was horrible and wonderful, the greatest experience of their lives as well as the worst thing that ever happened to them.

There was an important political discussion to be had about Vietnam, but there was another level on which politics was beside the point.

Dispatches was more than simply a great book about Vietnam, I began to understand.

I spend a lot of my professional time interviewing authors, and over the years I heard several of them refer to Herr's work with a reverence that bordered on awe.

Dispatches was "one of the greatest memoirs of all time," remarked Mary Karr, no slouch in that department herself. "It intimidated the pants off me," confessed novelist Bob Shacochis, who, when I talked with him, had recently completed a nonfiction portrait of American soldiers in Haiti. "I can't imagine writing a better book than Dispatches; it's a blast of genius."

The blasts of Herr's rage, scorn, and agonized tenderness have been disturbing my peace for nearly three decades now; few works in any genre have haunted me the way Dispatches has.

IN 1999, IT REENTERED my life in the oddest way, forcing itself anew on my attention when I least expected it. I'd had a baby at age 39 and sank happily into the swamp of my son's all-consuming demands and my equally consuming love for him. The domestic world was my kingdom; war was one of those absurd male pastimes that had no relevance to me. (I know this is ridiculous: remember, I was a new mother.)

One day, reading a book about helicopters to my vehicle-obsessed four-year-old, I came across a photograph of a Huey landing under fire somewhere in South Vietnam. The next thing I knew, Dispatches was back in my hands.

It was placed there by my recollection of Herr's amazing description of the Vietnam chopper: "the sexiest thing going; saverdestroyer, provider-waster, right hand-left hand, nimble, fluent, canny and human; hot steel, grease, jungle-saturated canvas webbing, sweat cooling and warming up again, cassette rock and roll in one ear and door-gun fire in the other, fuel, heat, vitality and death, death itself, hardly an intruder."

Rereading that fabulous effusion, I remembered Mary Karr's appreciative appraisal: "Just at the level of sentences, it's never boring." The third time around, I was swept away by the sheer magnificence of Herr's prose as much as by what he had to say. Of course, the two were inextricably connected, and Dispatches had something new to say to me in my 40s.

The book was a personal testament, I belatedly grasped.

Herr wasn't just showing me what the war did to other people; he was examining what it did to him. He was terrified, naturally — take a look at his defoliating depiction of being under fire:

That passage took me through Vietnam to the eternal terrain of stark, animal fear.

At its existential heart, Dispatches was about what happened to someone living for months on end with that kind of fear, about what the omnipresence of death did to your soul.

Herr summed it up for himself in a single bleak sentence. Walking through the streets of Hue during the Tet Offensive, past hundreds of bodies decomposing in the cold rain, he wrote, “I realized that the only corpse I couldn’t bear to look at would be the one whose face I would never have to see.”

The grunts’ moments of individual reckoning were blunter. “All that’s just a load, man,” said one young soldier, dismissing the domino theory and other official rationales. “We’re here to kill gooks. Period.”

Being a mother, I flinched at the thought of my son growing up to say something like that. Being a journalist, I flinched again at Herr’s sardonic addendum: “(That) wasn’t at all true of me. I was there to watch.”

I’d never covered a war or grilled a duplicitous politician, but anyone who writes nonfiction is familiar with the queasily mixed emotions inherent in using other people’s experiences as your raw material. Herr dissected that complex, fraught relationship in a situation where the stakes were mortally high.

He thought of himself as the grunts’ brother, sharing their miseries and dangers in the field. On the surface, they seemed to agree. They gave him their helmets and flak jackets, found him mattresses to sleep on, threw blankets over him when he was cold. “You’re all right man,” they said, “you got balls.”

But then would come “that bad, bad moment . . . the look that made you look away,” or the comment of a rifleman watching a jeepload of correspondents drive off: “Those fucking guys, I hope they die.”

Then the distance was clear.

“They weren’t judging me, they weren’t reproaching me, they didn’t even mind me, not in any personal way,” Herr wrote. “They only hated me, hated me the way you’d hate any hopeless fool who would put himself through this thing when he had choices.”

He was not their brother, and he came to a conclusion many reporters prefer not to draw: “You were as responsible for everything you saw as you were for everything you did.”

There was only one way to honor that responsibility, and the grunts told him what it was.

“They would ask you with an emotion whose intensity would shock you to please tell it, because they really did have the feeling that it wasn’t being told for them, that they were going through all this and that somehow no one back in the World knew about it.”

Herr told as many of their stories as he could cram into a narrative burning with his fierce belief that “conventional journalism could no more reveal this war than conventional firepower could win it.”

He told the story of a freaked-out Marine, throwing away fatigues soaked with the blood of “some guy he didn’t even know (who) had been blown away right next to him, all over him.”

There was no way to wash them clean, the soldier said, near tears: “You could take and scrub them fatigues for a million years, and it would never happen.”

He told the story of a battalion in the midst of the Tet Offensive’s worst days, afflicted with despair so terrible that men from Graves Registration going through the personal effects of dead soldiers sometimes found letters from home “delivered days before and still unopened.”

All wars produce horror stories, but in most wars before Vietnam reporters were constrained from telling them, by censorship, of course, but also by their sense that there was a greater goal that at least partly justified the horrors.

Herr cared very little about the big picture — and who could blame him, when one month Khe Sanh fit into the big picture as “the Western Anchor of our Defense” and the next it was “a worthless piece of ground”?

He cared more about what he could learn from the Special Forces captain who said, “I went out and killed one VC and liberated a prisoner. Next day the major called me in and told me that I’d killed fourteen VC and liberated six prisoners. You want to see the medal?”

THE HUMAN TRUTHS of Dispatches were also political truths,

I could see when I angrily reopened it on the eve of the 2006 midterm elections.

Because Vietnam was an unpopular war that we lost, it was possible for Herr to say things about the essential nature of combat that it had been unacceptable to say about, for example, World War II. (The U.S. Army was so upset by John Huston’s Signal Corps documentary about veterans suffering from what we would now call post-traumatic stress disorder that it suppressed the film for more than 30 years.)

Herr took full advantage of that freedom.

He took very seriously his commitment to tell the grunts’ stories, but he made no pretense of telling them from the grunts’ point of view, and he told stories they undoubtedly wished he’d kept to himself.

He wasn’t “embedded,” the cynical tactic invented by the Bush administration to enmesh reporters in a conflict they were supposed to be covering impartially. “I crossed the line from observer to participant,” said Time correspondent Michael Weiskopf, who lost his right hand when he picked up a live grenade tossed into the Humvee carrying him and

four soldiers on patrol in Baghdad. “It became very difficult to objectively assess the role of U.S. soldiers who were housing, feeding, befriending and protecting me. After three weeks in a platoon, I came dangerously close to adopting the mindset and mission of a soldier.”

Herr never fell into that trap.

His affection for the grunts didn’t prevent him from seeing what Vietnam had done to some of them. “They were killers,” he wrote of the soldiers hunkered down at Khe Sanh. “Of course they were; what would anyone expect them to be?”

With the appalling photographs from Abu Ghraib still vivid in my memory, I found my fourth journey through Dispatches halted time after time by grim glimpses of the atrocities committed in Vietnam.

Herr heard stories about “the man in the Highlands who was ‘building his own gook,’ parts were the least of his troubles”; about the door gunner, asked how he could shoot women and children, who replied, “It’s easy, you just don’t lead ‘em so much.”

He saw a photo of a Marine “pissing into the locked-open mouth of a decomposing North Vietnamese soldier”; albums with pictures of smiling soldiers holding up severed heads or necklaces of ears. “There were hundreds of those albums in Vietnam, thousands,” he noted wearily. The inevitable snapshot of a dead Viet Cong woman stripped naked was inevitably accompanied by “that same tired remark you heard every time . . . ‘No more boom-boom for that mamma-san.’”

Herr was sickened by what he saw and heard, but he didn’t judge the grunts. He knew what they were up against. The North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong were not good guys; he observed without surprise that they were supplied by the Soviets and the Chinese, that they were responsible for plenty of atrocities themselves.

What unnerved American soldiers about their enemy — and drove the brass purely crazy — was that he wasn’t playing by their rules.

Over and over, Herr described major battles with massive casualties on both sides that didn’t so much end as stop when the North Vietnamese picked up most of their dead and vanished into the jungle.

Command proclaimed them victories, but it was hard to feel victorious at the top of Dak To’s Hill 875, which hundreds of Americans had died to take, where there were exactly four Vietnamese bodies.

“Of course more died, hundreds more,” Herr wrote, “but the corpses kicked and counted and photographed and buried numbered four. . . . Spooky. Everything up there was spooky . . . you were there in a place where you didn’t belong.”

The grunts knew it, and they didn’t make their commanders’ mistake of underestimating their opponents.

While a colonel in Saigon was declaring that the enemy “no longer maintains in our view capability to mount, execute or sustain a serious offensive action,” out in

the countryside soldiers were looking around uneasily, saying, “Charlie’s up to something. Slick, slick, that fucker’s so slick. Watch!”

What they understood and their leaders refused to acknowledge was that battles and “victories” didn’t add up to anything.

“They killed a lot of Communists, but that was all they did,” Herr wrote of the campaign in the Vietnamese highlands.

“The number of Communist dead meant nothing, changed nothing.”

Iraq is not Vietnam. The desert is not the jungle.

The Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army, infuriatingly hard to pin down though they were, were miracles of coherence compared to the rat’s nest of sectarian death squads and fundamentalist splinter groups accountable to who knows who that toss IEDs at American jeeps in the streets of Baghdad and Mosul.

What is shockingly, shamefully similar is the arrogance, criminal blindness, and willful obfuscation that ensnared America in both places.

In 2006, no other sentence in Dispatches distressed me more than an almost casual aside in the midst of Herr’s exegesis of “the bloody, maddening uncanniness” of Vietnam’s terrain.

“There is a point of view,” he wrote, “that says that the United States got involved in the Vietnam War, commitments and interests aside, simply because we thought it would be easy.”

Like all great books, Dispatches is inexhaustible.

I have learned from it, changed with it, made mistakes about it.

It was never the document of national reconciliation I once thought it was.

It was and is the timeless portrait of war’s bedrock realities — fear, death, murder, madness — that I was finally ready to confront in my 30s.

It’s also a revelation of the beauty that unfolds in extreme circumstances, the clarity of vision possible when everything extraneous has fallen away. It’s a brazen display of unbridled romanticism and extravagant prose.

It’s a chastening exploration of our complicity in what we see from a safe distance.

It’s beyond politics, but we ignore, and have ignored, its political lessons at our peril.

MORE:

Vietnam GI: Reprints Available



Vietnam: They Stopped An Imperial War

Not available from anybody else, anywhere

Edited by Vietnam Veteran Jeff Sharlet from 1968 until his death, this newspaper rocked the world, attracting attention even from Time Magazine, and extremely hostile attention from the chain of command. The pages and pages of letters in the paper from troops in Vietnam condemning the war are lost to history, but you can find them here.

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

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Foreign Occupation “Servicemember” Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan Friday: Nationality Not Announced

November 19 Reuters

A foreign servicemember died following an improvised explosive device attack in southern Afghanistan today.

Wentzville Soldier Killed In Afghanistan



Justin Culbreth

11.18.10 KSDK

Wentzville, MO

A 26-year-old soldier from Wentzville was killed during combat operations in Afghanistan.

Army Specialist Justin Culbreth died when his vehicle came into contact with an improvised explosive device (IED). The exact date of his death remains unknown. Culbreth's parents were notified of his death on Wednesday.

Culbreth, a married father of two, received his GED from Warrenton High School after years of home schooling.

Culbreth was stationed out of Tennessee.

Justin attended Westlake Church of Christ in Wentzville before moving to Colorado Springs, Colorado. Funeral arrangements have not yet been announced.

Guardsman Christopher Davies Killed In Nahr-e Saraj

19 Nov 10 Ministry of Defence

It is with sadness that the Ministry of Defence must confirm that Guardsman Christopher Davies, from the 1st Battalion Irish Guards, serving with Combined Force Nahr-e Saraj (North), was killed in Afghanistan on Wednesday 17 November 2010.

Guardsman Davies was killed while taking part in a security patrol in Nahr-e Saraj (North), Helmand province. As he was conducting a partnered operation with the Afghan National Army to the east of Patrol Base Hazrat, Guardsman Davies was hit by small arms fire.

Merseyside Irish Guards Soldier Killed In Nahr-e Saraj

11/18/10 By Laura Jones, Liverpool Daily Post

A MERSEYSIDE soldier was killed in Afghanistan.

The 22-year-old Irish Guard, from St Helens, was shot in an ambush while patrolling the Nahr-e Saraj district of Helmand Province yesterday.

He is the first Irish Guard to be killed on duty in Afghanistan. His unit was deployed in September taking over from the Scots Guard. It is the regiment's first tour of Afghanistan as a battle group since the conflict began.

Marine Brandon Pearson's Promise: 'I've Got Your Back'



11.11.10 By Jeffrey Wolf and Kim Christiansen, KUSA-TV

ARVADA - If you knew Brandon Pearson you knew he was known for saying: "I've got your back bro." He made that promise to his good friends and the men in his battalion as a Marine.

When he was a senior Ralston Valley High School in Arvada, Pearson made the decision to join the Marines.

"Those are the tough guys and that was his style, go big or go home," his father, Michael Pearson, said.

In September, Brandon Pearson began his second deployment, this time in Afghanistan.

"I think he knew, he knew there was a chance he wouldn't come back," his mom Wendy Pearson said.

Brandon Pearson was part of a battalion in Sangin, one of the most perilous districts of Afghanistan. British forces handed over responsibility to U.S. forces in July after a four-year mission in the area. One British military leader calls it the most dangerous place in the world. Almost one third of all British deaths in Afghanistan have been in Sangin.

Last week, Brandon Pearson's parents got the news. Their son was shot and killed. He was 21 years old.

Michael and Wendy Pearson traveled to Dover, Del., to identify their son, and then returned to Arvada to plan his funeral.

While talking with a chaplain in Delaware, they told him about Brandon Pearson's influence on his high school friend, Spencer Elrod, who decided to join the Marines shortly after Brandon Pearson enlisted.

The chaplain asked the Pearson family if they would like Elrod to escort their son's body back to Colorado.

The day before Veterans Day, Brandon Pearson came home to Colorado.

On Saturday, Nov. 13, his family and friends will celebrate his life at Faith Bible Chapel in Arvada. He will be buried at Fort Logan National Cemetery.

Brandon Pearson's sister Ashley calls him a hero, the kind of person everyone loved. His girlfriend, Alexa Mantas, describes him as a strong person, who loved what he was doing.

The Pearson family hopes Brandon's story will remind all of us to think of the young men and women in harm's way. Wendy Pearson adds this: "They're there for us, so we can enjoy a better life and not worry about terrorism in our country."

Grieving Family Remembers PFC Reifert

17 Nov 2010 By RON SAVAGE, WJBK

MARINE CITY, Mich. - U.S. Army Private First Class Shane Reifert of Marine City was serving in Kunar Province, Afghanistan. His unit with the 101st Airborne Air Assault came under attack of enemy fire on Saturday. Shane was killed.

His mother running errands drove up to the family home and found uniformed soldiers waiting in the driveway.

"They were here and no one was home. I pulled up in the driveway, and I just happened to see them," said Kitty Reifert, Shane's mother. "I said to them I wasn't getting out of my car and they asked me to get out, and I told them no, to go away."

Shane Reifert was 23. He dreamed of being in the military since he was a boy.

"Shane decided that he wanted to serve in the military when he was probably eight or nine years old, and the rest of his life was spent towards that goal. He spoke with a lot of veterans, a lot of active duty soldiers to get their input. Many of them tried to talk him out of it. They said don't do it. You can do something else with your life, but nobody was going to change his mind," said Kurt Reifert, Shane's father.

"If he had to go at this young age, at least he was following his dream," Kitty Reifert said.

Shane was home for his last visit in September. He and his sister Elizabeth arranged for her to pick him up at Detroit Metro Airport.

"My brother let me pick him up from the airport by myself, just the two of us, and seeing those Army boots and his ACU and his little face - it wasn't a little face, he was a man - come down the escalator just... I held him so tightly and just breathed him in as much as I could," said Elizabeth Reifert. "I'll never forget that moment that I had with my brother in the airport."

Shane's sister has established a blog online to tell the world about her brother and to gather donations to go to Afghanistan where members of Shane's unit are still serving.

The funeral services are incomplete, but a funeral with full military honors will be held at Holy Cross Catholic Church in Marine City.

Two Finnish & One Swedish Soldier Wounded By RPG

Nov 19, 2010 DPA

Stockholm/Helsinki - Three members of a Finnish-Swedish patrol were injured Friday when a grenade hit their vehicle in northern Afghanistan, the Finnish and Swedish military said.

The two injured Finnish soldiers and a Swedish officer were flown by helicopter to a German-run hospital in Marmal.

The attack took place some 45 kilometres west of Mazar-e Sharif. It appeared that a rocket-propelled grenade launcher had been used, the Swedish military said.

NO MISSION; POINTLESS WAR: ALL HOME NOW



US soldiers patrol Siah Choy village in Zari district of Kandahar province, south of Afghanistan in October 2010. (AFP/Massoud Hossaini)

MILITARY NEWS

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



The casket of Sgt. Michael F. Paranzino, who was killed in Afghanistan last week, during burial services at St. Columba Cemetery in Middletown, R.I., Nov. 15, 2010. (AP Photo/Stew Milne)



The casket of Sgt. Michael F. Paranzino, who was killed in Afghanistan last week, during burial services at St. Columba Cemetery in Middletown, R.I., Nov. 15, 2010. (AP Photo/Stew Milne)

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

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

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

**Hope for change doesn’t cut it when you’re still losing buddies.
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

**I say that when troops cannot be counted on to follow orders because they see the futility and immorality of them THAT is the real key to ending a war.
-- Al Jaccoma, Veterans For Peace**

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

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

**“The Nixon administration claimed and received great credit for withdrawing the Army from Vietnam, but it was the rebellion of low-ranking GIs that forced the government to abandon a hopeless suicidal policy”
-- David Cortright; Soldiers In Revolt**

**It is a two class world and the wrong class is running it.
-- Larry Christensen, Soldiers Of Solidarity & United Auto Workers**

**“There Are Tens Of Millions Of
Americans Who Have Very Good
Reason To Hate”
“As Long As The Liberal Class Speaks In
The Dead Voice Of Moderation It Will
Continue To Fuel The Right-Wing
Backlash”**

Oct 31, 2010 By Chris Hedges, Truthdig [Excerpts]

The Rally to Restore Sanity, held in Washington’s National Mall, was yet another sad footnote to the death of the liberal class.

It was as innocuous as a Boy Scout jamboree.

It ridiculed followers of the tea party without acknowledging that the pain and suffering expressed by many who support the movement are not only real but legitimate.

It made fun of the buffoons who are rising up out of moral swamps to take over the Republican Party without accepting that their supporters were sold out by a

liberal class, and especially a Democratic Party, which turned its back on the working class for corporate money.

Fox News' Beck and his allies on the far right can use hatred as a mobilizing force because there are tens of millions of Americans who have very good reason to hate.

They have been betrayed by the elite who run the corporate state, by the two main political parties and by the liberal apologists, including those given public platforms on television, who keep counseling moderation as jobs disappear, wages drop and unemployment insurance runs out.

As long as the liberal class speaks in the dead voice of moderation it will continue to fuel the right-wing backlash.

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.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Traveling Soldier is the publication of the Military Resistance Organization.

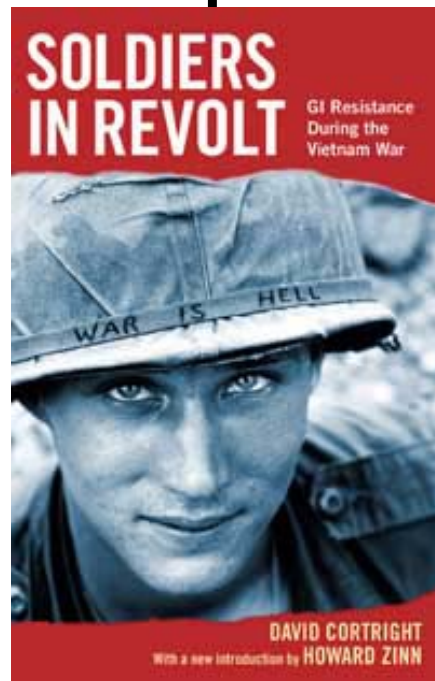
Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

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/)

“With The Growth Of Civilian Support And A Consequent Greater Degree Of Unity And Self-Awareness Among Base Projects, The GI Movement Displayed Increasing Strength And Political Sophistication”



From: SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975. Now available in paperback from Haymarket Books. [Excerpts]

Most major organizations experienced an occasional lull because of cadre turnover, repression, etc., but in nearly every instance new activists rose to sustain the struggle -- as I found in my own experience at Fort Bliss.

When I arrived in Texas, in July 1970, GIs for Peace was in a state of disarray, with the chairman and most of the active members discharged and no activities scheduled.

Meetings soon began, however, and within a few months a GI coffeehouse had been set up in downtown El Paso, Gigline was again circulating, and the core membership had increased to twenty-five soldiers.

On October 31, a major peace rally was held at the local University of Texas campus, with over four hundred GIs joining several hundred civilians to hear featured speaker Rennie Davis.

Several months later, on March 21, 1971; GIs for Peace engaged in another successful action, this time countering a pro-war "Honor POW Day" held in El Paso.

The POW Day sponsors (among them several officers at Fort Bliss) had expected a crowd of fifteen thousand people to kick off a massive "tell it to Hanoi" campaign.

Because of the vigorous publicity and educational drive mounted by local peace forces, however, only a few hundred people actually showed -- including approximately one hundred GIs for Peace members who had come to distribute anti-war literature.

An increasingly important element in sustaining, political activity at Fort Lewis, Fort Bliss, and elsewhere was, the growth of civilian support.

One result of this support was an increase in the number of civilians working directly with soldiers at the local level.

Recently discharged GIs, and in some cases outside civilian radicals, formed collectives and, often with the aid of USSF [United States Servicemen's Fund], provided legal counseling and other services to active-duty organizers.

A number of observers, most notably Fred Gardner, have been highly critical of such arrangements, claiming that civilians often exploit GIs for sectarian political purposes and stifle spontaneous dissent.

To a certain degree the criticism is valid, but it is also true that civilian workers impart needed stability and legal expertise to GI projects.

Indeed, in some cases their presence sparked substantial political activity among servicemen.

At Fort Ord, for example, a civilian collective in March 1971 started a new base paper, P.O.W.; within a few months, a new GI group emerged, the "United Soldiers Union."

Similarly; civilians helped establish an important new organizing center and coffeehouse near Fort Campbell, in Clarksville, Tennessee. The center, known as the "People's House," was immediately successful, attracting over two hundred soldiers in its first six weeks and publishing the newspaper People's Press.

The group's first major action occurred on April 10, when approximately three hundred people, many of them active-duty, demonstrated at the Clarksville federal building against the jailing of Lieutenant William Calley.

The protesters demanded that the leaders responsible for the war, not low-ranking servicemen, be tried as war criminals.

With the growth of civilian support and a consequent greater degree of unity and self-awareness among base projects, the GI movement displayed increasing strength and political sophistication.

November 18, 1989: Honorable Anniversary: “We Want Democracy Now!”



Carl Bunin, Peace History November 12-18

November 18, 1989:

More than 50,000 people have taken to the streets of Sofia in Bulgaria demanding political reform.

In the biggest demonstration in the country’s post-war history, protesters held up banners and chanted: “We want democracy now.”

Other demands included free elections, a new constitution and the dismissal of the remaining hard-line members of the Politburo.

The gathering, in the city’s Aleksandr Nevsky Square, comes just eight days after the country’s Communist leader, Todor Zhivkov, 78, was ousted from power following a 35-year regime.

He was replaced by the more moderate former foreign minister Petar Mladenov, 53, who has promised reform.

Most of Zhivkov’s loyal supporters have already been dismissed and the newly-formed Parliament moved quickly to repeal a repressive law against freedom of speech which had previously led to the imprisonment of thousands.

Today’s protest, organised by dissident political groups, included many of the country’s academics and literary personalities who had been banished under the Zhivkov regime.

Radoi Ralin, a once-imprisoned poet, said: “We want democracy and pluralism.

“We want freedom of people’s opinion, freedom of people’s speech, freedom of people’s will.

But he also signalled a note of caution warning that the new leader may not be as good as his word: “For years we have been promised radical changes in our society, but it always turned out to be a carnival in which masks were changed but policy remained the same.

“That is why we should not be too enthusiastic about the latest changes. We have to see what the new leaders have to offer us soon.” Numerous similar demonstrations have taken place across Eastern Europe since the collapse of Communism in the Soviet Union.

Bulgaria has been one of the countries most resistant to change. Just two weeks ago Mr Zhivkov issued a statement stressing that the Bulgarian Communist Party was still in total control.

But as the ideals of “perestroika” and glasnost” swept through countries including Poland, Eastern Germany and Hungary, Mr Zhivkov’s grip on power became increasingly weakened.

November 20, 1816: Anniversary Of A Marvelous Creation



Carl Bunin Peace History November 19-25

November 20, 1816: The term “scab” was first used in print by the Albany (N.Y.) Typographical Society. A scab is someone who crosses a union’s picket line and takes the job of a striking worker.

“A Scab Is A Traitor To His God, His Country, His Family And His Class”

by Jack London, (1876-1916) [Dawn.thot.net]

After God had finished the rattlesnake, the toad, and the vampire, he had some awful substance left with which he made a scab.

A scab is a two-legged animal with a corkscrew soul, a water brain, a combination backbone of jelly and glue.

Where others have hearts, he carries a tumor of rotten principles.

When a scab comes down the street, men turn their backs and angels weep in heaven, and the devil shuts the gates of hell to keep him out.

No man (or woman) has a right to scab so long as there is a pool of water to drown his carcass in, or a rope long enough to hang his body with.

Judas was a gentleman compared with a scab. For betraying his master, he had character enough to hang himself. A scab has not.

Esau sold his birthright for a mess of pottage.

Judas sold his Savior for thirty pieces of silver.

Benedict Arnold sold his country for a promise of a commission in the British army.

The scab sells his birthright, country, his wife, his children and his fellowmen for an unfulfilled promise from his employer.

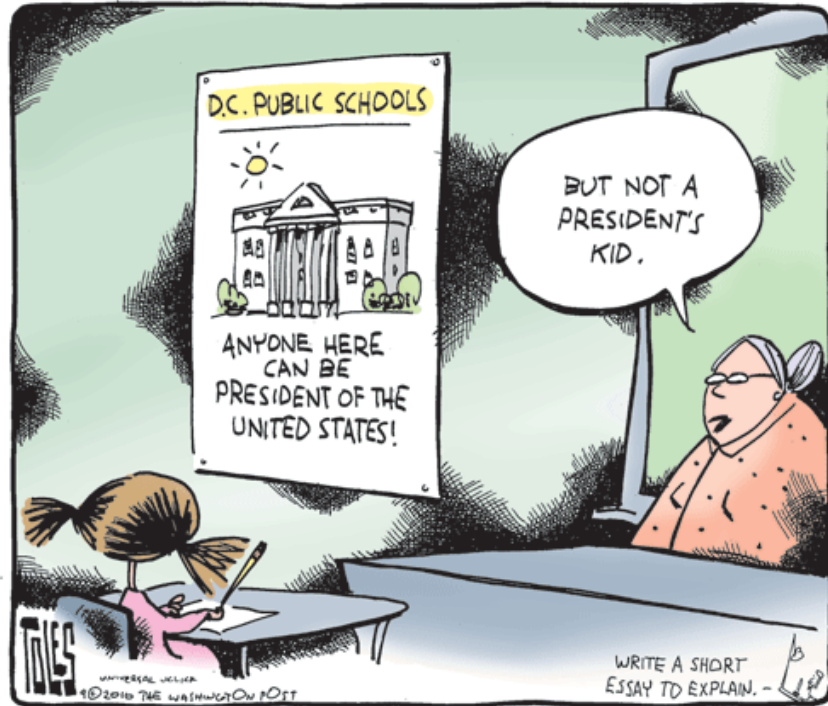
Esau was a traitor to himself; Judas was a traitor to his God; Benedict Arnold was a traitor to his country.

A scab is a traitor to his God, his country, his family and his class.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



“In His Criminality, Obama Has Actually Surpassed Bush” “Obama Is The President Of Extra- Judicial Murder”

[Thanks to Linda O, who sent this in.]

November 15, 2010 By PAUL CRAIG ROBERTS, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

In his criminality, Obama has actually surpassed Bush.

Bush is the president of extra-judicial torture, extra-judicial detention, extra-judicial spying and invasions of privacy, but Obama has one-upped Bush.

Obama is the president of extra-judicial murder.

The most massive change brought by Obama is his assertion of the right of the executive branch to murder whomever it wishes without any interference from US and international law.

The world has not seen such a criminal government as Obama's since Joseph Stalin's and Hitler's.

On November 8, the US Department of Justice (sic) told federal district court judge John Bates that president Obama's decision to murder American citizens is one of "the very core powers of the president."

Moreover, declared the Justice (sic) Department, the murder of American citizens is a "political question" that is not subject to judicial review.

In other words, federal courts exist for one purpose only--to give a faux approval to executive branch actions.

**TRAITOR
DOMESTIC ENEMY
UNFIT FOR COMMAND
UNWORTHY OF OBEDIENCE**



[September 15,2010: REUTERS/Jim Young]

**THIS IS THE ENEMY
BRING THE WAR HOME NOW**

Politicians' Lying Bullshit To The Contrary: Poll Finds Few Americans Care About The Budget Deficit

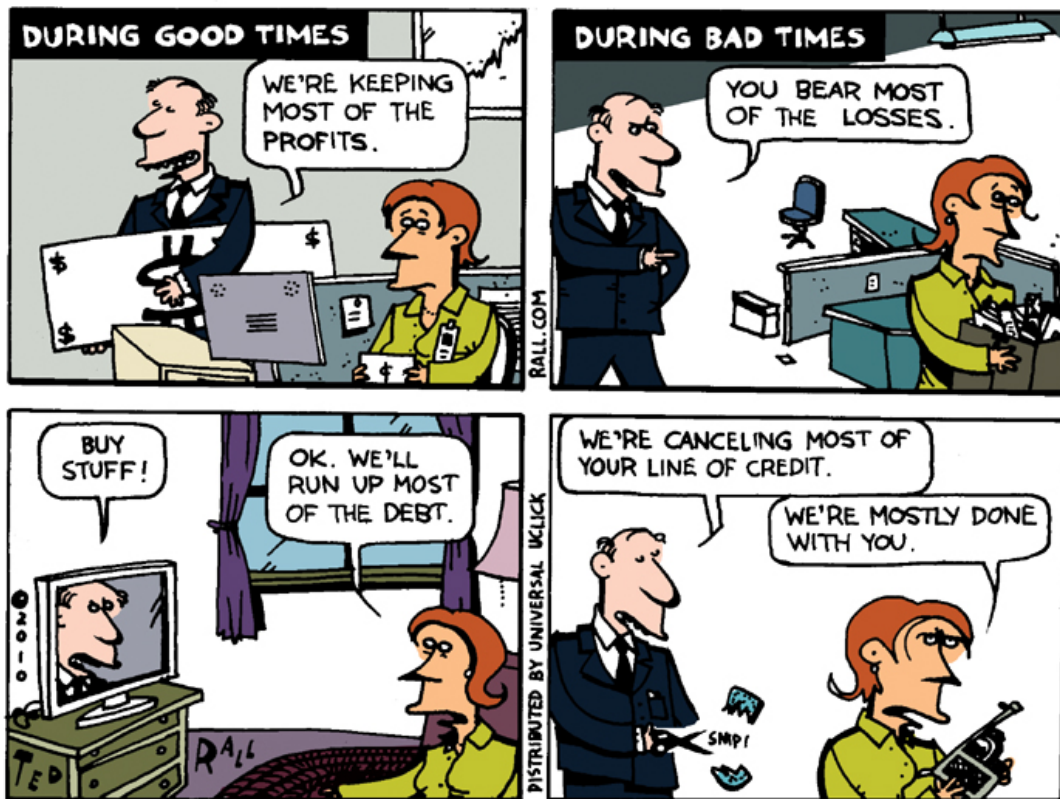
November 15, 2010 By Jillian Rayfield, TPM Media LLC [Excerpts]

For all the recent frenzy over reducing the deficit, a new poll by CBS News shows that only 4% of Americans consider it the biggest problem faced by the country.

Respondents were asked: "Of all the problems facing this country today, which one do you most want the new Congress to concentrate on first when it begins in January?"

56% of respondents said Congress should focus on the economy and jobs 14% said health care, while only 4% said the budget deficit and national debt.

CLASS WAR REPORTS



Got an opinion? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request identification published.



Military Resistance Looks Even Better Printed Out

Military Resistance/GI Special are archived at website

<http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

<http://williambowles.info/wordpress/category/military-resistance/> ;

news@uruknet.info; http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/

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