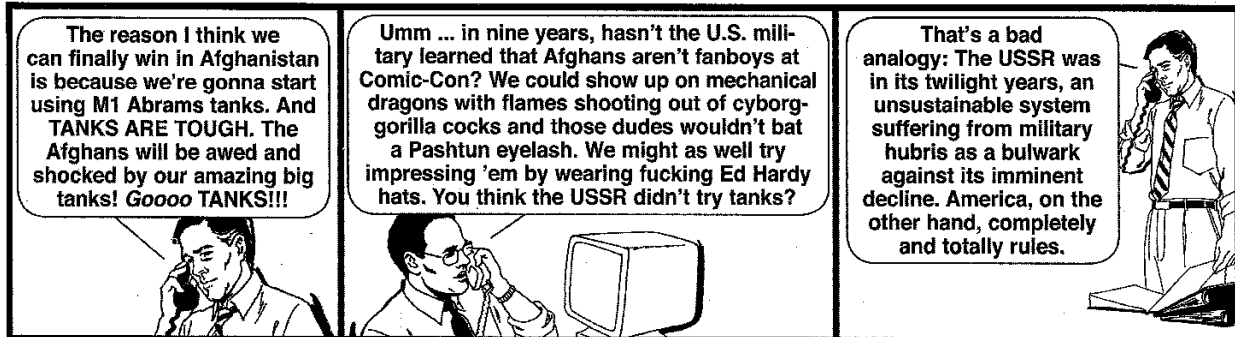


Military Resistance 8L16



[By David Rees, New York Magazine, 12.6.2010]

“A Few Young Soldiers Struggled With A Sense Of Betrayal”

“In The Days After Their Battle In The Mountains, Some Of Ryan’s Soldiers Questioned Whether Their Commander Had Asked Too Much Of Them In Pursuit Of A Fleeting Victory”

“Why Are We Still Here?” “We Should Have Been Off This Mountain Two Days Ago”

“No Matter How Many Taliban His Platoon Killed, It Wasn’t Worth The Life Of Any More Of His Friends” “The Best Thing We Can Do Is To Pull Back And Let The Afghans Figure This Place Out”

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

“I came in looking for a counterinsurgency victory,” Ryan said. “But here, there is no such thing.” “We fight here because the enemy is here. The enemy fights here because we are here.”

December 27, 2010 By Greg Jaffe, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

IN PECH VALLEY, AFGHANISTAN -- Earlier this year, Lt. Col. Joseph Ryan concluded that his 800-soldier battalion was locked in an endless war for an irrelevant valley.

“There is nothing strategically important about this terrain,” said Ryan, 41, a blunt commander who has spent much of the past decade in combat.

“We fight here because the enemy is here. The enemy fights here because we are here.”

Ryan’s challenge for the past several months has been to figure out a way to leave the Pech Valley, home to about 100,000 Afghans, without handing the insurgents a victory.

This fall he launched a series of offensives into the mountains to smash Taliban sanctuaries. His goal is to turn the valley over to Afghan army and police units who would work out their own accommodation with bloodied insurgents.

“The best thing we can do is to pull back,” he said, “and let the Afghans figure this place out.”

On the afternoon of Nov. 12, Ryan’s plan reached a critical moment. A company of his soldiers was clearing a village in the mountains when it came under attack. One American and two Afghan soldiers were killed.

Ryan ordered his troops to pursue the enemy deeper into the mountains, kicking off a gun battle that spanned six days and resulted in the deaths of more than 60 Taliban fighters, U.S. military officials said.

Six of Ryan's soldiers and one Army Ranger from another unit were killed. "Losing those soldiers was a huge price," said Maj. Gen. John F. Campbell, the senior commander for eastern Afghanistan. "What they did was very important. This was a significant disruption of the enemy's network."

For Ryan's soldiers, the outcome wasn't nearly as clear.

In some parts of Afghanistan, troops are fighting to build a government and Afghan security forces in the midst of an effective and deadly insurgency.

In other places, like the Pech Valley, where there is little history of governance and a deep suspicion of outsiders, U.S. goals have been scaled back.

These troops are fighting so that Afghan officials can figure out a way to coexist with a committed and ideological resistance.

In the days after their battle in the mountains, some of Ryan's soldiers questioned whether their commander - a steady officer carrying out a thankless mission - had asked too much of them in pursuit of a fleeting victory.

A few young soldiers struggled with a sense of betrayal.

Letters To Loved Ones

"I really wish I was never put in a position where I had to write a letter like this," 1st Lt. David Broyles wrote in a small leather-bound notebook his wife had sent him.

It was the evening of Nov. 11 and in a few hours Broyles's platoon was going to board a Chinook helicopter bound for the village of Tsangar. Broyles's platoon was based at Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle, one of four American bases in the Pech Valley.

Tsangar sat in the mountains, less than three miles north of Broyles's outpost. The 31-year-old lieutenant was writing letters in case he didn't make it back alive.

He wrote first to his wife: "I expect you to be happy. Whatever makes you happy - go with it." He instructed his 4-year-old son to listen to his mother: "Everything she does is for you and your best interests."

A few hours later Broyles spoke to his platoon: "We are going to go up there and take care of each other," he said. "That is going to be our number one priority."

Broyles's 40-soldier platoon - one of three tapped to clear Tsangar - landed in the high ground surrounding the village in the predawn hours of Nov. 12.

This account was assembled from soldiers' descriptions of the fighting and from military logs.

The soldiers had just begun moving into Tsangar when insurgents struck with a blast of machine-gun, mortar and rocket-propelled-grenade fire. The worst of the barrage was aimed at his sister platoon several hundred yards away.

A 25-year-old Army medic was killed while treating a wounded colleague. Two Afghan soldiers were blown to pieces by rocket-propelled grenades.

The insurgents then fled to a cluster of villages higher in the mountains. Ryan, who was following the battle on the radio from one of the American outposts in the valley, abandoned his plans to have his soldiers continue down the mountain on foot.

He brought in more troops and ordered his Alpha Company, which included Broyles's platoon, to reload and climb the mountain. Ryan wanted his troops to pursue and kill the enemy.

Comrades And Tattoos

Before they could move, Broyles's soldiers waited for helicopters to pull out the dead from the day's fighting and ferry in extra ammunition, food and water.

Spec. Cory Petrosky, the platoon's primary radio operator, found a spot to rest about 10 yards from the three black bags holding the bodies of the medic and the Afghan soldiers. Petrosky, 19, had been through plenty of hit-and-run attacks in the Pech Valley.

The fighters in the mountains were more numerous, more deadly and more determined.

Petrosky was typically at Broyles's side. Despite different backgrounds, the two had become friends.

Broyles had graduated from Ohio State University and then spent four years as an enlisted soldier before becoming an officer. He was lanky, earnest and eager to connect with the Afghans. He struggled to make small talk with the elders in the valley even after his interpreters had stopped translating, pressing ahead in English with compliments about the tea and hospitality.

Petrosky, who has spiky brown hair and sleepy eyes, said he dropped out of high school and enlisted at age 17 after police showed up at his mother's office in a Dallas suburb with pictures of him selling drugs.

A few weeks before he deployed, Petrosky got the names of eight of his fellow soldiers from his platoon tattooed on his left forearm. "They are the ones who helped me mentally," he said.

Both Petrosky and Broyles had the same thought when they looked at what was left of their sister platoon, which had suffered 10 wounded and one dead.

"You can't help but think that is going to be us tomorrow," Broyles said.

Shortly before sunrise, the soldiers used thermite grenades to melt down the bloody body armor of the dead and injured.

The armor was too heavy to carry and they didn't want the enemy to use it. Then they headed toward the village of Qatar Darrayea, a treacherous 1.5-mile uphill hike from Tsangar.

On Nov. 13, the second day of the mission, insurgents swarmed the platoon. As bullets snapped over Broyles's head, he spotted a Taliban fighter about 50 yards away carrying a rocket-propelled grenade launcher. It was the first time he had actually seen the face of one of the fighters trying to kill him. He fired his rifle at the insurgent and was certain he had hit him.

But after the battle Broyles and his troops could find no body or blood trail.

That evening helicopters arrived again with ammunition.

Airborne medical evacuation crews pulled out the American wounded and one dead Afghan.

On the morning of their third day in the mountains, Broyles's soldiers discovered a building full of combat medical supplies and Taliban weapons.

Broyles's platoon, dirty, filthy and tired, took cover in buildings that the Afghans used to keep their animals. Goat and chicken manure covered the floor. In the distance they could hear Air Force bombs leveling the building that held the weapons cache and medical supplies.

Pfc. Christian Warriner, 19, of Mills River, N.C., sat just outside the building on guard duty.

After all the shit I have survived I'll be pissed if I die today," he drawled, according to Spec. David Jones, the platoon medic.

"If you are dead you won't be pissed," Jones said. "You'll be fucking dead."

A few hours later, as many as 150 Taliban fighters struck back at the Americans. Warriner was shot in the forehead. One of his fellow soldiers stuffed the wound with gauze and called for help.

The fighting was too heavy to bring in medical evacuation helicopters, so Jones, the medic, pulled Warriner into the stone building and tried to stanch the bleeding from his head.

His fellow soldiers took turns holding Warriner's hand and talking to him about his wife, Shelby.

"You are not just here for us," his best friend in the platoon told him. "You have Shelby waiting at home for you. You promised her that you would be there for her."

After about 45 minutes, Warriner died.

On the radio, Petrosky and Broyles heard reports that their sister platoon had suffered four more dead.

In three days of fighting, six Americans and three Afghan soldiers had been killed.

Night fell and Petrosky helped carry Warriner's body to the hovering helicopters. "We'll take good care of your friend," one of the airmen from the medical evacuation crew yelled over the sounds of the rotors.

"Why the fuck are you saying that?" Petrosky recalled thinking. "He's dead."

Later that evening Petrosky huddled under a blanket with Pfc. Dustin Riedemann, who had stuffed gauze into Warriner's wound.

Riedemann kept talking about the look in Warriner's eyes after he was shot. All Petrosky could think about was getting back to his outpost and his bunk, which he had decorated with pictures of his girlfriend and the Dallas Stars hockey team.

He was angry at the Afghan soldiers who had left most of the fighting on the mountain to the Americans, and he was furious at his commanders.

No matter how many Taliban his platoon killed, it wasn't worth the life of any more of his friends.

"Why are we still here?" he recalled saying. "We should have been off this mountain two days ago."

Broyles and Capt. Bo Reynolds, the senior American officer on the mountain, sat together in the building where Warriner had died.

Broyles, like Petrosky, was furious and doubted that his men could keep fighting.

"I felt like battalion wasn't listening to us and didn't understand what was happening to our guys physically and mentally," Broyles said. "I felt ignored and neglected."

Ryan, the battalion commander, sensed the U.S. troops were on the verge of victory.

No helicopters were flying in fresh ammunition, food and water to the Taliban fighters. His intelligence officer was reporting that the enemy had fled to Gambir, about one mile north of Broyles's position. Beyond the tiny village there were only more mountains. The Taliban had no place to go.

"We have got to go to Gambir," Ryan told his brigade commander.

An elite force of Army Rangers, backed by fearsome Spectre gunships, flew into Gambir on Nov. 15. About 100 Afghan commandos and U.S. Special Forces soldiers were dispatched to clear another cluster of nearby villages.

Broyles's platoon continued to press on to Qatar Darrayea, which was empty. The soldiers took cover in a small house in which someone had drawn a picture of an AK-47 rifle firing at an American helicopter on the wall in crayon. They fell asleep to the sound of AC-130 aircraft searching for Taliban fighters in Gambir.

No one shot at Broyles's platoon for the next two days.

After he returned to Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle, his anger faded. The attack in the mountains had weakened the enemy, he concluded, and would make his platoon's last five months in the valley safer. "No one decided that the lives of six guys are worth the lives of 60 Taliban," he said.

'It Callouses You'

A few days after the battle, Ryan called his wife to see how the families at Fort Campbell, Ky., were handling the deaths.

His wife's biggest concern was that her husband would have no one to talk to about the emotional toll of the losses. Ryan told her he was fine. "I've been doing this for nine years. People assume that it wears you down," he said of the battlefield deaths. "Really it callouses you."

Ryan had been selected to lead a battalion in the Army's Ranger Regiment after his Afghan tour, a sign that the Army considered him one of its best battlefield commanders. He was proud of his soldiers' resilience and the heavy losses they inflicted on the enemy. He also was quietly comfortable with his decision to press the fight in the mountains.

On Nov. 21, Ryan's troops gathered at Combat Outpost Honaker-Miracle for a memorial service to honor the six dead from the battle. It was a warm, sunny afternoon. Apache helicopters circled over the outpost, scanning the ridgelines for the enemy.

A few minutes before the ceremony began, Campbell, the 101st Airborne Division commander and the commanding general for eastern Afghanistan, flew into the base. He motioned to Ryan and the other soldiers who were speaking at the service to form a tight knot around him.

Campbell pulled out two stacks of cards, each bearing the name, photo and hometown of a soldier killed under his command in Afghanistan. There were 88 from the 101st Airborne Division, each card numbered neatly in pen. Another stack of 44 cards memorialized soldiers who had attached to his unit.

"I carry these because I don't want to forget that there is a human cost," Campbell said.

Ryan watched as the general struggled to fit the cards into a small plastic bag. He couldn't get it to snap shut, and the two stacks spilled out of the top.

The memorial ceremony was dominated by the soldiers' remembrances of their friends. For these soldiers - most of whom are in their early 20s - victory in the valley is almost impossible to discern.

"A lot of people ask, what was it all for?" said Pfc. Dustin Wade, who had held Warriner in his arms as he died. "It's an easy answer. He did it for us. He did it for his platoon. He did it so all of us could eventually make it back home to our families and friends."

After the speeches the troops filed up to a battlefield memorial that consisted of their deceased friends' boots, helmets, rifles and dog tags. Large, framed photographs of the dead rested on easels.

One of the soldiers placed a snapshot taken at Warriner's wedding by his empty boots. Warriner had carried the picture in his wallet, and the sweat from his body had caused it to fray and tear.

The U.S. Army established its first foothold in the Pech Valley in 2006. In keeping with U.S. counterinsurgency doctrine, the soldiers fought to keep the enemy back so that they could build roads, open schools and extend the reach of the Afghan government.

Tens of millions of dollars were spent to pave the main road through the Pech Valley. Close to 100 American soldiers were killed in the area. Ryan had lost 15.

Campbell's new strategy for eastern Afghanistan focused limited American resources on those areas where governance, police and economic development efforts have shown promise in recent years.

The Pech Valley wasn't one of those places. Even the Afghan government's commitment to the valley seemed shaky.

The police were so poorly equipped that they begged the Americans for blankets. The Afghan army refused to patrol without the Americans.

Senior U.S. officials still have not reached a final decision to leave the valley, though a significant reduction in U.S. forces seems likely.

Ryan envisioned two possible outcomes following a U.S. pullout. In the best-case scenario, army and police forces would be able to hold off the recently bloodied insurgents, retain their bases and figure out how to meld into the insular and tribal valley society. In the worst-case scenario, the Afghan forces would collapse, he said.

"I came in looking for a counterinsurgency victory," Ryan said.

"But here, there is no such thing."

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Baghdad IED Wounds U.S. Soldier

Dec 28 (Reuters)

BAGHDAD - A U.S. soldier was wounded when a roadside bomb hit a U.S. military convoy in northwestern Baghdad, the U.S. military said.

More Resistance Action

Dec 27 (Reuters) & Dec 28, 2010 DPA & (Reuters)

In the western part of Mosul, five Iraqi police were killed and three others wounded when a car bomb targeted their patrol.

MOSUL - A sticky bomb attached to an off-duty Iraqi soldier's car went off and killed him in the southern outskirts of Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, police and army sources said.

MOSUL - A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol wounded a soldier when it exploded in western Mosul, police and army sources said.

BAGHDAD - Insurgents in a car shot a Baghdad municipality employee and wounded him late on Monday in eastern Baghdad, a municipality source said.

BAGHDAD - A bomb attached to the car of a foreign ministry employee wounded him seriously in the Qadissiya district of southwestern Baghdad.

BAGHDAD - Insurgents using silenced weapons killed an Iraqi parliament employee in Baghdad's central Karrada district late on Monday, an Interior Ministry source said.

TAL AFAR- Insurgents attacked an Iraqi army checkpoint, killing one soldier and wounding another in the town of Tal Afar, about 420 km (260 miles) northwest of Baghdad, police said.

BAGHDAD - Insurgents using silenced weapons wounded two police officers when they opened fire on the Interior Ministry's anti-crime department in Baghdad's west-central Yarmouk district, an Interior Ministry source said.

<p>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION</p>

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

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

December 28 Reuters

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

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

December 28 Reuters

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

British Soldier From Royal Logistic Corps Killed By IED In Helmand

28 Dec 10 Ministry of Defence

It is with sadness that the Ministry of Defence must announce that a soldier from 23 Pioneer Regiment, The Royal Logistic Corps, serving with the Counter-Improvised Explosive Device Task Force, was killed in Afghanistan on Tuesday 28 December 2010.

The soldier died as the result of an explosion caused by an Improvised Explosive Device whilst he was conducting the clearance of a road in Lashkar Gah district, Helmand Province.

MORE:

British Army Experts Teaching Afghans How To Find And Avoid IEDs In Helmand

December 28, 2010 MoD Oracle

British Army experts are training soldiers from the Afghan National Army (ANA) in the life-saving art of detecting and neutralising roadside bombs in southern Afghanistan's Helmand province.

Students attending the Explosive Hazard Reduction Course at the Joint Security Academy Southwest learn how IEDs work, the threats they pose and which techniques can be used to find them.

The International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) instructors are drawn from I Marine Expeditionary Force Counter-IED, Paladin Southwest and the UK's Task Force Helmand (TFH).

They deliver a course that combines traditional lectures with practical field exercises in the disposal of roadside bombs and other explosives, which insurgents manufacture and plant in many different guises.

Three Polish Soldiers Wounded By Ghazni IED

28.12.2010 IAR/PAP

Three Polish soldiers were wounded when a improvised explosive device (IED) hit their armoured vehicle a few kilometres from the Ghazni base.

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED
ON TO HALT THE BLOODSHED
THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO
STOP THE WARS**

U.S. Patrol Attacked In Chowkey



Smoke blows from a U.S. military vehicle after it hit an explosion during a patrol in Chowkey district near Pakistani border in Kunar province, eastern Afghanistan, Tuesday, Dec 28, 2010. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)



U.S. soldiers at the hole from an IED explosion and nearby pieces of a U.S. military vehicle after Taliban attacked a patrol in Chowkey district near the Pakistani border in Kunar province, eastern Afghanistan, Dec 28, 2010. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

Dec 28 By ELENA BECATOROS, Associated Press

In the eastern province of Kunar, a fierce firefight broke out when U.S. soldiers from Forward Operating Base Fortress came under attack as their patrol drove on a small road through mountainous territory in Chowkey District, an AP photographer with the troops said.

A roadside bomb struck a vehicle in the patrol first, and militants then opened fire on the soldiers with rocket-propelled grenades and rifles.

The U.S. soldiers hit back with gunfire and artillery in an hour-long firefight that caused no U.S. casualties. The clash reflected the daily violence faced by NATO forces confronting gunfire, roadside bombs and attacks in most parts of the country.

Afghan Soldiers Fire At Canadian Convoy After Road Accident In Kandahar

2010/12/28 Steve Rennie, The Canadian Press

A small group of Afghan army soldiers shot at a Canadian convoy after a recent road accident southwest of Kandahar city.

The incident occurred on Boxing Day when a Canadian re-supply convoy struck an Afghan truck near the Dand district centre.

The Canadians stopped to fill out paperwork and then started off down the road.

But the Afghan soldiers didn't want the Canadians to leave the scene and fired their weapons at the convoy and into the air.

The Canadian military says none of its soldiers were injured, nor did they return fire.

Word of the shooting has made its way around Kandahar Airfield. Several soldiers in a bomb shelter openly chatted about the incident during a recent rocket attack.

The Afghan army is considered far more disciplined and professional than the country's fledgling police force.

“I Don't Feel Completely Secure With U.S. Forces Because They Don't Always Recognize The Difference Between Taliban And Civilians”

“Our Women And Children Are Scared More”

“The Americans Left Nothing,” He Says, “Not Even The Tree Stumps”

Dec. 27, 2010 By Jason Motlagh, Kabul and Muhib Habibi, Kandahar [Excerpts]

Mohammad Hassan, 25, a farmer from Mishan village, says he and his family had to move three times because of rolling violence.

One day, after the farmer and his family had returned to their village, U.S. forces were patrolling the area around Hassan’s home when the troops received fire and responded with a mortar attack.

A stray armament landed inside Hassan’s compound, he says, shredding his mother’s arm with shrapnel. The family took her to Pakistan for treatment, he explains, before again returning to their home in the battle zone. They had no other place to go, he says. The trauma has left a residue of fear.

“I don’t feel completely secure with U.S. forces because they don’t always recognize the difference between Taliban and civilians,” says Hassan.

“Our women and children are scared more.”

It’s a common grievance.

Haji Fazel Mohammad, a member of the Zhari district council, says that in his community, two people were killed and more than 40 letters received over damaged property.

One was from Abdul Khaliq, 60, of the Pashmul area, who says that although no relatives were harmed, his home, irrigation pumps and stock rooms were crushed by coalition bombs, leaving his family bereft of a cash crop and a livelihood next year.

“The Americans left nothing,” he says, “not even the tree stumps.”

Khaliq has twice traveled to the district center seeking compensation and is convinced that Afghan officials are too corrupt to offer any money — if, indeed, they have any to offer.

For now, without the time or means to rebuild, he’s had to decamp to a friend’s home in a nearby village to sit out the harsh winter.

And if the best-case scenario holds and the Taliban is weaker than before, the coalition will still have to contend with festering local anger over the loss of homes, jobs and loved ones.

All of that is poised to harden as the current winter deepens.

NO MISSION; POINTLESS WAR: ALL HOME NOW



U.S. soldiers of 2nd Platoon Bravo Company 2-327 Infantry patrols in Chowkay district near the Pakistani border in Kunar province, eastern Afghanistan, Dec. 21, 2010. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

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.

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

MILITARY NEWS

HOW MANY MORE FOR OBAMA'S WARS?



The casket of Lance Cpl. Jose Maldonado Dec 28, 2010 at the Corpus Christi International Airport in Corpus Christi, Texas. Maldonado of Mathis died Friday during combat in the Helmand province of southern Afghanistan. Maldonado was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif. (AP Photo/Corpus Christi Caller-Times, Todd Yates)

Traveling Soldier:

Posted At:

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

THIS ISSUE FEATURING:

“A WAR WITH NO CLEAR OBJECTIVE”

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/12.10.war.php>

“WE SHOULD JUST END IT. BRING THE TROOPS HOME”

“I never wanted my son to be a little old obituary in the paper”

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/12.10.troops.php>

THE POLITICIANS WON'T TALK ABOUT THE WAR:

“But for the Olechnys, avoidance is not an option”

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/12.10.avoidance.php>

[And More.....]

TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

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**

**“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”
-- Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787**

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 Social-Democrats ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression no matter where it appears no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.”
-- V. I. Lenin; What Is To Be Done**

“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*

***Great Moments In U.S. Military
History:
December 29, 1890:
Massacre At Wounded Knee;
“Many Women And Children Standing By
Their Tipis Under A White Flag Of Truce
Were Cut Down By Deadly Shrapnel
From The Hotchkiss Guns”***



A mounted soldier rides among the dead Indians at Wounded Knee

[Via Peace History December 25-31 By Carl Bunin]

English.uiuc.edu

From Momaday, "The American West and the Burden of Belief" in Geoffrey C. Ward, The West: An Illustrated History. Copyright © 1996 by The West Book Project, Inc. (Little Brown, 1996).

On December 15, 1890, the great Hunkpapa leader Sitting Bull, who had opposed Custer at the Little Bighorn and who had toured for a time with Buffalo Bill and the Wild West show, was killed on the Standing Rock reservation.

In a dream he had foreseen his death at the hands of his own people.

Just two weeks later, on the morning of December 29, 1890, on Wounded Knee Creek near the Pine Ridge agency, the Seventh Cavalry of the U.S. Army opened fire on an encampment of Big Foot's band of Miniconjou Sioux.

When the shooting ended, Big Foot and most of his people were dead or dying.

It has been estimated that nearly 300 of the original 350 men, women, and children in the camp were slain. Twenty-five soldiers were killed and thirty-nine wounded,

Sitting Bull is reported to have said, "I am the last Indian."

In some sense he was right. During his lifetime the world of the Plains Indians had changed forever.

The old roving life of the buffalo hunters was over. A terrible disintegration and demoralization had set in. If the death of Sitting Bull marked the end of an age, Wounded Knee marked the end of a culture.

"I did not know then how much was ended.

"When I look back now from the high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with eyes still young.

"And I can see that something else died there in the bloody mud, and was buried in the blizzard. A people's dream died there. It was a beautiful dream...." -Black Elk-

Paula M. Robertson: From Encyclopedia of North American Indians. Frederick E. Hoxie, Ed. Copyright © 1996 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

Many women and children standing by their tipis under a white flag of truce were cut down by deadly shrapnel from the Hotchkiss guns.

The rest fled under withering fire from all sides.

Pursuing soldiers shot most of them down in flight, some with babes on their backs.

One survivor recalled that she was wounded but was so scared she did not feel it. She lost her husband, her little girl, and a baby boy.

One shot passed through the baby's body before it broke her elbow, causing her to drop his body.

Two more shots ripped through the muscles of her back before she fell.

The warrior Iron Hail, shot four times himself but still able to move, saw the soldiers shooting women and children.

One young woman, crying out for her mother, had been wounded close to her throat, and the bullet had taken some of her braid into the wound.

A gaping hole six inches across opened the belly of a man near him, shot through by an unexploded shell from the guns.



Indian Bodies on the ground at Wounded Knee

Others told of women, heavy with child, shot down by the soldiers. Bodies of women and children were found scattered for three miles from the camp.

On New Year's Day, a pit was dug on the hill that the Hotchkiss guns had been on, and the frozen bodies of 146 men, women, and children were thrown into the pit like cordwood until it was full.

The whites stripped many of the bodies, keeping as souvenirs the Ghost Shirts and other clothing and equipment the people had owned in life, or selling them later in the thriving trade over Ghost Dance relics that ensued.

One member of the burial party remarked that it was “a thing to melt the heart of a man, if it was of stone, to see those little children, with their bodies shot to pieces, thrown naked into the pit.”

Besides the 146 buried that day, others who had been wounded died soon afterward, and relatives removed many of the bodies before the government burial party arrived.

Estimates of the number of Lakotas slain vary, but many authorities believe that the figure is around three hundred men, women, and children.

Not many escaped.



The mass grave at Wounded Knee

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Palestinian Youth Strangled, Kicked And Beaten By Zionist Occupiers Because He Couldn't Speak Hebrew

December 27, 2010 By Saed Bannoura, IMEMC & Agencies

Israeli soldiers stationed at the Za'tara Roadblock, near the northern West Bank city of Nablus, stopped three Palestinian youths and violently assaulted one of them for not understanding them when they spoke to him in Hebrew.

The youth, Bilal Hasan, 20, and two of his friends from Qaqra village, south of Nablus, were standing at the Za'tara Israeli military roadblock, waiting for a cab to take them to Salfit city where he is taking driving lessons.

Bir Zeit University Journalism student, Ahmad Judy, was standing at the roadblock and witnessed the attack.

He said that a military Jeep drove to the roadblock, and the soldiers started talking to the three youths in Hebrew.

When three could not understand what the soldiers were saying, as they cannot speak Hebrew, one of the soldiers wrapped the wire of his two-way communication radio around the neck Bilal Hasan and tried to strangle him with it, an issue that made him push the soldier away.

The soldiers then started beating and kicking Hasan before they cuffed him and took him to an unknown destination.

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

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.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS

**Mass Demonstrations Against
The Tunisian Dictatorship
Become More Intense:
“We Are Unhappy With Everything
- It Is Not Just Unemployment”**

**“People Are Organising Protests
Everywhere And It Is Spreading
Across The Country”
“It Is The Government That Incites
Violence. Everyone Is Fed Up Now”**



Protesters in Tunis take to the streets in a show of solidarity with Sidi Bouzid residents
[Photo: Lina Ben Mhenni]

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

Public protests in Tunisia - where the government is often criticised for its human rights record - are rare and political dissent is repressed, correspondents say. But recent economic discontent has provoked the most violent unrest in more than a decade.

26 Dec 2010 Al Jazeera and agencies & 27 December 2010 BBC[Excerpts]

Scuffles have broken out in the Tunisian capital, Tunis, between police and protesters angry at high unemployment levels.

Some 1,000 protesters, mainly unemployed graduates, rallied outside the offices of the main workers' union.

In Tunis on Monday, Sami Tahr, head of the union for high school teachers said the demonstrators sought radical solutions to the country's problems.

“We're gathered today in solidarity with the population of Sidi Bouzid and to salute the memories of the martyrs of repression who seek only their right to work,” AP reported him as saying.

Tunisian trade-union sources say more confrontations have occurred between Tunisian security forces and residents in Sidi Bouzid governorate.

The clashes took place on Saturday night in the towns of al-Ragab and Maknasi in central Tunisia, the sources told Al Jazeera.

The skirmishes broke out when security forces staged overnight crackdown campaigns, after social protests against unemployment spread to Tunis, the Tunisian capital.

Hundreds of protesters had rallied in front of the Tunisian labour union headquarters. The demonstrators called on the authorities to provide jobs for those with university degrees.

They were also out in a show of solidarity with Sidi Bouzid residents who kept protesting for the ninth day, leaving one man dead and others injured.

Lina Ben Mhenni, a Tunisian blogger and university assistant, told Al Jazeera that people are discontented.

“We are unhappy with the policies in Tunisia, we are unhappy with everything - it is not just unemployment.”

Mohamed Ammari, a teenager, was killed on Friday when police in Bouziane, 240km south of Tunis, opened fire on protesters.

An interior ministry spokesperson said police had been forced to “shoot in self-defence” after shots into the air failed to disperse scores of protesters who were setting police cars and buildings ablaze.

The cause of the latest violence was not immediately clear but similar clashes broke out on December 17 in the town of Sidi Bouzid after a man committed suicide in a protest over unemployment.

“A young man set fire to his body and people are reacting - people are organising protests everywhere and it is spreading across the country,” Lina Ben Mhenni said.

“Last night there were clashes in an area called Souk Jedid. Today there are marches and protests in Gassa, in the south, and in Sfax, the capital of the south,” she said.

“I just heard about another protest in Ben Guerdane, also in the South.”

The incident prompted violent demonstrations in which protesters burned tyres and chanted slogans demanding jobs.

Tensions heightened on December 22 when another young man climbed up an electricity pylon and electrocuted himself on the cables, saying he was fed up with being unemployed.

Said Ferjani, a member of the outlawed opposition Nahda movement, told Al Jazeera that unemployment was a country-wide issue.

“We have a problem in the management of the country and it is not only in Sidi Bouzid, it is across the country,” Ferjani said from London.

“These disturbances have never been violent - it is the government that incites violence. They are highly corrupted and there is a denial from them about how they treat people.”

He said that joblessness was not a new problem and it was also not related to the financial crisis.

Al Juwayni, the Tunisian development minister, travelled to Sidi Bouzid on Thursday to announce a new \$10m employment programme.

But Ben Mhenni said that this was too late: “They (the government) are trying to solve the problem by making promises. They did the same thing in 2008, but these are not real solutions.”

Public protests in Tunisia - where the government is often criticised for its human rights record - are rare and political dissent is repressed, correspondents say. But recent economic discontent has provoked the most violent unrest in more than a decade.

The Tunisian government, which tolerates little dissent, has accused its opponents of manipulating the clashes between police and young people in Sidi Bouzid to discredit the authorities.

Ben Mhenni said that she was harassed by police after speaking to Al Jazeera in the past: “They followed me for two days but I am not afraid.”

“I am fed up with what is happening in Tunisia, I don’t care - they can do whatever they want. Everyone is fed up now.”

The opposition Democratic Progressive Party, which does not have a seat in parliament, called on the government to stop arresting young people and instead focus on dialogue and job creation.

Riots are rare in Tunisia, which has been run for 23 years by Zine al-Abidine Ben Ali and works closely with Western governments to combat al-Qaeda operatives.

The North African country has become a regional focus for international financial institutions since announcing a plan to complete current-account convertibility of its dinar currency over the 2010-2012 period.

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