

Military Resistance 9E5



IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**“The Intensity Of The Recent
Assassinations Has Attracted
Lurid Coverage”**

**“The Dead In April Alone Included
Generals, Police Commanders, A
Deputy Minister And The Head Of
Iraq’s Tax Agency”**

“Some Police Officers Said They Have Refused To Drive Their State-Run Pickup Trucks, Shunning Any Vehicles With Iraqi Government Markings As ‘Caskets’”

[Oceans of posturing, babbling and cud-chewing about the long irrelevant Ben Laden from every quarter. Meanwhile, back in the real world..... T]

May 3 by Aaron C. Davis, Washington Post [Excerpts]

BAGHDAD — The intensity of the recent assassinations has attracted lurid coverage in the Arabic-language media, with haunting details of the previous night’s attacks recounted each morning in television and newspaper reports across the country.

Iraqi intelligence officials say the killers include gunmen who have stalked Iraqi bureaucrats with semiautomatic weapons muzzled with silencers. Others have been masked men on motorbikes who slap magnetic “sticky bombs” on motorcades carrying political and military elite.

The dead in April alone included generals, police commanders, a deputy minister and the head of Iraq’s tax agency. The wounded included a member of parliament, a judge and the head of the national theater, survivors of attacks on their motorcades.

In a posting on an extremist Web site, the Islamic State of Iraq listed the names of 62 government employees and security workers it said it had killed, including 22 assassinated with silenced weapons.

In response, some police officers said they have refused to drive their state-run pickup trucks, shunning any vehicles with Iraqi government markings as “caskets.”

Iraq’s intelligence agencies have acquired scores of beat-up taxis for agents and high-ranking officials so they can disguise themselves on their way to and from work.

To cut off potential escape routes, security forces have erected new roadblocks and checkpoints in recent days, contributing to traffic gridlock. Among 50 targeted killings last month, most were carried out by gunmen using silenced weapons, according to Iraq’s Interior Ministry, which oversees the country’s police forces.

Assassinations are not an entirely new feature of Iraq’s political landscape. But a stealthy string of killings that began last month has given them new prominence, shaking Iraqis’ confidence in their government’s ability to protect them and raising questions about the country’s security just months before the last U.S. troops are scheduled to withdraw.

In recent days, Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki and members of parliament have felt compelled to address the killings repeatedly in public, vowing all-out efforts to stop them.

But the killings have continued with at least 14 more dead from gun attacks and targeted bombings, mostly against police officials, in the first three days of May.

In recent congressional testimony, State Department officials have described Iraq as "relatively stable" as the roughly 50,000 U.S. troops still in the country begin to prepare for departure.

Car Bomber Attack On Hilla Police Headquarters Kills At Least 17

May 05, 2011 Reuters [Excerpts]

A bomber rammed his car into the entrance of a police headquarters in the center of Hilla during a shift change at around 6:40 am (0340 GMT), when many police officers were outside the building.

"So far, 17 people were killed and 65 wounded. But this is not final as there are many wounded in critical condition," Babil province Deputy Governor Sadeq al-Muhanna told Reuters.

A police official in Hilla, 100 km (60 miles) south of Baghdad, said 16 people were dead and 41 wounded. A hospital source in Hilla said 21 had been killed and at least 80 wounded.

Blast walls in front of the police quarters in Hilla had collapsed and the building was badly damaged, a Reuters reporter at the scene said. Most of the dead and wounded were police.

Other buildings on the main road, including shops and houses, were also damaged.

"The negligence comes from Baghdad because we're always asking them to increase the number of our policemen, but there is no response," Kadhim Majeed Tuman, the head of the Babil provincial council, told Reuters.

Dr Amer Ajerash, head of Hilla's main hospital, said it had issued 16 death certificates so far. Another hospital source said conditions in the hospital were miserable.

"There are a lot of wounded and martyrs," the source said.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

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

May 3, 2011 AP

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

Town Bids Farewell To Fallen Shell Rock Soldier



Donald Lee Nichols

Apr. 24, 2011 by STACI HUPP, Des Moines Register

Waverly, Ia. - Donny Nichols was branded a man growing up in Shell Rock for his love of Jeeps, the Minnesota Vikings and the U.S. Army.

The young soldier will be remembered as a man because of his bravery, never-quit attitude and love for his country.

Spc. Donald Lee Nichols, 21, was killed April 13 when an insurgent's bomb struck the armored truck he was driving on a gravel road in Laghman province in eastern Afghanistan.

His death was the second among the 2,800 Iowa National Guard troops who deployed to the area last fall. Services for Sgt. Brent Maher of Honey Creek were Friday.

The people who cheered Nichols on the football field and on the wrestling mat filled the bleachers again Saturday to salute their hero and say goodbye.

Hundreds of mourners filled the Waverly-Shell Rock High school gymnasium, where they heard Nichols' fellow soldiers describe a man whose commitment to his country's freedom was far greater than his fear of death.

Soldiers in pressed uniforms filled the rows near Nichols' family. Gov. Terry Branstad sat among them.

Several soldiers were granted leave from Afghanistan to pay their respects, including Nichols' older brother, a pallbearer. Joe Nichols is stationed in southern Afghanistan with the Army Reserve.

Joe Nichols flew home on the airplane that also carried his brother's body. A tribute he wrote on the trip home was read Saturday by chaplain Mike Crawford.

"We were supposed to come home together and tell stories and joke about the things that only we could understand," Joe Nichols wrote.

"If I would have known that I was going to be 10,000 feet in the air, on a plane with my little brother's body under my feet, I would go back to every time we ever got a chance to talk to each other and tell him how much I respected and loved him. And he should never look up to me, but I should look up to him because he is a true hero."

Donny Nichols' tearful fiancée, Chelsey Bliss, read a poem about fallen soldiers. Before she walked away from the podium, she said about her high school sweetheart: "He wanted to do so much."

Hundreds more well-wishers lined the streets in and around Waverly. They waved American flags, saluted, and wiped away tears as a hearse carried Nichols' casket to a cemetery in Cedar Falls.

Handmade signs read: "Thanks Don Nichols" and "RIP fallen soldier."

Nichols was a member of the Iowa Guard's 1-133rd Battalion. His reconnaissance platoon often patrolled around Combat Outpost Najil, one of the most violent areas any Iowa Guard unit is manning in Afghanistan.

On one mission, when Nichols severely injured his knee, he turned down offers to carry his rucksack because he wanted to carry his own weight.

"He always pushed himself to be better, he motivated his teammates, he always exceeded the standard," Lt. Col. Steve Kremer wrote in a tribute read at Saturday's memorial service.

Nichols also knew the importance of laughter, his fellow soldiers said. He loved to sing karaoke and play poker, they said.

Nichols joined the Army during his junior year of high school. He had been an instructor in charge of preparing his unit for its arrival in Afghanistan last October.

He is survived by his mother and stepfather, Roger and Becky Poock of Waterloo; his father and stepmother, Jeff and Jeanie Nichols of Shell Rock; his brothers, Nick of Waterloo, and Joe; and his grandmothers, Kay Secor and Carol Buchholz, and his grandfather, Donald L. Nichols, all of Waterloo.

Nichols' life story might be short, said Crawford, the chaplain. But it's full of courage, commitment and determination.

He shared a quote that Nichols lived by: "It's not how hard you get knocked down, it's about how quick you get up and keep on fighting."

Greencastle Soldier Benjamin Bitner Killed Serving With Army In Afghanistan



Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Franklin Bitner

Apr 26, 2011 By Rachel Bryson, The Record Herald

A soldier from Greencastle was killed Saturday while serving with Operation Enduring Freedom in the Kandahar province of Afghanistan.

Sgt. 1st Class Benjamin Franklin Bitner, 37, was a special forces soldier and had served in the U.S. Army for 18 years.

Bitner died of wounds suffered when insurgents attacked his unit, the 2nd Battalion, 3rd Special Forces Group, based at Fort Bragg, N.C., with an improvised explosive, according to the United States Department of Defense.

Born on July 4, 1973, in Hagerstown, he was the son of Roger and Beverly Bitner of Greencastle.

He and his wife, April, lived in North Carolina with their two sons, Gunnar and Rogue. Bitner graduated from Greencastle-Antrim High School in 1991 and was a member of the Rescue Hose Co.

Funeral arrangements have not been released.

Bitner was “a good kid. Ornerly, but a good kid,” said Dr. C. Gregory Hoover, Greencastle-Antrim School District superintendent. Hoover was assistant middle school principal when Bitner was in school and also is a member of the Rescue Hose Co.

“This hits home a little closer,” Hoover said, explaining his mother, Beverly Bitner is secretary to the district’s director of transportation and buildings and grounds.

Hoover said that Bitner was an outgoing child, everybody liked him and he was “happy-go-lucky.”

“He loved the military,” Hoover added. “We, as a district, express our deepest sympathies.”

Members of the Rescue Hose Co. added their condolences to the family. Bitner’s father, Roger, is a past fire chief.

A company spokesman said Bitner’s name has been placed on a plaque for fallen members at the fire station.

Military career

Bitner enlisted in 1991 and attended the special forces assessment and selection in 1999. He graduated from the Special Forces Qualification Course as an engineer sergeant later that year.

Bitner had been deployed to Afghanistan four times. He also served in Africa, Kosovo, Kuwait and Iraq.

Bitner received numerous awards for his service, including the Purple Heart; Bronze Star; Meritorious Service Medal; Army Commendation Medal; Army Achievement Medal; Army Good Conduct Medal; Army Reserve Components Achievement Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Kosovo Campaign Medal; Armed Forces Expeditionary Medal; Afghanistan Campaign Medal; Iraq Campaign Medal; Global War on Terrorism Expeditionary Medal; Global War on Terror Service Medal; Non-commissioned Officers Professional Development Ribbon; Army Service Ribbon; NATO Medal; Special Forces Tab; Combat Infantryman’s Badge; Parachutists Badge; Military Free-Fall Badge; Bandenkampfabzeichen Badge; and Ram’s Head Device.

Family, Friends Remember Fallen Soldier

April 25, 2011 BY NATHANIEL MILLER, OAOA.com

Sgt. John Paul Castro was the youngest of three children, but it never stopped him from taking on big challenges.

“Being the baby, we tried to protect him,” sister Blanca Castro, 31, said about a family vacation one year to South Padre Island when they were children. “We got to the beach and he ran straight into the ocean. He didn’t want to be left with the ‘what-ifs.’ ”

Sgt. John Paul Castro, 25, was killed Friday at Paktika province, Afghanistan when his unit was attacked by small arms fire, a Department of Defense news release stated.

He was assigned to 1st Battalion, 506th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division, Fort Campbell, Ky. He was on his third tour of duty.

Blanca Castro said she received a call Friday from her father, David Castro Sr., who said he heard rumors that something might have happened to her brother.

“(Andrews) is small. When you’ve got an Army chaplain and an officer driving around, word spreads quickly,” Blanca Castro said.

The support since the news of her brother’s death from the community has been tremendous, Blanca Castro said. She said everyone from the county judge to high school band mates have come out to “show gratitude for his sacrifice.”

During his tenure with the Army, he received several awards, including the Bronze Star, Army Commendation Medal with Valor device; Army Achievement Medal; Army Good Conduct Medal; National Defense Service Medal; Afghanistan Campaign Medal; Iraq Campaign Medal; Global War on Terrorism Service Medal; Army Service Ribbon; Overseas Service Ribbon; North Atlantic Treaty Organization medal, Combat Infantryman Badge and two Purple Hearts.

“His first one came while he was in Iraq and the vehicle he was in drove over an IED (Improvised Explosive Device),” Blanca Castro said. “Four died and several were wounded. He was treated in Germany and then flown home for physical therapy.”

Blanca Castro said his second Purple Heart came from injuries received from shrapnel while in Iraq, but were not severe enough to send him stateside for treatment.

John Paul Castro joined the Army after he graduated from Andrews High School in 2004. His sister said he signed up with a friend after graduation. While Army life was not his first choice in life, she said when it was time to re-enlist, John Paul Castro immediately signed back up.

“It’s what he wanted to do,” Blanca Castro said.

John Paul Castro played tuba in high school for the Andrews Mustangs band, but his real passion was baseball.

Raymond Oliver and his wife Michelle Oliver coached John Paul Castro from the ages of 10 to 16 years old. Raymond called John Paul Castro the most competitive young man he's ever seen in his life.

Recalling a game John Paul Castro played in when he was a teenager, the younger pitcher gave up back-to-back home runs when Raymond Oliver, whom John Paul called 'Coach' even into his adult years, came out to talk to him.

"I came out and told him, 'J.P., eye of the tiger. I don't want to see you give up another home run.' "

"Yes sir," the young John Paul Castro replied.

Raymond Oliver said his team won that game 13-2.

When the Olivers heard the news of John Paul Castro's death, they first thought it was only rumors about the young man who was once offered a contract to play with the St. Louis Cardinals.

"We were in denial," Michelle Castro said.

Once they knew the rumors were facts, the Olivers went to visit the family of the man they said they loved like their own son.

"He's an all around good person that Andrews is going to miss," Raymond Oliver said.

A memorial service for John Paul Castro is scheduled in Andrews before his body is flown to Tennessee for burial. Castro is survived by his wife, Delia Castro of Clarksville, Tenn.; daughter, Natalia Castro of Fort Benning, Ga., and stepson, Kamren Buchholz of Clarksville, Tenn; mother Carmen Castro of Andrews; father, David Castro Sr. of Odessa; sister Blanca Castro of Irving; and brother David Castro Jr. of Irving.

John Paul Castro is the second soldier from Andrews to die in the Middle East. U.S. Army Cpl. Ray Michael Bevel died April 21, 2007, in Yusufiyah, Iraq, of wounds suffered when an IED detonated near his unit during combat patrol operations.

White Swan Marine Killed In Afghanistan Bomb Blast

April 25, 2011 by Phil Ferolito, Yakima Herald-Republic

YAKIMA, Wash. -- Joe Jackson was everything a Marine stood for, his foster father, Shawn Marceau said Monday, a day after Jackson was killed in Afghanistan.

Jackson, 22, was on foot patrol early Sunday in south-central Afghanistan when an improvised explosive device detonated next to him.

He was pronounced dead about an hour later at a hospital.

On Monday, Marceau sat between two Marines at the Marine Corps Reserve office on Tahoma Avenue in Yakima. Head cast down, fists clenching at times, eyes watering, he recalled the young man he raised from the age of 12.

"(He) was my road dog," he said. "That was my best friend. I lost my best friend."

A Gila River tribal member who was mostly raised in the Yakama reservation community of White Swan, Jackson was a strong kid who would help anyone, Marceau said.

"He was a stellar Marine son," Marceau said. "He had a Midas touch -- everything he touched turned to gold."

A lance corporal with the Alpha Company 15 out of Camp Pendleton, Calif., he was among the elite, with swimming, rifle and educational scores that landed him among the top 10 percent, said 1st Sgt. Michael Lillie.

Those scores opened opportunities for him far removed from the clashes on the ground, but he chose to tote a rifle as an infantryman, Lillie said.

"He wanted to be a grunt," Marceau said.

He often volunteered to be one of the lead men on foot patrols, where there was the possibility of being struck by IEDs.

His job was to mark the trail for his fellow Marines.

Military officials said that on Sunday he was following another Marine who was carrying a mine detector on a steep slope when his foot slipped outside the detected area and a bomb exploded. He was the only one struck.

Marceau, a Blackfeet tribal member, was at his White Swan home when two Marines arrived at his door about 8:45 a.m. Sunday.

"They showed up and it was scary," he said. "If I got the word from anyone, I'd rather get it from a Marine."

Marceau, his father, grandfather and great-grandfather all served in the Marines.

At age 13 -- one year after he came to live with Marceau -- Jackson began dressing up as a Marine, Marceau recalled.

"He accepted me as his father and that's the way it came down," he said.

"He was pretty rough, really rough around the edges," he said. "I just wanted him to succeed and he did."

Marceau recalled how Jackson would always come home right after school and do chores. If something needed fixing, he fixed it.

"He just wanted to be with us," he said. "He just wanted to be home."

Jackson preferred hands-on work rather than the confines of a classroom, said his high school resource teacher, Shelly Craig.

Although he fell behind on credits, he was smarter than most realized and surprised teachers when he passed the WASL in 10th grade, she said.

Once he realized that a high school diploma was important to his service in the Marines, he focused on graduating, she said.

"If the military (hadn't been) the carrot out there for him, I don't think he would have graduated.

"He's always been very much driven to join the Marines -- that was his ultimate goal."

On graduation night, he helped a wheelchair-bound student, RJ Jim, through the walk.

"He took care of him and made sure he made it up on the stage and everything," Craig said. "He had a very compassionate heart."

Following his foster father's footsteps, Jackson joined the Marines after graduating from White Swan High School in 2009. He was deployed to Afghanistan about a month ago.

Jackson leaves behind a younger brother and sister, both foster siblings, said Marceau, who declined to identify them. Services are not expected for about two weeks.

Jackson will be greatly missed, Marceau said.

"What he did, it was a calling -- America cashed a check on my boy," he said. "Don't forget him."

Father Mourns Fallen Marine

Apr 28, 2011 KNDO/KNDU

WHITE SWAN, Wash- "They showed up and it was like a movie, scary", remembered Shawn Marceau.

As soon as he saw the uniformed men on his doorstep Sunday morning he had no doubt what was coming.

But that didn't make it any easier to hear that his son, 22 year-old Lance Corporal Joe Jackson died Saturday night in Afghanistan. A former marine himself, Marceau instilled the Corps' values into his foster son, and they stuck.

"Live the American dream, and he did, he could have done anything he wanted", said Marceau.

Lance Corporal Jackson enlisted less than two years ago and was deployed to Afghanistan in March. He had volunteered for a security position in his patrol and was struck by an IED.

The corps says his actions likely saved other marines from being hurt in that explosion.

"One thing he always said was he's going to pay it back and I'll be damned if he didn't pay it back", Marceau reflected.

Lance Corporal Jackson was a Gila River Native American and lived in White Swan. His father says that his son was dutiful and selfless. He was a natural athlete and musician and preferred spending time with his family to going out.

"That was my best friend. Besides my little girl, that was my best friend. I lost my best friend", Marceau said overcome by emotion.

At times it seems nothing will ease this grieving father's pain, but he says there's one thing we can all do to help.

"Don't forget him", Marceau pleaded.

Lance Corporal Jackson continued the family tradition of military service. His father and grandfather were Marines and his great grandfather parachuted onto Normandy during World War II. Now Jackson himself is a decorated war hero. His five military honors include a Purple Heart.

Day 'The Toughest Marine He Could Be'

April 25, 2011 By Chris Engle and Michael Jones, HT Staff Writers

Editor's note: The military confirmed Tuesday that Sergeant David P. Day, 26, of Gaylord, died April 24, 2011, while conducting combat operations in Badghis province, Afghanistan.

Sgt. Day was assigned to 2nd Marine Special Operations Battalion, Marine Special Operations Regiment, US Marine Corps Forces Special Operations Command, Camp Lejune, North Carolina.

GAYLORD — Friends remember Sgt. David Day as a multi-sport athlete and Marine for life — but many will remember him as the guy who drove his classmates to school in a big, white van.

"That's how a lot of people will remember Dave," kidded Steve Dreffs, Day's close high school pal and neighbor, who was willing to ride the van to school early and work out in the weight room just to avoid their hour-long bus ride.

The morning workout routine, the Marine stickers on his school notebooks, the ambition — Dreffs said all signs pointed to what Day would become.

“He was going to be a Marine,” Dreffs said, “and he was going to be the toughest one he could be.”

Day’s toughness showed in his record. He put in 7 1/2 years in the service, had two tours in Iraq, one tour in Afghanistan, was named Team Leader of the Year for the 3rd Recon Battalion and completed Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) training — instruction on how to defeat one of the enemy’s deadliest weapons, the improvised explosive device (IED).

It was a roadside bomb that exploded April 24, ending the life and military career of Gaylord’s toughest Marine (see story below). Dreffs, and another friend and neighbor, Ryan Charboneau, reflected Monday on the Marine and buddy with the big white van.

Day, 26, moved to Chester Township in the ninth grade, and the four boys that lived on M-32 near Turtle Lake Road all became friends. They shot guns, played paintball and hung out, doing the things typical teenagers do.

“He never took himself seriously,” Charboneau said. “He had the personality that would lighten everyone’s mood.”

Dreffs said Day was active in football, swimming and wrestling, and the friends were defensive partners with the Otsego County Hockey Association.

After graduation, Day enlisted in the Marines, while Charboneau — a year older — went to college. Things didn’t work out at school, but Day, and his “ugly white conversion van” were there to help.

“He picked me up in his van and drove me back up the three hours from Kalamazoo to Gaylord to sign my enlistment papers,” Charboneau said.

Charboneau has since served two tours in Iraq, retired from the Marine Corps and now lives in Cleveland. He knows the importance of the role EOD-trained reconnaissance personnel like Day play in the battlefield.

“It’s a dangerous job,” Charboneau said, calling IEDs a “common threat” to units in war.

When Day married Nicole Makins on Oct. 6, 2009, Nicole’s mother Pat Makins, who lives in Gaylord, reminisced, “It was a very happy time in Florida. That’s where Dave proposed to Nicole and where they decided they wanted to get married.”

Even though Makins said the couple were “good friends” during their high school years in Gaylord, it wasn’t until after Day had enlisted in the Marine Corps that the couple started dating.

“You never saw two people who were more meant for each other,” Makins said of the two once their relationship took a more serious turn.

After their marriage, Makins said the couple purchased a home in Holly Ridge, N.C., a small town near Camp Lejeune, where Day was stationed prior to his November deployment.

Dreffi said Day spent most of his leave time with family, but saw him three or four times since he enlisted. One of their last moments together was just like old times.

“My buddy and I were done shooting guns and were walking back up to the house,” Dreffi said, remembering Day pulling into the driveway at that moment with the pistol he received from becoming a platoon leader. “He said, ‘I heard you guys shooting; I just thought I’d come down and join you.’ It was one of those moments.”

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

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

Fuel Truck For Foreign Troops In Afghanistan Burned As Usual



Pakistani security officials stand near an Afghanistan bound oil tanker to supply foreign troops which was set on fire by militants in Landi Kotal near Afghan border in Pakistan, on May 3, 2011. (AP Photo/Qazi Rauf)

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE

END THE OCCUPATION

Foreign Forces Massacre Their Own Supply Convoy Guards

3 May 2011 (AFP)

GHAZNI, AFGHANISTAN - Up to 10 Afghan guards were killed Tuesday in a foreign air strike along a highway in southern Afghanistan, police said, in the latest friendly fire incident involving the alliance's forces.

The armed guards were escorting a supply convoy to foreign bases in southern Afghanistan when they were hit in the province of Ghazni, Mohammad Hussain Yaqoubi, the deputy provincial police chief told AFP.

"Maybe mistaking them with insurgents NATO helicopters targeted the guards. Between eight to 10 guards have been killed," he added. An investigation was underway, the police chief said.

**ENOUGH OF THIS SHIT;
ALL HOME NOW**





U.S. soldiers after a flash flood swept through Combat Outpost Terra Nova following heavy rains in the Arghandab Valley north of Kandahar April 16, 2011. REUTERS/Bob Strong

MILITARY NEWS

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





The casket of Marine Sgt. Sean Callahan of Warrenton, Va., who was killed in combat in Afghanistan, at Arlington National Cemetery, May 2, 2011. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

**“An Atheist Group At Fort Bragg
Called Military Atheists And Secular
Humanists, Or MASH, Has Asked The
Army To Appoint An Atheist Lay
Leader At The Base”**

**“A New MASH Chapter At Fort Campbell,
Ky., Is Planning To Do The Same As Are
Atheists At MacDill Air Force Base In
Florida”**

April 26, 2011 By JAMES DAO, New York Times [Excerpts]

FAYETTEVILLE, N.C. — In the military, there are more than 3,000 chaplains who minister to the spiritual and emotional needs of active duty troops, regardless of their faiths. The vast majority are Christians, a few are Jews or Muslims, one is a Buddhist. A Hindu, possibly even a Wiccan may join their ranks soon.

But an atheist?

Strange as it sounds, groups representing atheists and secular humanists are pushing for the appointment of one of their own to the chaplaincy, hoping to give voice to what they say is a large — and largely underground — population of nonbelievers in the military.

Joining the chaplain corps is part of a broader campaign by atheists to win official acceptance in the military.

Such recognition would make it easier for them to raise money and meet on military bases. It would help ensure that chaplains, religious or atheist, would distribute their literature, advertise their events and advocate for them with commanders.

But winning the appointment of an atheist chaplain will require support from senior chaplains, a tall order.

Many chaplains are skeptical: Do atheists belong to a “faith group,” a requirement for a chaplain candidate? Can they provide support to religious troops of all faiths, a fundamental responsibility for chaplains?

Jason Torpy, a former Army captain who is president of the Military Association of Atheists and Freethinkers, said humanist chaplains would do everything religious chaplains do, including counsel troops and help them follow their faiths.

But just as a Protestant chaplain would not preside over a Catholic service, a humanist might not lead a religious ceremony, though he might help organize it.

“Humanism fills the same role for atheists that Christianity does for Christians and Judaism does for Jews,” Mr. Torpy said in an interview. “It answers questions of ultimate concern; it directs our values.”

Mr. Torpy has asked to meet the chiefs of chaplains for each of the armed forces, which have their own corps, to discuss his proposal. The chiefs have yet to comment.

At the same time, an atheist group at Fort Bragg called Military Atheists and Secular Humanists, or MASH, has asked the Army to appoint an atheist lay leader at the base. A new MASH chapter at Fort Campbell, Ky., is planning to do the same as are atheists at MacDill Air Force Base in Florida.

Such lay leaders can lead “services” in lieu of chaplains and have access to meeting rooms, including chapels.

Chaplains at Fort Bragg near here have seemed open to the idea, if somewhat perplexed by it.

“You’re not a faith group; you’re a lack-of-faith group,” First Lt. Samantha Nicoll, an active atheist at Fort Bragg, recalled a chaplain friend’s saying about the idea. “But I said, ‘What else is there for us?’ ”

Atheist leaders acknowledge the seeming contradiction of nonbelievers seeking to become chaplains or receive recognition from the chaplain corps. But they say they believe the imprimatur of the chaplaincy will embolden atheists who worry about being ostracized for their worldviews.

Defense Department statistics show that about 9,400 of the nation's 1.4 million active-duty military personnel identify themselves as atheists or agnostics, making them a larger subpopulation than Jews, Muslims, Hindus or Buddhists in the military.

But atheist leaders say those numbers are an undercount because, they believe, there are many nonbelievers among the 285,000 service members who claim no religious preference on military surveys.

Many chaplains dispute that interpretation, and say that most people in that group are religious, just not strongly so.

Those same statistics show that Christians represent about one million, or 70 percent, of all active-duty troops. They are even more dominant among the chaplain corps: about 90 percent of the 3,045 active duty chaplains are Christians, most of them Protestants.

Military atheist leaders say that although proselytizing by chaplains is forbidden, Christian beliefs pervade military culture, creating subtle pressures on non-Christians to convert.

As an example, they cite the Army's Comprehensive Soldier Fitness program, created to help soldiers handle stress and prevent suicide. The program requires soldiers to complete surveys assessing emotional, social, family and spiritual well-being. Based on their answers, some soldiers are asked to take "resiliency" training.

Atheists say the survey and training are rife with religious code words that suggest a deity or afterlife.

Atheist and secular humanist groups in the military are hardly new. But at some bases, they have become better organized and more vocal in recent years.

Last fall, atheists at Fort Bragg objected to an event by the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association called Rock the Fort. The base command, at the urging of its chaplains, provided some money and manpower for the event as well as a choice location on the post's parade grounds.

A communication sergeant, Justin Griffith, argued that the event was an Army-sponsored platform for the Graham organization to recruit converts. The post commander, Col. Stephen J. Sicinski, denied that, saying soldiers were not pressured to attend. In a recent interview, the colonel said Rock the Fort was intended to boost morale as well as "bolster the faith."

In response, Sergeant Griffith has recruited a star lineup of atheist musicians and speakers, including the writer Richard Dawkins, to headline a secular event, possibly for

the fall. He calls it Rock Beyond Belief and has asked Colonel Sicinski to provide resources similar to what he gave Rock the Fort.

Colonel Sicinski has refused, saying the event will not draw enough people to justify using the parade grounds and that money from religious tithes, which helped finance Rock the Fort, cannot be spent on it.

Sergeant Griffith has appealed.

A high school dropout raised near Dallas, Sergeant Griffith, 28, was a passionate Christian and creationist until his teens. Now his dog tags list his religious preference as atheist, and he is pushing to create MASH chapters on as many bases as possible.

He is also giving thought to becoming a chaplain himself, though it would take years: He would have to earn a graduate degree in theology and then be commissioned an officer. He would also need the endorsement of "a qualified religious organization," a role Mr. Torpy's organization is seeking to play.

Sergeant Griffith said he believed there were already atheist chaplains in the military — just not open ones.

"I support the idea that religious soldiers need support from religious chaplains," he said. "But there has to be a line between supporting religious soldiers and promoting religion."

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.”

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

Frederick Douglass, 1852

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

**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**

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

**“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**

**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**

**“The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it.”
-- Karl Marx, "Theses on Feuerbach"**

Stop Me Before I Kill Again



From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance
Sent: May 04, 2011
Subject: Stop Me Before I Kill Again

Stop Me Before I Kill Again

**"These capitalists generally act harmoniously
and in concert, to fleece the people."**

Abraham Lincoln

**Photograph by Mike Hastie Vietnam Veteran
Taken in Portland, Oregon just before George
H.W. Bush launched the first Iraq War in 1991.
In December 1989, Bush invaded Panama. Since
the end of World War II, the U.S. Government
has bombed 29 countries.**

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

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

ANNIVERSARIES

May 4, 1970: Dishonorable Anniversary: Unarmed Students Murdered By Ohio National Guard



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

Carl Bunin Peace History April 30-May 6

Ohio National Guard troops opened fire on anti-war protesters at Kent State University, killing four students and wounding nine others.

The previous day, President Nixon had announced a widening of the Vietnam War with bombing in neighboring Cambodia. There were major campus protests around the country with students occupying university buildings to organize and discuss the war and other issues.

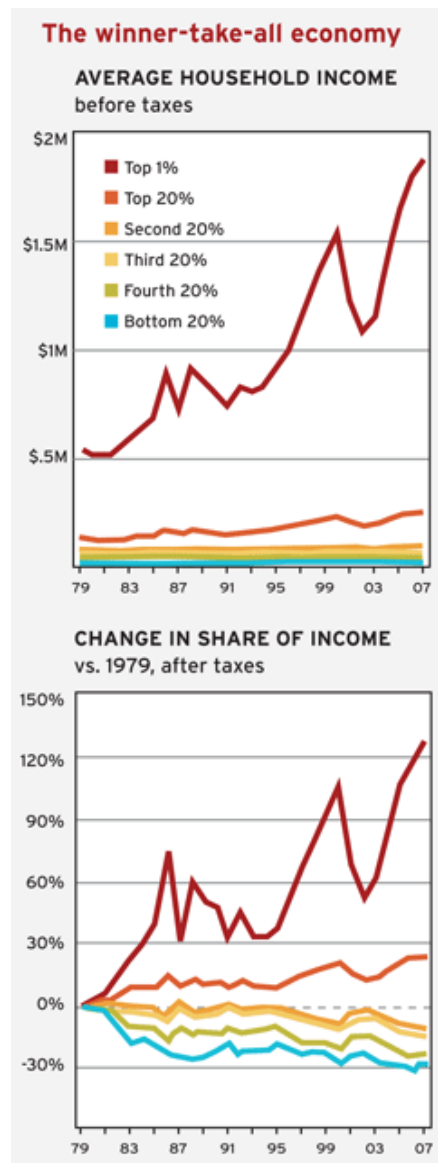


DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



CLASS WAR REPORTS

Why Won't Congress Raise Taxes On The Filthy Rich 1%? Because They Are Part Of The Filthy Rich 1%



April 28, 2011 By Eric Ruder, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

Taxing the rich not only makes financial sense, it's also what the majority of people living in the "world's greatest democracy" want to do.

Nearly three-quarters of Americans support raising taxes on those with incomes of more than \$250,000 a year, according to a Washington Post-ABC News Poll from mid-April.

So what's the hold up?

In the May 2011 issue of Vanity Fair, Nobel Prize-winning economist Joseph Stiglitz provides a simple and compelling explanation: The top 1 percent themselves:

“Virtually all U.S. senators, and most of the representatives in the House, are members of the top 1 percent when they arrive, are kept in office by money from the top 1 percent, and know that if they serve the top 1 percent well they will be rewarded by the top 1 percent when they leave office.

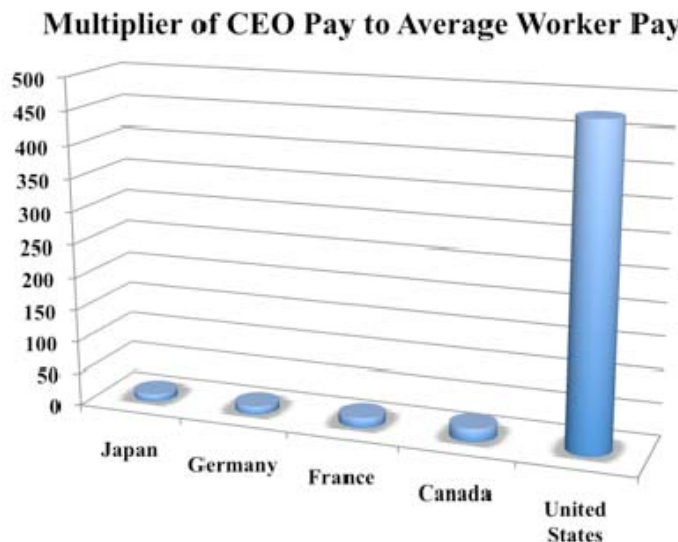
“By and large, the key executive-branch policymakers on trade and economic policy also come from the top 1 percent...”

“It should not make jaws drop that a tax bill cannot emerge from Congress unless big tax cuts are put in place for the wealthy.

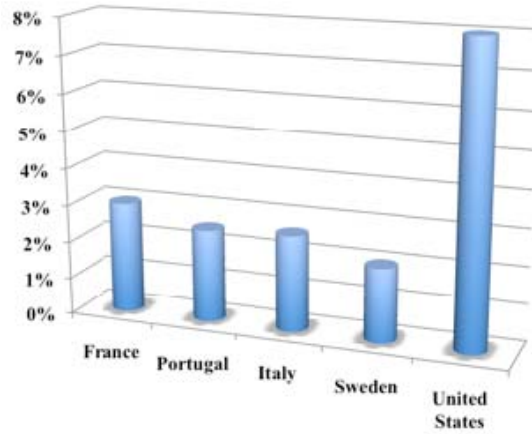
“Given the power of the top 1 percent, this is the way you would expect the system to work.”

We're #1

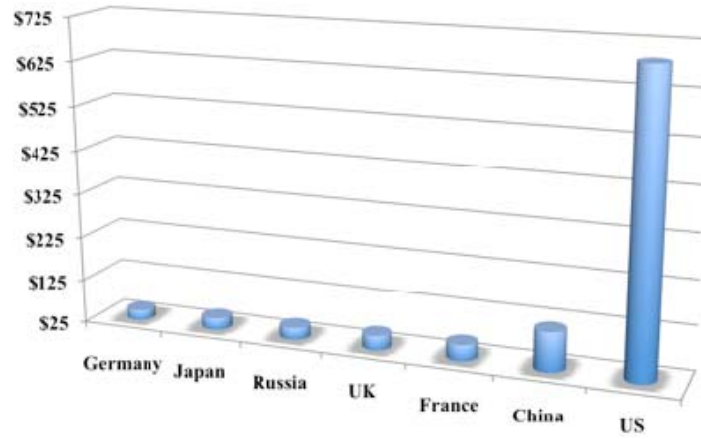
April 18th, 2011 By David Morris, Defending the Public Good [Excerpts]



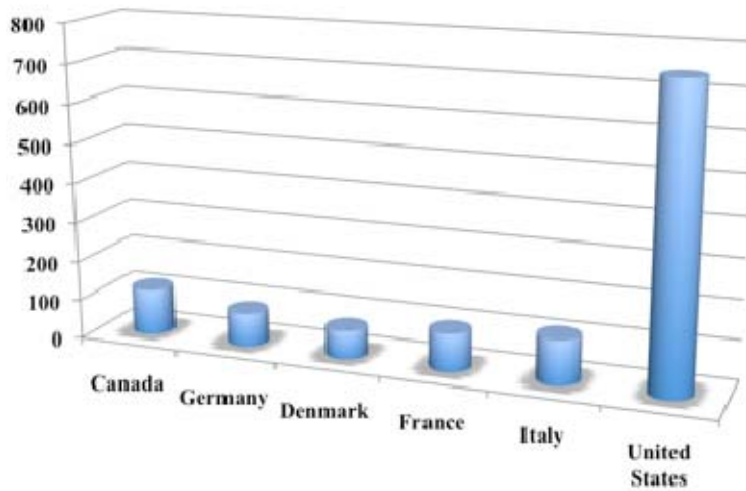
% of Total Income Received by Richest 0.1%



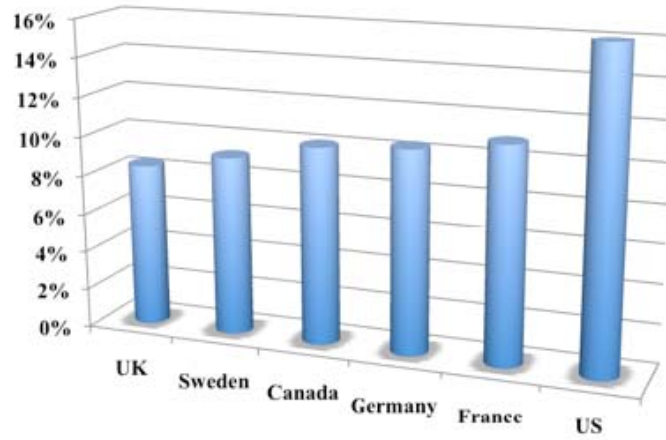
Military Expenditures-2010



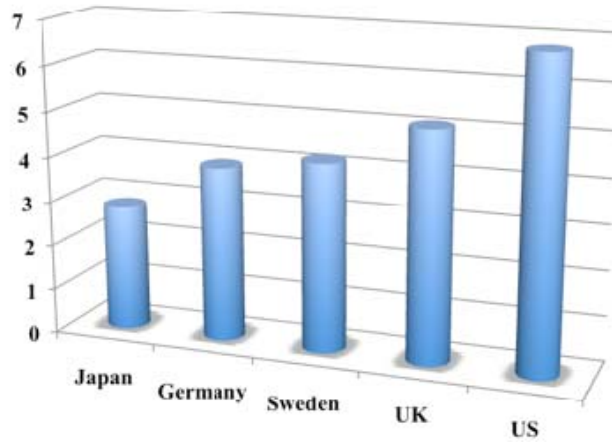
Prisoners Per 100,000 Population



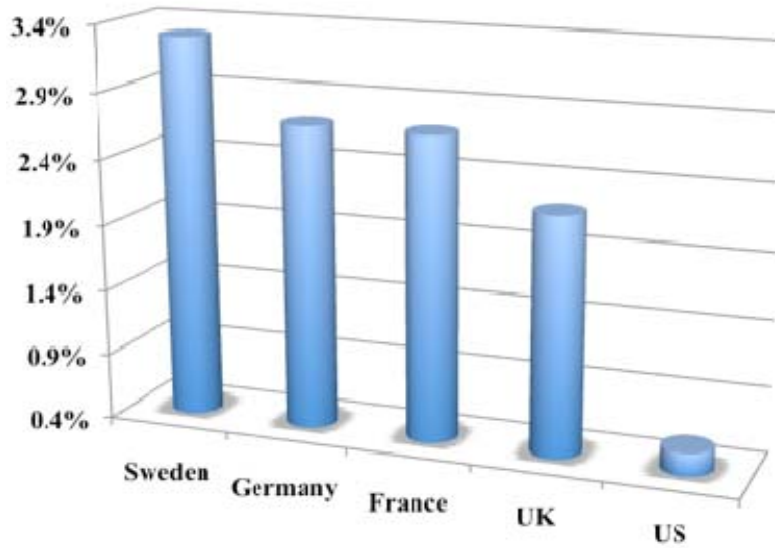
Health Costs As a % of GDP



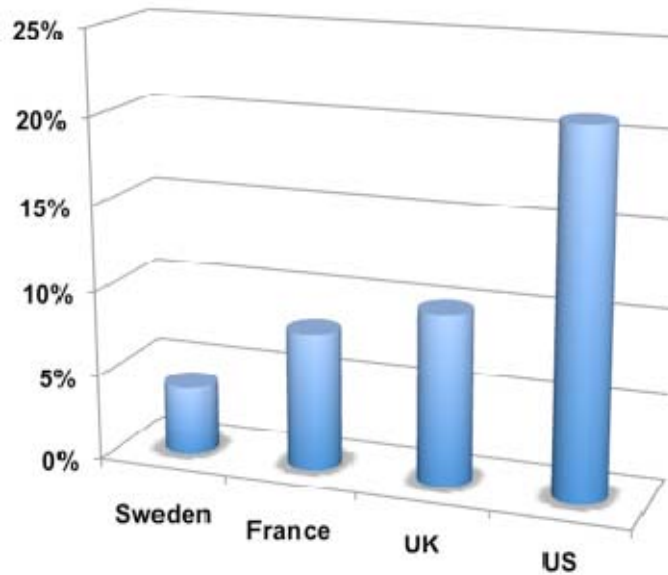
Infant Mortality-Deaths Per 1000 Live Births



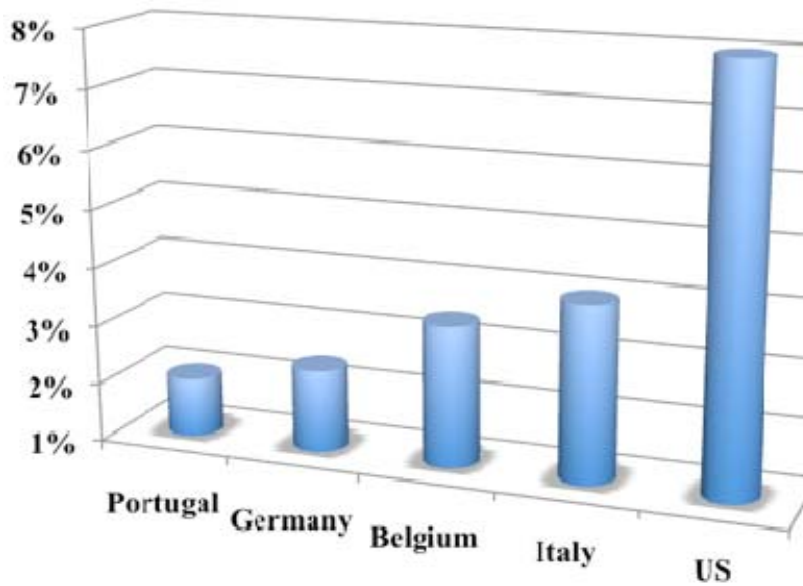
Social Spending For Families-% of GDP



% of Children Living in Poverty



% of Population Experiencing Homelessness-1990-2006



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If you prefer PDF to Word format, email contact@militaryproject.org

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.

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