

Military Resistance 9H19

Honorable Anniversary: August 28, 2008



Iraq Veterans Against The War, Denver [www.ivaw.org/]

**“Soldiers In Uniform Began The
Four-Mile March To The Pepsi
Center In Downtown Denver To
Protest The Iraq War”**

[From GI Special 6H20: 8.29.08]

The thing that stays with me is the sight of those troops looking worried but determined in the face of police force and possible public hostility, trying to make their statement for peace, and how, at the last moment, the whole, huge crowd of civilians had joined them, lifting up their little march and transforming it into an enormous, uplifting show of support.

August 28, 2008 By Ruth Conniff, The Progressive & By Patti Thorn, Rocky Mountain News (Colorado) &lvaw.org/ & By Paul A. Anthony, Rocky Mountain News [Excerpts]

It started as a modest sized march.

Two squads of 25 IVAW members each formed up outside the venue and began marching to the Pepsi center.

From the Rage Against the Machine concert at the Denver Coliseum, about 150 soldiers in uniform began the four-mile march to the Pepsi Center in downtown Denver to protest the Iraq War.

The squads were led by members in dress uniforms and combat uniforms, with thousands of supporters marching behind them in support.

The group of mostly young people walked behind a banner that said: "Support GI Resistance."

"Support GI Resistance"



Protesters march behind Iraq Veterans Against The War Wednesday from the Denver Coliseum to the Pepsi Center after a concert by Rage Against the Machine. Tim Hussin: The Rocky Mountain News

Though the event, co-sponsored by the anti-war group Tent State University and Iraq Veterans Against the War, was unpermitted, the parade proceeded peacefully.

Behind the troops, who marched calling cadence and chanting antiwar slogans, came a larger group in civilian clothes, cheering and waving signs, and growing larger and larger as the marchers wended their way through the downtown.

Wearing T-shirts and stickers with slogans such as "Arrest Bush" and "Make Out Not War," they sang rolling chants, Marine- style. "Tell Me What We're Marching For," sang one group. "Stop the torture, stop the war," answered another.

People lined the streets to watch, most approvingly.

As the marchers wound their way through the neighborhoods west of the coliseum, they found solidarity with a group of Latinos holding up an anti-war sign and cheering them on.

"Si, se puede!" shouted some young marchers. "Yes, we can!"

Not everyone was as respectful.

From the balcony of an apartment complex, a man yelled at the throngs of protesters to move on. "Don't come back here," he said.

But one protester had the last word: He suggested the man join the Army.

As they drew near the heavily guarded convention center, cops in riot gear lined the street, and helicopters buzzed overhead. At an intersection, the group stopped facing squad cars with lights on and a phalanx of black-clad police.

"We can go on here or not," one of the march's organizers told the troops through a megaphone. The march was unauthorized and it was unclear whether the police intended to have a confrontation.

She seemed to be trying to calm everyone for a moment, pointing out that the Denver police so far have not been "prone to violence."

The march continued, and the civilians bringing up the rear cheered.

It was quite a spectacle: the soldiers in dress uniform and fatigues, and the cops in riot gear watching them from the sidelines.

The soldiers chanted:

"Everywhere we go
People want to know
Who we are
Where we came from.
We are the veterans
Iraq War veterans
Antiwar veterans

Pissed-off veterans”

At an intersection, the group stopped to read a letter to Barack Obama asking that he agree to three core principles: the immediate withdrawal of troops from Iraq, full and adequate health care for all returning U.S. service members, and reparations to the Iraqi people.

The letter also upbraided the Democratic Party for their “initial and continued” support for the war.

The police presence intensified. I passed a cop videotaping the marchers and a marcher in a green “copwatch” vest videotaping him right back.

Over the long course, from the outskirts of town into the denser downtown, the energy from the crowd seemed to build. The marchers chanting had a hypnotic effect.

“It’s alright
Its OK
Remember MLK
He tried to lead the way
But he was shot one day
early in the morning”



Members of Iraq Veterans Against The War (IVAW) march in downtown Denver, leading several thousands activists towards The Pepsi Center. (Photo: Rocky Mountain News)

Thus far, the march has been peaceful and well received, as residents along the route sprayed the marchers with hoses and provided water from their homes and businesses.

More and more people joined the march, until, suddenly, looking back as the group crossed a bridge and then paused right outside the Pepsi Center, you could see several thousand people in a line stretching as far as the eye could see.

As the group passed into the perimeter of the convention hall, the police presence grew more threatening. "Hey, those ones have masks," someone pointed out. A group of police in gas masks were pulling on thick gloves and grabbing their batons. A white van with police in black flak jackets hanging off it rolled alongside the marchers.

The feeling of the whole, thousands-strong group was moving. "It's beautiful," one marcher said, looking back at the crowd in the late afternoon sun. Joey Minicucci, 18, of Littleton, noted that his brother was in the military and would soon be sent to Iraq. That was one of the reasons he was going to the march.

Anne Hill, of Montrose, had other reasons. "I'm marching because it seems to be the last vestiges of our free speech and because people have demands and our government's not listening," she said.

The march came to a standstill at the perimeter of the Pepsi Center around 6:30 p.m., at which time the veterans attempted to have their statement delivered to Obama.

Tension with police seemed to escalate, until several veterans stepped forward and saluted police. "We are your brothers and sisters in arms," said one.

"We don't want to hurt you. We don't want you to hurt us."

With that, the standoff melted away and soon an appropriate aide was contacted. "I figured as long as we kept things peaceful, they would hear us, and they did," said Army veteran Jeffrey Wood.

Nancy Pelosi, meanwhile, was answering tough questions from the founder of Digg on CNN about why the Democrats in Congress have failed to pull the troops out of Iraq.

The thing that stays with me is the sight of those troops looking worried but determined in the face of police force and possible public hostility, trying to make their statement for peace, and how, at the last moment, the whole, huge crowd of civilians had joined them, lifting up their little march and transforming it into an enormous, uplifting show of support.

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

Resistance Action

Aug 26 (Reuters) & Aug 27 (Reuters)

BAGHDAD - Five policemen were killed and three police were wounded, when two roadside bombs exploded in quick succession in the Iraqi capital's eastern New Baghdad district, an interior ministry source said.

TAZA - A roadside bomb wounded a member of the government-backed Sahwa militia in Taza, a town 210 km (130 miles) north of Baghdad, a local police source said.

HAMMAM AL-ALIL - A parked car bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol exploded near a police checkpoint, wounding five soldiers and one policeman in Hammam al-Alil, 329 km (200 miles) north of Baghdad, a local police source said.

MOSUL - A roadside bomb targeting an Iraqi army patrol exploded, wounding two soldiers in eastern Mosul, 390 km (240 miles) north of Baghdad, a local police source said.

BAGHDAD - A sticky bomb attached to the car of a police officer killed him when it went off on Friday in Baghdad's central Karrada district, an Interior Ministry source said.

JBELA - Insurgents in a car opened fire on a car carrying Thamir Ubaid, the former head of Jbela municipal council, killing him, his son and his uncle, and wounding one other relative, a local police source said. The source said the incident occurred late on Thursday in Jbela, 65 km (40 miles) south of Baghdad.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Mourners Gather To Remember Slain Navy Petty Officer

August 19, 2011 BY JULIE SHAW, Phillynews.com

A three-volley-rifle salute by seven Navy sailors and a flag-folding presentation to family members in Logan Square marked the end of formal ceremonies Thursday afternoon in honor of slain Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Michael Strange, of Northeast Philly.

In the bright sun, with water spraying off the nearby Swann Memorial Fountain, Navy Rear Admiral William E. Leigher knelt and presented a folded flag to Strange's mother,

Elizabeth "Betsy" Strange, a Philadelphia police officer, then to Strange's father, Charles Strange Jr.

As he handed a third flag to Strange's fiancée, Breanna Hostetler, she hugged it to her heart.

Strange, 25, was a Navy cryptologist technician who was assigned to a Navy SEAL team. He died in the early morning of Aug. 6 in eastern Afghanistan after the helicopter he was in was shot down by insurgents, killing 30 U.S. troops and eight Afghans.

Before the traditional volley of rifle shots, Strange's best friend, Navy Petty Officer 1st Class Ian Regnier told those gathered at the fountain: "Michael never settled for less than the best. He pushed himself to the limit."

He added: "Michael is a brother to all of us. He was a humble man, not the bragging type."

The mourners earlier gathered at the Cathedral Basilica of Ss. Peter and Paul to pay their wishes to the family and for a funeral Mass by Cardinal Justin Rigali, archbishop of Philadelphia.

Rigali told the hundreds in the cathedral: "The circumstances of his death reveal again how the young, the innocent, the peace-loving of this generation are so deeply affected by the violent conflicts of the world that find their origin in the reality of evil, in the mystery of iniquity."

Maggie O'Brien, Strange's aunt, read a statement in the morning to reporters outside.

"Today, as we bring Michael to his final resting place, we remember him as a son, a brother, a grandson, a nephew, a cousin, a friend, a fiancé, and a hero," she said.

"Mike had an undeniable presence about him. His sharp sense of humor and wide, warm smile left an impression on everyone who crossed his path."

She added that "Mike was killed doing what he loved."

Navy SEAL Known As 'Quiet Leader'

August 9, 2011 PAUL LEVY, Star Tribune

CHISAGO CITY, MINN. - Nicholas Spehar was a "quiet leader" -- a three-sport and academic star who "focused on getting things done," his high school principal said Monday of the U.S. Navy SEAL from Chisago City.

"Nick was an active young man, and if he said he was going to do something, he did it," Chisago Lakes High School Principal Dave Ertl said of Spehar, 24. "I could see him as a Navy SEAL and giving 110 percent to serve his country."

Spehar gave more than that. He was among 30 U.S. troops killed, along with seven Afghan commandos and an Afghan interpreter, when their CH-47 Chinook helicopter was shot down, apparently by a Taliban-launched rocket-propelled grenade, Saturday night in Afghanistan's Tangi Valley.

It was the deadliest single-day loss for U.S. forces since the war in Afghanistan began. Many of the Americans who died were members of Navy SEAL Team Six, the unit that conducted the raid that killed Al-Qaida leader Osama bin Laden at his hideout in Pakistan. (Spehar was not involved in that mission, nor were any of the other SEALs killed Saturday.)

On Monday, an almost eerie hush hung over the cornfields straddling the dirt road that leads to the Spehar family's Chisago City home, a 45-minute drive northeast of Minneapolis. Large Navy and POW-MIA flags that book-ended the Stars and Stripes above a storage garage hung listless. The house, save for a woman sitting on the front step, was as empty as the family surely is feeling.

The Spehars received the grim news "a few days ago," younger brother Luke Spehar, 23, said earlier in the day in a brief telephone interview. He said the family did not want to talk about Nick, the second oldest of five children, until after his funeral.

"We need time," he said.

'Pray for all the soldiers'

A Pentagon spokesman said that flag-draped caskets bearing the remains of the 30 troops -- 22 Navy SEALs, three Air Force Special Operations airmen and five Army aviators -- are scheduled to arrive at the Dover Air Force Base in Delaware on Tuesday. The Pentagon said it will prohibit news coverage of the return because the catastrophic nature of Saturday's crash made it impossible to preliminarily identify any of the service members, and their remains are mingled pending identification by experts.

From the Wagon Wheel cafe in Chisago City to the Swedish Inn restaurant in neighboring Lindstrom, many who knew Spehar declined to talk about him, in deference to his family's wishes. Many learned the news from a Facebook posting by younger brother Jacob, 21, who asked that others "refrain from putting it on the Internet."

"They're in pain," said the Rev. Mark Wehmann, eucharistic minister at the Church of St. Bridget of Sweden in Lindstrom, where some of the Spehar family reportedly attended mass Monday. "Pray for them. Pray for all the soldiers."

Craig Swanberg, 46, of Chisago City, said he watched the Spehar kids grow up; they played football with his kids.

"The whole family is a down-to-earth group ... nice, everyday, salt-of-the-earth people," Swanberg said. "Nick was a big kid, a power lifter, who was not as softspoken as his brothers."

Spehar, who graduated from high school in 2005, played on Chisago Lakes' football and baseball teams, "when those high-school teams were really something special, very

successful," Ertl recalled. Spehar also starred on the swimming team -- appropriate for a Navy SEAL -- and was an academic letter winner.

"He always gave everything his all," Ertl said. "I know Nick, and if there's one message that should be taken away about Nick and the lesson he taught us, that's it.

"We have 1,200 students in our school. You don't get to know them all. But Nick was somebody you noticed."

The woman sitting on the Spehars' steps said she was a relative looking after the home while the family retreats to react and mourn. "He was a hero," the woman said with tears in her eyes. "He was a hero."

Slain Soldier's Funeral Held In Warner Robins



A casket carrying Downer's body is loaded into a hearse Saturday at Southside Baptist Church in Warner Robins.

Aug. 14, 2011 By CARYN GRANT, Macon.com

WARNER ROBINS -- More than 200 people gathered inside Southside Baptist Church Saturday to remember a family member, friend and fallen hero in Army Spc. Mark J. Downer.

Downer, 23, was killed Aug. 5 in Afghanistan. A combat medic stationed at Fort Drum, N.Y., he died in Kandahar province as a result of a rocket-propelled grenade attack, according to the Department of Defense.

"He always did what was best for others," said Downer's aunt, Sandra Downer, during the service. "The profession he chose -- to be a medic -- was a dangerous one, and he's a very intelligent young man, so he knew the danger that would befall him, but he did it anyway. He strived to do his best."

Beside his silver coffin draped with an American flag, sat two medals awarded to Downer -- the Purple Heart and Bronze Star -- and presented to Downer's father, Garfield Downer, during the funeral service.

"Spc. Downer's commitment contributed to our nation's continual war on terrorism and his actions represented his dedication to the security of the United States of America," read the citation for the Bronze Star. "His sincere desire to bring peace and stability to a foreign nation is an example of what all American soldiers strive to achieve." "No greater honor can be demonstrated by his ultimate sacrifice and he will be forever remembered for his actions," it stated.

Downer, who joined the army in 2009, was assigned to the 10th Mountain Division, 1st Battalion, 32nd Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team. His unit deployed to Afghanistan in March.

Many of those who attended Saturday's service and lined the streets Friday as Downer's remains were escorted through Warner Robins did not know the soldier, but still wished to pay their respects to a man who gave his life serving the country.

"Everyone that met him liked him," Sandra Downer said. "All the people that we saw yesterday was a testament of that. ... The streets were lined with people waving flags, standing at attention, just showing their love and caring. That doesn't come to a stranger that doesn't give back."

"All of his selfless love and affection for others was expressed by this town yesterday and by the audience here today," she said.

Family and friends remembered Downer as quiet spirit. He was the first boy in a family full of girls, they said, which brought them great joy.

"Mark, being our first boy ... he was celebrated when he got here. He's celebrated now. We love him," Sandra Downer said.

A 2005 graduate of Northside High School, Downer played on the football team and ran track, finishing eighth in the triple jump in the state meet in 2004.

Courtney Chaplin, a former classmate of Downer's, described him as funny, loving, caring, a free spirit and selfless.

Downer was laid to rest at Parkway Memorial Gardens on Carl Vinson Parkway. He is survived by his parents, Garfield and Geraldine Downer of Byron; daughter, Auri; paternal grandparents, sisters and other family members.

Memorial Service Honors Navy SEAL In Green Forest

August 16, 2011, by reporter Jay Scherder and videographer Michael Coonrod, KY3 News

GREEN FOREST, Ark. -- A Navy SEAL from the Ozarks was one of 30 U.S. troops killed when a Chinook helicopter was shot down in Afghanistan on Aug. 6. Family and friends honored Senior Chief Tommy Ratzlaff at a memorial service on Tuesday.

Jim Atkinson coached Ratzlaff in junior high school and all four years of high school. He's had a lot of kids under his wing but says the character that Ratzlaff showed on and off the field is something that he'll always remember about the fallen hero.

"Tommy was just one of those kids that had a good heart," he said. "always trying to do better, always trying to do whatever you ask him. He got the rest of the kids rallied. 'Come on! We can do this!'"

As tragedy surrounds the small community of Green Forest, those who knew Ratzlaff relived the good times.

"If he wasn't successful the first time, he got up, dusted himself off and said, 'Let's do it again.' Failure was not an option with Tommy."

"I told my wife the other day, 'That's one of my kids.' He's still a kid to me," said Atkinson.

He was a kid that had passion for discipline, for hard work, and for football.

Atkinson recalls a game years ago. "It was just so funny and I can still see it to this day," Atkinson laughed.

Three inches of snow were on the field and Ratzlaff got knocked to the ground.

"He jumped up immediately and -- he just had snow packed in his facemask -- he just got up and started barking at this kid. For the rest of the game, Tommy was all over the field. It was like a highlight show. If we'd have known that, we would have thrown cold water into his face every game," Atkinson joked.

It was that determination that made him a leader. "It is extremely tough. Tommy is a hero to this community," he said.

As the small community comes together to mourn the loss of a father, a sailor, a friend, it will be the entire country that benefits from the sacrifice that he made.

"He touched so many people and he's served this country with great honor and we are so proud of him for that."

The 34-year-old sailor will be buried at Arlington National Cemetery. He leaves behind a wife, two sons and a daughter on-the-way along with family in Green Forest.

The family has requested memorial contributions in his honor be made to the Navy SEAL Foundation or to the Ratzlaff Memorial Fund, c/o First National Bank of Green Forest, P.O. Box 1900, Green Forest, AR 72638.

Community Remembers Stillwater Soldier Killed In Afghanistan

Aug 15, 2011 Craig Day, News On 6

PAYNE COUNTY -- Another Oklahoma soldier has died in Afghanistan.

Specialist Jordan Morris, 23, is the fifth Oklahoman to die in combat in Afghanistan in the past few weeks.

Even at an early age, people who knew him say Morris showed tremendous leadership. He's being remembered as an all around, great, likeable young man.

"Your heart aches for the family, for them having such a devastating loss, and such a devastating loss to our community," his baseball coach, Donnie Hoffman, said.

It wasn't long ago Jordan Morris walked the halls at Ripley High School. He was Valedictorian of his 2006 graduating class, an excellent student, active in just about everything, and a member of the baseball team.

"He was certainly one of those that could be easily identified as one of those good kids," Kenny Beams, Ripley Superintendent, said.

Those who knew him say it was the positive way he treated others, his love of his family and other qualities that made him so special. "Just wanted to make everybody smile and have a good day." Beams,

Morris, who attended West Point, was one of five soldiers killed when a bomb went off near their vehicle in Afghanistan last Thursday.

Baseball coach Donnie Hoffman had known him since Morris was in grade school.

"The world is not as good a place, when you lose people with the character that he was," Hoffman said.

In a small town where everybody knows everybody, and where everyone knew what kind of person and patriot Morris was, it's hard losing him and will be difficult saying goodbye to someone who made his community and the world a better place.

"The legacy he leaves behind was the way he led his life, the character, the discipline, the dedication, the honor," Hoffman said.

"I think that's what I'll remember about him most, he had an infectious smile," Beams added.

Morris' family is still deciding whether he'll be buried at Arlington National Cemetery or back here at home in Oklahoma.

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

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

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPREHENSIBLE
REASON TO BE IN THIS EXTREMELY HIGH RISK
LOCATION AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT THAT THE
PACK OF TRAITORS THAT RUN THE
GOVERNMENT IN D.C. WANT YOU THERE COVER
THEIR ASS:**

That is not a good enough reason.



A U.S. Marine carries a metal detector as he and others patrol on foot in the Gereshk Valley, Helmand province, southern Afghanistan, Aug. 20, 2011. (AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

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

LIBYA WAR REPORTS

“No One Who Cares About Justice Will Shed A Tear For Muammar El-Qaddafi. He Was A Tyrant, With The Blood Of Many People On His Hands”
“No One Who Opposes Imperialism And Its Crimes Can Celebrate Qaddafi’s Downfall In These Circumstances”

After the September 11 attacks, Libya signed on as an ally of the U.S. in the “war on terror” and backed the invasion of Iraq two years later. “Qaddafi is a despised dictator who ruled Libya with an iron fist for more than 40 years, while enriching his family and the small circle around it”

August 23, 2011 Socialist Worker Editorial [Excerpts]

The reign of Libyan dictator Muammar el-Qaddafi seems to be coming to an end after anti-government fighters backed by NATO forces took control of Tripoli.

After months of a military stalemate, the fall of the Libyan capital came with remarkable speed.

Masses of Libyans celebrated in Tripoli and around the country as the regime’s control of its last stronghold seemed to give way, and they will again when Qaddafi is definitively toppled.

Qaddafi is a despised dictator who ruled Libya with an iron fist for more than 40 years, squelching dissent while enriching his family and the small circle around it.

His rule continued whether he was seen by the West as an enemy to be demonized--or as a valued ally in the “war on terror.”

Hatred of the dictatorship and a thirst for democracy and freedom drove the uprising against Qaddafi when it first arose in February, clearly inspired by the revolutions against tyrants in Tunisia to Libya’s west, and Egypt to its east.

But the character of Libya’s uprising has been twisted and transformed in the months since.

The rebel forces that took over Tripoli this week operated in collaboration with U.S.-led NATO military forces that have no interest at all in Libyans' desire for freedom.

As Independent journalist Patrick Cockburn predicted some months ago, the fall of Tripoli and Qaddafi's regime will be "primarily won by NATO, and not popular revolution."

Last March, the United Nations sanctioned a U.S.-led air campaign in Libya, with the justification that this was the only way to stop Qaddafi's military from committing a massacre against the uprising. But the air war continued and escalated.

Meanwhile, Western governments were reshaping the anti-Qaddafi opposition to fit their needs--like ensuring the flow of oil from Libya for one, and even more importantly, creating a reliably pro-Western barrier against the tide of revolution that has swept through the region.

To do this, the U.S. and its European allies backed the most conservative elements among those who claimed to lead the struggle against Qaddafi.

A few were already on the CIA payroll--others were former officials of the Qaddafi regime who decided to switch sides.

The new government that will form in place of the Qaddafi regime will be led by these elements. It will be beholden to the U.S. and Europe for its existence--and pliable to their interests.

No one who cares about justice will shed a tear for Muammar el-Qaddafi. He was a tyrant, with the blood of many people on his hands.

But no one who opposes imperialism and its crimes can celebrate Qaddafi's downfall in these circumstances.

The head of the National Transitional Council (NTC)--already recognized before Qaddafi's fall as the official government of Libya by the U.S. and some 30 other countries--is Mustafa Abdul Jalil, who was Qaddafi's justice minister until he resigned in February at the beginning of the uprising.

The U.S. views Abdul Jalil as "cooperative," according to State Department cables revealed by Wikileaks--but then again, he's a familiar face, thanks to the quite-friendly relations between Washington and the Qaddafi regime.

Just as rebel fighters worked closely with NATO forces, the NTC is on good terms with Western diplomats and political figures.

As the advance on Tripoli began over the weekend, NTC leaders were in consultations with Jeffrey Feltman, a U.S. assistant secretary of state who traveled to Benghazi for meetings to discuss "a stable, democratic transition."

There's no doubt what someone like Jeffrey Feltman means by "stability."

There may be challenges to the authority of leaders groomed by the West. But the U.S. and its allies will be in a strong position in such conflicts.

They pushed the most pro-Western elements of the opposition into the spotlight as “leaders” of the rebellion. Their militaries were indispensable in the battle against the Qaddafi regime.

Don’t expect such considerations to enter into the pious statements of Western political leaders and their enraptured media, though.

They’ll too busy blustering about how evil Qaddafi is, and how he “got what’s coming to him.”

“Tripoli is slipping from the grasp of a tyrant,” Barack Obama pronounced in a statement over the weekend. But if Qaddafi was a tyrant--and he certainly was--he’s one the U.S. was more than willing to cooperate with, all the more so over the past decade.

During the 1980s, Qaddafi, then an ally of the former USSR in the Cold War, was a favorite scapegoat of U.S. politicians. Ronald Reagan called him the “mad dog of the Middle East” and ordered air strikes against Tripoli and Benghazi in 1986--one bombing run meant to target Qaddafi personally instead killed his adopted 15-month-old daughter.

But by the late 1990s, Qaddafi was making peace with his former enemies.

After the September 11 attacks, Libya signed on as an ally of the U.S. in the “war on terror” and backed the invasion of Iraq two years later.

In the wake of normalized relations came lucrative business deals with oil giants ExxonMobil, Chevron and other Western companies.

Libya is the only country in North Africa with significant oil deposits--which explains the enthusiasm of nearby European leaders to make friends with Qaddafi during the 2000s. Italy’s right-wing Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi had an especially cozy relationship with the dictator.

But according to State Department documents exposed by Wikileaks, relations with the oil companies had soured in recent years [12] because of Qaddafi’s growing tendency to demand “tough contract terms” and big bonus payments that further enriched the small circle around him.

Given the chance to intervene militarily in a region that has experienced two successful revolutions since the start of the year, Washington and its allies turned on their ally--and suddenly rediscovered that he was an oppressive dictator.

This record shows the truth about the U.S. government and its alliances around the world. They have nothing to do with principles such as democracy and freedom. Washington was happy to work with Qaddafi when that relationship served its interests.

Now, the U.S. is betting that it can regain some of the ground it lost in the Arab world as a result of the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt by enabling the overthrow of Qaddafi--and bolstering a new government that can be relied on to protect Western interests.

Qaddafi deserved to be overthrown. But the circumstances of his downfall are an advance for imperialism--which means a setback for the struggle to extend democracy and freedom.

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.

MILITARY NEWS

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



The remains of Hospitalman Riley Gallinger-Long Aug. 13, 2011 at Dover Air Force Base, Del. Gallinger-Long, 19, of Cornelius, Ore., was killed Aug. 11, 2011 while conducting a dismounted patrol in the Marjah district, Helmand province, Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Steve Ruark)

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

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**

England: “Tax Evasion And Avoidance By The Rich Will This Year Cost The Public More Than One Hundred Times What’s Being Spent Repairing Riot Damage”

**“One Hundred And Fifty People Have
Been Made Homeless As A Result Of The
Recent Riots, But Tens Of Thousands
Will Be Made Homeless By The
Government’s Cuts To Housing Benefit”**

August 20, 2011 MIKE MARQUSEE & TABISH KHAIR, The Hindu [Excerpts]

Britain as a whole is a wealthy country but the distribution of that wealth has grown increasingly and palpably unequal.

In London in particular, there’s a concentration of glamour and grimness, luxury goods and lifestyles next to poverty and exclusion.

Fifteen years of GDP growth passed many of those in the riot-affected areas by, and three years of recession have hit them hard.

Average male life expectancy in Tottenham is 18 years less than in wealthy Kensington and Chelsea (and youngsters there five times more likely to be injured in road accidents).

Youth unemployment, running at 20 per cent nationally, runs at double that figure in places like Tottenham and Hackney.

Recession is now being compounded by austerity, with the coalition government cutting public support for housing, education, healthcare, pension contributions, the disabled and the unemployed, while privatising state functions and further easing the tax burden on the rich.

Young people face an exceptionally bleak future: it will be much harder for them than for their parents to get an education, a decent job, a secure home, or, in the remote future, a dignified retirement.

The life chances of millions are being diminished.

One hundred and fifty people have been made homeless as a result of the recent riots, but tens of thousands will be made homeless by the government's cuts to housing benefit.

There is widespread resentment about the way the burden of austerity has fallen much more heavily on some than on others.

Tax evasion and avoidance by the rich will this year cost the public more than one hundred times what's being spent repairing riot damage.

And the anti-social behaviour of the banks and financial institutions has been as brazen as anything seen in the riots.

Their reckless avarice triggered a meltdown that destroyed London's property values to a far greater extent than the riots, but they go on rewarding themselves record-breaking bonuses — sharing among the few a pot of money worth twice the combined spending of all London local authorities.

MORE:

“Were The Riots Political? Of Course They Were”

“This Month's Events Have Been Neither More Nor Less Political Than The Outbreaks In Previous Generations Now Recalled As Having Been Sparked By Understandable Anger”

“Cameron And His Class Are Frightened For The Future”

Countering claims that these events were qualitatively different to riots in previous and more unjust times, socialist historian Chris Harman observed: “Crowds clashing on the streets with the forces of law, arming themselves in some way or other, smashing windows, looting shops, burning down buildings, besieging police stations, these are all very old features of urban life.”

17 August 2011 By Eamonn McCann; Belfast Telegraph [Excerpts]

British riots in past generations were rooted in real grievance.

But the low-lifes and looters of the last couple of weeks were rioters without a cause.

In 1981, the outbreaks in Brixton and Toxteth were an incoherent cry for justice.

But the gangs who have just trashed Tottenham, Lewisham, Birmingham, Manchester and so on were fighting not for a better life, but for brand-name trainers and plasma TVs.

To hint at any deeper meaning is to condone their wanton destruction.

They are criminals and must be made to pay the full price.

In fact, this month's events have been neither more nor less political than the outbreaks in previous generations now recalled as having been sparked by understandable anger.

The 1981 Brixton riots began on April 10 after crowds gathered to complain about (subsequently admitted) police mistreatment of young black people.

Within minutes, a bus was hijacked and driven at police lines. At least 25 cars were seized and torched, a number of pubs burnt down and scores of shops looted.

Next night, there was fighting between police and youths in Brixton, Finsbury Park, Peckham, Ealing and Wanstead, as well as in Sheffield.

Looting was widespread. Sporadic violence continued for weeks.

On July 3/4 at Toxteth in Liverpool, after police stopped a taxi to arrest a black youth, cars were hijacked and piled up as barricades and police were pelted with petrol-bombs.

The Guardian told of 'middle-aged women, white and black, queuing with shopping trolleys to loot supermarkets'.

In Moss Side, Manchester, crowds broke windows, looted and set fire to shops and held the police at bay with volleys of petrol-bombs. Woolworths in Southall was cleared of virtually all merchandise.

Handsworth in Birmingham, Chapeltown in Leeds, Bolton, Leicester, Nottingham, Southampton, Halifax, Bedford, Gloucester, Hull, Walthamstow, Coventry, Portsmouth, Bristol, Edinburgh and Reading were among centres which saw fighting and looting.

Countering claims that these events were qualitatively different to riots in previous and more unjust times, socialist historian Chris Harman observed:

“Crowds clashing on the streets with the forces of law, arming themselves in some way or other, smashing windows, looting shops, burning down buildings, besieging police stations, these are all very old features of urban life.”

Take the rioting of the early 1930s and the 1880s.

Wall Hannigan reported in Unemployed Struggles that 50,000 rioted in Glasgow in February 1931, fighting police and causing “widespread destruction”.

Trouble then spread to London, Manchester, Port Glasgow, Blackburn and Cardiff. There was looting in every centre.

As there was in 1886, when an unemployed march from Trafalgar Square to Hyde Park turned violent.

In Outcast London, Gareth Stedman Jones recorded: “In St James Street, all club windows were broken and in Piccadilly looting began . . . Then they moved onto South Audley Street, looting every shop along their route.”

London was hit by a “great fear”: “The rumour spread that 10,000 men were on the march from Deptford, destroying as they came the property of small traders . . . In Whitehall, a mob was said to be marching down the Commercial Road. At Bethnal Green, the mob was said to be in Green Street. In Camden Town, there was a rumour that the mob would go from Kentish Town to the west.”

Two thousand gathered at Deptford to await the rumoured mob. They then marched to merge at Westminster Bridge with columns from Peckham and Battersea, linked arms and rushed Parliament Square “using pokers, lengths of gas-pipe and oyster knives to defend themselves against the horse and foot police.” There was widespread looting on the way home.

Had they had mobiles and Blackberries they would no doubt have co-ordinated more efficiently.

But it’s the thought that counted.

The notion that the most recent British rioting has been out of character with the rioting of ages past - that what’s happened now has been an orgy of unrestrained consumerism - is not borne out by history.

The response of the authorities has certainly been political.

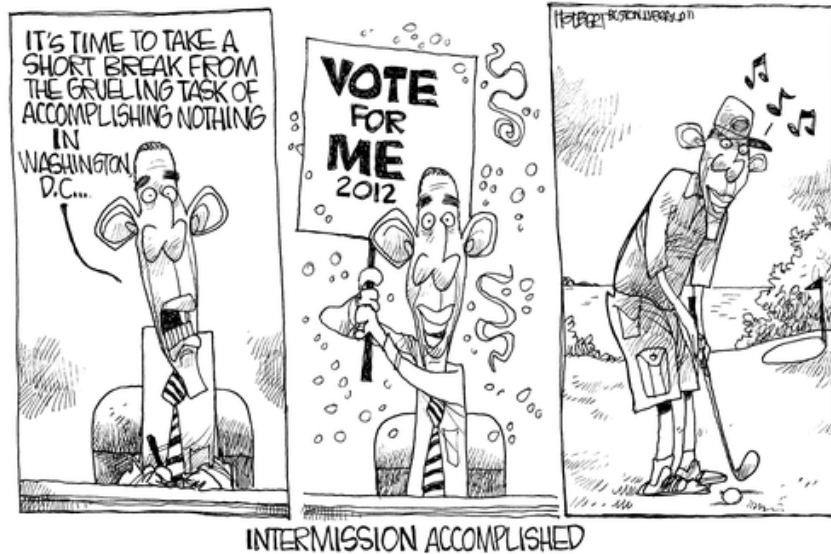
The mass round-up of suspects, the ‘shop your neighbour’ appeals by the Murdoch-linked Met, the police mob-handed in Robocop gear using battering rams to storm into working-class homes and haul suspect teenagers off, cameras on hand to record pictures for reassurance of the ruling class, all this has the character, not of hunting down criminals, but of a major security operation.

Cameron and his class are frightened for the future, of the likely reaction to their planned assault on the welfare state and the rights and living standards of people in the bottom half of an increasingly divided society.

Were the riots political?

Of course they were.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

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

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

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CLASS WAR REPORTS

“A Blockade That Stopped An Eviction In Brooklyn”

“Bus Drivers, Truck Drivers And Individuals In Cars Honked Their Support As The Protest Swelled To Take Up Both Sides Of The Street”
“This Is A New Day. Everything Needs Changing”



Mary Lee Ward emerges from a New York City courtroom after learning her eviction was halted

August 24, 2011 By Alexander Super, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

MORE THAN 200 community members, activists and supporters blockaded Mary Lee Ward’s home in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn on August 19 to prevent an eviction of the 82-year-old African American grandmother.

The city marshal never showed up, and the intervention of a city councilwoman got the developer and Ward to a negotiating table. But activists with Organizing for Occupation, who put together the defense, remain wary that not all is settled at 320 Tompkins Ave.

Demonstrators gathered in the early morning, some with banners that read, “We stand with Ms. Ward,” “Defend the block” and “Evict Speculators, Not Grandmothers.”

Bus drivers, truck drivers and individuals in cars honked their support as the protest swelled to take up both sides of the street.

Community members brought out chairs and children, waiting to confront the police should, they show up.

There was a palpable sense of anger at the audacity of the eviction, especially from members of the community, who know Mary Lee Ward from her 44 years of residence there.

“You have to stick with it when you know you’re right,” Ward told the crowd. “Don’t let nobody walk all over you.”

Ward’s story is a familiar one. In 1995, she took out an \$80,000 loan against her house after receiving a flyer in her mailbox from Delta Funding. Of the \$10,000 she was promised up front, she only received \$1,400.

Two years after this deal, the government shut down Delta Funding for preying on thousands of elderly people of color in Queens and Brooklyn by convincing them to take out loans they couldn’t afford.

Ward’s broker lost his license and was prosecuted for fraud. Yet her loan lived on.

It was sold by different financial institutions over the course of 10 years, and ballooned to \$200,000.

Ward, who is retired and lives on Social Security, couldn’t make the payments.

In 2008, a speculative real estate developer bought the home in an auction as an asset in the now-gentrifying neighborhood.

The speculators scheduled for marshals to take full ownership of the property on Friday. But they were sadly mistaken if they thought they could come in and take Ward’s home without a fight.

“I live in this neighborhood, and low-income neighborhoods are frequently targeted by these speculators, especially longtime residents,” said Sukjong Hong, who was at the blockade.

“We should be standing together to fight these foreclosures--we need a larger movement that can stand up to these bankers and landlords. Everyone knows housing is a human right.”

Robert Paschall attended the protest in solidarity. Paschall was evicted in 2008 and has been in a court battle ever since. He, too, was a victim of predatory lending.

“She shouldn’t be evicted. The court system has failed me and her and the community,” he said. “I lived in my home for 25 years, and because of a predatory scam, my family is broke up, having to go into shelters. It goes back to the courts and lawyers profiting from these evictions.”

But, after seeing this protest, Paschall added, “This is a new day. Everything needs changing.”



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