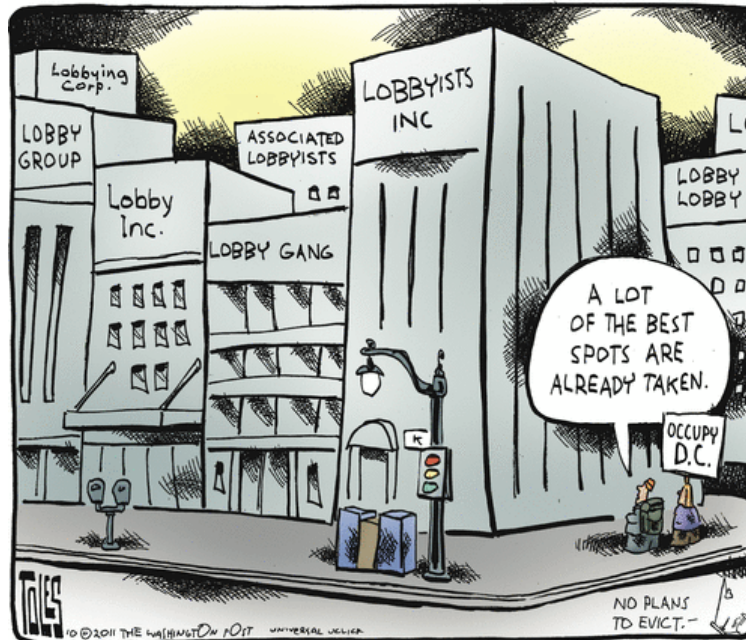


Military Resistance 9K7



Veteran Facing 105 Years In Prison For Shooting At Thief: “David Sturdivant Has Lost His Liberty, A Kidney, His Home, His Business And All His Belongings”

November 10, 2011 By Rhonda Cook, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

David Sturdivant has lost his liberty, a kidney, his home, his business and all his belongings.

He has nothing left other than the \$21 a friend put on his account at the Fulton County Jail, where he has been since April 8.

The 64-year-old Marine Purple Heart recipient could have left jail two weeks ago, but he refused to plead guilty to a misdemeanor, a deal that included 12 months probation with credit for the seven months served.

The deal would have let Sturdivant keep his guns – four rifles and a pistol -- as well as his military disability benefits, according to the prosecutor.

Fulton County Judge Kelly Lee told Sturdivant it was a good offer because he was looking at as much as 105 years in prison if a jury convicted him of all six felony charges he faces.

“He was under the mistaken belief it would be OK to shoot at an intruder,” senior assistant district attorney Jason Park said in court. Sturdivant is charged with shooting at a man in his yard -- not in his house -- that he thought was there to steal from him.

Yet as far as Sturdivant is concerned, he did nothing wrong.

“We’ll go to trial,” public defender Wes Bryant told the judge on Oct. 27.

It has been quite an odyssey for Sturdivant since he woke from a nap just after 1 p.m. April 8 to go to the bathroom.

A police officer shot him in the stomach, which cost him a kidney.

His house and business burned almost two months later while he was in jail.

The tools and lawnmowers Sturdivant had in his shop for repair have been stolen.

His antique Thunderbird and white Ford 150 pickup, electronics and HAM radio equipment that belonged to his father, the surveillance cameras positioned around the property, his clothes, important papers and even the door knobs and the key to his mailbox, all gone.

He has no family and his only friend is already caring for an elderly mother and can't take him in.

The Veterans Administration, alerted to Sturdivant's plight, said it has programs that help homeless vets and someone would go to the jail to talk with Sturdivant about services available in the next few days.

According to police reports, Sturdivant awoke on that Friday afternoon to see Dennis Alexander in his yard.

Alexander’s pickup was parked beside the engine repair shop attached to Sturdivant's house and one of the riding lawnmowers in for repair was positioned near the open tailgate to the bed of the Dodge Ram.

Alexander, jailed several times for property crimes but not charged in this case, told police he was there to buy parts.

“Get off my property and stop stealing my stuff,” Sturdivant shouted at Alexander from the second-floor balcony.

The neighbors said Alexander, who was not charged in this encounter, mocked Sturdivant . Sturdivant, a frequent target of thieves, answered with a single shot from his commercial-grade M14.

Police officers nearby with a crew filming the truTV reality television program Bait Car heard the shot -- the only one Sturdivant fired -- and responded to the corner of Bolton Road and Collier Drive to find a naked and armed Sturdivant.

A truTV camera captured it all – the confusion, tension, the fast breathing and the adrenaline of the officers who swarmed to the corner lot shrouded by trees, bushes and underbrush.

Two of the officers, including the one who fired the shot that hit Sturdivant, were still wearing microphones from the Bait Car taping when they responded to the shot.

“Where he at? Where he at?” an officer can be heard shouting.

Another says, “You got a shot, take it.”

“Drop the gun,” one officer shouts.

A second later one rifle shot is fired.

“I think he’s down. He went down. He went down. He went down. I don’t see him any more,” said one of the first officers wearing the mic from the taping.

A minute and 45 seconds later, Sturdivant peeked over a four-foot-tall piece of plywood that was the railing for his balcony and three police officers responded with gun fire. According to court records three officers fired a total of 14 times.

“Did he pop up?” asks a second officer, still wearing a microphone from the television taping.

“Did you guys see a gun? Did he see a gun? I hope it was a gun.”

Inside his house, Sturdivant called 911 for an ambulance. He told the operator the police had shot him.

According to court records, the bullet that hit Sturdivant first passed through the strap of his rifle and then a wooden piece on the barrel before going into the left side of his abdomen.

His lawyer says the route of the bullet suggests that Sturdivant never pointed the rifle at the officers. APD's internal investigation into the shooting is pending.

Sturdivant was at Grady Memorial Hospital for about a week and he has been housed in the medical unit at the jail since.

On May 30, there was a fire on his property that the fire department called “suspicious.”

His house and everything inside burned.

Vandals have left his late-father's house a few yards away uninhabitable.

All Sturdivant's tools for his business have been stolen from his repair shop.

At the same time, it looks as if the property where he lived all his life except for his four tours in Vietnam is now being treated as a garbage dump.

"Looters have taken everything," said Sturdivant's friend from childhood, Bill Erquitt. "Now it's the biggest trash heap. ... If it's metal, it's gone."

Sturdivant is still waiting for his trial to be scheduled and is hopeful of the outcome, according to his lawyer.

He has nothing left to lose.

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 email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

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

November 11, 2011 AP

A foreign servicemember died following an insurgent attack in southern Afghanistan Friday.

Army Sgt. Ari Cullers Killed In Afghanistan



November 1, 2011 By Paul Petrone, Newlondon.patch.com

Ari Cullers “would give you the shirt off his back. “ He was “funny and silly.” He was “a good kid.”

This is how those who knew the 28-year-old Waterford native described him Monday, one day after he was killed serving his country in Afghanistan.

Ari R. Cullers, a sergeant in the Army assigned to the 10th Mountain Division out of Fort Drum, died Sunday.

According to a press release from Gov. Dannel Malloy, Cullers was killed by a rocket propelled grenade as he was repairing a bulldozer in Kandahar province.

“Anyone who knew (Ari) will immediately say how funny and silly he was,” Cullers' cousin Britt Poletti-Huhn said. “He could put a smile on anyone’s face. But he was also the bravest person I knew.”

Poletti-Huhn, who described Cullers as more of a big brother than a cousin, said she couldn’t talk about him without crying, and answered questions about him through text message.

Patch went to Cullers’ mother's home in Waterford on Monday, and was met with grieving relatives. It was still too traumatic, and they weren’t ready to talk about it, the relatives said.

“He was the type of person who would give you the shirt off his back and not think twice about it,” said Craig Daignault, who said he was a close friend with Cullers in middle school and high school, via a Facebook message to Patch. “I feel greatly honored and privileged to have known him.”

Cullers graduated Waterford High School in 2001. In his four years at the school, Cullers was a “rascal, but a likeable rascal,” Principal Don Macrino said.

"He was a good kid," Macrino said. "I don't think that school was the favorite part of his life all the time, but he was really a likeable kid."

Cullers "found his niche" when he entered the military shortly after graduating high school, Macrino said.

"He felt as though he was doing something really important and worthwhile," Macrino said. "And he really dedicated himself to it."

Cullers was a member of the Army's Headquarters, Headquarters Company, Brigade Special Troops Battalion, 3rd Brigade Combat Team of the Army's 10th Mountain Division, based out of Fort Drum, New York.

This tour into Afghanistan was at least his second tour of duty in the war zone, Macrino said.

"While it is very sad - very sad - he was doing something I think he felt was very, very important," Macrino said.

Cullers is the third Waterford High School graduate to be killed in the military since the War on Terror began. In 2003, Marine Cpl. Kemaphoom "Ahn" Chanawongse died in Iraq, and in 2010, Staff Sgt. Edwin Rivera died in Afghanistan.

Also, Waterford native James Greenleaf, Jr. died in the Sept. 11, 2001 terrorist attacks in New York City.

"It has hit Waterford very hard," Macrino said. "That's a lot for a small town."

Cullers is survived by his mother, Robin Cornele, and his brother, Jacob Cullers.

News of Cullers' death spread through Facebook Sunday and Monday, as friends and family members posted messages on their own Facebook walls and Cullers' Facebook wall.

"The Army has lost another great soldier," Michael Keenan, who is also in the military, wrote on Cullers' Facebook wall. "I am shocked that I'll never get the chance to see him again."

"R.I.P. Ari Cullers," Keyth Reynolds wrote on Cullers' wall. "Lost but never forgotten, rest in peace my brother."

Carrie Flanagan, who graduated a year after Cullers, brought the news to Waterford High School Monday morning when she saw all the posts. She works now as In-School Suspension Coordinator, and described Cullers as "one of the funniest kids I ever met."

"It makes the War on Terror a reality when an individual you know dies," Flanagan said. "And a good individual at that."

Macrino said the school will somehow memorialize Cullers, the way it memorialized Rivera and Chanawongse.

"I think it is always important to include the kids in Waterford, even if they didn't know Ari," Macrino said. "He is part of the extended Waterford High School family, he's an alumni, he's a graduate, and I feel as though we will have to appropriately memorialize him, as we did with Ahn and we did with Edwin."

Malloy today ordered U.S. and Connecticut flags in the state to be flown at half-staff until Cullers' burial. "It is with tremendous sadness that we mourn the loss of Sergeant Cullers, who gave his life serving our nation," Malloy said. "On behalf of all Connecticut residents, I extend our deepest sympathies to his family, friends and loved ones as we honor his life and remember his service."

Soldier With 432nd Seriously Wounded In Afghanistan

Nov 11, 2011 WBAY

A soldier serving with the Ashwaubenon-based 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion has been seriously wounded in Afghanistan.

Military officials say Sergeant Adam Alexander was wounded Thursday.

We're told there are conflicting accounts about how he was injured, but officials say he is expected to survive.

Sergeant Alexander is from Potosi, which is near Platteville in southwestern Wisconsin.

Australian Soldier Seriously Wounded In Uruzgan

11.11.11 Radio Australia News

An Australian soldier has been seriously wounded in Afghanistan after coming under persistent fire from insurgents.

The soldier was on a joint patrol of Afghan and Australian troops about 12 kilometres from their base at Tarin Kot in Uruzgan province.

He was wounded by small arms fire after more than four hours of skirmishes between the patrol and the insurgent gunmen.

The Australian Defence Force says the soldier is being treated at a military hospital at Kandahar Airfield and is in a serious but stable condition.

UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; ALL HOME NOW



A wounded U.S. soldier is carried away from the site of an attack in Kabul October 29, 2011. A car bomber attacked a convoy in the Afghan capital, Kabul. REUTERS/Omar Sobhani

MILITARY NEWS

**“How Can You Not Know What
Body Parts Belong To What
Soldier?”**

**“Officials At The Dover Mortuary
Did Not Let Her See The Body Of
Her Son”**

“She Protested, Because Her Son’s Fellow Marines Had Told Her That His Body Was Still Intact”

Mark Cohen, The Deputy Special Counsel, Says “The Air Force Has Shown As Much, If Not More, Reverence For Its Image As It Has For The Families Of The Fallen”

The Office of Special Counsel chided the Air Force for not taking stricter action.

It noted that investigators concluded Keel had falsified records, tried to fire two employees for cooperating with the probe and gave a version of events that was “wholly inconsistent with the facts.”

November 8 By Greg Jaffe, Christian Davenport & Craig Whitlock, The Washington Post

Gloria Crothers made the sad pilgrimage to Dover Air Force Base in 2009 to see her son, who was killed in Afghanistan, return to American soil.

Like hundreds of families before her, she watched the short, quiet ceremony, in which white-gloved troops carried a transfer case bearing her son’s remains from a cargo aircraft.

On Tuesday, the base in Delaware became the latest of the nation’s hallowed military places to be sullied by charges of mismanagement and scandal.

“How can you not know what body parts belong to what soldier?” said Crothers, of Conowingo, Md.

“That is very disrespectful to the person who just sacrificed their life for the country. This is not acceptable. It’s just not.”

Officials at the Dover mortuary did not let her see the body of her son, Sgt. Michael Heede Jr., saying it was too damaged.

She protested, because her son’s fellow Marines had told her that his body was still intact. Seeing any part of him, even just a limb, would help her accept his death.

“I know every tattoo he had,” she said.

“I had doubts about my son being in that coffin, and now I have more doubts,” she said.

When Shane Wilhelm went to Dover after his son, Army Pvt. Keiffer Wilhelm, was killed in 2009, everything appeared to be run professionally. There was a somber ceremony involving a color guard. A chaplain said a prayer. And his son’s transfer case was moved from the plane to the mortuary.

“We even have a video of it,” Wilhelm said. “To hear this now, it’s like, you’ve got to be kidding me.”

The Air Force and the Army both investigated the complaints about Dover.

But the Office of Special Counsel, a watchdog group that receives complaints from whistleblowers and protects them against reprisals, criticized the Air Force’s handling of the situation in unusually sharp language.

In a letter, agency head Carolyn Lerner said the service displayed a pattern of “failure to acknowledge culpability for wrongdoing,” adding that it had managed to “stop just short of accepting accountability.”

Her office said one mortuary official was “untruthful” and tried to obstruct the investigation by firing a whistleblower.

One of the whistleblowers agreed. “The Air Force basically tried to make the Air Force not look too bad,” said James G. Parsons Sr., an autopsy and embalming technician. “They did try to cover it up.”

In emotion-laden remarks to reporters, Schwartz [Gen. Norton Schwartz, the Air Force chief of staff] said the Air Force became aware of problems at Dover in May 2010 after whistleblowers complained to several agencies.

At first, Schwartz asserted that the Office of Special Counsel had placed “certain constraints” on the Air Force’s ability to notify the families, resulting in the delay. Later, he said the Air Force waited until the investigations were complete so that the families could be fully informed.

The Office of Special Counsel disputed Schwartz’s account.

The agency said relatives of fallen service members should have been notified right away, but the Air Force resisted.

Mark Cohen, the deputy special counsel, called Schwartz’s suggestion that the Office of Special Counsel was responsible for the delay “patently false,” adding: “The Air Force has shown as much, if not more, reverence for its image as it has for the families of the fallen.”

The Office of Special Counsel chided the Air Force for not taking stricter action. It noted that investigators concluded Keel had falsified records, tried to fire two employees for cooperating with the probe and gave a version of events that was “wholly inconsistent with the facts.”

Troubles first surfaced in April 2009 when technicians noticed something amiss while conducting an inventory of body parts stored in a walk-in refrigerator. A sealed plastic bag that was supposed to contain a shattered ankle from a soldier killed in Afghanistan was empty, according to the investigations. The ankle had been stored in the refrigerator seven months earlier, but the plastic bag was slit at the bottom and a frantic search turned up no sign of the remains.

About the same time, supervisors learned that a similar problem had occurred three months earlier, when two plastic bags containing body parts were also found slit and emptied. In that incident, technicians found what they believed were the missing remains in trays on storage racks underneath the bags.

Another empty plastic bag was found in July 2009. Missing was a four-inch-long piece of flesh recovered from an F-15 fighter jet crash in Afghanistan; two airmen had died and medical examiners weren't certain to whom the missing body part belonged. It was never located.

Special Counsel Carolyn Lerner said her office is investigating allegations by the three whistle-blowers that the Air Force retaliated against them in several ways, including an attempt to fire one of them.

THIS IS HOW OBAMA BRINGS THEM HOME: ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE



The remains of Marine Lance Cpl. Jason N. Barfield at Dover Air Force Base, Del. Oct. 26, 2011. Barfield, 22, of Ashford, Ala., was killed in combat Oct. 24, 2011 in Helmand, Afghanistan. (AP Photo/Steve Ruark)...

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

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

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

Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you-
Ye are many — they are few
-- Percy Bysshe Shelley, 1819, on the occasion of a mass murder of British
workers by the Imperial government at Peterloo.

Their Memory, And Ours: Ninety Years On, The Coal Seams Of West Virginia Are A Battlefield Once More: For Working People, The Struggle Goes On



Kayford mountain in West Virginia is demolished by 'mountaintop removal': the historic site of Blair Mountain is under similar threat. Photograph: Mandel Ngan/AFP/Getty Images

My first time in Westminster Abbey, London, I was taken inside by a coal miner friend who was down from South Wales for a brief London holiday.

Suitably awed, we gawked at Poets' Corner, the Coronation Throne, the tombs and effigies of prelates, admirals, generals and prime ministers – England in all its majesty and pageantry.

Gazing at the Gothic Revival columns, transepts and amazing fan-vaulted ceiling, my friend said, “Impressive, isn't it? Of course, it's their culture not ours.”

Our culture – class conscious, bolshie, renegade – rarely lay in plaques and statues, hardly ever in school texts, but mainly in orally transmitted memories passed down generation to generation, in songs and stories.

“Labor history” has become a province of passionately committed specialists and working-class autodidacts, keepers of the flame of a human drama at least as fascinating and blood-stirring as the dead royal souls in the Abbey.

It belongs to all of us who claim it.

I'm lucky because my family's secular religion is union.

They include cousin Charlie (shipbuilders), cousin Davie (electrical workers), cousin Bernie (printers), my mother (ladies' garment) and father (butchers and barbers), and cousin Fred (San Quentin prisoners).

Establishment history may have its Battle of Trafalgar and Gallipoli; we have Haymarket Square, Ludlow, Centralia and Cripple Creek: labor's battle sites, more often slaughtering defeats than victories.

Until recently, a lot of this history casually disappeared down Orwell's “memory hole”, forgotten, censored or ignored. But with the spectacular emergence of the Occupy Wall Street movement, and fight-backs in states like Wisconsin and Ohio, young people especially seem to be regaining and reinvigorating a living history. Memory stirs.

This contest for memory is a class struggle by other means.

Half our story – the half where unions created the modern middle class – is written in the pedestrian language of contracts, negotiations, wages and hours laws ... the nuts and bolts of deals. After all, unions exist to make a deal.

But the other half is inscribed in the whizzing bullets, shootouts and pistol duels of out-and-out combat.

Labor has its own Lexington and Gettysburg.

And none more bloodily inscribed than in the hills and hollows of the West Virginia coal fields.

The 1921 five-day Battle of Blair Mountain was the largest domestic insurrection in the nation's post-Civil War history, pitting 15,000 armed “redneck” miners, with their fierce and family passions, against an army of imported gun-thugs, strikebreakers, federal troops and even a US army bomber, hired by the coal companies who owned the state

and federal governments and believed they owned the human beings who dug the raw coal.

The Blair Mountain shootout had been preceded and provoked by the “Matewan massacre” when a local sheriff and his deputies, sympathetic to the young miners' union, took on the coal company's hired gorillas who were evicting pro-union miners and their families from their shanties. (See John Sayles's film, *Matewan*.)

Enraged miners marched on to Blair Mountain in the next county.

When the smoke cleared over Blair mountain, along an eight-mile front reminiscent of Flanders trenches, a hundred on both sides had been killed with many more wounded.

Outgunned and under a presidential order, the miners, led by the fabulously named Bill Blizzard, took their squirrel-hunting rifles and went home – to face indictments for treason and murder, drawn up by the coal owners and their bought judges.

Sympathetic juries freed most of them. (For further interest: Bill Blizzard's son, the late William C., has a book, *When Miners March*.)

The beautiful, heartbreaking thing is that today the Battle of Blair Mountain goes on.

With protest hikes, films and pamphlets, the campaign to save the mountain – again – sets local miners and their families and friends, including archaeologists and historians, against West Virginia coal owners like notorious Massey Energy, still being investigated by the FBI for possible criminal negligence in the deaths of 29 miners in the Upper Big Branch disaster of 2010.

A billion dollars of undug coal inside the mountain is at stake.

The world is in the middle of a coal rush.

Dynamite is cheaper than people.

Incorrigible companies like Massey aim to blow up Blair, via “mountaintop removal” (aka “strip mining on steroids”), to get at the coal and, while they're at it, destroy the people's battleground, the ecology and any inheritance of resistance.

It is a fight over memory and honor, with very practical consequences for the coal valleys, its displaced families, poisoned rivers, contaminated communities.

For a while, it looked as if the miners and their union had won a great victory by getting Blair Mountain on the National Register of Historic Places. But with a Democratic state governor and a Democratic president refusing to take sides, the coal owners – who still control West Virginia – at the last minute suddenly found some landowners to object. With the connivance of Obama's departments of interior and environment and the Park Service, Blair Mountain was de-registered and thrown open to the pillagers.

Coal mining is where open class warfare is often at its sharpest, most visible and violent.

Something about the job underground, and the shrewd tactical skills it takes not to get yourself killed by roof falls and methane gas explosions, binds miner to miner in what the military likes to call “unit cohesion”.

Historically, miners worldwide have been in the advance guard of social progress.

It's one reason why coal companies in America, and Mrs Thatcher in Britain, always despised the miners and became obsessed with breaking their union.

Labor does not have its Westminster Abbey and probably shouldn't. Museums are no substitute for “talking union”.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN MILITARY SERVICE?

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 and economic injustice, inside the armed services and at home.

Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Liberals Whine Mildly After Cops Attack Berkeley Students With Clubs:

**“Using A Baton To Aggressively
Poke Protesters Can Be
Dangerous”**

**“The Way They Were Using It, You're
Very Likely To Hit The Groin Or
Kidney”**

**“I Think It Is An Excessive Action And
Totally Unwarranted In The
Circumstances We See On The Video”**



Clker.com

[Below you will notice use of the word “batons” to describe what the police were using to attack the students. That is a pretty word these enemy combatants in blue made up to seem less vicious. A baton is used by a conductor leading an

orchestra or band. What the enemy used on these Berkeley students were clubs. See for yourself: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buovLQ9qyWQ&sns=em> T]

11 November 11 By Will Kane and Demian Bulwa, San Francisco Chronicle [Excerpts]

A debate over the use of police force has reignited at the UC Berkeley campus after videos surfaced showing officers repeatedly shoving and jabbing screaming students who tried to keep officers from dismantling a nascent Occupy encampment.

The videos taken by protesters, journalists and casual observers show UC Berkeley police and Alameda County sheriff's deputies in riot gear ordering students with linked arms to leave a grassy area outside the campus administration building Wednesday.

When the students didn't move, police lowered their face shields and began hitting the protesters with batons.

But many law enforcement experts said Thursday that the officers' tactics appeared to be a severe overreaction.

Both the ACLU and the National Lawyers Guild said they had "grave concerns about the conduct" of campus police.

"Video recordings raise numerous questions about UCPD's oversight and handling of these events, including whether law enforcement were truly required to beat protesters with batons," the two groups wrote in a letter to campus officials.

In total, 39 people were arrested Wednesday; 22 were students and one was a professor, police said. All but one were taken to jail and released.

Yet many experts said the officers' actions were at least questionable and likely excessive.

"Using a baton to go through a nonviolent crowd is as inappropriate today as it was in the South when they used it to enforce segregation in the 1960s," said Jim Chanin, a Berkeley attorney who specializes in police misconduct issues.

Sam Walker, a professor emeritus of criminal justice at the University of Nebraska at Omaha who has served as a consultant to the Oakland Police Department, said he thought the campus response was "unprovoked" and "completely unnecessary."

Using a baton to aggressively poke protesters can be dangerous, Walker said.

"The way they were using it, you're very likely to hit the groin or kidney," he said. "I think it is an excessive action and totally unwarranted in the circumstances we see on the video."

David Klinger, a professor of criminology at the University of Missouri at St. Louis, said people who see such startling videos online shouldn't assume police acted inappropriately.

But Shane Boyle, a graduate student who was smacked twice while linked with protesters, said he thought commanders sent a squad of thugs to break up the protest. **[Gee, ya think?]**

“The one that hit me was going kind of crazy,” Boyle said. “He was kind of fierce.”

Boyle said he thought the footage had galvanized his peers and united disparate groups around a frustration with the university.

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 email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

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**Guantánamo -- The Most
Expensive Prison On Earth:
“The Pentagon Confirmed That U.S.
Troops Working At The Prison
Camps Get The Same ‘Hostile Fire’
And ‘Imminent Danger’ Pay As Their
Battlefield Counterparts In
Afghanistan”**

“Guantánamo’s A Place Where Today An Army Colonel Can Talk About ‘The Battle Rhythm’ Of The Camps, Have His Family On The Base And His Kids In The Base’s School System”



A scattering of moviegoers attended the Saturday night feature on March 29, 2009 of “Underworld 3: Rise of the Lycans” at the open-air Lyceum cinema along Sherman Avenue at the U.S. Navy base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. JOHN VANBEEKUM / PHOTOGRAPHER

11.08.11 By CAROL ROSENBERG, Miami Herald Media Company

Guards get combat pay, just like troops in Afghanistan, without the risk of being blown up.

Some commanders get to bring their families to this war-on-terror deployment.

And each captive gets \$38.45 worth of food a day.

The Pentagon detention center that started out in January 2002 as a collection of crude open-air cells guarded by Marines in a muddy tent city is today arguably the most expensive prison on earth, costing taxpayers \$800,000 annually for each of the 171 captives by Obama administration reckoning.

That’s more than 30 times the cost of keeping a captive on U.S. soil.

It’s still funded as an open-ended battlefield necessity, although the last prisoner arrived in March 2008.

But it functions more like a gated community in an American suburb than a forward-operating base in one of Afghanistan's violent provinces.

Congress, charged now with cutting \$1.5 trillion from the budget by Christmas, provided \$139 million to operate the center last year, and has made every effort to keep it open — even as a former deputy commander of the detention center calls it “expensive” and “inefficient.”

“It’s a slow-motion Berlin Airlift — that’s been going on for 10 years,” says retired Army Brig. Gen. Greg Zanetti, a West Point graduate who in 2008 was deputy commander at the detention center.

Both its location and temporary nature drive up costs, says Zanetti.

While there, he wrote a secret study that compared the operation to Alcatraz, noting that Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy had closed it in 1963 because it was too expensive.

At Guantánamo, everything comes in by barge or aircraft “from paper clips to bulldozers,” Zanetti says, as well as the revolving guard force.

Also, more recently, a massage chair for stressed-out prison camp staff.

Zanetti, now a Seattle-based money manager, was a financial advisor in civilian life before his New Mexico National Guard unit’s call-up to Guantánamo. He has never disputed that America needed the detention center after 9/11 but argues that today it deserves a cost-benefit analysis.

“What complicates the overall command further is you have the lawyers, interrogators and guards all operating under separate budgets and command structures,” he said. “It’s like combining the corporate cultures and budgets of Goldman, Apple and Coke. Business schools would have a field day dissecting the structure of Guantánamo.”

An examination of the expenses shows that now, with no strategy for meeting President Barack Obama’s Jan. 22, 2009 closure order, the military is preparing for the prison’s next decade.

Spending is not just aimed at upgrades for the captive population, most in medium security confinement, but also for the revolving staff of 1,850 troops, linguists, intelligence analysts, federal agents and contract laborers.

Commanders are contracting for a new round of capital improvements, including \$2 million worth of new computer equipment to grow storage space under a fast-track, noncompetitive contract with Dell recently posted on a government website.

And that doesn’t include the un-networked laptops the prison provides captives taking a life skills class that includes a resume writing lesson, in case anyone gets to go home.

Meantime, the guard force commander is getting a new 3,000-3,500 square foot headquarters at the prison camps for what is predicted to cost less than \$750,000, below the amount that needs Congress’ sign-off.

The military is also spending up to \$750,000 to replace the aging, rusting prison camp hospital with a new “infirmary hub” and so-called “expeditionary medical shelters” around the prison camps.

Equipping the new hospital will cost more so the Navy Medical Logistics Command has put out a bid for everything from microscopes to resuscitators. Price? Unknown.

Millions go to an intelligence operation whose early Guantánamo interrogations may have fed tips to the U.S. manhunt that tracked Osama bin Laden to his hideout in Pakistan this year. It continues to interrogate some of the captives and maintains risk assessments on each one.

A guard with four years in the Navy, with the rank of petty officer 3rd class, gets \$2,985.84 a month, including the same hazardous duty pay as they’d pull in Kabul.

A Navy commander with 15 years but no kids gets \$7,840 a month, including hazardous duty pay.

But Guantánamo’s a place where today an Army colonel can talk about “the battle rhythm” of the camps, have his family on the base and his kids in the base’s school system, which currently has 247 kids.

Prison staff have their own gym, housing and newsletter, dining rooms and first-run movie theater at “Camp America,” adjacent to the camps. They have their own chapel, mental health services and mini-mart that was recently peddling a \$99.99 SCUBA “bodyglove” and tacky souvenirs such as Cuba Libre-Gitmo fridge magnets and a full aisle of protein supplements.

Guards and other staff also cross over to the larger Navy base for the programs of any sailor or contractor pulling permanent duty on the base — a golf course and deep-sea diving, beach parties and fishing trips.

They can hit the Irish pub, which was built after the al-Qaida airlifts began, take classes over the Internet, which were established once the prison was opened, and can grab McDonald’s drive-through on their way to work.

And that’s just for the guards.

Both captives and captors also have their own kitchen, health services, transportation and security services all fueled by a steady supply line.

In their cellblocks, cooperative captives get satellite television with sports, news and religious programming as well as Arabic soap operas. Pentagon contract workers maintain a 24,000-title book, video and magazine library and are building yet another soccer field for cooperative captives. Unless they’re hunger strikers fed Ensure through tubes tethered through their nose into the stomach, each detainee is offered up to 4,500 calories a day — including lamb certified as halal, Islam’s version of kosher.

“We are running a five-star resort and not a detention facility for terrorists,” says Florida Republican Rep. Allen West, the fiscal conservative and former Army lieutenant colonel

who toured the facility in March. “For example, why do they need 24 cable TV channels?”

Soldiers and sailors consistently gripe that the Internet is slow inside their private quarters, which mostly range from trailer parks to townhouses.

But, unlike in Afghanistan, some prison camp staff officers have brought their families, gotten suburban-style housing and put the kids in the Navy base school.

Sailors said it is better than ship duty. Sure it’s surrounded by water. But you get private quarters, scuba diving and can check in on weekends at guest housing complete with big-screen TVs and backyard patio with barbecue grill.

“This is great. You get the opportunity to serve your country and nobody’s shooting at us. Plus, there’s no mortars coming in,” said Army Staff Sgt. Fred Plimpton, 55, who was a New York state trooper who was dispatched to Ground Zero on 9/11 and later deployed to Baghdad.

And, it’s close enough to home that members of the New York Army National Guard infantry unit now patrolling the prison camps’ perimeter can race home if there’s an emergency.

“Peter’s wife just had a baby and we got him right home,” Plimpton said in September. “Moffit’s wife went into labor and we got him out of here right away. It’s good to see the guys get out of here when a baby’s born.”

Only in an operation bursting with personnel and charter aircraft can that even happen.

At Southern Command, Army Col. Scott Malcom notes that because the Pentagon is holding its prisoners “on a military base in a foreign country” it needs more security measures than on U.S. soil. He also cautions “against making a straight comparison between military detention operations and civilian correctional facilities.”

For example, for federal prison guards, being a correctional officer is a career, a commuter job. They sleep at home, carry their own meals, entertain themselves on their days off. Prison staff come and go on mostly nine- to 12-month rotations, aboard special charter flights, are put up in special housing, help themselves to all-you-can-eat rations from the same dining hall that feeds the captives up to 4,500 calories a day.

But that’s exactly what the Obama administration did this summer in a letter to Congress.

The Defense Department “spends approximately \$150 million per year on detention operations at Guantánamo, currently at a rate of more than \$800,000 per detainee,” Attorney General Eric Holder and Defense Secretary Leon Panetta and other Cabinet members wrote Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell and others.

“Meanwhile, our federal prisons spend a little over \$25,000 per year, per prisoner, and federal courts and prosecutors routinely handle numerous terrorist case a year well within their operating budgets.”

The Herald then sought to do a line-by-line analysis of the expenses, with which the secretive prison camp command refused to participate. It instructed The Miami Herald to file a Freedom of Information Act request, which Southcom refused to expedite in consideration of the ongoing budget debate.

Instead, The Herald was able to create a snapshot of the costs.

The Pentagon confirmed that U.S. troops working at the prison camps get the same “hostile fire” and “imminent danger” pay as their battlefield counterparts in Afghanistan.

In September, a massage chair was the centerpiece of an office for a special Navy mental health counseling unit — set up to minister to stressed out prison camp staff, such as guards.

It was such a success that the unit ordered up another and two biorhythm machines to assist in counseling sessions.

It’s two months later, the Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery still hasn’t been able to figure out how much it spent on purchasing and delivering even the first massage chair.

The camps spokeswoman, Navy Cmdr. Tamsen Reese, said by email Oct. 27 that the prison “executed \$2.4M in FY11 for detainee rations.” Feeding the 1,850 prison staff who eat from the same kitchen is not included, she said.

That’s \$38.45 a captive a day for food delivered to each prisoner.

It’s more than five times as much as the average American spends on food a day and nearly 17 times as much as the State of Florida spends to feed its prisoners.

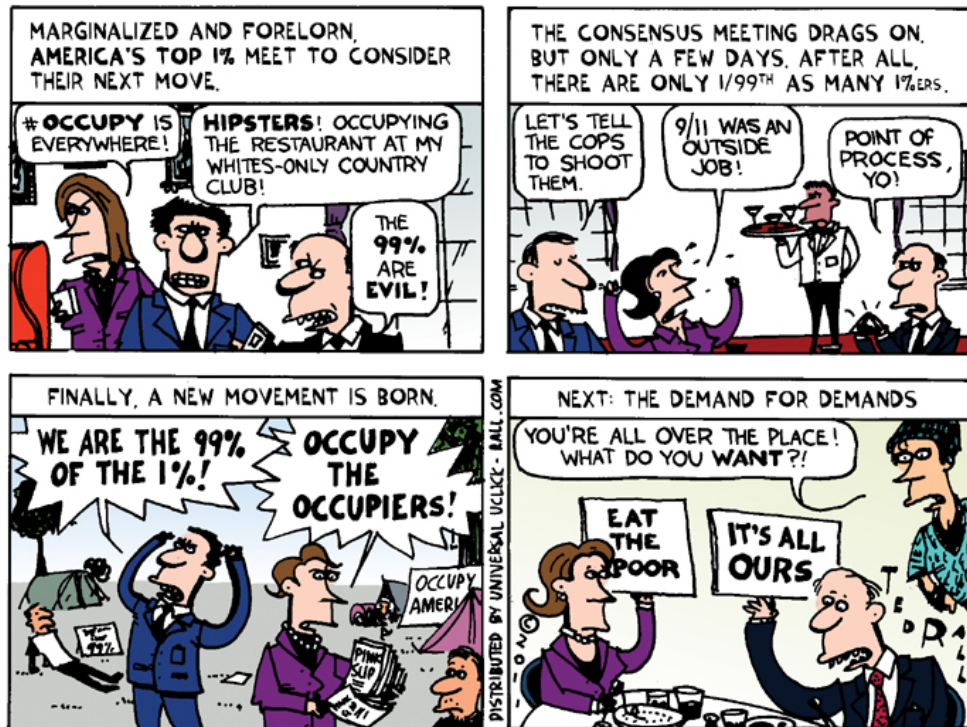
At Guantánamo, the military imports all its food by both cargo airplane and barge from Jacksonville.

A Florida Department of Corrections spokeswoman, Jo Elly Rackleff, notes that the state grows some of the food.

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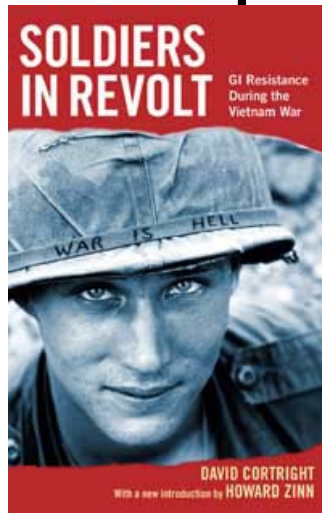
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