

Truth in Recruiting - "Don't Believe the Hype!"

The Tulsa Peace Fellowship's Counter-Recruitment Update/Digest, for Oct 2009

lead story:

Picture of dying U.S. marine brings war home to America

--AP releases photo of dying marine in Afghanistan

related opinion piece:

A U.S. marine's photo reminds us of war that will not end

--engagement in Afghanistan is now longer than U.S. commitment in WWI & II combined

--AP photo compared by PBS to other iconic anti-war photos in history

quote:

"We need security. But the **Americans are just making trouble for us. They cannot bring peace**, not if they stay for 50 years."

~Afghan villager named Ghafoor, speaking to a correspondent for *The Economist*, the magazine read widely the world over

related:

op/eds decrying the **hypocrisy of War Sec'y Gates**, who has no combat experience, trying to censor the photo from American eyes

page one:

Hundreds protest US Army recruitment center that doubles as an arcade

--a dozen arrests as counter-recruiters descend on Franklin Mills, in the Philly Burbs

--Philadelphia chosen as likely hunting grounds for military recruiters preying on the poor, blacks

quote:

Iraq War veteran Kyle Quigley traveled from Harrisburg to take part in the protest. After one tour in Baghdad, Quigley said he opposes the war in Iraq as well as operations in Afghanistan.

"These video games don't show you what it's really like over there," Quigley said. "It's dishonest. It's not representative of what it's really like in the army."

More than 250 new, first-time patients flood into Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and clinics every day

--all of them Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans

facts & figures:

While the press and public are often focused on the more than 5,000 deaths from the two wars, a tidal wave of wounded, injured, and ill continue flooding into VA, with no end in sight. After eight years and two wars, the VA has treated more than 425,000 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans.

related story:

PTSD cases among Iraq vets are swamping U.S. cities

related groups

Nonmilitary Options for Youth

Begun in 1997, Nonmilitary Options for Youth does direct outreach in the public high schools in Austin, Texas as an alternative to military recruitment in the schools. The group includes students, teachers, activists, veterans and parents. Contact them at 512-462-1486.

<http://www.peaceoptions.blogspot.com/>

featured op/ed

What Ever Happened to Gary Cooper?

--A 7-step program to return America to a quieter, less muscular, patriotism

sidebar:

Schwarzenegger vetoes bill honoring Vietnam veterans

facts & figures:

Veterans unemployment rate hits 11.3%

through the grapevine:

H1N1 Swine Flu Vaccine Test Infects Entire U.S. Naval Vessel, Kills Captain and Chief Petty Officer

-- also THREE OTHER U.S. NAVAL SHIPS reported to be under similar at-sea quarantine (NOW CONFIRMED)

-- caveat: the story is gleaned indirectly from anonymous testimony of Navy wives of the affected crew via an internet radio show: **whistleblowers or just the rumor mill?**

<http://labvirus.wordpress.com/2009/09/25/h1n1-vaccine-infects-entire-naval-vessel-kills-captain-and-chief-petty-officer/>

facts & figures (update from official sources, contradicting the above):

The Pentagon said there were roughly 2,900 confirmed cases of the H1N1 flu among active duty forces during the outbreak last spring from the end of April until the services stopped counting at the end of July.

No deaths due to the H1N1 virus have been reported in the armed forces, said Department of Defense spokeswoman Air Force Lt. Col. Rene White.

<http://wire.antiwar.com/2009/09/26/army-issues-hand-gel-cough-orders-in-flu-fight-2/>

page two:

What Iraqi journalist who threw shoes at Bush had to say

--Muntadhar al Zaidi, the Iraqi reporter who threw his shoes at former President Bush last year in an act of protest, gained international notoriety

--rare appearance of the voice of the oppressed, in U.S. domestic press

Daniel Lakemacher was discharged as a conscientious objector from the U.S. Navy on 09/11/09.

--In his interview with antiwar.com, Lakemacher explains how he argued successfully that he had undergone a dramatic shift in belief and daily living, after witnessing excessive force, inhumane conditions, cruel and unusual punishment to the point of driving inmates to insanity, all at Guantanamo. Although not religious, he persuaded the Navy of his sincere objection to serving any further.

quote:

"War is immoral. That's why I quit."

~conscientious objector Daniel Lakemacher, former Navy hospital corpsman

U.S. troops raid Afghan hospital, break International Law in doing so

--no one injured, but outrage from Swedish contingent running the hospital

quote:

"The rules are that medical facilities are not combat areas. It's unacceptable for a medical facility to become an area of active combat operations."

~U.N. spokesman Aleem Siddique

U.S. Soldier Gets 5 Life Sentences for Iraqi Murders

--former Army Soldier, labeled a sociopath, is convicted of raping a civilian and murdering her family

--civilian jury's decision makes a mockery of the Army's decision to grant him an "**honorable discharge with a personality disorder**"

--other soldiers also involved in the rape/murders, and successfully court martialed, will be eligible for parole after 7 years in jail

--civilian court is *far, far more severe* in sentencing than U.S. Army court martial for same offenses

quote:

"You can act like I'm a sociopath. If I had not joined the Army, if I had not gone to Iraq, I would not have got caught up in anything."

~convicted soldier, in his defense

Afghan alcohol ban after Nato staff were 'too hungover' to give explanation for airstrike that killed 70 civilians

-- expose of war crime committed against Afghani village

Custody battles can become a rude 'welcome home'

--Staff Sgt. Jessica Tolbe, who is fighting for custody of her boys with her ex-husband, believes her overseas deployment to Iraq played a factor in her losing custody of the children.

facts & figures:

The military does not keep statistics on how many troops are involved in custody fights, but Army records show more than 20,000 troops in the ranks last year were single parents.

That's nearly one in every 16 soldiers whose off-duty hours are spent raising children alone, and in some cases fighting with former spouses about how best to do it.

Marine faked 'war story'

-- Sergeant David W Budwah was allegedly never in Afghanistan, was not wounded and did not earn the medals he wore.

backpage:

Filipinos want US soldiers out

--presence of U.S. troops in Mindanao declared illegal by Filipino senator

Japanese PM wants U.S. Marines Relocated to Guam

--Calls for a revision of the U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA).

related opinion piece:

Calls for revision of SOFA reflect leftist thinking

--popular opposition to the continued presence of U.S. bases in Japan, 64 years after end of WWII

file under: 40 years later

Vietnam urged the U.S. to speed funding for Agent Orange victims

--The Vietnamese say many babies of soldiers exposed to Agent Orange have been born with terrible birth defects.

The Tulsa Peace Fellowship's Counter-Recruitment Update/Digest, for Oct 2009

lead story

Pictures of dying marine bring war home to America

--AP releases picture of dying marine in Afghanistan



Lance Cpl. Joshua Bernard is tended to by fellow U.S. Marines in Afghanistan. Photograph: Julie Jacobson/AP

It is a graphic image of the harsh realities of war: the fatally wounded young marine lying crumpled in the mud, his vulnerable face turned to the camera. And it is one the US defence secretary would rather you did not see.

Lance Corporal Joshua Bernard, pictured being tended by comrades in southern Afghanistan, died of his injuries soon after. Now the release of this record of the 21-year-old's last moments has divided America, prompting furious debate over the sanitisation of war at a critical time for the military offensive.

The US defence secretary, Robert Gates, condemned the decision by the news agency Associated Press to publish.

However, AP, whose photographer Julie Jacobson took the shot after being caught in the middle of an ambush while accompanying marines on patrol, said it had acted only after a "period of reflection" and argued that the picture illustrated the sacrifice and the bravery of those fighting in Afghanistan. "We feel it is our journalistic duty to show the reality of the war there, however unpleasant and brutal that sometimes is," said Santiago Lyon, the director of photography for AP.

The row reflects rising tensions over the impact of the death toll on an already wavering American public, with support for the war in Afghanistan dwindling.

In extracts from her journal published by the US website huffingtonpost.com, Jacobson described the moment when she watched the marine lose his life. "He was hit with the RPG which blew off one of his legs and badly mangled the other... I hadn't seen it happen, just heard the explosion." She described how she heard Bernard calling out that he could not breathe, and his friends telling him he was going to make it.

About 20 American newspapers and some websites used the image.

He was airlifted to the US base at Camp Leatherneck but died there of his wounds, the 19th American to lose his life in Helmand that month at the height of the fighting.

Joshua Bernard has now come to symbolise the suffering inflicted on America's sons and daughters in uniform, and the unease of fellow citizens forced to confront the grim truth about their deaths.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/sep/06/dying-marine-fury-america-afghanistan>

related opinion piece/editorial:

Marine's Photo Reminds Us of War that Will Not End

by Michael Winship

Saturday, September 12, 2009 by CommonDreams.org

At *Bill Moyers Journal*, our production team wrestled with the dilemma over whether to show the photo on this week's PBS broadcast. We finally decided to do so, but carefully placed it within the context of other pictures AP's Jacobson took earlier that day of Lance Corporal Bernard and his fellow Marines on patrol.

However your own conscience comes down on this issue, there can be no denying the story the photo tells. It forces us to confront through a young man's violent death the ugly, bloody reality of a war that America has been fighting longer than we fought in the First and Second World Wars combined.

August was the deadliest month for our troops in Afghanistan since we first invaded the country shortly after 9/11. It has been a gruesome summer -- 51 Americans died in August, 2009; 45 in July, 2009.

And to what end? The Taliban is resurgent. Almost two-thirds of the country is deemed too dangerous for aid agencies to deliver much needed help. Civilian casualties this year have reached more than a thousand, including the victims of suicide bombings and so-called collateral damage from American air strikes. The credibility of recent so-called "free" elections has been shattered with charges of widespread fraud and corruption.

As *The Economist* magazine noted last month, resentment against the Karzai government, NATO forces and Westerners in general is growing. "It seems clear," the magazine reported, "that the international effort to bring stability to Afghanistan, in which a strong somewhat liberal and democratic state can take root, is failing."

On Monday, the McClatchy news service reported that some top Pentagon officials worry that without a clear definition of our mission there, further escalation may be useless.

According to the article, "Some even fear that deploying more U.S. troops, especially in the wake of a U.S. airstrike last week that killed and wounded scores of Afghan civilians, would convince more Afghans that the Americans are occupiers rather than allies and relieve the pressure on the Afghan government to improve its own security forces."

One of that story's reporters, McClatchy's chief Pentagon correspondent Nancy Youssef, recently returned from Afghanistan and was interviewed by my colleague Bill Moyers for this week's *Journal*. Youssef said, "I can't tell you how many Afghans said to me, 'I don't want the Americans. I don't want the Taliban. I just want to be left alone.'"

In addition to the theories of generals and diplomats, the President and Congress may wish to pay careful attention to the words of an Afghan villager named Ghafoor. He told a correspondent for *The Economist*, "We need security. But the Americans are just making trouble for us. They cannot bring peace, not if they stay for 50 years."

Not a pretty picture.

When it was first published in 1936, during the Spanish Civil War, Robert Capa's photo was captioned "Loyalist Militiaman at the Moment of Death." Better known today as "The Falling Soldier," the picture purportedly captures the gunning down of a Republican anarchist named Federico Borrell Garcia who was fighting against the forces of General Francisco Franco. Dressed in what look like civilian clothes, wearing a cartridge belt, he is thrown backwards in an almost balletic swoon, his rifle

falling from his right hand.

The picture quickly came to symbolize the merciless and random snuffing out of life in wartime -- that murder committed in the name of God or country can strike unexpectedly, from a distance, like lightning from a cloudless sky.

byline: Michael Winship is senior writer of the weekly public affairs program "Bill Moyers Journal," which airs Friday night on PBS. Check local airtimes or comment at The Moyers Blog at www.pbs.org/moyers

<http://www.commondreams.org/view/2009/09/12-3>

related opinion piece/editorial:

Hypocrisy of U.S. War Secretary Gates Astonishes

--praise for AP photographer
--op/ed by by Paul Craig Roberts

September 07, 2009

The photographer was on patrol with the Marines when they came under fire. She found the courage and presence of mind to do her job. Her reward is to be condemned by the warmonger Robert Gates.

The American Legion jumped in and denounced the Associated Press.

To stem opposition to its wars, the War Department hides signs of American casualties from the public. Angry that evidence escaped the censor, the war secretary and the American Legion attacked with politically correct jargon: "insensitive," "offended," and the "anguish" and "pain and suffering" inflicted upon the Marine's family. The War Department sounds like it is preparing a harassment tort.

Isn't this passing the buck? The Marine lost his life not because of the Associated Press and a photographer, but because of the war criminals – Gates, Bush, Cheney, Obama, and the U.S. Congress that supports wars of naked aggression that serve no American purpose, but which keep campaign coffers filled with contributions from the armaments companies.

Marine Lance Cpl. Joshua M. Bernard is dead because the U.S. government and a significant percentage of the U.S. population believe that the U.S. has the right to invade, bomb, and occupy other peoples who have raised no hand against us but are demonized with lies and propaganda.

The exceptional "virtuous nation" does not think it is insensitive for America's bombs to blow innocent villagers to pieces. On Sept. 4, the day before Gates' outburst over the "insensitive" photo, Agence France Presse reported from Afghanistan that a U.S./NATO air strike had killed large numbers of villagers...

The U.S. government is like a criminal who accuses the police of his crime when he is arrested or a

sociopathic abuser who blames the victim.

<http://original.antiwar.com/roberts/2009/09/06/us-hypocrisy-astonishes/>

related op/ed

Killing America's Kids

by Fred Reed, former Marine Lance Corporal & injured Vietnam Vet
September 08, 2009

<http://original.antiwar.com/reed/2009/09/07/killing-americas-kids/>

The Tulsa Peace Fellowship's Counter-Recruitment Update/Digest, for Oct 2009
page one

Hundreds protest US Army arcade used as recruitment tool

By: James McGinnis
Bucks County Courier Times
Sept 13 2009, PhillyBurbs.com

There were about a dozen arrests as protesters, counter protesters and cops descended on Franklin Mills.

As many as 300 protesters marched into Franklin Mills on Saturday to demand the shutdown of an Army recruitment center that doubles as an arcade with games that simulate warfare.

Hundreds of counter protesters - many of them Vietnam veterans - and about 90 Philadelphia Police officers also filled the courtyard outside the Army Experience Center, a pilot program launched in Philadelphia by the military.

There were about a dozen arrests Saturday afternoon as police forced protesters to leave the mall. The names of those arrested were not immediately released by the city.

At times, the rally seemed likely to escalate into a brawl as the protesters and counter protesters shouted and pointed at each other.

"War is not a game" the protesters hollered. In turn, supporters of the center waved flags and chanted "USA!"

All that stood between them was a line of police.

The army center itself was not open - at least to the public or press - on Saturday.

The arcade area, visible through a series of glass windows, appeared less like a game room and more like a military command center. Posh computer workstations were aligned to face a wall of flat screen televisions, each tuned to either a military recruitment video or a live feed from Fox News.

Recruiters traded in army fatigues for khakis and polo shirts. Staff refused to let reporters into the recruitment center, although counter protesters were gathering inside the arcade as early as 10 a.m.

Vietnam veteran Bill Perry of Middletown wants the center shut down.

"I just don't think 13 year olds and 17 year olds can really handle something like this and understand that war is not a game," Perry said.

"War is not sanitary as it seems in there," Perry added. "It's not going to be like an arcade when you're in Iraq or Afghanistan."

Bill Deckhart helped organize the protest as coordinator for the BuxMont Coalition for Peace Action. Deckhart, of Falls, said he doesn't want his tax money used to expose teens to violence.

"I understand that kids can play these games at home. But that's up to the parents to watch their children," Deckhart said. "This is my government spending my money to expose children to violent games."

Iraq War veteran Kyle Quigley traveled from Harrisburg to take part in the protest. After one tour in Baghdad, Quigley said he opposes the war in Iraq as well as operations in Afghanistan.

"These video games don't show you what it's really like over there," Quigley said. "It's dishonest. It's not representative of what it's really like in the army."

The 14,500-square-foot Army Experience Center is a pilot program and the only one in the country, according to Capt. Jared Auchey, who is commander at the Franklin Mills site.

http://www.phillyburbs.com/news/local/the_intelligencer/the_intelligencer_news_details/article/27/2009/september/13/hundreds-protest-us-army-arcade.html

More than 250 new, first-time patients flood into Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and clinics every day

Written by Paul Sullivan
Monday, 07 September 2009 19:30

Veterans for Common Sense (VCS) Releases Dozens of New VA Reports Obtained Using FOIA

Washington, DC – According to government reports obtained exclusively by Veterans for Common Sense, more than 250 new, first-time Iraq and Afghanistan war veteran patients flood into Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) hospitals and clinics every day. After eight years and two wars, VA has treated

more than 425,000 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans.

While the press and public are often focused on the more than 5,000 deaths from the two wars, a tidal wave of wounded, injured, and ill continue flooding into VA, with no end in sight. Beginning today, VCS starts publishing official VA reports obtained by VCS using the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). You can view our FOIA archives at our web site: www.VeteransForCommonSense.org.

This effort to obtain documents about VA is our second major FOIA campaign. In our first FOIA campaign that began in 2002, VCS teamed up with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) to force the Administration to release documents about torture, as profiled on August 30, 2009, in The New York Times.

In our second FOIA campaign that began in 2006, VCS sought to determine the human and financial costs of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. After nine months of delay and denial, VA released the reports only after a threat of litigation. For the first time, VCS posts nearly all of the documents we obtained from VA using FOIA. VCS remains the only non-profit with a full-time FOIA campaign targeting VA, the government's second largest agency with an expected budget of \$113 billion and more than 270,000 employees.

The long-term human and social consequences from these two wars remain enormous, and much more work still needs to be done so our veterans stop falling through the cracks at VA and experiencing long delays to access healthcare and disability benefits. Both wars continue undermining our domestic economic recovery and further increasing the Federal budget deficit. VA reports reveal the crisis goes far beyond the military, as the wars are impacting millions of veterans, their families, and local communities, as VA struggles to treat more than 425,000 new patients and process more than 405,000 disability claims from the Iraq and Afghanistan wars.

read more: <http://www.veteransforcommonsense.org/index.php/veterans-category-articles/1216-paul-sullivan-and-lauren-hohle>

Vets With PTSD Strain Cities' Services

September 01, 2009

El Paso Times

EL PASO -- This city, like many across the nation, faces a wave of military veterans asking for help with mental health problems related to duty in combat zones.

Military and veterans health-care officials are trying to keep up, but some of those soldiers are being referred to community mental health systems that may already be crowded.

Beaumont Army Medical Center has been referring hundreds more soldiers struggling with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, severe depression and other problems into private mental health centers.

In 2008, Beaumont referred 292 patients. As of this July, it already has referred 525, medical center officials said.

El Paso resources already are strained, evidenced by the plan to put about 1,500 El Paso Mental Health

Mental Retardation clients on a waiting list. Demand for the services is growing as the county struggles with a \$2 million gap in funding for mental-health programs.

"Creating a waiting list in mental health is a dangerous proposition," said state Rep. Joe Moody, D-El Paso. "They end up in the emergency rooms and in the county jail."

Bill Nelson, executive director of USA Cares, which helps military families financially, said one of his organization's priorities is providing support for combat veterans who require residential mental-health treatment.

A 2008 study by the Rand Center for Military Health Policy Research estimated that 300,000 of the more than 1.6 million U.S. soldiers who had deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan have stress disorders or severe depression. A total of 320,000 have some form of traumatic brain injury. Many service members with brain injuries also have stress disorders.

<http://www.military.com/news/article/vets-with-ptsd-strain-cities-services.html?col=1186032310810>

An Untitled Protest (antiwar song, Vietnam War era)

by Country Joe MacDonald

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bV7mDnI16h8&feature=related>

Red and swollen tears tumble from her eyes
While cold silver birds who came to cruise the skies
Send death down to bend and twist her tiny hands
And then proceed to target "B" in keeping with their plans
Khaki priests of Christendom interpreters of love
Ride a stone Leviathan across a sea of blood
And pound their feet into the sand of shores they've never seen
Delegates from the western land to join the death machine
And we send cards and letters.

The oxen lie beside the road their bodies baked in mud
And fat flies chew out their eyes then bathe themselves in blood
And super heroes fill the skies, tally sheets in hand
Yes, keeping score in times of war takes a superman
The junk crawls past hidden death its cargo shakes inside
And soldier children hold their breath and kill them as they hide
And those who took so long to learn the subtle ways of death
Lie and bleed in paddy mud with questions on their breath
And we send prayers and praises.

Recorded at Sierra Sound Laboratories, Berkeley, November 1967
and Vanguard Studios, 71 West 23rd Street, New York City, 1968
Producer: Samuel Charters
Engineer & Sound Effects: Ed Friedner

Processed at Vanguard Studios, 71 West 23rd Street, New York City

Joe McDonald: vocals, harmony vocals, rap, lead guitar, 12-string guitar

Barry Melton: vocals, rap, lead guitar, rhythm guitar

David Cohen: rhythm guitar, organ, lead guitar, organ, piano, harpsichord, bells

Bruce Barthol: bass, vocal, backing vocal, acoustic guitar, organ

Gary "Chicken" Hirsh: drums, vocals, bells, background vocals, harmony, sand blocks, castanets, Chicken's music box

Robin McDonald: finger cymbals

We wish to thank Michael Chechik for radio research.

We would also like to thank for their contributions to sound effects, Ruth Revelise, Rosanne Haberman, Leigh Centrone, Barbara Ruggieri, Alice Belgray and Holly Tooker of the Vanguard staff.

This album is dedicated to Bobby Hutton — Black Revolutionary 1950-1968

Original vinyl release: Vanguard VSD.79277 [August 1968]

Original CD release: Vanguard VMD-79277 [April 07, 1992]

All songs copyright © 1968 renewed 1996 by Joyful Wisdom, BMI

<http://www.countryjoe.com/together.htm#protest>

featured op/ed

Whatever Happened to Gary Cooper?

A Seven-Step Program to Return America to a Quieter, Less Muscular, Patriotism

By William Astore

I have a few confessions to make: After almost eight years of off-and-on war in Afghanistan and after more than six years of mayhem and death since "Mission Accomplished" was declared in Operation Iraqi Freedom, I'm tired of seeing simpleminded magnetic ribbons on vehicles telling me, a 20-year military veteran, to support or pray for our troops. As a Christian, I find it presumptuous to see ribbons shaped like fish, with an American flag as a tail, informing me that God blesses our troops. I'm underwhelmed by gigantic American flags — up to 100 feet by 300 feet — repeatedly being unfurled in our sports arenas, as if our love of country is greater when our flags are bigger. I'm disturbed by nuclear-strike bombers soaring over stadiums filled with children, as one did in July just as the National Anthem ended during this year's Major League Baseball All Star game. Instead of ooing and aahing at our destructive might, I was quietly horrified at its looming presence during a family event.

We've recently come through the steroid era in baseball with all those muscled up players and jacked up stats. Now that players are tested randomly, home runs are down and muscles don't stretch uniforms quite as tightly. Yet while ending the steroid era in baseball proved reasonably straightforward once the will to act was present, we as a country have yet to face, no less curtail, our ongoing steroidal celebrations of pumped-up patriotism.

It's high time we ended the post-Vietnam obsession with Rambo's rippling pecs as well as the jaw-dropping technological firepower of the recent cinematic version of G.I. Joe and return to the resolute,

undemonstrative strength that Gary Cooper showed in movies like High Noon.

Whatever happened, in other words, to quiet, unemotive Americans who went about their business without fanfare, without swagger, but with firmness and no lack of controlled anger at the right time?

Why did we allow lanky American citizen-soldiers and true heroes like World War I Sergeant Alvin York (played, at York's insistence, by Gary Cooper) and World War II Sergeant (later, first lieutenant) Audie Murphy (played in the film *To Hell and Back*, famously, by himself) to be replaced by all those post-Vietnam pumped up Hollywood "warriors," with Sylvester Stallone and Arnold Schwarzenegger-style abs and egos to match?

And far more important than how we got here, how can we end our enduring fascination with a puffed up, comic-book-style militarism that seems to have stepped directly out of screen fantasy and into our all-too-real lives?

A Seven-Step Recovery Program

As a society, we've become so addicted to militarism that we don't even notice the way it surrounds us or the spasms of societal 'roid rage that go with it. The fact is, we need a detox program. At the risk of incurring some of that 'roid rage myself, let me suggest a seven-step program that could help return us to the saner days of Gary Cooper:

1. Baseball players on steroids swing for the fences. So does a steroidal country. When you have an immense military establishment, your answer to trouble is likely to be overwhelming force, including sending troops into harm's way. To rein in our steroidal version of militarism, we should stop bulking up our military ranks, as is now happening, and shrink them instead. Our military needs not more muscle supplements (or the budgetary version of the same), but far fewer.

2. It's time to stop deferring to our generals, and even to their commander-in-chief. They're ours, after all; we're not theirs. When President Obama says Afghanistan is not a war of choice but of necessity, we shouldn't hesitate to point out that the emperor has no clothes. Yet when it comes to tough questioning of the president's generals, Congress now seems eternally supine. Senators and representatives are invariably too busy falling all over themselves praising our troops and their commanders, too worried that "tough" questioning will appear unpatriotic to the folks back home, or too connected to military contractors in their districts, or some combination of the three.

Here's something we should all keep in mind: generals have no monopoly on military insight. What they have a monopoly on is a no-lose situation. If things go well, they get credit; if they go badly, we do. Retired five-star general Omar Bradley was typical when he visited Vietnam in 1967 and declared: "I am convinced that this is a war at the right place, at the right time and with the right enemy — the Communists." North Vietnam's only hope for victory, he insisted, was "to hang on in the expectation that the American public, inadequately informed about the true situation and sickened by the loss in lives and money, will force the United States to give up and pull out."

There we have it: A classic statement of the belief that when our military loses a war, it's always the fault of "we the people." Paradoxically, such insidious myths gain credibility not because we the people are too forceful in our criticism of the military, but because we are too deferential.

3. It's time to redefine what "support our troops" really means. We console ourselves with the belief

that all our troops are volunteers, who freely signed on for repeated tours of duty in forever wars. But are our troops truly volunteers? Didn't we recruit them using multi-million dollar ad campaigns and lures of every sort? Are we not, in effect, running a poverty and recession draft? Isolated in middle- or upper-class comfort, detached from our wars and their burdens, have we not, in a sense, recruited a "foreign legion" to do our bidding?

If you're looking for a clear sign of a militarized society — which few Americans are — a good place to start is with troop veneration. The cult of the soldier often covers up a variety of sins. It helps, among other things, hide the true costs of, and often the futility of, the wars being fought. At an extreme, as the war began to turn dramatically against Nazi Germany in 1943, Germans who attempted to protest Hitler's failed strategy and the catastrophic costs of his war were accused of (and usually executed for) betraying the troops at the front.

The United States is not a totalitarian state, so surely we can hazard criticisms of our wars and even occasionally of the behavior of some of our troops, without facing charges of stabbing our troops in the back and aiding the enemy. Or can we?

4. Let's see the military for what it is: a blunt instrument of force. It's neither surgical nor precise nor predictable. What Shakespeare wrote 400 years ago remains true: when wars start, havoc is unleashed, and the dogs of war run wild — in our case, not just the professional but the "mercenary" dogs of war, those private contractors to the Pentagon that thrive on the rich spoils of modern warfare in distant lands. It's time to recognize that we rely ever more massively to prosecute our wars on companies that profit ever more handsomely the longer they last.

5. Let's not blindly venerate the serving soldier, while forgetting our veterans when they doff their spiffy uniforms for the last time. It's easy to celebrate our clean-cut men and women in uniform when they're thousands of miles from home, far tougher to lend a hand to scruffier, embittered veterans suffering from the physical and emotional trauma of the battle zones to which they were consigned, usually for multiple tours of duty.

6. I like air shows, but how about — as a first tiny step toward demilitarizing civilian life — banning all flyovers of sporting events by modern combat aircraft? War is not a sport, and it shouldn't be a thrill.

7. I love our flag. I keep my father's casket flag in a special display case next to the very desk on which I'm writing this piece. It reminds me of his decades of service as a soldier and firefighter. But I don't need humongous stadium flags or, for that matter, tiny flag lapel pins to prove my patriotism — and neither should you. In fact, doesn't the endless post-9/11 public proliferation of flags in every size imaginable suggest a certain fanaticism bordering on desperation? If we saw such displays in other countries, our descriptions wouldn't be kindly.

Of course, none of this is likely to be easy as long as this country garrisons the planet and fights open-ended wars on its global frontiers. The largest step, the eighth one, would be to begin seriously downsizing that mission. In the meantime, we shouldn't need reminding that this country was originally founded as a civilian society, not a militarized one. Indeed, the revolt of the 13 colonies against the King of England was sparked, in part, by the perceived tyranny of forced quartering of British troops in colonial homes, the heavy hand of an "occupation" army, and taxation that we were told went for our own defense, whether we wanted to be defended or not.

It's increasingly clear that our outward swagger conceals an inner desperation. If we're so strong, one might ask, why do we need so much steroidal piety, so many in-your-face patriotic props, and so much parade-ground conformity?

Forget Rambo and action-picture G.I. Joes: Give me the steady hand, the undemonstrative strength, and the quiet humility of Alvin York, Audie Murphy — and Gary Cooper.

byline: William Astore, a retired lieutenant colonel (USAF), is a TomDispatch regular. He teaches History at the Pennsylvania College of Technology.

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<http://original.antiwar.com/engelhardt/2009/09/03/whatever-happened-to-gary-cooper/>

sidebar:

Schwarzenegger vetoes bill honoring Vietnam veterans

By Kevin Yamamura | The Sacramento Bee

In the latest round of Capitol brinksmanship, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed a bill honoring Vietnam veterans and threatened to kill 72 other proposals on his desk because he said lawmakers have ignored his priority issues.

The Senate withdrew all of its 43 bills from the Republican governor's desk for temporary safekeeping. But in an act of defiance, the Assembly left on his desk a bill that would designate March 30 as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day."

"I dare the governor to veto this bill," said Assembly Majority Leader Alberto Torrico, D-Newark, before the close of Tuesday's session.

Shortly afterward, Schwarzenegger accepted the dare and vetoed Assembly Bill 264.

http://www.mcclatchydc.com/100/story/75047.html?storylink=omni_popular

Veterans unemployment rate hits 11.3%

By Rick Maze - Staff writer, Army Times

The number of unemployed Iraq and Afghanistan veterans is now almost the same as the number of service members currently deployed in support of those two wars, according to new Labor Department numbers.

About 185,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are out of work, just 9,000 fewer than the number currently deployed to those two areas, said Justin Brown of the VFW's national legislative service.

Labor Department figures released Friday show the nation's unemployment rate has now reached 9.7 percent — the highest in 23 years — and the rate among Iraq and Afghanistan veterans is 11.3 percent.

An unemployment rate that is higher for recent combat veterans than for the overall U.S. population is not a sign of discrimination against veterans, Brown said, but a sign that service members leaving the military today are hamstrung in some ways in the hunt for jobs.

http://www.armytimes.com/news/2009/09/military_veterans_unemployment_090409w/

through the grapevine:

H1N1 Swine Flu Vaccine Test Infects Entire U.S. Naval Vessel, Kills Captain and Chief Petty Officer

– also THREE OTHER U.S. NAVAL SHIPS reported to be under similar at-sea quarantine (NOW CONFIRMED)

September 25, 2009 at 10:52 am

Tags: h1n1 bird flu birdflu swine flu swineflu h5n1 pandemic ott deagle eisenstein cassel vaclib nvic dissent resistance vaccine vaccination toxic adjuvants mf-59 squalene genocide who cdc nih globalists ge, nato martial law who model state health emergency powers new world order nwo

Courtesy of Bob Chapman of The International Forecaster

Subject: Vital data about US Navy results of swine flu vaccine on ship

Data gleaned indirectly from anonymous testimony of Navy wives of the affected crew via the internet radio show A Marine Disquisition http://www.clipser.com/watch_video/1362067 :

1. Unnamed US Navy vessel put to sea in April with 347 man crew.
2. Entire crew was vaccinated with H1N1 Swine Flu vaccine shortly after they put to sea.
3. Crew sickened so severely that other ships had to respond to render aid. 16 Medical Dr.s put aboard from an unnamed aircraft carrier and other responding vessels. Total of 50 Navy personnel sent aboard to respond to crisis.
4. Two of the crew of 347 died – including the Captain of the ship (a Lieutenant Commander) and a Chief Petty Officer.
5. 50 personnel sent aboard to help are quarantined in Navy hospital in Balboa, Spain after 10 of them caught the flu from the ship's crew. Two of the 50 quarantined are in serious condition at last report.
6. Of the 347 man crew that were vaccinated, 333 contracted the H1N1 flu FROM THE VACCINE. Two died, as mentioned above, and 331 survived. Only 14 of the 347 vaccinated sailors did not show any ill effects from the vaccine.
7. Navy has threatened all the spouses of the ship's crew to remain silent – claiming all this information is classified. Some are whistle-blowing and that is where this information is coming from.
8. On the unnamed aircraft carrier that provided assistance, 415 sailors contracted the swine flu and are currently quarantined onboard.

PLEASE pass this email along. The truth is that the swine flu epidemic will be created BY THE VACCINE. If we don't take it, there will be no epidemic. From this one test it's apparent that the vaccine as tested on that ship's crew in April is 96% effective at infecting the recipient with swine flu. Such an infection rate is impossible to achieve by any natural means. Though it only killed 1% immediately, there is no telling what the long term effects on those injected with the vaccine will be. See the research on the long term effects of the 1976 swine flu vaccine, and the Gulf War anthrax vaccine programs for more information.

Also note that mere contact with those that have been vaccinated creates a 20% chance of you contracting the swine flu even if you have not been vaccinated.

Please pass this data along to anyone you care about!

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/07/21/health/main5177494.shtml>

<http://www.resistnet.com/profiles/blogs/navy-soldiers-are-dying-from>

<http://labvirus.wordpress.com/2009/09/25/h1n1-vaccine-infects-entire-naval-vessel-kills-captain-and-chief-petty-officer/>

further info:

update from official sources, contradicting the above

facts & figures:

The Pentagon said there were roughly 2,900 confirmed cases of the H1N1 flu among active duty forces during the outbreak last spring from the end of April until the services stopped counting at the end of July.

No deaths due to the H1N1 virus have been reported in the armed forces, said Department of Defense spokeswoman Air Force Lt. Col. Rene White.

<http://wire.antiwar.com/2009/09/26/army-issues-hand-gel-cough-orders-in-flu-fight-2/>

What Iraqi journalist who threw shoes at Bush had to say

Posted on Tuesday, September 15, 2009

McClatchy Newspapers

BAGHDAD — Muntadhar al Zaidi, the Iraqi reporter who threw his shoes at former President Bush last year in an act of protest that gained international notoriety, was freed from an Iraqi prison Tuesday after nine months behind bars and gave a passionate defense of his actions.

Here are his remarks, translated by McClatchy special correspondent Sahar Issa.

In the name of God, the most gracious and most merciful.

Here I am, free. But my country is still a prisoner of war.

Firstly, I give my thanks and my regards to everyone who stood beside me, whether inside my country, in the Islamic world, in the free world. There has been a lot of talk about the action and about the person who took it, and about the hero and the heroic act, and the symbol and the symbolic act. But, simply, I answer: What compelled me to confront is the injustice that befell my people, and how the occupation wanted to humiliate my homeland by putting it under its boot.

And how it wanted to crush the skulls of (the homeland's) sons under its boots, whether sheikhs, women, children or men. And during the past few years, more than a million martyrs fell by the bullets of the occupation and the country is now filled with more than 5 million orphans, a million widows and hundreds of thousands of maimed. And many millions of homeless because of displacement inside and outside the country.

We used to be a nation in which the Arab would share with the Turkman and the Kurd and the Assyrian and the Sabeen and the Yazid his daily bread. And the Shiite would pray with the Sunni in one line. And the Muslim would celebrate with the Christian the birthday of Christ, may peace be upon him. And despite the fact that we shared hunger under sanctions for more than 10 years, for more than a decade.

Our patience and our solidarity did not make us forget the oppression. Until we were invaded by the illusion of liberation that some had. (The occupation) divided one brother from another, one neighbor from another, and the son from his uncle. It turned our homes into neverending funeral tents. And our graveyards spread into parks and roadsides. It is a plague. It is the occupation that is killing us, that is violating the houses of worship and the sanctity of our homes and that is throwing thousands daily into makeshift prisons.

I am not a hero, and I admit that. But I have a point of view and I have a stance. It humiliated me to see my country humiliated. And to see my Baghdad burned. And my people being killed. Thousands of tragic pictures remained in my head, and this weighs on me every day and pushes me toward the

righteous path, the path of confrontation, the path of rejecting injustice, deceit and duplicity. It deprived me of a good night's sleep.

Dozens, no, hundreds, of images of massacres that would turn the hair of a newborn white used to bring tears to my eyes and wound me. The scandal of Abu Ghraib. The massacre of Fallujah, Najaf, Haditha, Sadr City, Basra, Diyala, Mosul, Tal Afar, and every inch of our wounded land. In the past years, I traveled through my burning land and saw with my own eyes the pain of the victims, and hear with my own ears the screams of the bereaved and the orphans. And a feeling of shame haunted me like an ugly name because I was powerless.

And as soon as I finished my professional duties in reporting the daily tragedies of the Iraqis, and while I washed away the remains of the debris of the ruined Iraqi houses, or the traces of the blood of victims that stained my clothes, I would clench my teeth and make a pledge to our victims, a pledge of vengeance.

The opportunity came, and I took it.

I took it out of loyalty to every drop of innocent blood that has been shed through the occupation or because of it, every scream of a bereaved mother, every moan of an orphan, the sorrow of a rape victim, the teardrop of an orphan.

I say to those who reproach me: Do you know how many broken homes that shoe that I threw had entered because of the occupation? How many times it had trodden over the blood of innocent victims? And how many times it had entered homes in which free Iraqi women and their sanctity had been violated? Maybe that shoe was the appropriate response when all values were violated.

When I threw the shoe in the face of the criminal, Bush, I wanted to express my rejection of his lies, his occupation of my country, my rejection of his killing my people. My rejection of his plundering the wealth of my country, and destroying its infrastructure. And casting out its sons into a diaspora.

After six years of humiliation, of indignity, of killing and violations of sanctity, and desecration of houses of worship, the killer comes, boasting, bragging about victory and democracy. He came to say goodbye to his victims and wanted flowers in response.

Put simply, that was my flower to the occupier, and to all who are in league with him, whether by spreading lies or taking action, before the occupation or after.

I wanted to defend the honor of my profession and suppressed patriotism on the day the country was violated and its high honor lost. Some say: Why didn't he ask Bush an embarrassing question at the press conference, to shame him? And now I will answer you, journalists. How can I ask Bush when we were ordered to ask no questions before the press conference began, but only to cover the event. It was prohibited for any person to question Bush.

And in regard to professionalism: The professionalism mourned by some under the auspices of the occupation should not have a voice louder than the voice of patriotism. And if patriotism were to speak out, then professionalism should be allied with it.

I take this opportunity: If I have wronged journalism without intention, because of the professional embarrassment I caused the establishment, I wish to apologize to you for any embarrassment I may

have caused those establishments. All that I meant to do was express with a living conscience the feelings of a citizen who sees his homeland desecrated every day.

History mentions many stories where professionalism was also compromised at the hands of American policymakers, whether in the assassination attempt against Fidel Castro by booby-trapping a TV camera that CIA agents posing as journalists from Cuban TV were carrying, or what they did in the Iraqi war by deceiving the general public about what was happening. And there are many other examples that I won't get into here.

But what I would like to call your attention to is that these suspicious agencies -- the American intelligence and its other agencies and those that follow them -- will not spare any effort to track me down (because I am) a rebel opposed to their occupation. They will try to kill me or neutralize me, and I call the attention of those who are close to me to the traps that these agencies will set up to capture or kill me in various ways, physically, socially or professionally.

And at the time that the Iraqi prime minister came out on satellite channels to say that he didn't sleep until he had checked in on my safety, and that I had found a bed and a blanket, even as he spoke I was being tortured with the most horrific methods: electric shocks, getting hit with cables, getting hit with metal rods, and all this in the backyard of the place where the press conference was held. And the conference was still going on and I could hear the voices of the people in it. And maybe they, too, could hear my screams and moans.

In the morning, I was left in the cold of winter, tied up after they soaked me in water at dawn. And I apologize for Mr. Maliki for keeping the truth from the people. I will speak later, giving names of the people who were involved in torturing me, and some of them were high-ranking officials in the government and in the army.

I didn't do this so my name would enter history or for material gains. All I wanted was to defend my country, and that is a legitimate cause confirmed by international laws and divine rights. I wanted to defend a country, an ancient civilization that has been desecrated, and I am sure that history -- especially in America -- will state how the American occupation was able to subjugate Iraq and Iraqis, until its submission.

They will boast about the deceit and the means they used in order to gain their objective. It is not strange, not much different from what happened to the Native Americans at the hands of colonialists. Here I say to them (the occupiers) and to all who follow their steps, and all those who support them and spoke up for their cause: Never.

Because we are a people who would rather die than face humiliation.

And, lastly, I say that I am independent. I am not a member of any political party, something that was said during torture -- one time that I'm far-right, another that I'm a leftist. I am independent of any political party, and my future efforts will be in civil service to my people and to any who need it, without waging any political wars, as some said that I would.

My efforts will be toward providing care for widows and orphans, and all those whose lives were damaged by the occupation. I pray for mercy upon the souls of the martyrs who fell in wounded Iraq, and for shame upon those who occupied Iraq and everyone who assisted them in their abominable acts. And I pray for peace upon those who are in their graves, and those who are oppressed with the chains

of imprisonment. And peace be upon you who are patient and looking to God for release.

And to my beloved country I say: If the night of injustice is prolonged, it will not stop the rising of a sun and it will be the sun of freedom.

One last word. I say to the government: It is a trust that I carry from my fellow detainees. They said, 'Muntadhar, if you get out, tell of our plight to the omnipotent powers' -- I know that only God is omnipotent and I pray to Him -- 'remind them that there are dozens, hundreds, of victims rotting in prisons because of an informant's word.'

They have been there for years, they have not been charged or tried. They've only been snatched up from the streets and put into these prisons. And now, in front of you, and in the presence of God, I hope they can hear me or see me. I have now made good on my promise of reminding the government and the officials and the politicians to look into what's happening inside the prisons. The injustice that's caused by the delay in the judicial system.

Thank you. And may God's peace be upon you.

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/world/story/75438.html>

Daniel Lakemacher discharged as a conscientious objector from the U.S. Navy

"War is immoral. That's why I quit," he says.

18 Sep 2009:

In his interview with antiwar.com, Lakemacher explains how he argued successfully that he had undergone a dramatic shift in belief and daily living, after witnessing excessive force, inhumane conditions, cruel and unusual punishment to the point of driving inmates to insanity, all at Guantanamo. Although not religious, he persuaded the Navy of his sincere objection to serving any further. His [CO application is available online](#) for other G.I.'s to consider; even available as a podcast. He is the founder of the website WarIsImmoral.com

rush transcript provided by TPF (excerpt only):

Scott Horton: "What is your message to people still in the military today?"

Daniel Lakemacher: "My message is definitely to think through these issues yourself. The biggest problem that I see with the military is that it's completely an obedience-based morality. They try and define for you that right and wrong is whether you are being obedient to them or being disobedient to them. We all know that that's not actually true. Another person doesn't decide for you what's right and wrong in any given situation. So think through whatever situation you're in, whether you're driving a truck, or whether you're pulling a trigger, whether you're loading munitions someplace, think for yourself, think through whatever you're involved in, 'Is it right or is it wrong?' What is the larger context of what you are doing."

Scott Horton: "I hope that there are some punk-rock 16-year-olds listening to ChaosRadio today who

will be inoculated against all the military propaganda."

Daniel Lakemacher: "One simple questions that I'd encourage you to ask --if you're thinking about joining up-- is to ask them: '*Do recruiters lie?*' Because you go to their recruiting office and you hear all this good stuff. Find somebody who's not a recruiter and simply ask them: '*Do recruiters lie?*' Or, 'Should I believe what they say, should I take what they say at face value, and accept it?' You can ask almost anybody in the military and get the same answer. ... I worked at the Navy bootcamp and I saw it day-in and day-out, people who'd be coming in 18, 19, 20 years old --17 years old too-- and they'd been lied to through and through by recruiters. Those recruiters are just working on the fact that they get credit when somebody shows up at bootcamp."

<http://antiwar.com/radio/2009/09/16/daniel-lakemacher/>

U.S. troops raid Afghan hospital

By Jonathon Burch – Sep 6, 2009

KABUL (Reuters) – U.S. troops burst into a Swedish charity-run hospital in Afghanistan and tied up patients' relatives and staff, the charity said on Sunday, in what it called a breach of deals between the military and aid groups.

In a statement issued on Sunday, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) said soldiers had entered its hospital in Wardak, south of Kabul, on Wednesday evening without explanation and conducted a search, including of female wards and toilets.

"Upon entering the hospital they tied up four employees and two family members of patients at the hospital. SCA staff as well as patients (even those in beds) were forced out of rooms/wards throughout the search," SCA said in a statement.

"This is simply not acceptable," said SCA Country Director Anders Fange told Reuters.

"It is not only a clear violation of globally recognized humanitarian principles about the sanctity of health facilities and staff in areas of conflict but also a clear breach of the civil-military agreement" between aid groups and the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, he said.

A press officer for the NATO-led force, Lieutenant-Commander Christine Sidenstricker, said she was aware of an incident but did not have enough information to comment.

U.N. spokesman Aleem Siddique said he was not aware of the details of the particular incident, but that international law requires the military to avoid operations in medical facilities.

"The rules are that medical facilities are not combat areas. It's unacceptable for a medical facility to become an area of active combat operations," he said. "The only exception to that under the Geneva Conventions is if a risk is being posed to people."

SCA provides runs health, education and agricultural development programs in about half of the country's provinces. It has been based in Afghanistan since the early 1980s.

"There is the Hippocratic oath. If anyone is wounded, sick or in need of treatment ... if they are a human being, then they are received and treated as they should be by international law."

http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20090906/wl_nm/us_afghanistan_hospital_raid

PADUCAH, KY., Sept. 4, 2009

U.S. Soldier Gets 5 Consecutive Life Sentences for Murdering Iraqi Civilians

Former Army Soldier Convicted of Raping Civilian, Multiple Counts of Murder

(AP) A former U.S. soldier received five consecutive life sentences Friday for his role in the rape and murder of an Iraqi teenager and the slaying of three of her family members.

"What the defendant did was horrifying and inexcusable," U.S. District Judge Thomas Russell said in sentencing Steven Dale Green, 24. "The court believes any lesser sentence would be insufficient."

A civilian jury convicted Green in May of raping Abeer Qassim al-Janabi, conspiracy and multiple counts of murder.

Green shot and killed the teen's mother, father and sister, then became the third soldier to rape her before shooting her in the face. Her body was set on fire March 12, 2006, at their rural home outside Mahmoudiya, Iraq, about 20 miles south of Baghdad.

Green was the first person charged under the Military Extraterritorial Jurisdiction Act, a law passed in 2000 that allows U.S. authorities to prosecute former military personnel, contractors and others for crimes committed overseas.

The panel couldn't reach an unanimous decision about whether Green should get a death sentence, automatically making Green's sentence life in prison.

Green told the judge he merely followed orders from other soldiers involved in the attack.

"You can act like I'm a sociopath. You can act like I'm a sex offender or whatever," Green said. "If I had not joined the Army, if I had not gone to Iraq, I would not have got caught up in anything."

During Green's trial, defense attorneys never contested Green's role in the attacks. Instead, they focused on saving his life by putting on witnesses that testified that the military failed Green on multiple fronts - by allowing a troubled teen into the service, not recognizing and helping a soldier struggling emotionally and providing inadequate leadership.

Green and four other soldiers with the 101st Airborne Division based at Fort Campbell, Kentucky, were investigated after the killings. Three who went to the family's home, along with Green, received lengthy sentences up to 110 years but will become eligible for parole in seven years. Another who had a lesser role was released from military prison after serving 27 months.

All except Green were charged under the Uniform Code of Military Justice and faced a military trial, known as a court martial. Two of the soldiers who were at the home when Green shot the family pleaded guilty and a military jury convicted a third.

By the time the Army pressed charges in June 2006, Green had been honorably discharged with a personality disorder and returned to the United States. Because Green had been discharged, prosecutors filed an indictment against him as a civilian.

<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2009/09/04/national/main5289281.shtml?tag=stack>

Afghan alcohol ban after Nato staff were 'too hungover' to give explanation for airstrike that killed 70 civilians

By Mail Foreign Service

Last updated at 8:00 AM on 09th September 2009

Alcohol has been banned from Nato's headquarters in Afghanistan in the wake of an airstrike that killed up to 70 civilians.

US General Stanley McChrystal, head of the International Forces in Afghanistan (Isaf), decided to bar boozing after launching an investigation into the bombing in northern Afghanistan.

Staff at the Kabul headquarters were 'either drunk or too hungover' to answer his questions.

The command to drop two 500lb bombs on two fuel tankers hijacked by the Taliban came from Germany, while American pilots carried it out.

A preliminary investigation found that the bombs were dropped in breach of Nato guidelines, on "intelligence" from a single source

Read more: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/worldnews/article-1211736/U-S-forces-Afghanistan-dock-counts-storming-hospital-airstrike-death-70-civilians.html#ixzz0QcVwfHTd>

Custody battles can become a rude 'welcome home'

--Staff Sgt. Jessica Tolbe, who is fighting for custody of her boys with her ex-husband, believes her overseas deployment to Iraq played a factor in her losing custody of the children.

By Leo Shane III, Stars and Stripes

Mideast edition, Sunday, September 6, 2009

WASHINGTON — When Staff Sgt. Jessica Tolbe returned from Iraq in February, she looked forward to catching up on lost time with her sons.

But when she went to pick them up from her ex-husband, she was blocked from seeing them by a court order issued while she was still overseas.

“You’d think common sense would make a judge ask ‘Has the mother been served; does she know what’s going on?’ before changing the custody rules,” the Hawaii-based soldier said. “But apparently not.”

family law experts say they continue to see hundreds of cases in which troops finishing combat rotations return home to angry custody battles and unsympathetic judges, who see long tours overseas as an obstacle to providing a stable home for children.

“The court system is still stacked against members of the military who deploy,” said Mathew Tully, whose legal practice specializes in military rights cases.

<http://www.stripes.com/article.asp?section=104&article=64595>

Marine faked 'war story'

By David Dishneau, Associated Press
Tuesday, 22 September 2009

A so-called war hero who claimed to have been wounded when he dived to shield a buddy from a grenade in Afghanistan is facing a court martial by the US Marines for making the story up.

Sergeant David W Budwah was allegedly never in Afghanistan, was not wounded and did not earn the medals he wore. Prosecutors say he accepted invitations to rock concerts, baseball games, banquets and other events meant to fete wounded servicemen. He allegedly bluffed his way into 33 events in 2008. Mr Budwah faces more than 30 years in prison and a dishonourable discharge if convicted next month.

Budwah joined the Marines in October 1999 and spent nearly all of the next six years with a radio communications unit in Okinawa, Japan, according to the Marine Corps Base in Quantico, Virginia, where Budwah has been stationed since February 2006.

Phony heroes are not unusual. Thousands of complaints pour in annually to the FBI and civilian groups about impostors flaunting store-bought medals.

Budwah's case is remarkable because he is an active-duty Marine facing military justice, not a civilian charged with wearing unearned medals. Of nearly 3,100 courts-martial last year in the four major armed services, only 27 were trials for wearing illegal decorations. Just two involved Marines.

He faked post-traumatic stress disorder in hopes of leaving service early and was sent to the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, where he bluffed his way into 33 events from late July through November 2008, according to charges obtained by The Associated Press through an appeal of its Freedom of Information Act request.

Bethesda hospital spokesman Chris Walz said the staff tries to involve as many patients as possible in such activities, which range from free sports event tickets to speaking engagements like Budwah's at the youth camp.

The charges include making false official statements, malingering, misconduct and larceny. Budwah faces up to 31 1/2 years in prison and a dishonorable discharge if convicted on all eight counts at a trial set for Oct. 20.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/marine-faked-war-story-1791171.html>

The Tulsa Peace Fellowship's Counter-Recruitment Update/Digest, for Oct 2009
backpage:

Filipinos want US soldiers out

Written by Alex Newman
02 September 2009

Calls to renegotiate a treaty that allows U.S. troops to operate in the Philippines — or to expel the forces altogether — are growing as criticism and allegations of U.S. involvement in combat operations continue to mount.

About 600 elite American soldiers are currently stationed in the country under the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA) that has been in force since 1999. The treaty allows U.S. troops to train and advise the Filipino military in its counterinsurgency operations in the south, but forbids them from participating in combat roles except for self-defense.

Despite vehement denials from most U.S. officials, reports of alleged American involvement in the fighting have been surfacing since 2002. And following an alleged admission of fighting and its purported legality by Col. David Maxwell, the commander of the Joint Special Operations Task Force of the Philippines, along with a declaration by U.S. defense officials that they will seek to keep the contingent there indefinitely, a Filipino senator is leading the movement to find a solution.

"If the U.S. wants to use Philippine territory in its alleged war on terror, they will have to negotiate a treaty with the Philippines," said Senator Miriam Defensor-Santiago, the head of the nation's Senate panel on foreign relations and the co-chair of the VFA's legislative oversight committee. "In the meantime, in my humble view, the presence of U.S. troops in Mindanao, and even worse, their participation in combat operations, are illegal."

Santiago said the current treaty and U.S. operations violate the constitution and that American forces have overstayed their welcome.

Another representative, Walden Bello, blasted the alleged construction of new U.S. bases that were supposed to have been outlawed in 1991. "Let's call a spade a spade, let's not pretend anymore that there is no U.S. basing in the country. The U.S. bases are definitely back." Others went further, with a

resolution (1335) filed in the House claiming that the continued U.S. presence “has resulted [in] the proliferation of prostitution and violence against women and children.”

<http://www.thenewamerican.com/index.php/world-mainmenu-26/asia-mainmenu-33/1804>

New Japanese PM Wants U.S. Marines Relocated from Japan to Guam

Futenma shift puts Hatoyama, U.S. ties to test

By MARI YAMAGUCHI
The Associated Press

The next prime minister faces a possible showdown with Washington over a plan to relocate a U.S. air base in Okinawa and in the process move thousands of U.S. Marines from the prefecture to Guam.

Yukio Hatoyama, riding a landslide victory by his Democratic Party of Japan in Sunday's Lower House election, has said he wants Japan's relationship with the U.S. — a key trade partner and the Asian power's strongest ally — to be more equal.

The transfer of marines from Okinawa to Guam could be the first test of that effort, analysts said Tuesday.

Under a deal negotiated with the U.S., Tokyo agreed to foot part of the bill to move 8,000 marines, and their dependents, from Okinawa to a new base in Guam by 2014, easing overcrowding a prefecture that hosts more than half of the 50,000 U.S. service members stationed in the country. About 10,000 marines will remain.

But the accord is murky on a number of points, and one of Hatoyama's first dealings with Washington will be to iron it out.

Key to the accord is the long-delayed relocation of the U.S. Marine Corps Air Station Futenma to a another location on Okinawa Island. The new base is supposed to be operational by 2014, at which time the marine contingent would be moved to Guam.

Washington has already tried to head off any attempts by the new government to re-negotiate the terms of the agreement.

"The United States has no intention to renegotiate the Futenma replacement facility plan or Guam relocation with the government of Japan," State Department spokesman Ian Kelly said Monday.

But the DPJ has raised concerns with several components of the accords with the U.S.

Some members, for instance, have questioned Japan's contribution to the cost of moving the marines. It has pledged more than \$6 billion. The party is also resisting U.S. plans to build Futenma's replacement air base elsewhere on Okinawa — a component Washington says is integral to the deal, which the two

nations formally agreed upon in 2006, when the LDP was in power.

In August, some 200 people gathered to oppose the use of Futenma at the campus of Okinawa International University, where a helicopter crashed five years ago, damaging a school building and triggering calls for shutting the base. They want the base out of the prefecture altogether, not simply relocated to a less congested area.

Okinawans have long bristled at the difficulties of hosting so many service members, including crimes committed by U.S. personnel and congestion caused by the existence of the bases that take up a large swath of the main island, and analysts said tensions over the marines' presence could flare up.

<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20090904f1.html>

coverage in the *NYTimes*:

Mr. Hatoyama was seeking to quell worries that his slightly left-of-center government — elected after an almost uninterrupted half-century of rule by the conservative, pro-American Liberal Democratic Party — would pull Japan away from the United States.

During the campaign, his party, the Democratic Party, promised to seek a more “equal partnership” with Washington and build closer ties with China and other Asian countries.

Mr. Murata faulted American officials for their immediate negative reactions to the Japanese Democrats’ campaign pledges, like re-examining an agreement to relocate the Marine Corps airfield at Futenma to another site on the Japanese island of Okinawa.

“If they say things like Futenma is not negotiable, this will just make the Democratic Party become more obstinate,” Mr. Murata said. Koji Murata, a professor of international relations at Doshisha University in Kyoto.

http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/04/world/asia/04japan.html?_r=1&ref=world

related op/ed

The DPJ's sense of duty may change Japanese-American alliance

By HISAHIKO OKAZAKI

It's hard to say how a Democratic Party of Japan-ruled government will impact the U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement. Calls for a revision reflect leftist thinking.

Until the Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ)'s win in Sunday's election, the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) had dominated Japanese politics for more than half a century except for short intervals.

The impact on the U.S.-Japan alliance is still not clear. It is hard to divine it from the abstract words of the DPJ's "manifesto" for the election campaign: "In order to build a close and equal U.S.-Japan

alliance, Japan will fulfill her responsibilities by sharing them with the United States, based upon an autonomous Japanese diplomatic strategy."

The manifesto contains two concrete proposals: to promote a U.S.-Japan free trade agreement (FTA) and to revise the U.S.-Japan Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). An FTA would reflect urban, free-trade thinking in contrast to the LDP's policy influenced by its strong constituency in the farming districts. But faced with criticism from farmers, the DPJ toned down its FTA stance during the election campaign.

The call for a SOFA revision reflects strong leftist, anti-American thinking. In fact, under the existing SOFA with the U.S., Japan enjoys stronger rights with regard to criminal jurisdiction than do South Korea or Germany. With little room for improvement in this regard, short of abolishing the U.S. bases outright, leftists have pushed for revision as part of an anti-U.S. base campaign.

It is doubtful that the DPJ can deliver on either of its campaign proposals mentioned above.

<http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/ea20090904ho.html>

quote:

2009/08/15

Statement on the anniversary of the end of World War II by the Democratic Party of Japan's leader

"This April, US President Obama proclaimed his intention to work toward a "nuclear-free world". The world is now taking this opportunity to move toward the abolition of nuclear weapons. As the only nation to have suffered the effects of the atomic bomb, the abolition of nuclear weapons is a fervent wish shared by all the citizens of Japan. We are prepared to overcome any difficulties, and to aim determinedly for progress. We will join hands with President Obama and call for the abolition of nuclear weapons."

~DPJ President Yukio Hatoyama, August 15, 2009

file under: 40 years later

Vietnam urged the U.S. to speed funding for Agent Orange victims

US, Vietnam begin 4th annual meetings on eradicating Agent Orange

AP News

Sep 08, 2009

U.S. troops sprayed Agent Orange on jungles to deprive Vietnamese troops of ground cover. Vietnam says 1 million to 4 million of its citizens may have suffered serious health consequences.

So far, cleanup efforts have focused on the airport at Danang, a former U.S. air base in central Vietnam where American troops stored, mixed and loaded Agent Orange onto planes.

Agent Orange is perhaps the war's most contentious legacy. After years of disagreement, the two sides

began working together in 2006 to address problems linked to the herbicide. A joint study in Danang found dioxin levels were 300 to 400 times higher than internationally accepted limits.

The two sides have already taken temporary steps to contain dioxin, the highly toxic element of Agent Orange, at the Danang site. They are now seeking ways to remove the dioxin from the soil.

The two sides are also working on joint efforts to help disabled Vietnamese whose health problems might be linked to Agent Orange.

It isn't clear how much the cleanup and health projects will cost.

The Vietnamese government estimates that cleaning Danang and the two other most contaminated Agent Orange hot spots will cost \$58 million. So far, the U.S. government has set aside \$8 million to deal with environmental and health issues linked to Agent Orange.

Nonprofit groups and international donors have contributed funds as well, and more will be needed.

Studies by a Canadian environmental consultant have identified seven Agent Orange hot spots, but Vietnam says as many as two dozen need to be cleaned up.

As this week's meetings opened, the Vietnamese side urged the U.S. to speed up disbursement of money to help the disabled.

"We all know that exposure to dioxin is the cause of serious suffering to the victims," said Nguyen Xuan Cuong, Vietnam's vice minister of natural resources and the environment.

The U.S. Veterans Administration provides benefits to U.S. veterans who were exposed to Agent Orange and later developed various cancers.

The Vietnamese say many babies of soldiers exposed to Agent Orange have been born with terrible birth defects.

The two sides have agreed to work together to help Vietnamese who have disabilities, regardless of the cause.

<http://wire.antiwar.com/2009/09/08/us-vietnam-open-annual-agent-orange-meetings-4/>

Tulsa Peace Fellowship's counter-recruitment update/digest for Sept 2009
masthead

who we are:

***The Tulsa Peace Fellowship** is the activist wing of the peace movement in Eastern Oklahoma. TPF offers citizens and community groups tools and resources to participate personally in our democracy, to help shape federal budget and policy priorities, and to promote peace, social and economic justice,*

and human rights. TPF is a registered non-profit organization and a non-partisan group, loosely affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration, north side of Tulsa.

"Waging Peace One Person at a Time".

TPF meets monthly @ **Peace House in Tulsa** inside the **Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration** at 1314 N. Greenwood Ave, in Tulsa, close to corner of Pine & Greenwood, just north of the OSU-Tulsa campus

If you have not already done so, please join the **new social networking tool for TPF on Ning**, in lieu of TPFtalks on yahoogroups, which has fallen into disuse Thank you! You can check out our new tool here: <http://tulsapeacefellowship.ning.com> (new for 2009) Also still going strong: our announcement list on yahoo! tulsapeace@yahoogroups.com (since 2002) Go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/> and search for "tulsapeace"

Through its counter-recruitment task force, TPF is a member of the **National Network in Opposition to the Militarization of Youth (NNOMY)** representing some 188 counter-recruitment groups in cities and towns across the country. On the web: http://www.nnomy.org/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=216&Itemid=91

Tulsa Peace Fellowship is open to 3rd parties, progressives, Dems, libertarians, etc.

Peace House-Tulsa is an incubator for peace and justice. The Peace House office inside the UU Church of the Restoration can host a wide range of activities: classes, discussion groups, meditation, music-making, social gatherings, retreats, etc. While some activities may be limited by the size and amenities of this building, our imaginations need not be limited!

If you enjoyed this news digest and/or found this update useful, please consider making a donation of time, money, or effort to the Tulsa Peace Fellowship. Details on tax status available.

info for TPF counter-recruitment-- contact by phone 918 906 0828

The next monthly anti-war demo in Tulsa is scheduled for

Saturday Oct 3rd, 12noon to 2pm

Details online: <http://tulsapeacefellowship.ning.com/events/out-of-afghanistan-1>

The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Fellowship will be held

on Thursday, October 8th 2009, 6:15 PM – 7:30 PM

--including members from other local non-partisan groups such as the Tulsa chapter of "Season for Non-Violence," the Tulsa University chapter of Amnesty International, ImpeachOK1.org, TulsaTruth.org, the Center for Racial Justice in Tulsa, the Tulsa Interfaith Alliance, Pax Christi, and the Quakers.

--including a meeting of the counter-recruitment campaign activists

Come join us! Especially parents, guardians, and students in the Tulsa Public Schools system who are interested in countering the presence of military recruiters on school grounds.

An archive of TPF counter-recruitment updates and other related TPF material is available to members online:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/tulsapeace/>

You must sign in to yahoo! groups to see the archived "message history"
TPF messages have been archived online since 2002
TPF was founded some 30 years ago.
Current membership online: 692 subscribers

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further information

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Strength Through Peace: Out of Iraq & Afghanistan
Accountability: Indict & Imprison Bush & Cheney for War Crimes
JROTC: Out of Our Schools
Schools as Military-Free Zones
Alternatives to War: Department of Peace & cabinet-level Secretary of Peace

dopcampaign_tulsaconnection@cox.net
armywrong@cox.net

THE 10 REASONS

Ten excellent reasons not to join the military:

- a.. You May Be Killed, Even By Mistake
- b.. You May Kill Others Who Do Not Deserve to Die
- c.. You May Be Injured
- d.. You May Not Receive Proper Medical Care
- e.. You May Suffer Long-term Health Problems
- f.. You May Be Lied To
- g.. You May Face Discrimination
- h.. You May Be Asked to Do Things Against Your Beliefs
- i.. You May Find It Difficult to Leave the Military
- j.. You Have Other Choices, including the Choice to Learn a Marketable Skill

for more info:

<http://www.10reasonsbook.com/medcare.htm>