

## "Don't Believe the Hype!" – *Truth in Recruiting* Now

### The Tulsa Peace Fellowship's Counter-Recruitment Update/Digest, for Nov 2010

(scroll down for details about any story - links to all articles provided in the PDF version)

Lead Story from the past month's news:

#### [Amputations Increase Sharply With Surge in Afghanistan](#)



quote:

"Understand you are going to Afghanistan, and you better make sure you are absolutely willing to make that ultimate sacrifice."

~Oxford Area High School principal David C. Madden, when he counsels the few students who want to enlist. Madden is a former Marine

source: <http://www.politicsdaily.com/2010/10/03/voters-sour-on-afghan-war-and-doubt-that-america-can-win/>

facts & figures:

**Afghan war enters its 10th year with key players hedging their bets, uncertain over US plans**

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file under: portrait of a **fascist running for office**

**Murder case against GOP House hopeful**

--an ex-Marine running for Congress was charged with murder for killing two Iraqi prisoners

--transcript of case against Pantano "sickens" former chair of Tea Party Express; endorses Democratic candidate instead

--military and human-rights experts condemn GOP candidate's conduct as deplorable

quote:

"Ilario Pantano should not even be elected dogcatcher for the things he's done. You can't just completely ignore his record. He is not a war hero. It is people like that that give all our military a bad name."

~Deborah Johns, former vice chair of the Tea Party Express

file under: confirming the image of **U.S. troops as "trigger happy"**

**Iraq war logs: Apache helicopters kill 14 innocent civilians in hunt for insurgents**

--'Gun runs' over Baghdad saw pilots blasting vehicles and buildings on the slightest suspicion

quote:

"As untrue as the helicopter pilots' live reporting was, the intelligence summary they filed later compounds the lies."

~Jonathan Steele, *The Guardian* (UK)

related story:

**Iraq war logs reveal 15,000 previously unlisted civilian deaths**

--Leaked Pentagon files contain records of more than 100,000 fatalities including 66,000 civilians

facts & figures:

Independent estimates of the total number of killed in Iraq since 2003 place the number of fatalities at 1.25 million people killed

file under: Latinos wise up!

**Immigrant vets face deportation, despite years of service in U.S. Armed Forces**

--**As TPF has stated repeatedly, enlistment in the military is no guarantee of obtaining citizenship**

--U.S. Armed Forces are not bound by the so-called "contracts" they sign with non-citizens

facts & figures

Up to 4,000 non-American veterans have been deported, over the years.

featured op/ed

**Unique hell seemingly reserved for women in the military**

--by Kelley Vlahos

follow up on suicide in the military

**Military sees suicide trend grow worse**

--statistics show 40% rise among Texans under 35 who have served

quote:

Orrin Gorman McClellan, a 25-year-old Vet, died on May 18th. It was suicide by alphabet - PTSD. His mother, Judith Gorman, said, "He never really came all the way home." The Seattle Times article by Hal Benton is [here](#). "In the last five years, suicide rates have increased year over year," said Army veteran Zack Choate, member of IVAW (Iraq Veterans Against the War)

facts & figures:

In the state of Florida, more than 3,700 people identifying themselves as having been in the armed services committed suicide between 2004 and 2009, according to a study to be released in November by the University of South Florida's College of Behavioral and Community Sciences.

source online: "[Military suicide rates surge](#)"

more facts & figures:

Reports indicate some 12 percent of U.S. soldiers in Iraq are being medicated; 15 percent in Afghanistan. Military doctors begin prescribing questionable pill "cocktails" for soldiers in the field – for pain due to injury, anxiety, sleeplessness and depression. Recent studies and reports have indicated that a growing number of active duty service members – more than any other wartime cohort in American military history – are on drugs, illegal and otherwise.

The prescriptions and self-medication continue when they get home, and, if they aren't retired or medically boarded out (which, depending on the injury, could follow a hellish purgatory in a military trauma care unit), chances are they'll redeploy to the war zone again, broadly sabotaging their chances for a 'normal' future as a fully functioning individual.

In June, the Army found that **active duty soldiers were killing themselves at the rate of one a day**.

source online: <http://original.antiwar.com/vlahos/2010/10/11>

related story:

**Veteran Suicides Outnumber US Military Deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan**  
<http://www.truth-out.org/veteran-suicides-outnumber-us-military-deaths-iraq-and-afghanistan64433>

More than 1,000 veterans in California under 35 died after returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan between 2005 and 2008 - three times as many California service members who were killed in conflict overseas, according to a recently published *Bay Citizen* report.

file under: Prozac Nation

**Are We Giving Our Soldiers Drugs That May Make Them Kill Themselves?**

--more soldiers than ever are on **medically-prescribed drugs linked to suicide** and violent behavior

facts & figures:

Right now, 4,994 troops at Fort Bragg are on antidepressants; and another 664 are on antipsychotics.

from the archives:

**Episode of "Law & Order: SVU" on Primetime TV addresses **Drug-induced Suicides by Returning Veterans****

--fictional story addresses issue of widely disparate individuals turning violent in order for Big Pharma to make profit off of DoD

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follow up: what?! there are rules in warfare?

**Refusing to "support the troops," when **"troops" commit murder****

--featured op/ed from editor of antiwar.com, a libertarian publication online

--gruesome crimes in Afghanistan that have resulted in 12 U.S. Army soldiers facing trial at a base near Seattle

file under: winning 'hearts and minds'

**Afghanistan: Victims' Families Denounce U.S. 'Kill Team'**

--one of the civilians was *imam*, or religious leader, of his tiny town, and was killed after returning from tending his farmfields

--as in Iraq, U.S. soldiers attempted to plant a weapon on the victim, to cover up their crime, according to *Time Magazine*

quote:

**"The Americans really love to kill innocent people."**

~Jan, father-in-law of the slain imam. The deep anti-American sentiment, he adds, has only grown worse since their religious leader was murdered.

quote:

**"The military has become an outlet for the **sociopaths in our midst**."**

~Justin Raimondo, war critic

related: protection for whistleblowers

**Whistle-blowing soldier moved to solitary confinement**

with photo: Christopher Winfield, father of Spc Adam Winfield, whistleblower

quote:

**"There are no more good men left here."**

~Adam Winfield, whistleblower, in protective custody as key witness against murderous band of U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan

more coverage:

**Army won't seek death penalty against soldier who detailed plot to kill Afghan civilians**

--Despite Army regs, a U.S. soldier who told investigators that he and other members of his unit executed three civilians in Afghanistan for sport will not face the death penalty if convicted.

--Plea bargain down to **life in prison**, as maximum sentence, in return for his cooperation with the investigation

facts & figures:

Over the last nine years, as the U.S. Army has **court-martialed 34 soldiers on murder or manslaughter charges** in the killings of civilians in either Afghanistan or Iraq. Twenty-two were convicted, and twelve acquitted.

quote:

“You have to motivate soldiers who you are asking to do very dangerous things. But you have to temper that with rule of law, and telling troops that, ‘Hey, part of winning this conflict is going to be every time you pull the trigger, you’ve got to make sure it’s the right thing to do.’ Then 20 years from now when you’re waking up in the middle of the night, that’s what’s going to keep you on the right side of PTSD [post-traumatic stress disorder]. That’s what’s going to keep you sane.”

~anonymous, senior US military official who was at the NTC

more coverage:

**Pentagon had red flags about commander with responsibility over murderous 'kill team' brigade**

--Five soldiers in the 5th Stryker brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division are charged with forming a 'kill team' in Afghanistan. The commander of that brigade is not yet implicated

quote:

“When you feel violent intent coming down from the command and into the culture of the brigade, that’s when you end up with things like the rogue platoon.”

~anonymous, senior US military official who worked with the brigade accused of intentionally killing civilians in Afghanistan.

file under: friendly fire? or murder?

**US soldier charged with killing troops in Iraq**

--An American soldier was charged Wednesday with killing two fellow U.S. troops and wounding a third after an argument

file under: please don't bore me with that 'band of brothers' nonsense

**Grieving family wants answers in Army slaying**

--Weeks after soldier's killing in his living quarters in Iraq, full account still not forthcoming

quote:

"As far as I'm concerned, **the military's the one that murdered my son**. They owe me answers."

~Desiree Carrillo, 40, of Stockton, the mother of four children, including Army Spc. John "Junior" Carrillo, her firstborn. He was shot and killed by his Army roommates, apparently.

quote:

"He didn't sign his life away to get **killed by one of our own**."

~Reylene Carrillo, 21, John Carrillo's widow and the mother of his two sons, is equally angry.

file under: friendly fire

**Iraq war logs: How friendly fire from US troops became routine**

--Americans have shot at their own troops or allies so often that...

file under: stuff of **war crimes**

**Iraq war logs: Apache crew killed insurgents who tried to surrender**

--A US gunship crew attacked insurgents on the ground even though the pilots reported that the men were trying to surrender

--With information revealed by the leaked Iraq war logs, the largest such leak in history

--Debate over the *Manual of the Law of Armed Conflict* and the poor legal advice given to U.S. troops on the battlefield

file under: Milo Minderbender rides again

**Soldier gets 21 months for lying about money**

--U.S. Army officer who approved supplies contracts in Iraq was sentenced Friday to 21 months in prison for pilfering more than \$100,000.

file under: Milo Minderbender redux

**Army Engineer Accused of Shakedown in Iraq**

--demanded 'kickbacks', soldier now faces up to 20 years in prison

--tags: **Army corruption**, Iraqi Consultants & Construction Bureau

file under:

**Court ruling or no, Pentagon cautions gays in U.S. military about revealing identity**

--uncertainty continues to rule over place of homosexuality in the Armed Forces

--most err on side of caution, keep sexual orientation a secret

facts & figures:

A recent poll by the Pew Research Center found that 60 percent of Americans support allowing gays to serve openly in the military. Polling over the past 16 years has consistently shown similar results, but some in the military contend that it could have a negative impact on military effectiveness.

backpage

**Pentagon efforts to keep memoir out of circulation backfire**

--News of the pulping of more than 8,000 of the first edition copies briefly shot sales of the book to No. 1 on Amazon.com.

--The book will be ranked No. 7 on the Oct. 17 New York Times hardcover nonfiction list, according to the publisher.

--Now in its fourth printing, *Operation Dark Heart* has more than 50,000 copies in circulation.

file under: Reduce Military Spending. Rebuild America.

**TIME: British Military Cuts: When Will the U.S. Follow Suit?**

--British Defense Ministry elected to scrap the Royal Navy's only fixed-wing-aircraft carrier

--Vaunted 20% cut did not happen, but British Defense budget will be cut by 7.5%

what the critics say:

### **Defence cuts don't go deep enough**

Billions are being spent on defence projects the military do not want and will not use thanks to ministers bottling tough decisions

facts & figures:

Defence cuts in the U.K. have seen the Harrier fleet scrapped, but two new aircraft carriers are still being built at a cost of £5bn.

on the lighter side:

### **U.S. Air Force Academy Now Welcomes Spell-Casters**

--Wiccans and Pagans now have a protected space to practice their religion, while serving in the U.S. Armed Forces

sidebar:

**41% of non-Christian Air Force cadets cite unwanted religious proselytizing by fellow cadets**

file under: U.S. interminable bases abroad

### **Filipinos aim to give US army the boot**

file under: Reduce Military Spending, Re-build Your Country

### **Germans Recommend Cutbacks in Defense Spending**

— Defense Ministry of Germany has been advised to cut its staff by half, close several army bases and slim the armed forces from 250,000 to 180,000

— European countries seek to cut military forces in response to the economic slowdown and pressure from finance officials to rein in spending

file under: counter-recruitment success?

### **Slots for soldiers go unfilled at West Point**

--perhaps this is a measurable quantifiable effect of counter-recruitment efforts nationwide?

epitaph for this edition of "Truth in Recruiting"

**"take your pleasantries  
your generalizations, good intentions,  
sweet words, and half-truths,  
put them in a box.  
drape a flag over it.  
and bury it with the rest of the dead."**

**- Orrin Gorman McClellan, veteran/poet**

**March 22, 1985 - May 18, 2010, death by suicide**

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# Amputations Increase Sharply With Surge in Afghanistan

7 Oct 2010

By Gregg Zoroya, USA TODAY

The number of U.S. soldiers who have suffered amputations in Afghanistan has increased sharply over last year as more troops move into Taliban territory, according to Army data.

Amputations rose from 47 in 2009 to 77 through Sept. 23 of this year, or an increase of more than 60%, the Army reports.

The chief cause of the injuries are improvised explosive devices — or IEDs — that are planted in the ground or along roads, according to the International Security Assistance Force, which oversees military operations in Afghanistan.

Coalition forces have been hit by more IEDs in recent weeks as the surge in U.S. troops allows for expanded operations into traditional Taliban strongholds in Kandahar and Helmand provinces in southern Afghanistan.

The vast majority of amputations involve the loss of either an arm or leg, but a dozen soldiers this year have had multiple amputations, twice the number of such cases in 2009.

At the NATO hospital, doctors amputated a major limb — a leg or arm — an average of once every other day in September, according to Navy Capt. Michael Mullins, a hospital spokesman. The operations included not only U.S. troops, but also NATO troops, Afghan soldiers and civilians, Mullins said.

A recent Pentagon report said IEDs are now the "the most serious threat" to coalition forces, killing 6,200 allied and Afghan troops in fiscal year 2009, compared with 3,800 in 2008.

The surge in reinforcements ordered by President Obama and subsequent military operations in Taliban strongholds have led to the "highest rate of IED attacks" since the war began in 2001, the Pentagon report said.

Deaths among U.S. troops in Afghanistan this year reached 531 in September, surpassing the 514 Americans killed in 2009.

[http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/afghanistan/2010-10-05-afghanistan-amputations\\_N.htm?POE=click-refer](http://www.usatoday.com/news/world/afghanistan/2010-10-05-afghanistan-amputations_N.htm?POE=click-refer)



sidebar:

## Afghan war enters its 10th year with key players hedging their bets, uncertain over US plans

Deb Reichmann, AP News  
Oct 06, 2010

Afghans are tired of the violence, increasingly resentful of foreign forces. Many wonder why their quality of life has not markedly improved when their nation has been awash in billions of dollars of foreign aid.

"NATO is here and they say they are fighting terrorism, and this is the 10th year and there is no result yet," Karzai said in an emotional speech last week. "Our sons cannot go to school because of bombs and suicide attacks."

<http://wire.antiwar.com/2010/10/06/uncertainty-over-us-plans-as-war-enters-10th-year-3/>

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file under: portrait of a fascist

## Murder case against GOP House hopeful

An ex-Marine running for Congress was **charged with murder for killing two Iraqi prisoners**; case was later dropped

By Justin Elliott  
Oct 7, 2010

U.S. Marine Second Lt. Ilario Pantano faced an Article 32 hearing at the Legal Support Service Courtroom April 26 & 27, 2005, at Camp Lejeune, N.C.

Iraq War vet Ilario Pantano, a Republican congressional hopeful is running against incumbent Rep. Mike McIntyre (D-NC). In Iraq in 2004 Pantano shot two unarmed Iraqi prisoners, unloading up to 60 rounds, and then placed a sign next to their bodies with a Marine slogan, "No better friend, no worse enemy."

Charges of premeditated murder against Pantano were aired in 2005 in an Article 32 hearing, which helps determine whether there is enough evidence to go forward to a court martial. The military ultimately agreed with Pantano's version of events, in which the two Iraqi men made a threatening movement toward him, and decided to drop the charges. Officials also opted not to subject Pantano to nonjudicial punishment for desecrating the bodies of the two men (by reloading his rifle and emptying another magazine into the men after they were already dead).

Perhaps fearing a backlash in a district with a sizable ex-military population, Pantano's Democratic

opponent has so far not made an issue of the murder case.

But now, a transcript of the hearing in which the the murder charges were aired in 2005 has been posted by an anonymous anti-Pantano blog. The nearly 800-page document offers dramatic details about the case, and paints an often brutal picture of the Iraq War.

The release of the transcript comes as Pantano is facing renewed criticism of his past -- from the right. Deborah Johns, a former vice chair of Tea Party Express and an ally of a candidate Pantano beat in the GOP primary, this week endorsed Pantano's Democratic opponent, citing concerns about Pantano's war record. Johns, whose son is a Marine who served in Iraq, told Salon that reading the transcript of the hearing in the murder case convinced her that she could not support Pantano.

"I understand war is a dirty, ugly thing, I get that," she said. "But I sat there sickened" reading the transcript.

Deborah Johns is a former vice chair of the Tea Party Express, the influential conservative organization that helped bankroll the upset campaigns of Joe Miller in Alaska and Christine O'Donnell in Delaware. She's also the mother of a Marine and once organized pro-Iraq War counterprotests against Cindy Sheehan. In an interview with the Associated Press, Johns said that she's endorsing McIntyre and that Pantano's conduct in Iraq, which a number of military and human-rights experts have condemned as deplorable, is to blame for the surprise move.

"That is not a war hero," Johns said. "It is people like that that give all our military a bad name. Ilario Pantano should not even be elected dogcatcher for the things he's done," she said. "You can't just completely ignore his record.

[http://www.salon.com/news/politics/war\\_room/2010/10/07/ilario\\_patano\\_article\\_32\\_transcript](http://www.salon.com/news/politics/war_room/2010/10/07/ilario_patano_article_32_transcript)  
<http://www.thedailybeast.com/beltway-beast/tea-partier-backs-democrat-over-ilario-pantano/>

more coverage

## **Tea Party Official Slams War Criminal Candidate**

Eric Garris,  
October 28, 2010

Deborah Johns, former vice chair of the Tea Party Express, has denounced North Carolina candidate for Congress Ilario Pantano and has endorsed his Democratic opponent. Johns is the mother of a Marine and once organized pro-Iraq War counterprotests against Cindy Sheehan.

Ilario Pantano shot and killed two unarmed prisoners in Iraq while serving in the Marines and survived charges of premeditated murder before returning to America to run for Congress in North Carolina this year.

In an interview with The Daily Beast, Johns turned against Pantano after reading the transcript of the military hearing that eventually cleared Pantano of the charges. In April 2004, Pantano killed two unarmed Iraqi detainees, twice unloading his gun into their bodies and firing between 50 and 60 shots in total. Afterward, he placed a sign over the corpses featuring the Marines' slogan "No Better Friend,

No Worse Enemy” as a message to the local population.

“That is not a war hero,” Johns said. “It is people like that that give all our military a bad name.”

<http://www.antiwar.com/blog/2010/10/28/tea-party-official-slams-war-criminal-candidate/>

## **Iraq war logs: Apache helicopters kill 14 civilians in hunt for insurgents**

'Gun runs' over Baghdad saw pilots blasting vehicles and buildings on the slightest suspicion

by Jonathan Steele  
guardian.co.uk  
22 October 2010

US Apache helicopters killed at least 14 unarmed civilians in a series of previously unreported "gun runs" in eastern Baghdad only four days after the notorious killing of two journalists and 10 other civilians that was captured on a leaked cockpit video released in April.

War logs examined by the Guardian reveal that a bigger incident with a greater number of casualties occurred in a neighbouring part of Baghdad four days later on 16 July 2007. This time the Apaches were aided by unmanned surveillance drones and two F-16 fighter-bombers as US ground troops stepped up operations in densely populated eastern Baghdad against militants loyal to the anti-occupation cleric Moqtada al-Sadr. When it was over a local Iraqi informer told a US army interpreter that 14 civilians were dead, according to a military intelligence report.

The bloody incident begins after two foot patrols from A Company of the 504th Parachute Infantry Regiment come under small arms fire. One patrol "clears" the nearby Islamic Bank and then comes under fire again from a building belonging to the electricity ministry. Ten minutes later the other patrol reports fire from small arms and rocket-propelled grenade launchers. Two Apache helicopters are called in, known in US military jargon as Crazyhorse elements 20 and 21, and both "engage the AIF" (anti-Iraqi forces). (The helicopter involved in the shooting four days earlier was Crazyhorse 18.)

The helicopter pilots spot a crowd gathering who are described as "possible AIF". The second helicopter, Crazyhorse 21, "conducts final gun run" to strafe unnamed targets that the intelligence report does not specify. By now two F-16 fighter-bombers are on station along with an unnamed drone that is filming the scene. Four Bradley armoured vehicles full of US ground troops are at the ready nearby.

But there is no more firing from the Iraqis and the drone's video footage, which is being monitored by US controllers, shows people coming out of the mosque and dispersing. "No weapons were seen." US troops remain on the scene for another 50 minutes before returning to base.

It is not their practice to remove or identify bodies. If done at all it is usually left to Iraqis. In this case the war log on the incident ends with what are described as unconfirmed reports of casualties. An Iraqi colonel says 12 AIF are dead. A named Iraqi informer on the ground rings the Parachute Infantry Regiment's interpreter and tells him 14 civilians are dead.

It is not clear whether both men are referring to one group of dead with differing estimates of whether they were insurgents or civilians, or whether there were separate groups totalling 26.

The terseness of the war log, which was compiled some time after the event, conveys little drama – which is why the cockpit video released by WikiLeaks in April is so important. It shows the true face of war as pilots treat a small densely populated corner of a foreign city as a battle space in which any adult male they spot is suspected of being a gunman.

Even so they are not supposed to kill unless they or any ground troops they are assisting have come under fire, or they are sure a person seen to be carrying a gun is about to fire at US troops.

If rules of engagement are broken the war logs usually conceal it. This appears to have happened with the killings illustrated in the leaked cockpit video. The Guardian has examined the secret intelligence reports for 12 July 2007 and compared them with the recorded words of the pilots and ground commanders. Parts of the video recording already showed the helicopter pilot and gunner giving false information to their commanders in order to get permission to fire. The logs show clear evidence of a cover-up after the event.

As untrue as the helicopter pilots' live reporting was, the intelligence summary they filed later compounds the lies.

Read the full article: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/22/apache-helicopters-kill-iraqi-civilians>

related story:

## **Iraq war logs reveal 15,000 previously unlisted civilian deaths**

Leaked Pentagon files contain records of more than 100,000 fatalities including 66,000 civilians

by David Leagh  
guardian.co.uk  
22 October 2010

Leaked Pentagon files obtained by the Guardian contain details of more than 100,000 people killed in Iraq following the US-led invasion, including more than 15,000 deaths that were previously unrecorded.

British ministers have repeatedly refused to concede the existence of any official statistics on Iraqi deaths. US General Tommy Franks claimed in 2002: "We don't do body counts."

The mass of leaked documents provides the first detailed tally by the US military of Iraqi fatalities. Troops on the ground filed secret field reports over six years of the occupation, purporting to tot up every casualty, military and civilian.

Iraq Body Count, a London-based group that monitors civilian casualties, told the Guardian: "These

logs contain a huge amount of entirely new information regarding casualties. Our analysis so far indicates that they will add 15,000 or more previously unrecorded deaths to the current IBC total. This data should never have been withheld from the public."

The logs record a total of 109,032 violent deaths between 2004 and 2009. It is claimed that 66,081 of these were civilians. A further 23,984 deaths are classed as "enemy" and 15,196 as members of the Iraqi security forces. The logs also include the deaths of 3,771 US and allied soldiers.

The data cannot be relied upon as a complete record of Iraqi deaths. IBC, for example, had previously calculated that up to 91,469 civilians were killed from various causes during the period covered by the leaked database. While detailing the 15,000 previously unknown deaths, it also omits many otherwise well-attested civilian fatalities caused by US troops themselves. Nor does the Pentagon data cover any of the initial invasion fighting throughout 2003; IBC has identified 12,080 purely civilian deaths in that year.

The US figure is far lower than another widely quoted estimate of more than 650,000 "excess deaths" extrapolated on a different basis and published in a 2006 study in the Lancet.

A key example of the failure by US forces to record civilian casualties they have inflicted comes in the two major urban battles against insurgents fought in 2004 in Falluja. Numerous buildings were reduced to rubble by air strikes, tank shells and howitzers, and there were well-attested deaths of hundreds of civilians. IBC has identified between 1,226 and 1,362 such deaths during April and November. But the leaked US internal field reports record no civilian casualties at all.

One of the most publicised allegations was that a clinic in central Falluja was shelled on 9 November. Doctors claimed to international media that two strikes on the roof had killed scores of patients and staff. The IBC puts the total number of civilian deaths at 59.

At other times the troops record Iraqi deaths but invariably classify all the corpses as "enemy". When a helicopter gunship killed two Reuters journalists with a group of other men in a Baghdad street, in one notorious 2007 incident, all were listed as "enemy killed in action".

John Sloboda, IBC co-founder, has called for a British judicial inquiry into the civilian deaths, which he says have not been addressed by the Chilcot hearings. "If we try to hide the reality of what happened we are going to sow seeds of hatred among those whose trust we are trying to gain and in whose name we said we were doing all of this."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/22/true-civilian-body-count-iraq>

## **Immigrant vets face deportation despite service**

Immigrant veterans facing deportation fight to stay in the US, and try to change the law

Juliana Barbassa  
AP News  
Oct 24, 2010

When Rohan Coombs joined the U.S. Marine Corps, he never thought one day he would be locked up in an immigration detention center and facing deportation from the country he had vowed to defend.

Coombs, 43, born in Jamaica, immigrated to the United States legally as a child with his family. He signed up to serve his adopted nation for six years — first in Japan and the Philippines, then in the Persian Gulf during the first war with Iraq.

Up to 8,000 non-citizens enlist in the U.S. Armed Forces every year and serve alongside American troops. As of May 2010, there were 16,966 non-citizens on active duty.

If they die while serving, they are given citizenship and a military funeral. If they live and get in trouble with the law, as Coombs did, they can get caught in the net of a 1996 immigration law that greatly expanded the list of crimes for which non-citizens can be deported.

"As far as I was concerned, I was a citizen," said Coombs, whose soft-spoken, introspective nature contrast with his physical presence. Coombs stands 6 foot 5 and weighs more than 260 pounds — a gentle giant, according to his fiancée, Robyn Sword.

Now advocates of non-citizen servicemen and women are trying to change that. Attorneys are taking cases like Coombs' to court, arguing that an immigrant who serve in the Armed Forces should be considered a U.S. national and protected from deportation.

Advocates estimate that thousands of veterans have been deported or are in detention. Government officials say they have no tally but plan to begin tracking the numbers.

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement found that Coombs's criminal convictions made him eligible for deportation, and he was turned over to ICE after serving his sentence. He has been held in a San Diego immigration detention center for 22 months and is appealing to the 9th U.S. Circuit Court.

Coombs was stunned to realize he could be forced to leave the country for his crimes.

"This is the only life I've known," he said. "The only time I left this country was when I was deployed overseas. This is my home."

Advocates and immigration attorneys say that before the 1996 Illegal Immigrant Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, few immigrant veterans were deported, because immigration authorities could take their service into consideration.

The law added crimes such as drug possession for sale to the list of serious crimes that could lead to deportation of a legal immigrant.

"Drugs, anger management, weapons charges, that's what a lot of vets are getting caught for, and there is no relief," said Margaret Stock, a recently retired Army reservist and immigration attorney who taught at the United States Military Academy at West Point. "The 1996 law really put the nails in their coffin."

Coombs' attorneys, Shagin and Heather Boxeth of San Diego, Calif., who have represented or advised immigrant veterans in similar straits, estimate up to 4,000 veterans who served as long ago as World War II are now in immigration detention or have been deported, but acknowledge that there are no hard

numbers.

ICE spokeswoman Lori Haley said identifying and removing dangerous criminals from the country is an agency priority

Source: AP News

<http://wire.antiwar.com/2010/10/24/immigrant-vets-face-deportation-despite-service-3/>

## **Unique hell seemingly reserved for women in the military**

by Kelley B. Vlahos, October 12, 2010

WASHINGTON – Joyce Wagner is one of those women who is supposed to be celebrated but instead has had to endure a unique hell seemingly reserved for women in the military. She was sexually assaulted in-theater by a fellow Marine who Wagner had trusted. She didn't say anything for six years because she thought no one would believe her.

Today, Wagner looks pretty tough, tattoos and a ring in her nose, but it's not hard to imagine her a fresh-faced 20-year-old, eager to prove her mettle with the other Marines in her unit. But the dues she paid didn't make her a better Marine, they opened her eyes. Wagner, now 27, recalled the night she was on guard duty, when a female soldier was raped by another American at gunpoint in the barracks.

"It's huge," she said of assaults against servicewomen in the military, citing a 2008 survey that said upwards of 30 percent of women are raped. Wagner believes the number is much higher. "They just don't report it."

Despite keeping her secret for years, Wagner joined a dozen or so veterans on the ninth anniversary of the start of the war in Afghanistan Thursday, and shared her story, briefly and in stark terms. Together, as members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), they demanded the military stop redeploying traumatized, brain damaged, drugged out soldiers and Marines to war. It is part of the group's first national campaign, Operation: Recovery.

Wagner said despite a growing drinking problem and symptoms of PTSD, she redeployed in 2005. "I am here today because I don't want another man or woman to go through what I went through."

<http://original.antiwar.com/vlahos/2010/10/11/are-veterans-our-only-hope/>

## **Military sees suicide trend grow worse**

Statistics show 40% rise among Texans under 35 who have served

By LINDSAY WISE and YANG WANG

HOUSTON CHRONICLE

Oct. 4, 2010



FORT HOOD — After four deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan in five years, Army Sgt. Timothy "Ryan" Rinella knew he needed counseling, but he feared a diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder would ruin his career.

"I remember him saying, 'It's not as if I don't want to go to counseling, but I want to get promoted, and they look at people with PTSD as weak,' " said his wife, Sarah Rinella, 26.

Her husband, 29, was found dead from a gunshot wound on Sept. 25, one of four soldiers stationed at Fort Hood who apparently took their own lives last weekend.

All four had served combat tours in Iraq or Afghanistan. Their deaths at this sprawling Army base are part of an alarming surge in suicides among young active-duty military personnel, reservists and veterans in Texas.

A Houston Chronicle analysis of the state's vital statistics found that suicides among Texans younger than 35 who had served in the military jumped from 47 in 2006 to 66 in 2009 — an increase of 40 percent.

Last year, suicides made up nearly 25 percent of the deaths of Texans younger than 35 who served in the military. That percentage is more than twice the rate of suicide in the comparable civilian population.

National attention has been focused on the record suicide rate in the Army, which lost 163 soldiers to suicide in 2009. But the military only recently began reporting suicides in the Reserve and National Guard, and there are no official statistics on suicides among veterans who are retired or were discharged from the armed forces.

"The country is mostly unaware of this silent national epidemic in suicides," said Paul Sullivan, executive director of Veterans for Common Sense.

As America approaches a decade of constant warfare, he said, the stress is taking a toll on troops' health, families, and careers, especially in Texas - home to an estimated 1.7 million veterans and a multitude of military installations, including Fort Hood, the nation's largest Army base. So far this year, Fort Hood has confirmed 11 suicides on and around the post, and another five possible suicides that remain under investigation.

"The military needs to wake up and acknowledge that war and multiple deployments are causing suicides," Sullivan said, "and until the military admits that, they won't address the suicide epidemic."

<http://www.chron.com/disp/story.mpl/metropolitan/7230100.html>

related public service campaign:

## **Operation Recovery**

**Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW)** has demanded that the U.S. military stop redeploying traumatized, brain damaged, drugged out soldiers and Marines to war. It is part of the group's first national campaign, Operation: Recovery. <http://www.ivaw.org/gallery/operation-recovery>

file under: Prozac Nation

# **Are We Giving Our Soldiers Drugs That May Make Them Kill Themselves?**

--more soldiers than ever are on **medically-prescribed drugs linked to suicide** and violent behavior

October 10, 2010

More troops are dying by their own hand than in combat.

In 2009 there were 160 active duty suicides, 239 suicides within the total Army including the Reserves, 146 active duty deaths from drug overdoses and high risk behavior and 1,713 suicide attempts. In addition to suicide, other out-of-character behavior like domestic violence is known to erupt from the drugs. 36 percent of the suicides were troops who were never deployed.

The unprecedented suicide rates are accompanied by an unprecedented rise in psychoactive drug rate among active duty-aged troops, 18 to 34, which is up 85 percent since 2003.

Since 2001, 73,103 prescriptions for Zoloft have been dispensed, 38,199 for Prozac, 17,830 for Paxil and 12,047 for Cymbalta. All of the drugs carry a suicide warning label.

In addition to the leap in SSRI antidepressants, prescriptions for the anticonvulsants Topamax and Neurontin rose 56 percent in the same group since 2005 -- drugs the FDA warned last year double suicidal thinking in patients. Troops may also be taking Chantix, an antismoking drug so linked to violence and self-harm.

And who knows what happens when the drugs are mixed with mood stabilizers, insomnia and pain pills and antianxiety and antipsychotic pills -- combinations that have never been tested for safety? In June Marine Times reported 32 deaths on prescription drugs in Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) since 2007 and said an internal review "found the biggest risk factor may be putting a soldier on numerous drugs simultaneously, a practice known as polypharmacy."

Links between suicide and even murder-suicide and SSRI and SNRI antidepressants have been long recognized.

Over 4,000 published reports of violent and bizarre behavior of people affected by antidepressants on the web archive [ssristories.com](http://ssristories.com) reveal the same out-of-character violence and self harm in civilians that is currently seen in the military.

David Healy, a psychiatrist and professor at Cardiff University School of Medicine in Wales, has authored several books about the connections. "Prozac and other SSRIs can lead to suicide," he said in a lecture at the University of Toronto. "These drugs may have been responsible for one death for every day that Prozac has been on the market in North America."

And psychiatrist and expert witness Dr. Peter Breggin specifically called on the military to "curtail the use of these drugs and rely instead on psychotherapeutic and educational processes that have already

proved effective,” in a recent oped. “There is “profound danger of prescribing drugs that cause impulsivity, hostility and suicidality to heavily armed young men and women under stress on active military duty.”

[http://www.alternet.org/health/148444/are\\_we\\_giving\\_our\\_soldiers\\_drugs\\_that\\_may\\_make\\_them\\_kill\\_themselves/?page=entire](http://www.alternet.org/health/148444/are_we_giving_our_soldiers_drugs_that_may_make_them_kill_themselves/?page=entire)

from the archives:

## **Episode of "Law & Order: SVU" on Primetime TV addresses Drug-induced Suicides by Returning Veterans**

--fictional story addresses issue of widely disparate individuals turning violent in order for Big Pharma to make profit off of DoD

### **Season 6, Episode 23: [Goliath](#)**

Original Air Date—**24 May 2005**

After the wife of a police officer claims her husband raped her, Benson and Stabler arrest the man and come close to believing his version of events when he attacks his captain. When another officer murders his wife and attempts to kill himself that same night, the whole force gets involved and soon realizes that the two men both recently returned home from Afghanistan, where they were given the drug Quinium, an anti-malarial. With the reluctant help of reporter Sherm Hempell and a base doctor with an attack of conscience, Novak takes on the U.S. army. Stabler has trouble with the case because of his history in the Marines.

rated 8.1 out of 10 on IMDB

<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0629659/>

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The Tulsa Peace Fellowship's Counter-Recruitment Update/Digest, for Feb 2010  
*page 2*

file under: what?! there are rules in warfare?

--featured op/ed from the editor of antiwar.com, a libertarian publication online

## **Support the Troops? You mean, Johnnie-the-thug?? No way!**

by Justin Raimondo, October 08, 2010

We often hear, from antiwar activists as well as pious politicians and every sort of commentator, that we should all "support the troops." No matter what one thinks of the particular war being fought, this kind of boilerplate is invariably appended.

But consider the details of the most recent atrocity coming out of Afghanistan, the activities of the "Thrill Kill platoon," which is accused of murdering Afghan civilians and keeping body parts as trophies. The alleged mastermind of the thrill-killers, Staff Sergeant Calvin Gibbs, is also under investigation by military authorities on suspicion of carrying out similar murders in Iraq. The Gibbs "kill team" is suspected of slaughtering at least seven Afghan civilians, and quite possibly more, in the most heinous manner imaginable. Gibbs and four others were arrested in June, and seven others are being held.

Assigned to the 2nd Stryker Brigade, and stationed at Forward Operating Base Ramrod, along the border with Pakistan — they randomly chose unarmed Afghan civilians to murder. Then they shot them, or blew them up with grenades, mutilating the victims.

Knowledge of the killings was widely shared in the camp, and it's hard to imagine higher-ups were unaware of what was going on. But there was indeed one apparently unwilling participant, Adam Winfield.

Winfield pointed out to his parents in a February 14 Facebook posting: "Pretty much the whole platoon knows about it. It's okay with all of them pretty much. Except me.... I want to do something about it [but] the only problem is I don't feel safe here telling anyone." "I talked to someone," Winfield continued, "and they told me this stuff happens all the time."

Winfield's father asked, "No one else thought it was wrong?" Winfield's reply:

"No, everyone just wants to kill people at any cost, they don't care, the Army is full of a bunch of scumbags, I realized."

Winfield resigned his position as the platoon's team leader because "I cannot be a leader in a platoon that allows this to happen." He went on to make a key point:

"There are no more good men left here.... I started to think whether I should quit and just give up because it's stupid to get smoked in Afghanistan. The Army really let me down when I thought I would come out here to do good, maybe make some change in this country.... I find out that it's all a lie."

Winfield's parents made repeated calls to military authorities immediately upon learning of this horror, but before I get to any of that I want to underscore Winfield's words:

"There are no more good men left here."

Of course there aren't. What kind of person joins the military at this particular point in time — a point when the US is engaged in endless wars of aggression, and stories of atrocities committed by "our" soldiers are coming out all the time? For the most part, precisely the kind of person who would delight in the orgy of bloodlust conducted by the "thrill kill platoon." The military has become an outlet for the sociopaths in our midst.

There was a time, not so long ago, when the decision to seek a career in the military did not involve

becoming a moral monster. That time has long since passed. To put on an American uniform today is to become complicit in a criminal enterprise, and this characterization is not by any means limited to the thrill-killer platoon but to the entire killing machine deployed to carry out Washington's grand design.

The US is exporting its sociopaths overseas, in hopes that the havoc such people usually wreak can be put to some "good" use, but such callousness will soon blow back in our faces when Johnnie-the-thug comes marching home. We've already seen a spate of vicious murders committed by just-released veterans of the Iraq and Afghan wars: mental illness is rife among these veterans, and a disproportionately large segment is turning violent. More worrisome, gang members are reportedly joining in droves, and being accepted because the military is desperate to make its recruiting quota. They are boasting that when they come back, trained to kill by professionals, they'll be in good shape to continue their criminal activities on the home front.

It will be a harsh justice indeed as these deranged killers visit the same sort of destruction on us as they inflicted on their innocent victims overseas.

<http://original.antiwar.com/justin/2010/10/07/support-the-troops/>

more coverage:

## **Afghanistan: Victims' Families Denounce U.S. 'Kill Team'**

by Jason Motlagh / Muhib Habibi  
Oct 15, 2010

Kandahar and Maiwand, Afghanistan – After several weeks of trying to make contact, TIME was able to interview several family members about the events of those grim days between January and May. Dozens of photos to be introduced as evidence in the case allegedly show men from a self-styled "kill team" accused of murdering Afghan civilians for sport posing beside charred and mutilated bodies, from which fingers and a head were allegedly severed as trophies. One spoke with chilling candor on camera to military investigators about choosing targets at random. But absent from the narrative until now has been the voices of the victims' families, some of whom witnessed the killings in villages near the U.S. base in the Taliban stronghold of Maiwand district.

One of the victims, Mullah Allah Dad, was said to have been the *imam*, or religious leader, of Qala Gai village, some four miles from Forward Operating Base Ramrod, where the accused soldiers, who were part of the 5th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, were stationed. According to his wife, who asked not to be named and relayed her story through her father, Dad, said to be in his early 40s, had just returned to the family compound from tending his fields on the morning of May 2 when the American soldiers arrived, and dragged him outside. She and their six children were inside the mud-brick compound. Peering through a crack in the wall, she says she heard a volley of gunshots and saw her husband fall to the ground, into view. "I didn't know if he was dead or alive," she says. Soldiers then barged back inside and moved her into a room. Some of them searched the home, throwing furniture and belongings to the floor. As they exited, an Afghan translator ordered her not to leave and locked the door. There was a loud explosion; one of the two accused soldiers apparently exploded a grenade by Dad's body. His wife emerged to find her dead husband lying face down "naked and totally burned." (See photos of [a civilian casualty in Afghanistan](#).)

The dead man's father-in-law, Abdullah Jan, went to the Maiwand district office early that afternoon to retrieve Dad's remains. He said the local district official and intelligence director presented him with a black body bag and said they had taken pictures, adding, without remorse, that the killing was justified because an American soldier had told them: "This man [Dad] was carrying a grenade." After disputing that claim to no avail, he left with the body bag and went back to the village to conduct an immediate burial, as required by Islamic tradition. (Watch TIME's video: "Witness to the Pity of War.")

A total of 12 soldiers now face charges in connection what are alleged to be some of the worst war crimes of the nine-year U.S. involvement in Afghanistan. Five are accused of committing the murders, while the other seven are charged with attempting to cover them up. Spc. Jeremy Morlock, 22, is accused of creating the "kill team" along with Staff Sgt. Calvin Gibbs, 22, who reportedly claimed to have gotten away with killings in Iraq. Some of the men also stand accused of drug use, and of collecting body parts from other Afghan casualties. If convicted, the five accused of murder face the death penalty or life in prison. Each has maintained his innocence. Some insist they were forced by Gibbs, their superior, to participate in the killings. In a video of his interrogation released by military prosecutors, Morlock described how Gibbs singled out an Afghan man and ordered that he be shot after he was blown up with a grenade.

Maj. Kathleen Turner, a spokesperson for Joint Base Lewis-McChord, near Seattle, where the accused soldiers are being tried, declined to comment on grounds that the investigation was ongoing.

Civilian casualties have cost the U.S. and its allies a lot of local support in critical areas like Kandahar, and with the damage already done in Maiwand, where major operations are now taking place, it's unlikely that even a guilty verdict with a hefty punishment would do much to reverse the trend. (To avert a public backlash, a top Army official has ordered that the images of the victims in the case not be made public.)

Jan, father-in-law of the slain imam, says any forthcoming punishment won't matter. People in his village "hated" the Americans even before these killings, he explained, because of errant airstrikes and heavy-handed night operations into private homes. The deep anti-American sentiment, he adds, has only grown worse since their religious leader was murdered. "The Americans really love to kill innocent people," he says. "We don't have a court for [the accused soldiers], but [God] will give them the strongest punishment." If he's reflecting local public sentiment, the chances of the U.S. mission uprooting the Taliban appear to be increasingly remote.

View this article on [Time.com](http://news.yahoo.com/s/time/20101015/us_time/08599202509100)

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/time/20101015/us\\_time/08599202509100](http://news.yahoo.com/s/time/20101015/us_time/08599202509100)

## **Whistle-blowing soldier moved to solitary confinement**

Charley Keyes, CNN  
October 4, 2010

- Safety concerns prompt Winfield's move, source says
- Spokeswoman says Army is investigating alleged threat
- 12 soldiers charged in connection to civilians' killings

(CNN) -- A U.S. soldier who blew the whistle on his fellow soldiers' links to the killing of civilians in Afghanistan -- and who himself is accused of one slaying --has been moved to solitary confinement for his safety, a source said.

Spc. Adam Winfield, 21, told Army investigators that he alerted his father to the civilian killings early this year and told him that he feared for his own life, according to an interrogation tape obtained by CNN. His father tried and failed to get the military to intervene, Winfield's attorney, Eric Montalvo, said.

Winfield now is held in a military facility at Joint Base Lewis-McChord in Washington along with other soldiers he said instigated the killings. Some of those soldiers are facing charges in connection with three slayings of civilians, and Winfield would be a key part of any case against them.

Winfield contacted his father about the serial killing ring inside his Stryker Brigade squad, and his father, Christopher Winfield, telephoned the Army but with little result, Montalvo said. The father's phone calls, from the family's home in Cape Coral, Florida, and the failure of the Army to take swift action to intervene are the focus of a separate military investigation, an Army spokesman said.

A person familiar with the case against Winfield and the other soldiers said Sunday that Winfield had been moved to solitary confinement amidst concerns about his safety.

Maj. Kathleen Turner, a public affairs officer for Lewis-McChord, said: "The U.S. Army CID is investigating allegations that a threat was made to one of the defendants; however, we are not releasing any further information associated with these allegations."

[http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/10/04/us.soldier.solitary/index.html?eref=rss\\_us&utm\\_source=feedburner&utm\\_medium=feed&utm\\_campaign=Feed%3A+rss%2Fcnn\\_us+%28RSS%3A+U.S.%29](http://www.cnn.com/2010/US/10/04/us.soldier.solitary/index.html?eref=rss_us&utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+rss%2Fcnn_us+%28RSS%3A+U.S.%29)

update Oct 29, 3:11 PM EDT

SEATTLE (AP) -- A soldier who tried to blow the whistle on an alleged plot to kill Afghan civilians for sport has been removed from protective solitary confinement at his own request, his father said Friday.

Spc. Adam Winfield had been jailed on his own for about a month after he reported being threatened by co-defendant Pfc. Andrew Holmes, but he's now back in the general population at the Joint Base Lewis-McChord detention facility with Holmes and another defendant, Spc. Michael Wagon.

"He could not stand another day in solitary," father Chris Winfield wrote in an e-mail to The Associated Press. "We are a little nervous having him back in the same area as Holmes and Wagon, but Adam said he would rather be there than solitary confinement."

The alleged ringleader and highest ranking defendant, Staff Sgt. Calvin Gibbs, has been held at a civilian jail nearby to keep him separated from the other defendants, and the soldier described as his closest collaborator in the killings, Spc. Jeremy Morlock, is being detained at a Navy brig in Washington state.



Base spokeswoman Maj. Jenny Willis said she could not immediately confirm Winfield's transfer from protective pretrial custody, but said earlier this week that he had been treated humanely and that "everything that's been done has been for his security and his safety."

## **Army won't seek death penalty against soldier who detailed plot to kill Afghan civilians**

Gene Johnson, AP News  
Oct 15, 2010

A U.S. soldier who told investigators in horrifying detail that he and other members of his unit executed three civilians in Afghanistan for sport will not face the death penalty if convicted, the Army said Friday.

Spc. Jeremy Morlock, of Wasilla, Alaska, is one of five defendants charged with murder and conspiracy in the deaths this year. Much of the Army's case is based on extensive statements Morlock gave describing the killings.

Last month, an investigating officer at Joint Base Lewis-McChord south of Seattle held a preliminary hearing in Morlock's case and recommended it proceed to a court martial.

The Army announced Friday that a court martial would be scheduled, though no timeframe was given, and that Morlock would face a maximum penalty of life in prison if convicted.

Morlock, 22, cooperated with investigators and his lawyer said he suffered from repeat concussions from explosions in Afghanistan — both factors that could weigh against seeking execution, though the Army didn't detail its reasons.

"There's a lot of reasons they wouldn't seek the death penalty, especially when you have someone who has physical injuries from a combat zone," said Morlock's attorney Michael Waddington.

He said Morlock will fight the allegations at the trial and will seek to have his statements suppressed on the grounds that they were made under the influence of muscle relaxants and other drugs prescribed for possible traumatic brain injury.

No decision has been made on whether to send the other four defendants to trial or to seek the death penalty, Lewis-McChord spokeswoman Maj. Kathleen Turner said.

<http://wire.antiwar.com/2010/10/15/army-wont-seek-death-in-afghan-killings-case/>

# Pentagon had red flags about command climate in 'kill team' Stryker brigade

Five soldiers in the 5th Stryker brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division are charged with forming a 'kill team' in Afghanistan. The commander of that brigade is not yet implicated

By Anna Mulrine, Staff writer for *The Christian Science Monitor*  
October 28, 2010

Some sources suggest that **Army Colonel Harry Tunnell** set a tone that was not only out of line with Pentagon doctrine, but was inflammatory and potentially dangerous.

“When you feel violent intent coming down from the command and into the culture of the brigade, that’s when you end up with things like the rogue platoon,” says a senior US military official who worked with the brigade in early 2009 at the National Training Center before it deployed to Afghanistan. “He established a culture that allowed that kind of mindset to percolate. And there are second- and third-order effects that come with that. Clearly, the guys who were pulling the trigger are the proximate cause of the crime, but the culture itself is the enabler.”

As the 5th brigade of the 2nd Infantry Division, which Tunnell commanded for three years, was preparing to deploy to Afghanistan in June 2009, senior Army officials questioned Tunnell's leadership focus with growing concern, and discussed the possibility of removing him from command.

Now, Tunnell’s tenure is raising fresh questions in the halls of the Pentagon.

Officials continue to wonder whether Tunnell's approach may have resulted in unnecessary harm to both US soldiers and Afghan civilians. “From a command perspective, it was, ‘We’re going to take an iron fist approach.’ And I wonder if it was a self-fulfilling prophecy,” says one US official who worked with the brigade soldiers in Afghanistan. “They were seeing more kinetic activity, but they were also bringing a lot of kinetic activity,” says the official, using the Pentagon language for offensive operations.

During its tour, the brigade lost 37 troops and saw 238 wounded – a figure that amounted to a 10 percent casualty rate in some units and considerable loss by the standards of modern warfare.

Five soldiers in Tunnell's brigade stand accused of war crimes, including creating a self-described “kill team” that allegedly **targeted unarmed Afghan men** and cut off their fingers as war trophies. There is no indication that Tunnell, who declined requests to be interviewed for this story, condoned or had any knowledge of the alleged murders. Nor is he implicated in any criminal proceedings. Soldiers and commanders interviewed for this article emphasize that he never exhorted troops to do anything unethical or immoral.

But military officials are debating the extent to which the climate set by Tunnell influenced the actions of his troops, hundreds of miles away and far down the chain of command.

The question has been raised before, in the case of commanders who oversaw the Abu Ghraib prison in Baghdad, for example.

The narrative of Tunnell's leadership is particularly significant to the Pentagon now, however, as it endeavors to instill in troops a new ethic of using the least force necessary.

Some officials suggest that the Army confused soldiers under Tunnell by not removing him from command before the brigade deployed. "The fact that the Army chose to keep him in command sent a mixed message to Tunnell's subordinates. Given what is alleged to have happened within the brigade, however, Tunnell seems unlikely to rise any further in the ranks, senior officials say. After his tour in Afghanistan ended in June, he was assigned to be the executive officer for a three-star general in accessions command at Fort Knox.

### Face paint and intimidation

In Iraq during his 2003 to 2004 tour, Tunnell's units began taking steps to make it clear to insurgents that the US military would not shy away from a fight. He encouraged the use of camouflage face paint. "This simple non-verbal cue intimidated the local population – at least initially – and allowed us to gain easier compliance from them," Tunnell wrote.

Meanwhile, the military was changing. Top commanders would soon tell troops that wearing sunglasses – much less camouflage face paint – sent the wrong message to locals.

Commanders at the NTC submit a campaign plan that highlights what their brigade will accomplish during their year-long tours. The plan is supposed to incorporate security, economics, governance, and education. "Tunnell wrote one where the only thing that was on it was basically saying in 50 different ways how he was going to destroy the enemy," says Demaree.

Other officers within the battalion shared their concerns, says the senior official. "I had two staff officers [in Tunnell's brigade] separately tell me that they were afraid that the brigade was going to end up on CNN for 'all the wrong reasons,'" he says.

In response, trainers tried to help officers in the brigade take steps to "lead from the middle to ensure that didn't happen," says the senior official, who adds that some other military officials raised the possibility of removing Tunnell from command in discussions that included a two-star general.

Army spokesmen declined to discuss the matter, due to the ongoing investigation of the five men under Tunnell's command – proceedings in which he may be called as a witness. Staff Sgt. Calvin Gibbs, leader of the alleged "kill team" suspected of targeting innocent Afghan civilians in 2009 and 2010, had served on Tunnell's personal security detail before coming to the platoon where the murders were alleged to have taken place.

"This guy was in and around Tunnell on a daily basis," Demaree says. "How much his personal day-to-day words and actions may or may not have influenced this NCO who directly worked for him" is unclear, he adds.

Troops interviewed for this article reject the notion that Tunnell's philosophy led any troops to commit homicide. "Whatever Tunnell's failures may have been at higher levels, that doesn't make people engage in **psychopathic behavior**. That is a failure of leadership, but it happened way lower than Tunnell," says one junior officer in the brigade.

<http://www.csmonitor.com/USA/Military/2010/1028/Pentagon-had-red-flags-about-command-climate-in-kill-team-Stryker-brigade>

**TPF comment:** Accountability would demand that the above commander be held responsible for his wayward troops, and removed from his command, especially as keeping this man on will undoubtedly lead to more **war atrocities**. That the Pentagon allowed this commander to remain in charge, despite knowledge of the incompatibility of his tactics with stated goals in Afghanistan, is an indictment of the whole military culture with its excessive emphasis on aggression and killing, regardless of the consequences.

another **murder case, soldier-on-soldier** this time:

## **US soldier charged with killing troops in Iraq**

By Mazin Yahya, Associated Press – Oct 20, 2010

BAGHDAD – An American soldier was charged Wednesday with killing two fellow U.S. troops and wounding a third after an argument last month in a former Iraqi insurgent stronghold turned deadly.

Army Spc. Neftaly Platero was charged with two counts of murder and one count of attempted murder in a Sept. 23 shooting in Fallujah, about 40 miles (65 kilometers) west of Baghdad.

A statement issued late Wednesday by the U.S. military in Baghdad described the killings as premeditated but offered no other details.

Earlier, a U.S. military spokesman said Platero was accused of shooting the three soldiers after a verbal altercation. The spokesman, Col. Barry Johnson, did not know what the argument was about.

Pfc. Gebrah Noonan, 26, of Watertown, Connecticut, and Spc. John Carrillo Jr., 20, of Stockton, California, died the day after the shooting. The name of the wounded soldier has not been released, and the statement Wednesday said the criminal investigation of the incident is ongoing.

Platero, 32, from Houston, Texas, is being held in pretrial confinement in Kuwait. He will be tried by a military court.

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101020/ap\\_on\\_re\\_mi\\_ea/ml\\_iraq](http://news.yahoo.com/s/ap/20101020/ap_on_re_mi_ea/ml_iraq)

more coverage:

## **Grieving family wants answers in Army slaying**

Weeks after soldier's killing in his living quarters in Iraq, full account still not forthcoming

By Joe Goldeen  
Record Staff Writer  
October 15, 2010

STOCKTON - Is the U.S. Army trying to sweep the slayings of two soldiers at the hands of one of its own under the rug? That's how the Stockton family of one of those victims feels.

Three weeks after Spc. John "Junior" Carrillo of Stockton was killed in Iraq, his grieving family remains in the dark about exactly what happened. As they understand it, he returned to his living quarters, walked in on a fight between his Army roommates, attempted to break it up and was shot and killed by one of them.

Carrillo's young widow and his mother, however, have yet to receive a full, official account of what transpired. They feel ignored and abandoned by the disorganized military bureaucracy they've encountered. They are angry that the Army has not been forthcoming with information surrounding the circumstances of Carrillo's death and the status of the man accused of killing him.

"As far as I'm concerned, the military's the one that murdered my son. They owe me answers," said Desiree Carrillo, 40, of Stockton, the mother of four children, including "Junior," her firstborn.

"I just want answers, and I don't want to wait months or years, like they're telling us," she said, referring to the possible two years it may take before the accused American soldier faces a trial. "I'm grieving, but I'll stay angry until I know the person who did this to my son gets punished."

Reylene Carrillo, 21, John Carrillo's widow and the mother of his two sons, is equally angry.

"I feel like the military is not making a big deal out of what is going on, and I feel like things are taking a long time," she said.

"Tell me more about what's going on and what happened. They act like they don't know. I think me and his parents have a right to know what's going on, even if we have to keep hush about it. He didn't sign his life away to get killed by one of our own. I think they should treat it as a bigger deal."

"Are there that many murders in the Army? This should be something they want to get taken care of. This should not have happened," Desiree Carrillo said. "We have not gotten any comfort out of this."

The Army has consistently directed all media inquiries about the case to U.S. Forces-Iraq, based in Baghdad. The press office there responded Thursday by saying:

"The incident is still under investigation. The only information we have ... is what was in the two press releases on the incident. We will release additional information as it becomes available."

"It's just hard thinking about how my kids are going to grow up without their father," Reylene Carrillo said.

Contact reporter Joe Goldeen at (209) 546-8278 or [jgoldeen@recordnet.com](mailto:jgoldeen@recordnet.com). Visit his blog at [recordnet.com/goldeenblog](http://recordnet.com/goldeenblog).

[http://www.recordnet.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20101015/A\\_\\_NEWS/10150311](http://www.recordnet.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20101015/A__NEWS/10150311)

# **Iraq war logs: How friendly fire from US troops became routine**

Americans have shot at their own troops or allies so often that in at least one case a strafed British vehicle didn't even stop

James Meek  
guardian.co.uk,  
22 October 2010

US troops killed at least seven and wounded 34 of their compatriots in 18 suspected friendly fire incidents after the invasion of Iraq, only the most serious of which have previously been made public, the war logs reveal.

The catalogue of "blue on blue" deaths and injuries shows how serious the wrong call from a young man in charge of deadly weaponry can be in the stress, confusion and bureaucracy of modern war – and how events that seem clear one moment may be perceived differently soon afterwards.

When a unit from the 502nd Infantry Regiment came under small arms fire in Baghdad on 4 November 2005 they assumed they were being attacked by the enemy. Five men were injured and another, Staff Sergeant Joseph Fegler, 24, was killed. Two hours after the engagement it emerged that the damage had been done by the rear gunner of another US convoy up ahead. The first shots the victims heard had been warning shots fired to get them to keep their distance.

Three weeks later a patrol from another company of the same regiment, moving on foot through farmland south-west of Baghdad, came under heavy fire from insurgents. Some of the platoon were wounded and the senior sergeant commandeered a civilian car to take them back to the company vehicles. As it raced back another part of their company, drawn by the sound of shooting, headed their way. They saw a civilian car filled with armed men moving towards them at high speed, and opened fire, killing two of their comrades, Sergeant Aram Bass and Sergeant William Meeuwsen, and injuring four others, including a civilian interpreter.

Read the full article: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/22/american-troops-friendly-fire-iraq>

file under: what?! there are rules in warfare?

## **Iraq war logs: Apache crew killed insurgents who tried to surrender**

A US gunship crew was cleared to attack two insurgents on the ground even though the pilots had reported that the men were trying to surrender, the leaked Iraq war logs reveal.

The Apache helicopter pilots killed both Iraqi men after being advised by a US military lawyer that they could not surrender to an aircraft and therefore remained valid targets. A leading military law expert consulted by the Guardian has questioned this legal advice.

The Guardian can also reveal that the helicopter involved in the incident in 2007 had the same call sign – Crazyhorse 18 – as the Apache whose crew later mistakenly killed two Reuters journalists and injured two children in a notorious shooting in urban Baghdad. The killings drew worldwide condemnation in April this year when WikiLeaks obtained video footage taken from the helicopter's gun camera and released it on the internet.

It has not been possible to establish whether the same personnel were involved in both attacks.

According to the account of the earlier incident in the leaked logs, the insurgents had jumped out of their truck after it came under fire from the Apache. "They came out wanting to surrender," Crazyhorse 18 signalled

The crew received a further specific top-level kill instruction from brigade HQ and made another strafing run, firing bursts from long distance at 300 rounds a minute from the Apache's 30mm cannon. This time, the gunner succeeded in killing both men.

Under the 1907 Hague regulations, it is forbidden "to kill or wound an enemy who, having laid down his arms, or having no longer means of defence, has surrendered at discretion".

Britain's own official Ministry of Defence publication, the Manual of the Law of Armed Conflict, says there are practical difficulties around surrenders to aircraft, but adds: "With the advent of close-support and ground-attack helicopter units, the surrender of ground troops ... has become a more practical proposition."

One of Britain's foremost experts on the subject, Professor Sir Adam Roberts, cast doubt on the legal advice given to the Crazyhorse 18 crew. "Surrender is not always a simple matter," Roberts, emeritus professor of international relations at Oxford University and joint editor of Documents on the Laws of War, told the Guardian. But the reasoning given by the US military lawyer was "dogmatic and wrong".

"The issue is not that ground forces simply cannot surrender to aircraft," he said. "The issue is that ground forces in such circumstances need to surrender in ways that are clear and unequivocal."

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2010/oct/22/iraq-war-logs-apache-insurgents-surrender>

## **Soldier gets 21 months for lying about money**

10/08/2010

By Adrian Sainz / Associated Press

A U.S. Army officer who approved supplies contracts in Iraq was sentenced Friday to 21 months in prison for lying about contents of a package he sent to the United States containing more than \$100,000.

Maj. Charles E. Sublett pleaded guilty in July to sending almost \$108,000 in sequentially numbered \$100 bills and more than 17 million Iraqi dinar, then worth about \$11,600, from Balad, Iraq, to his wife in Killeen, Texas.



Sublett, who has six children, has said he suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder after deployments to Iraq and Bosnia.

"You have a wonderful career behind you, but you made a terrible error," federal Judge Samuel H. Mays told Sublett.

<http://www.dallasnews.com/sharedcontent/APStories/stories/D9INPJU83.html>

## **Army Engineer Accused of Iraq Contract Bribes**

15 October 2010.

Federal authorities say a U.S. Army engineer took hundreds of thousands of dollars in bribes for funneling Iraq reconstruction contracts to friends, building a \$1.1 million mansion with the proceeds.

John Alfy Salama Markus, 38, was arrested at his home on Wednesday and charged in New Jersey with money laundering and conspiracy to commit bribery and to defraud the United States.

If convicted he could face up to 20 years in prison.

Mr Markus, aka John Salama, was released on a \$500,000 bond secured by property, and did not enter a plea.

A project engineer with the Army Corps of Engineers, Markus allegedly used his influence to secure contracts worth millions of dollars between 2007 and 2008 for British contractor Ahmed Nouri, who was also charged but is still at large, according to the criminal complaint.

Markus is said to have demanded hundreds of thousands of dollars in kickbacks, which he used to build a palatial home in New Jersey, authorities said.

Tags: Corruption, Iraqi Consultants & Construction Bureau

<http://www.iraq-businessnews.com/2010/10/15/army-engineer-accused-of-iraq-contract-bribes/>

## **Pentagon cautions gays about revealing identity**

by David Alexander  
Oct 15, 2010

WASHINGTON (Reuters) – The Pentagon said on Friday it was abiding by a court injunction not to discharge openly gay men and women in the U.S. military but warned them against changing their behavior while legal challenges continue.

"We note for service members that altering their personal conduct in this legally uncertain environment may have adverse consequences for themselves and others should the court's decision be reversed," Undersecretary of Defense Clifford Stanley said in a memo.

California-based U.S. District Judge Virginia Phillips ordered the military on Tuesday to stop enforcing the "don't ask, don't tell" policy barring openly gay men and women from serving in the armed forces.

She also directed the military to drop any pending investigations and discharges after ruling that the policy violated the Constitution.

The Obama administration on Thursday asked Phillips to stay her ruling while it appealed the decision, which overturned a 17-year-old compromise that allowed gay men and women to serve in the military only if they kept their sexual orientation private.

Stanley, the undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, said the Defense Department was abiding by the terms of the court's injunction but noted the Justice Department had appealed the ruling.

"It is possible that a stay of the injunction could be issued very soon, perhaps in a matter of days," he said. If Phillips denies a stay, the Obama administration said it would seek one from the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit.

"In light of the appeal and the application for a stay, a certain amount of uncertainty now exists about the future of the don't ask, don't tell law and policy," Stanley said, cautioning service members against altering their behavior because of the situation.

[http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20101015/ts\\_nm/us\\_usa\\_military\\_gays](http://news.yahoo.com/s/nm/20101015/ts_nm/us_usa_military_gays)

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The Tulsa Peace Fellowship's Counter-Recruitment Update/Digest, for Feb 2010  
*backpage*

## **Pentagon efforts to keep memoir out of circulation backfire**

By Brian Bennet  
Tribune Washington Bureau  
Oct 11, 2010

The author of an Afghanistan war memoir bought and shredded under the supervision of the Pentagon says his free speech rights have been violated.

Former military intelligence officer Anthony Shaffer said that all of the information the military claimed was classified - and therefore barred from being published in his book - also is available in unclassified and open-source documents.

Pentagon officials oversaw the destruction of the first edition of the book on Sept. 20 after telling

Shaffer and his publisher, St. Martin's Press, that the version contained more than 250 examples of classified information.

A revised edition of "Operation Dark Heart: Spycraft and Special Ops on the Frontlines of Afghanistan - and the Path to Victory" was published Sept. 27 with large sections blacked out by Department of Defense censors

Shaffer contends the redactions were unnecessary and were ordered only to silence him.

"My First Amendment rights were sat on (sic)," Shaffer said.

"Not only has the government turned the book into a bestseller, it has focused attention specifically on the information it wanted to conceal," said Steven Aftergood, director of the Project on Government Secrecy at the Federation of American Scientists.

Among other material, the Pentagon wanted details blacked out about U.S. intelligence.

Defense Department officials also asked Shaffer to remove descriptions of his involvement in a data-mining operation launched before Sept. 11 that Shaffer says turned up the name of Mohamed Atta, the ringleader of the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks. But Shaffer said his claim about Atta is in the congressional record; he refused to remove it.

The destruction of the books has brought attention to how the U.S. government protects its most closely guarded secrets and what obligation intelligence agents have to protect the information after they have left their posts.

Intelligence agencies such as the CIA and the Defense Intelligence Agency - where Shaffer was a senior officer from 1995 to 2004 - have procedures for working with authors to review manuscripts before they are published to ensure the nation's secrets aren't revealed.

Shaffer, a lieutenant colonel in the Army Reserves, said he spent months working with his superiors in the reserves to show that everything in his book could be found in unclassified sources.

Shaffer wants the Pentagon to allow him to publish a version of the book with the text in the blacked-out sections restored. He says he is mulling his legal options because he believes the Pentagon stepped in to silence him.

Read more: <http://www.kansascity.com/2010/10/11/2300022/pentagon-efforts-to-keep-memoir.html>

file under: Reduce Military Spending. Rebuild America.

## **TIME: British Military Cuts: When Will the U.S. Follow Suit?**

The defense spending cuts announced this week as part of the British government's massive deficit-cutting austerity program mean that the next time America goes to war in some distant land, it is unlikely to be joined by significant numbers of British squaddies. Besides scrapping (for at least a

decade) its naval capacity to send air power overseas, the U.K. will cut its defense budget by 8%, losing 17,000 personnel and cutting back its armory of tanks and artillery.

The maximum number of troops that the reconfigured British military will be able to deploy in any new sustained expeditionary operation will be 6,500. The message for the U.S. in Britain's contraction may be a lot more sobering than simply the retrenchment of military capability by its most trusted ally. Britain's case may have illustrated the iron law that fiscal deficits inevitably corrode a nation's ability to project power beyond its shores.

The economic laws of gravity suggest that what we saw in Britain this week is a fate that eventually awaits the U.S. military too. After all, if the massive expansion of the U.S. economy over the past six decades appears to be coming to a close, it's hard to see how the epic expansion of the U.S. military budget over the same period can be sustained. A Federal Government currently borrowing 40 cents of every dollar it spends is likely to struggle to sustain imperial levels of military commitment.

The Congressional Research Service calculated last September that the U.S. has spent \$1.2 trillion on military operations since the 9/11 attacks, and the ongoing commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan are costing the U.S. more than \$3 billion a week. American politicians sound the alarm on the need to slash spending to rein in deficits.

The Pentagon maintains more than 800 bases beyond the 50 states, and stations close to 300,000 troops abroad. The 2009 U.S. defense budget of \$660 billion was more than the combined defense expenditures of the next 17 countries on the spending table. And that budget continues to rise steadily, growing at 4.8% for 2010, a year in which the U.S. economy's GDP growth is likely to be less than 2%.

<http://www.time.com/time/nation/article/0,8599,2026961,00.html?xid=rss-fullnation-yahoo>

more coverage:

## **Defence cuts don't go deep enough, say critics**

Billions are being spent on defence projects the military do not want and will not use thanks to ministers bottling tough decisions

by Richard Norton-Taylor

guardian.co.uk

21 October 2010

Defence cuts have seen the Harrier fleet scrapped, but two new aircraft carriers are still being built at a cost of £5bn.

Successive defence ministers and chiefs of staff, egged on by arms manufacturers, bottled out of tough decisions, indulging in a spending spree that left a £38bn black hole in the weapons procurement budget.

Yet they are punished even less than the bankers for their profligate irresponsibility. The navy gets two large aircraft carriers – the biggest ships it has ever had – at a cost of more than £5bn. The first one, the Queen Elizabeth, is due to enter service in 2016 yet, because Britain's Harrier fleet is being scrapped and the expensive US Joint Strike Fighters (JSFs) due to replace them won't be ready in time, by 2020 the ship will be mothballed – or sold – without ever having planes flying off her.

By 2020, the second carrier, the Prince of Wales, should be ready but adapted to take cheaper, catapult-launched JSFs, or French Rafale planes. So, for the next 10 years, Britain will have no carrier-based strike force. The obvious question, which has not been satisfactorily answered by the government, is why such a threat needing such a force will suddenly face the UK in 10 years' time.

The carrier fiasco is not the only bizarre feature of the government's strategic defence and security review. A new Nimrod maritime reconnaissance aircraft will be scrapped even though £3.6bn – about the amount of money the entire defence budget will be cut by over the next four years – has already been spent on it. At least this was one decision not to throw good money after bad.

Meanwhile, the RAF, the National Audit Office told us, will get 16 more Eurofighter/Typhoon jets than it has asked for at a cost of £2.7bn because it would be cheaper to build them than cancel the order, again because of the contract signed with the makers.

And then there was Trident, a nuclear missile system costing at least an initial £20bn, which we were told had to be ordered now. In a politically convenient move – the Lib Dems are split on the issue and at least demanded that a decision be put off – no decision on how exactly to replace the existing fleet of four Trident submarines will be taken until 2016, after the next election.

And the Treasury has forecast that the cost of military operations in Afghanistan, which have already cost £12bn, will cost an additional £15bn over the next four years.

Excluding Trident, the projects and operations mentioned here will cost more than £26bn, something that should not be forgotten. The sum amounts to nearly half the cuts announced by the chancellor on Wednesday.

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2010/oct/21/defence-cuts-dont-go-deep-enough>

on the lighter side:

## **U.S. Air Force Academy Now Welcomes Spell-Casters**

by Noah Shachtman  
October 22, 2010

Just a few years ago, the Air Force Academy was considered such an evangelical hothouse that the place got sued for its alleged discrimination against non-Christians. Today, the Academy is boasting of its thriving pagan community — and its friendliness towards spell-casters.

In a press release issued Thursday, the Academy features Tech. Sgt. Brandon Longcrier (pictured), “the lay leader for the Academy’s Earth-Centered Spirituality community, which includes Wiccans and Pagans from various traditions.” (It’s part of a larger effort by the school to promote an image of tolerance.)

During an inter-faith discussion group, the release notes, one cadet asked Longcrier “whether Wiccans or Pagans practiced ‘black magic.’”

Sergeant Longcrier responded by citing the Wiccan credo, or Rede: “An it harm none, do what ye will.” That would seem to preclude harmful spellcraft.

However, the Rede “would not apply to a battlefield,” according to the Academy release. Which gives new meaning to the term “magic missile.”

Two other unnamed pagan cadets offered a spirited defense of the power of magic.

“If I put out a healing spell — say, I wanted to heal you from pizza poisoning — if it doesn’t work for you, but it works for somebody else, does that mean it didn’t work?” one cadet asked.

“But also keep in mind that magic doesn’t necessarily mean miracles,” another said. “Say you have cancer, and someone does a healing spell for you. It doesn’t mean the cancer disappears overnight. It could mean your doctor thinks up a different treatment.”

This would be an unusual conversation at any military institution. But considering the Academy had “55 complaints of religious discrimination” against non-Christians between 2001 and 2005, it’s close to miraculous — er, magical. According to according to CNN, all “9,000 cadets and faculty and staff members are now required to take a 50-minute course on religious sensitivity.

<http://www.wired.com/dangerroom/2010/10/air-force-academy-now-welcomes-spell-casters/>

sidebar:

## **41% of non-Christian AF cadets cite unwanted proselytizing**

Oct 30th 2010

COLORADO SPRINGS, Colo. (AP) — An Air Force Academy survey found that 41 percent of cadets who identified themselves as non-Christian said they were subjected to unwanted proselytizing at least once or twice last year.

Overall, 19 percent of all cadets said they were subjected to unwanted proselytizing.

Participation by cadets in the official academy survey, conducted in December and January, was both voluntary and anonymous. Forty-seven percent, or 2,170, cadets participated in the poll.

In a survey in 2004, religious tolerance became a sensitive issue at the academy with a finding that many cadets heard slurs or jokes about other religions and that some felt ostracized because they weren't religious.

Gould, who was not at the academy at the time of the 2004 survey, has made it a priority to improve religious tolerance, launching new programs and frequently reminding cadets, faculty and staff of the need to respect others' beliefs, or lack of beliefs.

The documents obtained by the AP show that the percentage of Christians and non-Christians,

including atheists, who felt pressure to get involved in religious activities declined, compared with a survey in 2007.

The academy's analysis of this survey notes that about 10 percent of non-Christians reported they experienced unwanted proselytizing often or very often, and it labels that figure as a "primary concern."

[http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hsONU5vC7qRhQMcLtM\\_gAo0d0rQ?docId=0ebe904d02a94fd687e9c071f773f0c4](http://www.google.com/hostednews/ap/article/ALeqM5hsONU5vC7qRhQMcLtM_gAo0d0rQ?docId=0ebe904d02a94fd687e9c071f773f0c4)

## **Filipinos aim to give US army the boot**

By Al Labita

Asia Times

Oct 2010

MANILA - Opposition lawmakers in both houses of the Philippine congress have filed a joint resolution calling for the immediate abrogation of the VFA. The call is in sharp contrast to newly elected President Benigno Aquino's position, which favors only a review or fine-tuning of the agreement.

Aquino was supposed to take up the VFA when he met US President Barack Obama last month in New York, but failed due to lack of time. Aquino, however, will press for a review when he meets Obama again in Washington for an official visit before the year ends.

Aquino has already informed US ambassador to the Philippines, Harry Thomas Jr of a plan to "refine" the forces agreement in preparation for his second visit to the US.

Aquino has advocated a renegotiation of the VFA since he was a senator. Prior to last year's presidential elections, he signed a senate resolution calling for a review, citing Washington's shortcomings to help modernize the Philippine military.

US military aid to the Philippines has jumped dramatically, rising from US\$38 million in 2001 to \$94 million in 2009. That amount will be boosted to \$118.5 million this year. But Manila officials say that with the ongoing 15-year military modernization program, funded mainly by a constrained government budget, more US aid is needed.

Yankee go home

Opposition politicians view the VFA differently. Miriam Santiago, who chairs the senate's foreign relations committee, says the VFA's "fatal flaw" is its failure to specify the US troops' period of stay in the Philippines.

"It calls itself a visiting agreement, but it has been in force for some 10 years now," she says, referring to the continued stay of some 600 US military personnel to provide training to the Philippine military.

Santiago claimed that, until now, the US has failed in its obligation under the VFA to help modernize the poorly equipped Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP). Military officials have complained that while the US has turned over a number of helicopters, many were of Vietnam War-era vintage and referred to locally as "flying coffins" due to their tendency to malfunction.



"The VFA is a failure, because after 10 years, the AFP has not modernized sufficiently to keep up with our Asian neighbors and the terrorist groups are still active," the lawmaker told fellow senators during a recent speech. She was referring to Abu Sayyaf, an Islamic militant group operating mainly in Mindanao.

Manila and Washington inked the military accord, which governs the conduct, entry and exit of American troops visiting the Philippines for military exercises, over a decade ago. It came into force on May 27, 1999, eight years after the closure of US military bases at Subic and Clark.

Santiago, an expert on international law, argues that under the Philippine constitution its congress has the power to revoke laws and treaties without the need for Aquino's concurrence.

"Because treaties are considered as part of the laws of the land, congress can unilaterally abrogate the treaty on its own," Santiago says. Aquino's role is limited to giving a notice of termination to Washington, she says.

In the case of the US government, Santiago says there should be no problem because it does not recognize the VFA as a formal treaty and that the US Congress never gave its advice and consent to the agreement.

The lawmaker recalls that when the Philippine Congress ratified the VFA in 1999, then American president Bill Clinton merely transmitted the VFA to the US congress, in compliance with an American law called the Case-Zablocki Act.

This act requires that the US president, through the secretary of state, transmit to the US congress any international agreements entered into by the US government, or by its officials or agencies, which are not characterized as treaties.

"Therefore, the VFA is not valid and constitutional because it is not recognized as a treaty by the US on the account of its own constitution and law," says Santiago.

Critics say US forces have also overstayed in the southern island of Mindanao, where they've been stationed since 2002. "They are definitely no longer just visiting," said Bayan (Nation) secretary general Renato Reyes Jr. "While US troops are leaving Iraq, their counterparts in the Philippines are staying put."

[http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast\\_Asia/LJ20Ae02.html](http://www.atimes.com/atimes/Southeast_Asia/LJ20Ae02.html)

## **Germans Recommend Cutbacks in Defense Spending**

By Judy Dempsey  
October 24, 2010

BERLIN — As major European countries seek to cut military forces in response to the economic

slowdown and pressure from finance officials to rein in spending, the Defense Ministry of Germany has been advised to cut its staff by half, close several army bases and slim the armed forces from 250,000 to 180,000.

The recommendations were announced Sunday by Frank-Jürgen Weise, the head of a special cross-party commission charged with restructuring Germany's military.

Mr. Weise's proposal is likely to bolster efforts by Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg, who was appointed defense minister just over a year ago, to transform the German military. He has already abolished conscription despite strong opposition from his conservative bloc — the Christian Democratic Union party and the Christian Social Union party.

Mr. Guttenberg has been proposing radical cutbacks in the armed forces in to turn them into highly professional and better trained units.

The government of Chancellor Angela Merkel has said that it intended to save as much as €80 billion, or \$111 billion, by 2013. The Defense Ministry, which currently spends about €30 billion a year, is supposed to contribute €9.3 billion over the next three years toward that goal.

“In that sense, the savings helped Guttenberg,” said Henning Reicke, security analyst at the German Council for Foreign Relations in Berlin. “He could use them to explain why cutbacks were necessary but also use them to introduce much needed reforms.”

Mr. Weise, who is also head of the Federal Labor Office, suggested that the Defense Ministry's civilian staff, currently 3,300 people divided between Bonn and Berlin, should be reduced to 1,600.

Mr. Guttenberg, one of the country's most popular and ambitious politicians, told ARD, Germany's public television channel, that he would review the proposal with the idea of setting out a firm plan of his own by January. A former foreign policy expert for his party, the Bavarian-based Christian Social Union, Mr. Guttenberg, who is 37, has said in recent interviews that his country's armed forces had been slow to adapt after the end of the Cold War and the collapse of the former Soviet Union.

The German proposals echo others in Europe. Last week Britain announced a cut in its military budget of 7.5 percent, adjusted for inflation, over the next four years. The army will decrease from 102,000 to 95,000, and the navy's destroyer and frigate fleet are to be cut from 23 to 10. France plans to save €3.5 billion in military spending by 2013. Italy has decided to buy fewer frigates.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2010/10/25/world/europe/25iht-germany.html?ref=world>

## **Slots for soldiers go unfilled at West Point**

By John Ryan - Staff writer, Army Times  
Oct 9, 2010

The U.S. Military Academy hasn't filled all its congressionally reserved slots for soldiers.

For the most recent class, graduating in 2014, West Point admitted 69 enlisted soldiers — 40 percent of

the 170 slots authorized by Congress.

Despite recruitment efforts and the backing from the chain of command, old obstacles remain. Easley cites the academy's tough acceptance standards, which consider only active-duty soldiers between 17 or 23 years old who are without dependents, and are sponsored by their commanders. The minimum standardized test scores — around 22 for the ACT or 1,500 on the new SAT — pose a major hurdle for troops who have been away from academics for a few years, Easley said.

Not enough soldiers sign up for free college entry exams, study at post education centers and attain above-average scores. Many soldiers need high standardized test scores and exemplary soldier performance to overshadow below-average high school grades.

Some soldiers don't apply because they fear approaching a commander for a recommendation, are afraid of failing the rigorous courses, or just don't want to lose their independence. Other combat veterans, Easley said, refuse based on an idea that at West Point "a high school kid with a year of college" will yell at them.

West Point accepted just 69 soldiers — less than 5 percent — of more than 1,500 applications, for the class of 2014. Almost two-thirds of them were required to first complete a year at the U.S. Military Academy prep school at Fort Monmouth, N.J., to brush up on schoolwork. Just 18 soldiers were admitted directly.

<http://www.armytimes.com/news/2010/10/army-west-point-campaign-to-attract-cadets-100710w/>

epitaph for this edition of "Truth in Recruiting"

**"take your pleasantries  
your generalizations, good intentions,  
sweet words, and half-truths,  
put them in a box.  
drape a flag over it.  
and bury it with the rest of the dead."**

**- Orrin Gorman McClellan, veteran/poet  
March 22, 1985 - May 18, 2010, death by suicide**

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The Tulsa Peace Fellowship's Counter-Recruitment Update/Digest, for Jan 2010  
*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 civic-sector organization, loosely affiliated with the Unitarian Universalist Church of the Restoration, north side of Tulsa.*

### **"Waging Peace One Person at a Time".**

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](http://www.nnomy.org/joomla/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=216&Itemid=91)

Tulsa Peace Fellowship is open to members of third parties, progressives, Democrats, Republicans, libertarians, etc. 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](mailto:tulsapeace@yahoogroups.com) (since 2002). Go to: <http://groups.yahoo.com/> and search for "tulsapeace"

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.

**The next monthly anti-war demo in Tulsa** is scheduled for  
**Saturday Nov 6th 2010, 12noon to 2pm, with the theme: "U.S. Out of Afghanistan Now!"**  
Details online: <http://tulsapeacefellowship.ning.com/events/out-of-afghanistan-1>

The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Fellowship will be held  
**Thursday, Nov 11th 2010, 6:15 PM – 7:30 PM @ the UU Church of the Restoration, in Tulsa, just north of downtown**

--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](http://ImpeachOK1.org), [TulsaTruth.org](http://TulsaTruth.org), the Center for Racial Justice in Tulsa, the Tulsa Interfaith Alliance, Pax Christi, and the Quakers

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: 753 (including 687 subscribers through Yahoogroups, 64 subscribers

through Ning, our preferred network since 2009)

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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**

## **THE 10 REASONS why you should NOT enlist**

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>

*further information*

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