

Truth in Recruiting

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

lead story

upcoming event:

National Counter-Recruitment and Demilitarization Conference, in Chicago, July 17-19 2009

--if you donate to sponsor youth, please mention that you are member of the Tulsa Peace Fellowship

--letter from NNOMY Steering Committee (below), to the Tulsa Peace Fellowship, member organization

quote:

For recruiters, "school ownership" is the goal. They present themselves as "counselors" and are free to roam the halls and socialize with students. In many school recruiters use class time to recruit. In most schools there is no one to help students evaluate what recruiters are promising.

~Janine Schwab, NNOMY Steering Committee, National Network in Opposition to the **Militarization of Youth**

page one:

'Army simulation' tour cost taxpayers \$9.8 million in 2007; Kucinich wants funds pulled

--outlandish military recruitment budget contrasts starkly with grassroots, citizen-sponsored counter-recruitment effort (above)

--Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) calls latest high-tech army games "deceptive" e.g. sanitizing war, denying risk of death, etc.

BEWARE:

If you or your child participates in Army programs, or enters data into an Army computer program, or fulfills an Army test, the military recruiters will soon be knocking on your door.

House Passes Volunteerism Bill Critics Call Pricey, Forced Service

--The legislation will expand the AmeriCorps program, as an alternative to military enlistment

fact:

AmeriCorps volunteers typically receive stipends and college scholarships when they complete one of the several available programs. For example, a participant in the National Civilian Community Corps, which is a 10-month residential commitment, now receives \$4,000 in living expenses and a \$4,475 in money toward school.

file under: Military-Industrial-Congressional complex

Wartime Troop Brain Injuries Could Reach 360,000

--signature injury of modern urban warfare, during U.S. occupation of Iraq, 2003-2009

Ten excellent reasons not to join the military:

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

related book review:

Brutally honest, devastatingly accurate, hard-hitting memoir, *The Unmaking of a Marine*, by Marine Capt. Tyler E. Boudreau

--review by by Jason Leopold, in *Dissident Voice*, addresses **PTSD controversy**

quote:

“To say I was duped is not sufficient to lighten the load.”

~former Marine Capt. Tyler E. Boudreau, who resigned his Marine Corps commission in 2005, after 12 years of active service, due to reservations about serving in Iraq

Jobless rate at 11.2% for veterans of Iraq, Afghanistan; 15% unemployment for youngest veterans

--The jobless rate for veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, 18 and older, rose 4% in the past year

--Unemployment among the youngest of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, those ages 20 to 24, reached 15% in February

"I was shocked when a job-placement worker told me that some employers consider a military record almost like having 'a felony.' People just frown upon us nowadays, thinking we're all flying-off-the-handle crazy guys."

~Robert Pearson, 23, of Minneapolis, former paratrooper who served in Afghanistan

Ten excellent reasons not to join the military:

i.. You May Find It Difficult to Leave the Military, as You Will Not Learn a Marketable Skill

page two:

file under: Disabled American Veterans (DAV)

Pentagon knowingly exposed troops to cancer-causing chemicals

quote:

"A lot of soldiers in my old unit have asthma and bronchitis. I lived 50 feet from the burn pit. I used to wake up in the middle of the night choking on it. I've seen four or five cardiologists, but no one can tell me what's wrong with my heart."

~staff sergeant stationed in Iraq in 2005, at Balad Airbase, a large US military base about 70 kilometers north of Baghdad, in Iraq

file under: sadomasochistic sub-culture

Judge says its okay for Navy to spray recruits with banned chemical

file under: Milo Minderbender strikes again

US officer charged with stealing Iraq relief funds

--Michael Dung Nguyen is alleged to have stolen more than \$690,000 of U.S. taxpayer money

follow up: Katie Couric dossier on sexual assaults committed by U.S. Military
Female troops face threat of sexual abuse by comrades as "moral waivers" increase.
file under: risks involved in lowering recruitment standards

factoid:

In order to buoy recruitment numbers, the military is increasingly enlisting military personnel with felony convictions for crimes like rape and sexual assault.

Officer with TB who refused to deploy is convicted

--commanders cared more about filling their ranks than about health of injured & ailing soldier

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file under: Reasons not to join up #2 "You may get hurt"

One-third of deaths in Britain's military caused by accidents

file under: psychotic sub-culture

Commanding officers warned over bullying tactics

file under: Reasons not to join up #11: "Your family life may never be the same"

Sesame Street shows struggles of troops, families

epigraph for this issue of "Truth in Recruiting":

"Distorted history boasts of bellicose glory and seduces the souls of boys to seek mystical bliss in bloodshed and in battles."

— Alfred Adler

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--letter from NNOMY Steering Committee to the Tulsa Peace Fellowship, member organization

"Stopping War Where It Begins: Organizing Against Militarism in Our Schools"

Feb 18, 2009

As a member of NNOMY I hope that you are aware that we are organizing an "It Our World - Change

It!" National Counter-Recruitment & Demilitarization Conference,
at Roosevelt University in Chicago, to be held July 17-19 2009.

We hope that your group is already thinking about how some of your members can attend. Maybe you have been thinking of ways to help us reach our goal of **sponsoring 100 youth** to attend the conference!

Please consider helping out financially by becoming a sponsor of this conference. In a sense, you're already sponsoring this event because you've helped lay the groundwork for us to move forward in bringing together a broad cross-section of people to share skills and develop relationships needed to build permanent resistance to militarism in American society. You've made it possible for us with your leadership and steadfast resistance to war and aggression.

Any contribution you are able to give will help us bring in youth from every corner of the country. We already have commitments from organizers to bring busloads of young people to participate, but raising money to fund youth **participation from the South and other heavily-recruited areas** is critical to our success. We are lucky that, with Food Not Bombs supplying meals, we're already able to subsidize room and board for the weekend for as many as 100 students from across the country. But transportation is very expensive, even more so because we aim to have a broad cross-section of youth.

If every member of your group could contribute between \$10 and \$50, we will be well on our way towards our goal... If every NNOMY group were able to raise \$250, each member group could sponsor roughly half the cost of transporting one youth to the conference. Youth will join parents, educators, veterans, artists, social justice activists and others for practical training on counter-recruitment, legislative challenges and public pressure to promote non-military alternatives.

Even though the Bush era is over, you share our understanding that these are still critical times for the counter-recruitment movement. President Obama is committed to increasing the military by 92,000 additional soldiers and expanding the war in Afghanistan.

For recruiters, "school ownership" is the goal. They present themselves as "counselors" and are free to roam the halls and socialize with students. In many schools recruiters use class time to recruit. In most schools there is no one to help students evaluate what recruiters are promising.

In American schools every year 650,000 high school students take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB test). This military test is nothing but a recruiting tool. Half a million students are enrolled in JROTC programs while other nonmilitary programs are cut.

But the issue isn't only counter-recruitment. It's about militarism. Military attitudes and values like obedience, conformity and the use of force to solve problems have seeped into every area of our society. One result is that we allow thousands of billions of dollars to be spent on war and the military while our communities face crushing cuts in education, health care and other essential services. It is crucial that all of us who want to do something about militarism gather from this weekend of skill sharing, strategizing and solidarity.

We need to secure these funds as soon as possible, so that youth can make plans to attend. For more information, check our website at www.nnomy.org or call 312-427-2533. NNOMY is a tax deductible 501(c)3 organization. Checks can be made out to NNOMY/IHC and sent to NNOMY P.O. Box 3012 South Pasadena, CA 91031.

Hope to see you there! *We'll make history.*

NNOMY Steering Cttee

National Network Opposing the Militarization of Youth
P.O. Box 3012
South Pasadena, CA 91031
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312-427-2533
www.nnomy.org

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'Army simulation' tour cost taxpayers \$9.8 million in 2007; Kucinich wants funds pulled

Kucinich hits 'Virtual Army Experience' as 'deceptive'
by Stephen C. Webster
Thursday March 12, 2009

In real war, a "frag" does not earn more points or a higher ranking. It means something else entirely.*
And you don't respawn. Ever.

That's essentially the message carried by Congressman Dennis Kucinich in a letter to the leaders of the House Committee on Armed Services, urging them to pull funding for the Army's "deceptive recruitment" with its traveling VR simulation.

The popular, liberal representative's response was triggered by the latest "virtual reality" multi-player, squad-based tactical shooting video game.

"Although participants score points for shooting people in uniform and lose points for firing on noncombatants, no blood or carnage is ever seen in the simulation," writes the Ohio lawmaker and former presidential candidate. "The VAE shields participants from the realities of killing while glorifying the taking of human life in a thinly veiled attempt to recruit new soldiers. Making matters worse, **if a child wants to take part in the simulation, the Army collects his or her contact information**, as well as an assessment of the child's performance in the simulator.

"The VAE travels around the country to family oriented venues such as amusement parks, air shows and county fairs. When the VAE came to the Cleveland Air Show in 2008, I raised concerns and objections with the Army. Allowing children as young as thirteen years of age to participate in a simulation endorsed by the United States Government that **glorifies and sanitizes extreme violence** is

unacceptable."

"I had fun during the intense but short experience," summarized C-Net writer Will Greenwald in 2007. "Unfortunately, it didn't really present the same level of risk most video games offer. As far as I could tell, **nobody in the simulation died or got hurt**. Sure, bullets flew and bombs exploded, but **nobody lost a life ...**"

Kucinich insisted that funds be pulled from the "Virtual Army Experience," noting that in 2007 taxpayers footed a \$9.8 million bill for the program. Thursday morning, Kucinich's staff issued a memo calling on the committee to "eliminate deceptive Army recruitment."

http://rawstory.com/news/2008/Kucinich_hits_virtual_Army_experience_as_0312.html

*Fragging is a term from the Vietnam War, used primarily by U.S. military personnel, most commonly meaning to assassinate an unpopular officer of one's own fighting unit, often by means of a fragmentation grenade, hence the term. Fraggings are more commonly used as a term to define the friendly fire. Fraggings most often involved the murder of a commanding officer (C.O.) or a senior noncommissioned officer[citation needed] perceived as unpopular, harsh, inept, or overzealous. Many soldiers were not overly keen to go into harm's way, and preferred leaders with a similar sense of self-preservation. If a C.O. was incompetent, fragging the officer was considered a means to the end of self-preservation for the men serving under him. Fraggings might also occur if a commander freely took on dangerous or suicidal missions, especially if he was deemed to be seeking glory for himself.

The very idea of fragging served to warn junior officers to avoid the ire of their enlisted men through recklessness, cowardice, or lack of leadership. Junior officers in turn could arrange the murder of senior officers when finding them incompetent or wasting their men's lives needlessly. Underground GI newspapers sometimes listed bounties offered by units for the fragging of unpopular commanding officers. During the Vietnam War, fragging was reportedly common. There are documented cases of at least 230 American officers killed by their own troops, and as many as 1,400 other officers' deaths could not be explained. During the Iraq war: Captain Phillip Esposito and 1st Lieutenant Louis Allen were killed on June 7, 2005 by a Claymore mine deliberately placed on Esposito's office window at Forward Operating Base Danger in Tikrit, Iraq. The unit's supply sergeant was charged with the murder, but was subsequently acquitted at court martial.

source: [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frag_\(military\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Frag_(military))

House Passes Volunteerism Bill

Critics Call It Pricey, Forced Service

The legislation will expand the 1993 AmeriCorps program to match the renewed interest in national service since President Obama's election, which backers say is crucial in tough economic times.

By Kelley Beaucar Vlahos

FOXNews.com

Wednesday, March 18, 2009

WASHINGTON -- The House of Representatives passed a measure Wednesday that supporters are calling the most sweeping reform of nationally-backed volunteer programs since AmeriCorps. But some opponents are strongly criticizing the legislation, calling it expensive indoctrination and forced advocacy.

The Generations Invigorating Volunteerism and Education Act, known as the GIVE Act -- sponsored by Reps. Carolyn McCarthy, D-N.Y., and George Miller, D-Calif. -- was approved by a 321-105 vote and now goes to the Senate.

The legislation, slated to cost \$6 billion over five years, would create 175,000 "new service opportunities" under AmeriCorps, bringing the number of participants in the national volunteer program to 250,000. It would also create additional "corps" to expand the reach of volunteerism into new sectors, including a Clean Energy Corps, Education Corps, Healthy Futures Corps and Veterans Service Corps, and it expands the National Civilian Community Corps to focus on additional areas like disaster relief and energy conservation.

It is the first time the AmeriCorps program, which was created by President Clinton in 1993, will be reauthorized, and supporters say it will have additional funding to match the renewed interest in national service since President Obama's election and the acute need for volunteerism and charity in tough economic times.

"National and community service can help make Americans a part of the solution to get our country through this economic crisis. I hope the House and Senate will join us in moving as quickly as possible to help President Obama sign this critical bill into law," Miller, chairman of the education committee, said after the bill was passed.

But the bill's opponents -- and there are only a few in Congress -- say it could cram ideology down the throats of young "volunteers," many of whom could be forced into service since the bill creates a "Congressional Commission on Civic Service."

The bipartisan commission will be tasked with exploring a number of topics, including "whether a workable, fair and reasonable **mandatory service requirement** for all able young people could be developed and how such a requirement could be implemented in a manner that would strengthen the social fabric of the nation."

"It's ridiculous to suggest that our bill includes any effort to make service a mandatory requirement. All of the opportunities our bill provides to Americans are voluntary. Americans are proud of their service and volunteering and their interest in it is only growing, especially in the face of this crisis. Our legislation recognizes that more Americans than ever want to serve and give back and provides them with more opportunities to be able to do so," Miller spokeswoman Rachel Racusen said in an e-mail to FOXNews.com.

In addition to all of the funding that goes to organizations in the forms of grants and administrative costs, AmeriCorps volunteers typically receive stipends and college scholarships when they complete one of the several available programs.

For example, a participant in the National Civilian Community Corps, which is a 10-month residential commitment, now receives \$4,000 in living expenses and a \$4,475 in money toward school. That conceivably would increase under the new legislation.

But regardless of the budget estimate, the financial benefits outweigh the cost, Racusen said.

"The millions of Americans who volunteered in 2007 generated benefits worth \$158 billion," Racusen said. "A cost-benefit analysis of AmeriCorps, for example, shows that every dollar invested in the programs yields almost \$4 in direct, measurable benefits. Investing in service helps low-income students achieve in school, prepares future workers for green jobs, provides assistance to veterans returning from war, and rebuilds homes and communities after disasters."

Many of the provisions in the GIVE Act can be found in Obama's 2010 fiscal year budget blueprint issued in February. The administration proposes \$1.3 billion for the Corporation for National and Community Service, which administers AmeriCorps. CNCS received an estimated \$260 million in fiscal 2009.

Supporters say critics are a minority who prefer to agitate than assist.

"Resistance to expanded public service programs can be expected from the ideologically sclerotic, those who occupy the negative ground between government as the problem and government as our enemy," former Democratic Colorado Sen. Gary Hart wrote in a recent op-ed on the Huffington Post Web site.

The Senate is mulling over a similar piece of legislation, the "Serve America Act," sponsored by Sens. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, and Ted Kennedy, D-Mass. It was given a special endorsement by the president in his address before Congress on Feb. 24.

<http://www.foxnews.com/politics/2009/03/18/house-readies-passage-volunteerism-critics-pricey-forced-service/>

Wartime Troop Brain Injuries Could Reach 360,000

file under: Military Industrial Complex

By Pauline Jelinek | *LATimes*

The number of U.S. troops who have suffered wartime brain injuries may be as high as 360,000 and could cast more attention on such injuries among civilians, Defense Department doctors said Wednesday.

The estimate of the number injured — the vast majority of them suffering concussions — represents 20 percent of the roughly 1.8 million men and women who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, where blast injuries are common from roadside bombs and other explosives, the doctors said.

The estimate came in a Pentagon news conference on activities planned this month to bring attention to brain injuries. The doctors said the number could be as low as 180,000, based on estimates that between 10 percent and 20 percent of troops might have received such injuries.

The previous high estimate offered publicly was 320,000 in a study released a year ago by the private Rand Corp. It was based on about 1.6 million who had done tours of duty in the wars from late 2001.

Though so-called "traumatic" brain injury can range from a mild form such as concussions to severe forms with penetrating head wounds, officials said the majority of injuries among troops are the mild form.

The overwhelming majority heal — and heal without treatment — but an estimated 45,000 to 90,000 troops have suffered more severe and lasting symptoms, said Brig. Gen. Loree Sutton, the head of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury.

The Army alone spent \$242 million last year for staff, facilities and programs to serve troops with brain injuries, said Lt. Col. Lynne M. Lowe of the Army surgeon general's office.

Sutton said that, as in previous wars, the research and other work being done by the military will eventually benefit the civilian world. Whether the injuries occur while people ride bicycles, play football, skateboard or ski, "we know that this is an issue across the country," she said.

"In the past ... it was difficult to get this on the radar screen," said Dr. James Kelly, director of the National Intrepid Center for brain injuries and psychological health. "Brain injury was not recognized as a problem ... of any consequence and was, especially in the sports community, often dismissed or trivialized."

"I think that now you're seeing it being taken very seriously," Kelly said. "The wartime experience has been a big part of that."

<http://www.sfgate.com/cgi-bin/article.cgi?file=/n/a/2009/03/04/national/w115714S33.DTL>

related book review:

Brutally honest, devastatingly accurate, hard-hitting memoir,

***The Unmaking of a Marine*, by Marine Capt. Tyler E. Boudreau**

--review by Jason Leopold, available online in *Dissident Voice*, addresses PTSD controversy

Last year, Boudreau and his colleagues formed the nonprofit organization Iraq Veterans' Refugee Aid Association (IVRAA) in response to inadequate measures by the U.S. government to effectively deal with the PTSD crisis.

<http://www.dissidentvoice.org/2009/03/marine-capt-tyler-e-boudreau-puts-a-human-face-on-war/>

Jobless rate at 11.2% for veterans of Iraq, Afghanistan

By Gregg Zoroya, USA TODAY, March 20 2009

WASHINGTON — The economic downturn is hitting Iraq and Afghanistan veterans harder than other workers — one in nine are now out of work — and may be encouraging some troops to remain in the service, according to Labor Department records and military officials.

The 11.2% jobless rate for veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan and who are 18 and older rose 4 percentage points in the past year. That's significantly higher than the corresponding 8.8% rate for non-veterans in the same age group, says Labor Department economist Jim Walker.

Army records show the service has hit 152% of its re-enlistment goal this year. "Obviously the economy plays a big role in people's decisions," says Lt. Col. Christopher Garver, an Army spokesman.

Some soldiers are re-enlisting specifically because of the poor civilian job market, says Sgt. 1st Class Julius Kelley, a career counselor at Fort Campbell, Ky.

The market is tough outside the Army. Unemployment among the youngest of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans, those ages 20 to 24, reached 15% in February, records show. That compares with 13.8% for the same age group of non-veterans. Some government jobs offer preference to veterans by giving them extra points on civil service exams. However, there is no evidence this is having much effect on unemployment.

Young veterans, Walker says, often have trouble "translating their military skills into skills on their résumé that employers recognized."

The total number of unemployed veterans of the two wars — about 170,000 — is about the same as the number of U.S. troops deployed to those wars.

Iraq and Afghanistan veterans enter the workforce at a disadvantage, says Justin Brown, a Veterans of Foreign Wars specialist in veterans' economic issues. "If you served in the military, you're disconnected from the civilian workforce, you don't have contacts that a civilian person has," he says.

The least the country can do, Brown says, is help veterans find jobs so "they come home and they're not living in the streets, unemployed, homeless or in bankruptcy."

Robert Pearson, 23, of Minneapolis, is a former paratrooper who served in Afghanistan. He says it's hard to find work as a human resources manager in order to use the skills he learned managing soldiers as a combat team leader.

He says he was shocked when a job-placement worker told him that some employers consider a military record almost like having "a felony."

"People just frown upon us nowadays, thinking we're all flying-off-the-handle crazy guys," says Pearson, who has a bachelor's degree in business management. "They don't even give us a chance."

http://www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2009-03-19-jobless-veterans_N.htm?loc=interstitialskip

Pentagon knowingly exposed troops to cancer-causing chemicals

John Byrne

Tuesday March 10, 2009

A newly leaked military document appears to show the Pentagon knowingly exposed US troops to toxic chemicals that cause cancer, while publicly downplaying the risks exposure might cause.

The document, written by an environmental engineering flight commander in December of 2006 and posted on Wikileaks (PDF) on Tuesday, details the risks posed to US troops in Iraq by burning garbage at a US airbase. It enumerates myriad risks posed by the practice and identifies various carcinogens released by incinerating waste in open-air pits.

The leaked report was signed off by the chief for the Air Force's aeromedical services. Its subject is Balad Airbase, a large US military base about 70 kilometers north of Baghdad.

"In my professional opinion, the known carcinogens and respiratory sensitizers released into the atmosphere by the burn pit present both an acute and a chronic health hazard to our troops and the local population," Aeromedical chief Lt. Colonel James Elliott wrote.

According to the document, a US Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventative Medicine investigator said Balad's burn pit was "the worst environmental site I have ever personally visited," including "10 years working... clean-up for the Army."

Soldiers complain of chronic conditions

An Army Times investigation in 2008 found anecdotal evidence of health conditions caused by exposure to the fires.

"Though military officials say there are no known long-term effects from exposure to burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan, more than 100 service members have come forward to Military Times and Disabled American Veterans with strikingly similar symptoms: chronic bronchitis, asthma, sleep apnea, chronic coughs and allergy-like symptoms. Several also have cited heart problems, lymphoma and leukemia," Army Times reporter Kelley Kennedy wrote in December.

"A lot of soldiers in my old unit have asthma and bronchitis," a staff sergeant stationed in Iraq in 2005 was quoted as saying. "I lived 50 feet from the burn pit. I used to wake up in the middle of the night choking on it."

"I've seen four or five cardiologists, but no one can tell me what's wrong with my heart," the staff sergeant added.

"It seems like most of these cases, anecdotally, are people who were exposed heavily to the burn pits and they got sick quickly," Kerry Baker, legislative director for Disabled American Veterans, said. "There must be some areas that take a hit much harder than others. Everything seems to be pointing opposite to what the Defense Department is saying."

http://rawstory.com/news/2008/Pentagon_knowingly_exposed_troops_to_cancercausing_0310.html

Judge says its okay for Navy to spray recruits with banned chemical

John Byrne

Published: Monday March 16, 2009

The Navy can spray recruits in the eyes with pepper spray, even though it has been linked to death and is banned during warfare by international law, a federal judge ruled Friday.

The decision, revealed by the blog of Legal Times, is in response to a case brought by naval officers, who argued that the practice of "subjecting trainees to a direct shot of pepper spray was dangerous and deprived them of their constitutional rights to due process and equal protection. They said the Navy could rely on less intense training methods, such as smearing a small amount of the spray on the skin beneath the eyes, or forcing trainees to walk through a room that had previously been sprayed."

But Judge Richard Leon of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia said he wasn't in a position to overrule the Navy's decision to continue the practice.

"The use of direct-impact [pepper] spray indisputably risks injury, but the agency decided that this risk was offset by the benefits of training," Leon wrote. "Plaintiffs allegation that the action was 'clearly not the product of reasoned thought,' is little more than a legal conclusion and provides insufficient support for its claim that the agency decision was arbitrary and capricious."

Pepper spray is made from oleoresin capsicum, an oily extract of pepper plants. According to the American Civil Liberties Union, there have been 27 deaths among people sprayed in California alone since 1993, although the deaths were not directly linked to the chemical. In particular, it can be fatal for individuals with asthma.

Pepper spray is banned for use in war by Article I.5 of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The "spray may contain water, alcohols, or organic solvents as liquid carriers; and nitrogen, carbon dioxide, or halogenated hydrocarbons (such as Freon, tetrachloroethylene, and methylene chloride) as propellants to discharge the canister contents," the North Carolina Medical journal wrote in a study. "Inhalation of high doses of some of these chemicals can produce adverse cardiac, respiratory, and neurologic effects, including arrhythmias and sudden death."

According to Legal Times, the judge threw out the navy officers' constitutional arguments as well, who tried to make the outlandish claim that using pepper spray didn't "shock the conscience," even though it's banned for use in warfare by the chemical weapons convention.

http://rawstory.com/news/2008/Judge_says_its_okay_for_Navy_0316.html

US officer charged with stealing Iraq relief funds

Thu Mar 5, 2009

WASHINGTON (AFP) – A US military officer was charged Thursday with stealing hundreds of thousands of dollars in cash intended for relief and reconstruction efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan, the Department of Justice said.

While stationed in Iraq between April 2007 and February 2009, 28-year-old Michael Dung Nguyen is alleged to have stolen more than 690,000 dollars in US currency, sending it back to his home in northwestern Oregon state, the department said in a statement.

The funds were swiped from the Commander's Emergency Response Program (CERP), designed to empower local commanders in Iraq and Afghanistan to respond to humanitarian relief and reconstruction efforts.

Nguyen has been officially charged on three counts -- theft of government property, money laundering and structuring financial transaction -- and if convicted could face 30 years in prison and a 500,000-dollar fine.

http://news.yahoo.com/s/afp/20090305/pl_afp/usiraqmilitarycrimetheft

Does Army Policy Endanger Female Soldiers?

Wednesday 18 March 2009

by: Katie Couric | Visit article original @ CBS News



Female US soldiers from the 1st Cavalry Division ready their equipment before joining a patrol in Baghdad, Iraq during 2004. (Photo: AFP)

Female troops face threat of sexual abuse by comrades as "moral waivers" increase.

Deployed as a combat medic, Wendy was thrust into a chaotic and increasingly violent situation. Not long after, she experienced another kind of trauma, when she was assaulted by a fellow soldier in her barracks while she was sleeping.

"He started pushing himself on me," she said. "And I wasn't having it. So I started punching him and I actually kicked him in the groin."

Afraid to go to her Command, she took extra precautions - locking her room with a deadbolt, traveling in pairs. But just weeks later, she found herself fending off the sexual advances of a doctor she worked with in the operating room. Again, she didn't report it.

"He was a doctor, he was a surgeon. And who were they going to believe?" she says today.

Wendy's experience is not unusual. Since 2002, the Miles Foundation, a private non-profit that tracks sexual assault within the armed forces, has received nearly 1,200 confidential reports of sexual assaults in the Central Command Area of Responsibility, which includes Iraq and Afghanistan. Those reports have increased as much as 30 percent a year.

Part of the problem for the increase, critics say, is the quality of today's recruit.

The military is increasingly issuing something called "moral waivers," so they can enlist military personnel with felony convictions for crimes like rape and sexual assault.

<http://www.truthout.org/032109D>

Officer with TB who refused to deploy is convicted

Stars and Stripes

Mideast edition, Friday, March 27, 2009

An Army chief warrant officer, who argued his health problems should have prevented him from going to war, has been convicted of failing to deploy to Iraq and disobeying an order, according to a USA Today report.

Adisa "A.J." Aiyetoro — a 19-year veteran who has active tuberculosis and suffers from back injuries — was sentenced to six months in jail and ordered to forfeit \$1,300 a month for the next six months after his conviction at a court-martial this week in Fort Richardson, Alaska, USA Today reported Thursday.

Aiyetoro, an armament maintenance technician, began developing chronic, debilitating back pain after a previous deployment, according to an earlier USA Today report.

An Army surgeon classified him as non-deployable on Aug. 25, 2007, saying Aiyetoro was unable to wear his body armor. But a revised evaluation a few days later found that he could wear body armor but "only during mission-essential movements," USA Today reported.

Since then, doctors have changed Aiyetoro's medical status, again. In February, doctors concluded that Aiyetoro needed more tests on his back and he needs additional tests to determine whether his tuberculosis is active, according to court records.

Aiyetoro told USA Today that commanders cared more about filling their ranks than about him getting better when they ordered him to deploy in September.

The command offered to allow him to resign, but Aiyetoro chose a court-martial instead, according to the USA Today report.

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One-third of deaths in Britain's military caused by accidents

Internal documents reveal MoD must 'improve significantly' to counter health and safety failings

By Brian Brady and Jonathan Owen

Sunday, 22 February 2009

A third of deaths in the British military happen because of safety failures, the Ministry of Defence has admitted. Figures obtained by The Independent on Sunday reveal that nearly 800 service personnel have been killed over 10 years in accidents ranging from car crashes to electric shocks.

The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 removes the MoD's Crown immunity in health and safety matters. Senior defence officials are now open to the same risk of prosecution as employers in the private and public sectors.

At a meeting of the MoD board last summer, Sir Ian Andrews, a senior official at the department, told colleagues: "Examination of the figures on deaths in the armed forces between 2001 and 2008 showed that one in three of the total number recorded were caused by H&S [health & safety] failures ... Analysis of the data on fatalities, which overall had worsened during the reporting period, suggested the department had to improve significantly."

Officials were also warned that analysis of car and lorry crashes showed the department had "significant weaknesses in this area".

MoD figures reveal that 201 members of the armed forces died in 2007; 73 of the fatalities were classed as "deaths due to violence", including those killed in action. However, 80 of these deaths were caused by accidents, 50 of them in "land transport accidents".

Among the other causes were **adventure training, drowning and parachute failure. Seven were killed by "rotary blade aircraft"**. Between 1998 and 2007, almost 800 people died in such accidents.

Peter Brierley, whose son Shaun died in a Land Rover crash in Kuwait in 2003, said a series of failures led to the tragedy. The inquest into the death of Lance Corporal Brierley, 29, heard that he did not see a large lump of tarmac in the road because infrared equipment intended to deter friendly fire had been fitted over one headlight. "I think they have got a real problem with preventing accidents across the board," Mr Brierley said. "Shaun's case showed there is a real problem with the maintenance of their vehicles."

The ministry admitted yesterday that the number of personnel suffering from non-freezing cold injury (NFCI), or “trench foot”, has more than trebled since 2000 – to more than 300 cases last year.

The injury, caused by prolonged exposure of the feet to cold and wet conditions, can cause pain, numbness, and permanent muscle and nerve damage. In some cases, treatment can require amputation.

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/onethird-of-deaths-in-britain8217s-military-caused-by-accidents-1628935.html>

Commanding officers warned over bullying

By Kim Sengupta
Thursday, 5 March 2009

Commanding officers in the [British] military will find their careers "on the line" if they fail to investigate complaints about bullying, harassment and discrimination from the ranks, the ombudsman for the armed forces warned yesterday. The Ministry of Defence needs to undertake a "step change" in dealing with grievances from military personnel, said Susan Atkins, the Service Complaints Commissioner.

"Currently the focus is on individual redress not organisational improvement. It needs to be both," she said. "A complaint needs to be on a commanding officer's dashboard – an indication that something needs to be investigated and, if necessary, fixed to ensure his or her team can perform smoothly."

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/commanding-officers-warned-over-bullying-1637722.html>

Reasons not to join up #11 "Your family may never be the same"

Sesame Street shows struggles of troops, families

By Chuck Crumbo | *The State*

The Sesame Street show “Coming Home: Military Families Cope with Change” will air on at 8 p.m. Wednesday on South Carolina’s statewide public TV network.

Hosted by Queen Latifah and Sesame Street characters, the half-hour program tells stories of service members who return home with injuries — both visible and invisible — and offers a glimpse how they restitch the fabric of their lives.

It’s apparent from listening to parent and child that each have to deal with fear. The soldier worries if he can ever be a parent again; the child worries if their father can ever hug them again.

Anderson, a member of the S.C. Army National Guard who deployed to Iraq with Guard units in 1991 and 2003, said the show tackles head-on the problems troops and families face when they're reunited after a deployment.

Going to war is a life-changing event for both the soldier and family, and more needs to be done to help both, Anderson said.

<http://www.mcclatchydc.com/200/story/65169.html>

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

who we are:

The website for the **Tulsa Peace Fellowship** is:
www.tulsapeacefellowship.org

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

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

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

Tulsa Peace Fellowship is non-partisan, and is open to 3rd parties, progressive Dems, libertarians, etc. TPF is the activist wing of the peace movement in Eastern Oklahoma **"Waging Peace One Person at a Time"**.

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

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

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

The next regular meeting of the Fellowship will be held

on Thursday, April 9 2009, 6:15 PM – 7:30 PM

--including members from other local non-partisan groups such as the Tulsa chapter of "Season for Non-Violence," the Tulsa University chapter of Amnesty International, ImpeachOK1.org, TulsaTruth.org, the Center for Racial Justice in Tulsa, and the Tulsa Interfaith Alliance.
--including a meeting of the counter-recruitment campaign activists

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

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

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

You must sign in to yahoo! groups to see the archived "message history"

TPF messages have been archived online since 2002

TPF was founded some 30 years ago.

Current membership online: 701 subscribers

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further information

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Strength Through Peace: Out of Iraq

Accountability: Indict & Imprison Bush & Cheney for War Crimes

JROTC: Out of Our Schools

Schools as Military-Free Zones

Alternatives to War: Department of Peace & cabinet-level Secretary of Peace

dopcampaign_tulsaconnection@cox.net

armywrong@cox.net

THE 10 REASONS

Ten excellent reasons not to join the military:

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

for more info:

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