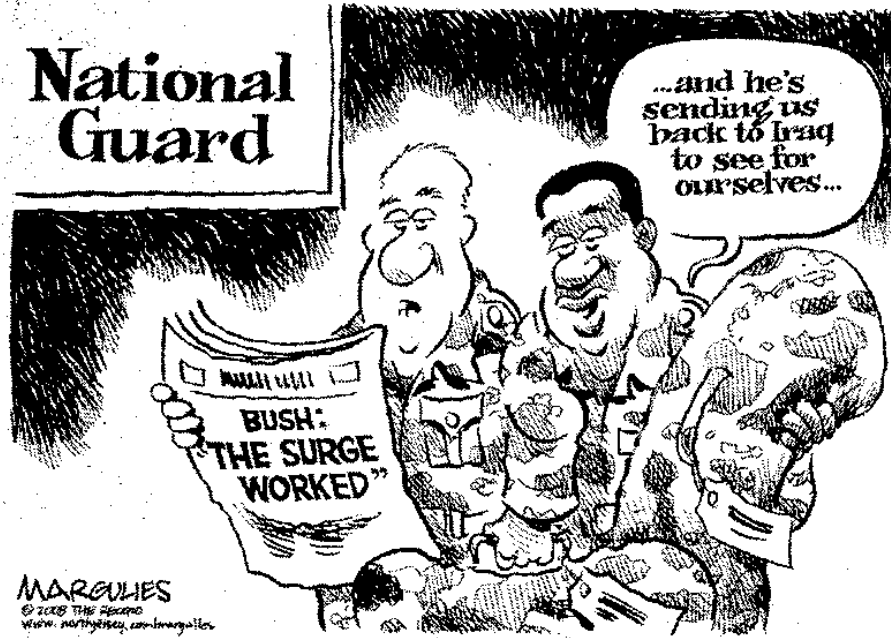


## GI SPECIAL 6J6:



# A Secretive Family: Jeff Sharlet Shines A Light On “Power, Politics and Fundamentalism’s Shadow Elite” “God And Money Are The Great Levers Of American Power”

# “Deals Are Made And Alliances Forged At Prayer Sessions Around Washington”

**Review: The Family: Power, Politics and Fundamentalism’s Shadow Elite, by Jeff Sharlet; HarperCollins, June 2008.**

May 31, 2008 By David Costello, The Courier Mail

GOD and money are the great levers of American power. Deals are made and alliances forged at prayer sessions around Washington.

Political redemption also comes through Jesus.

The disgraced Bill Clinton prayed with Billy Graham while others go to Chuck Colson, the Watergate jailbird who became America’s most celebrated evangelist. These men are known around the world.

**But author and academic Jeff Sharlet says they do not have the clout or connections of Doug Coe, the leader of a secretive fundamentalist group known simply as the Family. That is a big call given that Coe is “off the radar” and essentially invisible as a mover and shaker.**

Although the organisation has been around since 1935, he is best known as the organiser of the National Prayer Breakfast, held in Washington each February.

But Sharlet’s expose, which combines investigative journalism and history, is intriguing, startling and ultimately convincing.

**Coe and his followers are “avant-garde” fundamentalists who target Washington’s elites by setting up prayer cells around congressmen and generals. There are no passwords or secret handshakes but members are discreet and told not to commit deliberations or deals to paper.**

**The network extends to pro-American foreign leaders, some of them dictators. The late Indonesian president Suharto and Somalia’s bloodthirsty strongman Siad Barre were “brothers” of the Family.**

**They prayed with congressmen, oilmen and arms dealers. Later some lucrative business was done.**

The scary part is that Coe admires the leadership models of Adolf Hitler, Mao Zedong and even Osama bin Laden, who built disciplined organisations around a fanatical core.

There is, Sharlet writes, something disturbing about a ministry which ignores traditional Christian teaching and which celebrates power for the powerful.

**Domestically, the ministry works chiefly with conservative Republicans, but senior Democrats and even Catholics are within its orbit.**

**Hillary Clinton is regarded as a “fellow traveler” of the organisation and attends Coe’s weekly Senate prayer breakfasts.**

**Al Gore also counts Coe as a friend.**

**George W. Bush is not a member, but he was famously “born-again” at a prayer group set up by the Family.**

As an investigator, Sharlet is first-rate.

Much of the material here comes from interviews and a treasure-trove of confidential documents. He managed to infiltrate the Family on its ground floor by gaining admission to Ivanwald – a house in Arlington, Virginia, where some of the next generation of cadres is schooled. As a part-Jewish New Yorker, Sharlet was an unlikely recruit among a crew of preppy, athletic young devotees who spend their time praying and playing endless scratch games of basketball.

The author is fascinated by a 1989 Coe speech in which the minister admired the fanaticism of Maoist Red Guards who were prepared to kill their parents rather than betray the cause.

It is this that sets the Family apart from mainstream conservative groups – such as the Southern Baptist Convention – which focus on opposing abortion, gay marriage and gun control. Coe’s followers, writes Sharlet, broadly support these stances but their eyes are on the big prize, a “world government under God”.

**Should anyone be worried about congressmen, judges and mayors who meet in prayer cells?**

**Sharlet says it does matter and points to what the organisation has achieved since it was founded by Norwegian immigrant Abraham Vereide in Seattle in 1935.**

Then it was called the Fellowship and it was an alliance of conservatives opposed to communism and labour unions. By 1944 Vereide’s prayer groups involved a third of the members of Congress.

During the Eisenhower presidency, he started the National Prayer Breakfast and expanded his influence into the military and the CIA. During the 1950s, Vereide worked with the Pentagon and the CIA on a worldwide anti-communism propaganda campaign and he supported US involvement in Vietnam.

Coe took over in the late 1960s and decided to go underground, as he “crafted ever more complex hierarchies behind the scenes”.

Sharlet is not an angry liberal and the tone of the book is balanced, reasonable and often good humored.

The author likes the young men at Ivanwald even as he wonders why the handsome young heterosexuals such as “Jeff C” were so overdosed on Jesus and running they had no time for women.

In some ways Sharlet admires fundamentalism and recognizes its place in American history – from the Mayflower to the “Great Awakening” of preacher Jonathan Edwards in 1735 and on to Bill Graham and the current flock of televangelists.

And he recognizes its resilience, noting that the scandals surrounding Ted Haggard and Jimmy Swaggart strengthen the faithful in a way that a forest fire clears the underbrush.

But his exasperation rises when he contemplates how Suharto and other dictators benefited from their Family connections. In 1970, Suharto had a meeting with a Senate prayer group attended by secretary of defence Melvin Laird. Over the next two decades, Family-linked congressmen backed arms sales to Indonesia even as its military invaded East Timor and slaughtered its civilians.

This, Sharlet writes, made them “brothers in blood”.

The author, who is editor of TheRevealer.org, first wrote about Ivanwald in 2003 for Harper’s magazine and there have been a smattering of articles about Coe and Vereide in newspapers over the years.

But it will give outsiders a better picture of US fundamentalism in its most pure and disturbing form.

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **War Hits Home**



Sgt. Luke Mason

September 25, 2008 By Carolea Hassard; Azle News

Texas Army National Guard Sgt. Anthony "Luke" Mason of Springtown, 37, died along with six other soldiers when a Chinook helicopter crashed in Iraq Sept. 18.

Mason leaves behind his wife, Melanie, and four daughters who range in age from 4 to 13.

Arrangements will be made by White's Funeral Home and the service will be at First Baptist Church in Springtown. A family friend will establish a memorial fund at First Bank both in Azle and Springtown.

Luke's brother, Wesley, and his sister, Annette Cihak, both Azle residents, remember their brother as a "good ole' boy" who loved nothing more than to rile folks for a laugh.

"He made a career out of making my life miserable," Annette said. "There was a lot of fun at my expense.

"Besides him holding me down and tickling me," Annette said, "if he could get me in the middle of a group of people and pick the most embarrassing thing (to reveal) and get me mad enough to yell at him, he'd smile."

"Occasionally he'd snooker me into egging it on too," Wesley confessed.

But "if he picked on you, he loved you," Wesley added.

Wesley, 31, and Annette, 35, are both younger than Luke.

Luke was born in Panama on Oct. 19, 1970, coming to the U.S. when he was about a year old, Annette said. He did most of his growing up in the Springtown and Azle areas. When Wes was nine, all three were adopted by their grandparents, Robert and Mary Irene Boynton of Springtown.

Wesley said Luke was always interested in doing mechanical work and ended up working for his father-in-law, who had served in the Air Force.

Before signing on with the National Guard, "he thought about it here and there," Wesley said, and decided he could serve his country by applying his mechanical knowledge to helicopters.

"He could do his part and go forward with something to look out for his wife and daughters," Wesley added.

Luke signed on with the National Guard about 12 years ago, he said. Luke served two tours in Iraq, one in 2003 and the other this year.

Wesley said his brother was very family oriented and even had started doing research on the family tree. Just a few years ago, he found himself talking to two long-lost half-brothers, J.B. and Ray, both of Springtown.

Always mechanically-minded, Luke seemed able to make anything run. Wesley recalled that when Luke worked at a Fort Worth bowling alley, his car got stolen at least three times. Each time, he'd find it, take it back and get it running again.

“When he traded it in (the dealer said) ‘All I need is the keys,’ and my brother handed him a screwdriver,” Wesley said with a laugh.

Another car legend involved a white sedan. When Luke picked Wesley up, he didn’t explain why a piece of wood was on the passenger floorboard.

“We were almost to Lake Worth and he said, ‘Don’t put your feet on the floorboard.’

“I lifted it up and there was a big hole,” Wesley said. “You could see the road. That’s just the way he was. He’d wait and see your expression before telling you stuff,” he said.

Wesley also remembered that Luke had very strong hands.

“I learned real quick that I couldn’t beat him, so I learned to weasel (and) became slippery. I’d get out and run and hide,” he said.

“I’d jump him instead,” Annette chimed in.

“It was all out of love,” Wesley said. “He was just that way. He’d say, ‘You wanna duke?’”

Wesley said Robert Boynton “wanted to say that he is proud of Luke. You always knew where you stood with him, and he didn’t just do things for you.”

Luke “loved his country, he loved his family very much and he had a lot of family that loved him,” Wesley added.

“I would also like to remember the soldiers he worked with that are still over there,” Wesley said, “because they’re going through a tough time also.

“And the other soldiers that were with him (in the crash), and their families – my heart goes out to them,” Wesley said.

Seven men died in the crash, which occurred about 60 miles west of Basra. Reports indicate the crash might have been caused by a malfunction.

The soldiers were assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 149th Aviation, 36th Combat Aviation Brigade from Grand Prairie. They were called to active duty on June 5.

The men included 1st Lt. Robert Vallejo, 28, from Richland Hills; Warrant Officer Corry Ardel Edwards, 38, from Kennedale; 1st Sgt. Julio Cesar Ordonez, 54, of San Antonio; and three from the Oklahoma National Guard, including Chief Warrant Officer Brady Rudolf, 37, of Oklahoma City; Sgt. Daniel Eshbaugh, 43, of Norman; and Cpl. Michael Thompson, 23, of Harrah.

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## **Charleston Soldier Killed In Iraq**



September 24, 2008 By Post and Courier's Nadine Parks, WSCFM

A former band drum major for Fort Dorchester, Matthew Taylor went to the Army recruiter's office the day after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. "He felt like he needed to do his part," his wife said. "He said that he needed to contribute in some way."

Army Staff Sgt. Matthew Joseph Taylor came home from Iraq this summer to see his brand-new baby daughter. He spent two weeks at a rented beach house with his wife and three children, then said farewell once again and went back to the war.

Taylor's wife, Randi Taylor, and their children have been staying in Goose Creek with her family while the sergeant was overseas. On Sunday, a chaplain and a first sergeant with the 10th Mountain Division (Light) Infantry knocked on the door.

"We knew what it meant," said the soldier's father-in-law, Randy Gongre.

The former Summerville resident and Fort Dorchester High School student was on patrol in Baghdad on Sunday when he was wounded by small arms fire and died, said Samantha Evans, public information officer for Fort Polk, La., where the staff sergeant was stationed. Taylor was an infantryman assigned to the division's 2nd Battalion, 30th Infantry Regiment, 4th Brigade Combat Team.

His parents live in Hanahan. He was the son of Don Taylor, chief technology officer for Benefitfocus, and Kimberly Taylor, head of the English Department at Trident Technical College.

By November of that year, he was in the Army, and the following summer he married Randi, a 2002 Goose Creek High School graduate.

"He was about the best son-in-law you could ask for," Gongre said.

The 25-year-old was deployed twice to Afghanistan and was on his first tour of duty in Iraq when he was killed. He was a squad leader.

"He was a natural leader. One thing the Army really did was it brought out all the fine points of his character. ... I watched him mature over the years," Gongre said. "He had a

lot of fine leadership qualities. He took charge of things and got things done. He was a good fit for the Army.”

“I bragged about him to all of my friends,” Gongre said.

Matthew Taylor’s awards include the Purple Heart, Bronze Star Medal, Army Commendation Medal, Army Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, Afghanistan Campaign Medal, Iraq Campaign Medal, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Humanitarian Service Medal, Noncommissioned Officer Development Ribbon, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, the NATO Medal and the Combat Infantry Badge.

Matthew Taylor planned to leave the Army at the end of his enlistment next April.

“He wanted to be with his family,” his father said.

The staff sergeant is survived by three daughters: Ryann Taylor, 5; Raegan Taylor, 2; and Raina Taylor, who was born in June.

Carolina Memorial Funeral Home in North Charleston is handling the arrangements. Services had not been scheduled by late Tuesday.

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## **Tahlequah Couple’s Son One Of 7 Killed In Iraq Chopper Crash**



Corry Edwards

September 19, 2008 By JOSH NEWTON, Staff Writer, TAHLEQUAH DAILY PRESS

A local couple is mourning the loss of their son after he was killed in a helicopter crash in Iraq Thursday morning.

Officials with Tahlequah Public Schools confirmed Thursday and Friday that Corry Edwards, 38, of the Fort Worth, Texas, area, died in the crash that also killed three of his



fellow Texas National Guardsmen and three members of the Oklahoma National Guard.

Edwards' parents, Charlie and Glenda Hamilton, live in the Tahlequah area, where Glenda is an employee with the Tahlequah school district. The Hamiltons were notified of their son's death Thursday morning.

Edwards was a husband and father of two young boys, and lived in the Kennedale area outside Fort Worth.

An announcement on the Kennedale, Texas, Independent School District Web site Friday said the school would lower its flags in honor of Edwards, whose boys attend school there. It also states Edwards was a Warrant Officer I.

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## **BEEN ON THE JOB TOO LONG: COME ON HOME, NOW**



U.S. soldier with the Second Stryker Cavalry Regiment sleeps outside an Iraqi police station in Diyala province August 20, 2008. REUTERS/Andrea Comas

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## **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

### **Soldier With North Texas Ties Killed In Afghanistan**



Staff Sgt. Brandon Wade Farley

Sep. 23, 2008 By ALEX BRANCH, Star-Telegram

The day before he left for Afghanistan, U.S. Army Staff Sgt. Brandon Wade Farley seemed slightly more apprehensive than before previous tours there and in Iraq, his mother Sherry Farley said Monday.

"I'm going into a war zone over there," he mentioned during her July visit to Fort Hood.

Perhaps worried that he had spooked her, Sgt. Farley called her five days later at her Arlington home and left a reassuring message: "Don't worry, I'm fine. Everything is good here."

"He knew it was dangerous, but I think he wanted to make sure I wasn't too worried," Sherry Farley said.

It was the last time she heard her son's voice.

Sgt. Farley, 30, died Thursday at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan from injuries he suffered a day earlier when enemy forces attacked his mounted patrol in Able Monti, according to Fort Hood officials.

The attackers used small arms and rocket-propelled grenades, officials said.

Sgt. Farley grew up in Haworth, Okla., where his father lived, but he often stayed with his mother in Arlington or with his uncle in Grand Prairie, family members said. He drove up from Fort Hood almost every weekend and enjoyed hunting and watching Oklahoma football.

“He was real family- and friend-oriented,” said his younger brother Corey Farley. “When he was home, he wanted to eat some home cooking, sit around and talk and tell stories — an outgoing guy.”

Sgt. Farley decided that he wanted to join the military in his early teenage years and he enlisted right after high school, said his father, Wade Farley. He had been assigned to the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division, since April 2007.

Nine years of military training showed in his personality, his mother said.

“He was very disciplined,” she said. “He’d been in the military a long time.”

His experience also gave him confidence, Corey Farley said.

“He was good at what he did,” he said. “He always expected to come home. He expected to come home this time.”

Other survivors include two sisters, Ashlyn and Lauren Farley.

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## **“Britain’s Most Senior Military Commander In Afghanistan Has Warned That The War Against The Taliban Cannot Be Won”**

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, The Military Project & Clancy Sigal, who sent this in.

October 5, 2008 Christina Lamb Helmand, Afghanistan; The Sunday Times [Excerpts]

Britain’s most senior military commander in Afghanistan has warned that the war against the Taliban cannot be won. Brigadier Mark Carleton-Smith said the British public should not expect a “decisive military victory” but should be prepared for a possible deal with the Taliban.

Carleton-Smith, commander of 16 Air Assault Brigade, which has just completed its second tour of Afghanistan, said it was necessary to “lower our expectations”.

He said: “We’re not going to win this war. It’s about reducing it to a manageable level of insurgency that’s not a strategic threat and can be managed by the Afghan army.”

Carleton-Smith insisted that his forces had “taken the sting out of the Taliban for 2008”. But his brigade has sustained heavy losses in the southern province of Helmand in the past six months, with 32 killed and 170 injured.

In an interview with The Sunday Times, he added his voice to a growing number of people arguing that the conflict in Afghanistan could be resolved only through a political settlement that could include the Taliban.

Last week Gulab Mangal, the governor of Helmand, said the Taliban controlled more than half the province despite the increased presence of British forces.

**MORE:**

**British Government May Split With  
U.S. Government On War On  
Afghanistan;  
They Support “A Senior Military  
Commander’s Statement Suggesting  
That The War Against The Taliban  
Cannot Be Won”  
“Both The Republican And Democratic  
Presidential Contenders Favour Sending  
More Troops To Afghanistan”**

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, The Military Project, who sent this in.

October 5 2008 By Jimmy Burns in London and Daniel Dombey in Washington, The Financial Times [Excerpts]

The British government on Sunday risked fuelling a rift with the US and some members of the Afghan government by supporting a senior military commander’s statement suggesting that the war against the Taliban cannot be won.

A spokesman said the UK’s ministry of defence “did not have a problem” with warning the UK public not to expect a “decisive military victory” and to prepare instead for a possible deal with the Taliban.

“We are not going to win this war,” he told the newspaper.

But the brigadier’s statement airs a view on the subject at a time when there are signs of policy rifts developing among the allies.

The US, which has stepped up its efforts on Afghanistan in recent months, is sceptical about any idea of negotiating with the Taliban.

Despite the worries among Washington's European allies over whether the conflict with the Taliban can ever be won, President George W. Bush, and both the Republican and Democratic presidential contenders favour sending more troops to Afghanistan.

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**Notes From A Lost War:**

**“Out In The Countryside, The Taliban Still Hold Sway”**  
**“The Three Engagements Were Typical Of The Daily Skirmishes That Canadian Troops, Along With A Handful Of Americans, Are Fighting”**  
**“The Fighting That Occurred Near Pashmul Was Among A Number Of Incidents In Zhari District That Day, Enough, That ‘I Lost Count,’ McBride Said”**

October 3, 2008 By Drew Brown, Stars and Stripes

ZHARI DISTRICT, Afghanistan — The first firefight erupted to the south, hitting a Canadian patrol somewhere along the Arghandab River.

Then a few scattered shots hit a group of Canadian and U.S. soldiers on patrol with Afghan police about 300 meters away.

The third attack occurred when Taliban gunmen opened fire on two dozen Afghans and Canadian soldiers with Operational Mentor Liaison Team 73 Alpha.

As far as security incidents go in Afghanistan, the firefights were fairly unremarkable. No coalition soldiers or Afghan troops were killed or wounded, and it was unclear how many, if any, Taliban fighters were hit.

But the three engagements were typical of the daily skirmishes that Canadian troops, along with a handful of Americans, are fighting alongside Afghan troops here in Zhari district, about 25 kilometers west of Kandahar city.

Taking place in the heartland of the fundamentalist Taliban movement, they are short, sharp, chaotic affairs and often inconclusive.

Yet the gunbattles illustrate the kind of grinding attrition that the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force and the Taliban are waging against each other in southern Afghanistan, where frequent combat appears to be less about taking and holding territory than it is about weakening the other side's will to fight.

Canada has about 2,500 soldiers serving in Afghanistan. The soldiers serving in Zhari district are spread between a firebase and a number of smaller outposts.

The outposts are manned by teams of Canadian troops who serve as advisers and mentors to Afghan army and police units. They receive fire almost daily.

The fighting that occurred near Pashmul was among a number of incidents in Zhari district that day, enough, that "I lost count," McBride said.

Canada has lost 97 soldiers since the war began nearly seven years ago. Twenty-three of its soldiers have been killed so far this year.

At least 236 foreign soldiers have been killed in Afghanistan this year, the highest annual number since the war began seven years ago.

Coalition strategy in southern Afghanistan is based on building up the Afghan army and police and slowly expanding their presence into areas held by the Taliban.

For now, the strategy means that coalition and Afghan government forces control the roads.

But out in the countryside, the Taliban still hold sway.

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## **TROOP NEWS**

# **2,700 From Illinois Guard Off To Bush's Imperial Slaughterhouse**

October 2, 2008 St. Louis Post-Dispatch,

The largest deployment of Illinois National Guard troops since World War II is preparing to head to Afghanistan to help battle a growing insurgency, while families get ready for life without husbands, wives, fathers, mothers, sons and daughters.

The 2,700 soldiers of the 33rd Infantry Brigade Combat Team will ship out this month — some for pre-mission training, others to their posts in Afghanistan, where they will help train the Afghan national police force.

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## **Racist Rats Infest Benning: Jewish Soldier Beaten Up 6 Days After Filing Complaint About D.I. Harassment**

Oct. 04, 2008 BY LILY GORDON, Ledger-Enquirer

Fort Benning officials are investigating the beating of a Jewish soldier in basic training.

The criminal investigation was launched just days after Pvt. Michael Handman, 20, of Atlanta complained of religious discrimination, though post spokeswoman Monica Manganaro said Friday the two incidents have nothing to do with each other.

On the evening of Sept. 24, Handman and another basic trainee were involved in a physical altercation in the laundry room adjacent to the barracks on Sand Hill.

As a result of the fight, Handman was transported to Martin Army Community Hospital where he was treated for a concussion and bruises to the left side of face, while the other soldier was transported to the military police station for questioning.

**Six days prior to the fight, leadership with the 1st Battalion was made aware of a congressional inquiry alleging religious discrimination against Handman.**

**The allegations were against two drill sergeants, one of whom forced the private to take off his yarmulke in the dining facility and prohibited him from praying while pulling guard duty.**

**The other drill sergeant apparently unknowingly used a derogatory word that Handman considered offensive, Manganaro said. [Oh please.]**

The post's criminal investigation division is still working to determine the catalyst for the fight between Handman and the other soldier and what disciplinary action will be taken in this case. Handman has been reassigned to a different platoon.

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## **And Now For The Good News: “Cases Of Hazardous Waste Dumped In Ditches, Soldiers Setting Up Tents On**

# Top Of Fuel Spills And Service Members Exposed To Cyanide Gas During Overseas Deployments”

Oct 3, 2008 By Kelly Kennedy; Army Times Staff writer [Excerpts]

The U.S. Army is creating a toxic mess in Afghanistan and Iraq, according to a new report that details cases of hazardous waste dumped in ditches, soldiers setting up tents on top of fuel spills and service members exposed to cyanide gas during overseas deployments.

The report, “Green Warriors: Army Environmental Considerations for Contingency Operations from Planning through Post-Conflict, states:

- A contractor hired by the Defense Department dumped waste oil in a landfill in Iraq and then sold the barrels.
- U.S. soldiers in Afghanistan buried several drums containing unidentified liquids, which later turned out to be hazardous, posing a risk of soil and groundwater contamination.
- In Iraq, an airfield sits over an old airfield with leaking fuel tanks. “Major health issues arise whenever it is necessary to dig.”
- Commanders in Iraq have set up hazardous-waste disposal areas close to camp perimeters, creating a force-protection issue since they were potential targets for hand grenades and IEDs.
- High-grade diesel fuel was spilled in a lake in Iraq that was used for drinking water at a base.

Troops in Iraq fell ill after rolling leaking drums of industrial-strength pesticides out of a building.

As U.S. forces leave Iraq, they will have to clean up their mess. Bruce Travis of the U.S. Army Engineer School said in the alert that the Army didn’t even start environmental measures until five years into the war.

“We’ve had a lot of problems with waste lagoons, congressional inquiries, medical waste in landfills, insurgent chemicals and co-mingled wastes,” Travis said in the alert. Insurgent chemicals are used for explosive devices.

Michael Wolford, of the U.S. Army Engineer School prepared a briefing about environmental conditions in Iraq.

**After talking to commanders in theater, he compiled a list of the excuses he heard for not properly handling waste management and disposal while deployed:**



- “If it was important enough for us to do, we would have been told about it before we got here” — battalion commander.
  - “It’s not our job.” — battalion commander.
  - “We’re in the desert. What does it matter?” — Brigade combat Team commander
  - “We’re here to fight a war, not pick up trash.” — Battalion Combat Team Commander.
  - “We’re just passing through and do not have time.” — Battalion combat team commander.
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## **National Guard Soldiers Going To Iraq Must Now Worry About Losing Their Jobs While They’re Gone; “The Guard’s Success Depends On The Willingness Of Soldiers To Leave For Active Duty”**

October 02, 2008 New Jersey Star-Ledger

**Imagine the fear. The double whammy.**

**To be sent to Iraq where people aim to kill you -- at a time when grim faces on televisions and laptop screens are talking about the collapse of the American economy and the possibility of a second Great Depression.**

“It’s one thing to worry about it here -- another to worry about it there when there is not a lot you can do about it,” says John Smith, a retired New Jersey National Guard officer and civilian attorney who works at Fort Dix.

Nearly 3,000 members of the Guard are deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan; they left just as events on Wall Street and in Washington started to spin out of control. And, while maybe it’s an illusion that anyone anywhere has control over the fate of their livelihoods, it’s not comforting to be away from your job when your job might disappear.

**Laws protect soldiers from job discrimination based on military service; they don’t protect them from losing jobs because of an economic downturn. Smith and others say soldiers worry they might be more vulnerable to layoffs if they’re away.**

**A touchy, emotion-laden subject. The Guard’s success depends on the willingness of soldiers to leave for active duty -- and the support of employers to protect their jobs.**

State unemployment rose this month to 5.9 percent, up from 4.2 percent a year ago, according to the most recent figures provided by the state. The number of financial sector jobs fell by 7.9 percent -- all before the latest bad news about frozen credit lines.

"Of course, they should worry -- we all should worry," says Samuel Wright, a retired Navy captain whose Washington-based practice is almost completely limited to dealing with matters of military service and employment.

Wright says part-time soldiers might be vulnerable but have some protections. It depends on the criteria used by the employer to determine who faces the ax.

**If the soldiers were unionized, they would maintain seniority rights.**

**"But most private companies don't have unionized work forces now," Wright says.**

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**War-Profiteering Filth In Iraq  
Handed \$300 Million For A  
Package Of Useless, Pointless  
Criminal Bullshit:  
Contract Breaks Law Against  
Using Government Money For  
Propaganda Aimed At U.S.  
Citizens;  
Amazing Coincidence Reported:  
Petraeus' Buddy Works For One Of  
The Lucky Money Grabbers:  
"A Lot Of Money Is Being Thrown  
Around And I'm Not Sure It's All Paying  
Off As Much As We Think It Is"**

**Some inside the military itself have questioned the effectiveness of the defense program. "I'm not a huge fan" of information operations, one military official said, adding that Iraqi opinions -- as for most people -- are formed more by what they experience than by what they read in a newspaper, hear on the radio or see on billboards.**

October 3, 2008 By Karen DeYoung and Walter Pincus, Washington Post Staff Writers  
[Excerpts]

The Defense Department will pay private U.S. contractors in Iraq up to \$300 million over the next three years to produce news stories, entertainment programs and public service advertisements for the Iraqi media in an effort to "engage and inspire" the local population to support U.S. objectives and the Iraqi government.

The new contracts -- awarded last week to four companies -- will expand and consolidate what the U.S. military calls "information/psychological operations" in Iraq far into the future, even as violence appears to be abating and U.S. troops have begun drawing down.

**In the past, a lot of this stuff was just some guy's dreams," said a senior U.S. military official, one of several who discussed the sensitive defense program on the condition of anonymity.**

One official described how part of the program works: "There's a video piece produced by a contractor . . . showing a family being attacked by a group of bad guys, and their daughter being taken off. The message is: You've got to stand up against the enemy." The professionally produced vignette, he said, "is offered for airing on various (television) stations in Iraq. . . .

**"They don't know that the originator of the content is the U.S. government. If they did, they would never run anything."**

"If you asked most Iraqis," he said, "they would say, 'It came from the government, our own government.' "

The Pentagon's solicitation for bids on the contracts noted that media items produced "may or may not be non-attributable to coalition forces."

**"If they thought we were doing it, it would not be as effective," another official said of the Iraqis.**

Some of the new doctrine emerged from Petraeus's own early experience in Iraq.

As commander of the 101st Airborne Division in northern Nineveh province in 2003, he ensured that war-ravaged radio and television stations were brought rapidly back on line. At his urging, the first TV programs included "Nineveh Talent Search" and a radio call-in show hosted by his Arabic interpreter, Sadi Othman, a Palestinian American.

**Othman, a former New York cabdriver employed by Reston-based SOS International, remained at Petraeus's side during the general's subsequent Iraq deployments; the company refers to him as a senior adviser to Petraeus.**

**SOSi has been one of the most prominent communications contractors working in Iraq, winning a two-year \$200 million contract in 2006 to "assist in gathering information, conducting analysis and providing timely solutions and advice regarding cultural, religious, political, economic and public perceptions."**

The four companies that will share in the new contract are SOSi, the Washington-based Lincoln Group, Alexandria-based MPRI and Leonie Industries, a Los Angeles contractor. All specialize in strategic communications and have done previous defense work.

The Pentagon is sensitive to criticism that it has sometimes blurred the lines between public-affairs activities and unattributed propaganda.

**As information operations in Iraq expanded, some senior officers warned that they risked a return to psychological and deception operations discredited during the Vietnam War.**

**On Aug. 21, the day before bids on the new contract were closed, the solicitation was reissued to replace repeated references to information and psychological operations with the term "media services."**

**Senior military officials said that current media placement is done through Iraqi middlemen and that broadcast time is usually paid. But they said they knew of no recent instance of payment to place unattributed newspaper articles.**

**The officials maintained that news items are now a minor part of the operation, which they said is focused on public service promotions and media monitoring.**

**But a lengthy list of "deliverables" under the new contract proposal includes "print columns, press statements, press releases, response-to-query, speeches and . . . opinion editorials"; radio broadcasts "in excess of 300 news stories" monthly and 150 each on sports and economic themes; and 30- and 60-minute broadcast documentary and entertainment series.**

Contractors will also develop and maintain Web sites; assess news articles in the Iraqi, U.S. and international media; and determine ways to counter coverage deemed negative, according to the contract solicitation the government posted in May. Polls and focus groups will be used to monitor Iraqi attitudes under a separate three-year contract totaling up to \$45 million.

**While U.S. law prohibits the use of government money to direct propaganda at U.S. audiences, the "statement of work" included in the proposal, written by the U.S. Joint Contracting Command in Iraq, notes the need to "communicate effectively with our strategic audiences (i.e. Iraqi, pan-Arabic, International, and U.S. audiences) to gain widespread acceptance of [U.S. and Iraqi government] core themes and messages."**

Some inside the military itself have questioned the effectiveness of the defense program.

“I’m not a huge fan” of information operations, one military official said, adding that Iraqi opinions -- as for most people -- are formed more by what they experience than by what they read in a newspaper, hear on the radio or see on billboards.

“A lot of money is being thrown around,” he said, “and I’m not sure it’s all paying off as much as we think it is.”

**Troops Cordially Invited:**  
Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

## Iraqi Terrorist Troop Puppy Apprehended In Newark

**[Fiendish. Goes right up there with the terrorists’ other breakthrough: dog-sniffing bombs.]**

Oct 3, 2008 The Associated Press

NEW YORK — Federal health officials have issued a public health warning against rabies after an Iraqi puppy with the disease arrived in the U.S.

The dog was part of a rescue operation to unite American troops with abandoned animals they adopted.

Named Crusader, the puppy was among 24 dogs and two cats that arrived in Newark in June, according to The New York Times.

The shipment was part of an international rescue operation called Operation Baghdad Pups, organized by the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals International.

After being diagnosed, Crusader was euthanized. The other animals shipped around the country were tracked down and are being held for six months in quarantine. So far, none has become sick.

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## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

“What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms.”  
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.

“The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!”  
-- Camille Desmoulins

“When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, “No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country.”  
-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq

## War Is Not A Video Game



From: Mike Hastie  
To: GI Special  
Sent: September 28, 2008  
Subject: War Is Not A Video Game

### **War Is Not A Video Game**

**Someday, I think America will get it.  
There have been millions of books  
written on the horrors of war.  
So many Americans think they have  
experienced the horrors of war because  
of what happened in New York on 9/ 11.  
The year I was in Vietnam, the U.S. gov-  
ernment bombed Cambodia, killing  
over 200,000 people. Most of them  
were innocent civilians who died because  
they did not have bunkers to protect them.  
Someday, I think America will get it.  
The American Empire is on thin ice,  
just like the summer ice in the Arctic,  
which scientists say will be gone in  
five to ten years.  
Ignorance and greed are walking on  
thin ice.  
There will not be any bail outs here,  
except the bailing out of water all  
over the world.  
This is what happens, when greed  
and ignorance are blindly followed.  
This is what happens when nobody  
does anything.  
This is what happens when dissent  
is no longer allowed to speak.  
America is a military occupation,  
arresting people who try to expose  
the madness.  
This is what happens when people  
conform, and not join the ranks of  
those who are dissenting.  
Marching into gas chambers on  
command.**

**Mike Hastie  
U.S. Army Medic  
Vietnam 1970-71  
Sept. 28, 2008**

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: ([hastiemike@earthlink.net](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T)

## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



By Zina Saunders [Thanks to Scott Camil]

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

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

**DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE  
SERVICE?**



Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the wars, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 917.677.8057

## CLASS WAR REPORTS



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

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# **No Troop Withdrawal From New Orleans Either: Military Occupation By National Guard Continues Three Years After Hurricane Katrina**

September 30, 2008 By Gimena Gordillo, New Orleans; Letters To The Editor, Socialist Worker

AFTER TWO gut-wrenching days spent watching the industrial canal overtop blocks from my house, I was finally able to return home after evacuating New Orleans following Hurricane Gustav.

Upon entering the city, the damage was evident. Tree limbs and leaves were everywhere, the power was still out in most of the city, and the large majority of the population had yet to return.

The most striking thing about the city was the fact that the city was still under the occupation of the National Guard and New Orleans Police Department (NOPD).

Days before Gustav made landfall, Gov. Bobby Jindal ordered hundreds of National Guard troops to supplement those already in New Orleans as part of the post-Katrina occupation.

The city was put under a mandatory evacuation and curfew. Useless Mayor Ray Nagin threatened that all those caught breaking curfew or looting would be sent to Angola State Prison in north Louisiana. Angola is one of the most dangerous prisons in the entire country.

To further his point that his number one concern is the private property of New Orleans, Mayor Nagin declared that no help would be available to those that stayed behind to weather the storm. And to make sure that no one was left with any question about if he was sane, he called Gustav “the mother of all storms,” and declared that the west bank of New Orleans and Jefferson Parish would flood.

As of September 6, the city was still under curfew.

In some neighborhoods, like Uptown and the French Quarter, the curfew was not strictly enforced, but in other neighborhoods, like the Ninth Ward, the curfew was 10 p.m., and the military police and NOPD were patrolling the neighborhood all day.

**Gustav was being used as an excuse for the continued military occupation of New Orleans.**

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## Capitalism At Work

September 24 2008 by Robert Parry, Consortiumnews.com [Excerpt]

Before Reagan, corporate CEOs earned less than fifty times the salary of an average worker.

By the end of the Reagan and Bush One administrations in 1993, the average CEO salary was more than 100 times that of a typical worker.

(That CEO-salary figure is now more than 250 times that of an average worker.)

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## 1873, Not 1929?

# **“That Crash Came In 1873 And Lasted More Than Four Years. It Looks Much More Like Our Current Crisis”**

[Thanks to Ed Pearl for posting.]

October 17, 2008 By SCOTT REYNOLDS NELSON, The Chronicle of Higher Education The Chronicle Review [Excerpts]. Scott Reynolds Nelson is a professor of history at the College of William and Mary. Among his books is *Steel Drivin' Man: John Henry, the Untold Story of an American legend* (Oxford University Press, 2006).

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**While many commentators on the recent mortgage and banking crisis have drawn parallels to the Great Depression of 1929, that comparison is not particularly apt.**

**In fact, the current economic woes look a lot like what my 96-year-old grandmother still calls “the real Great Depression.”**

**She pinched pennies in the 1930s, but she says that times were not nearly so bad as the depression her grandparents went through.**

**That crash came in 1873 and lasted more than four years. It looks much more like our current crisis.**

The problems had emerged around 1870, starting in Europe. In the Austro-Hungarian Empire, formed in 1867, in the states unified by Prussia into the German empire, and in France, the emperors supported a flowering of new lending institutions that issued mortgages for municipal and residential construction, especially in the capitals of Vienna, Berlin, and Paris.

Mortgages were easier to obtain than before, and a building boom commenced. Land values seemed to climb and climb; borrowers ravenously assumed more and more credit, using unbuilt or half-built houses as collateral. The most marvelous spots for sightseers in the three cities today are the magisterial buildings erected in the so-called founder period.

But the economic fundamentals were shaky.

Wheat exporters from Russia and Central Europe faced a new international competitor who drastically undersold them. The 19th-century version of containers manufactured in China and bound for Wal-Mart consisted of produce from farmers in the American Midwest.

They used grain elevators, conveyer belts, and massive steam ships to export trainloads of wheat to abroad. Britain, the biggest importer of wheat, shifted to the cheap stuff quite suddenly around 1871.

By 1872 kerosene and manufactured food were rocketing out of America's heartland, undermining rapeseed, flour, and beef prices.

The crash came in Central Europe in May 1873, as it became clear that the region's assumptions about continual economic growth were too optimistic.

Europeans faced what they came to call the American Commercial Invasion.

A new industrial superpower had arrived, one whose low costs threatened European trade and a European way of life.

**As continental banks tumbled, British banks held back their capital, unsure of which institutions were most involved in the mortgage crisis.**

**The cost to borrow money from another bank - the interbank lending rate - reached impossibly high rates.**

This banking crisis hit the United States in the fall of 1873.

Railroad companies tumbled first. They had crafted complex financial instruments that promised a fixed return, though few understood the underlying object that was guaranteed to investors in case of default. (Answer: nothing).

The bonds had sold well at first, but they had tumbled after 1871 as investors began to doubt their value, prices weakened, and many railroads took on short-term bank loans to continue laying track.

Then, as short-term lending rates skyrocketed across the Atlantic in 1873, the railroads were in trouble. When the railroad financier Jay Cooke proved unable to pay off his debts, the stock market crashed in September, closing hundreds of banks over the next three years.

The panic continued for more than four years in the United States and for nearly six years in Europe.

The long-term effects of the Panic of 1873 were perverse.

For the largest manufacturing companies in the United States - those with guaranteed contracts and the ability to make rebate deals with the railroads - the Panic years were golden.

Andrew Carnegie, Cyrus McCormick, and John D. Rockefeller had enough capital reserves to finance their own continuing growth. For smaller industrial firms that relied on seasonal demand and outside capital, the situation was dire. As capital reserves dried up, so did their industries. Carnegie and Rockefeller bought out their competitors at fire-sale prices. The Gilded Age in the United States, as far as industrial concentration was concerned, had begun.

As the panic deepened, ordinary Americans suffered terribly.

A cigar maker named Samuel Gompers who was young in 1873 later recalled that with the panic, “economic organization crumbled with some primeval upheaval.”

**Between 1873 and 1877, as many smaller factories and workshops shuttered their doors, tens of thousands of workers - many former Civil War soldiers - became transients. The terms “tramp” and “bum,” both indirect references to former soldiers, became commonplace American terms.**

Relief rolls exploded in major cities, with 25-percent unemployment (100,000 workers) in New York City alone.

Unemployed workers demonstrated in Boston, Chicago, and New York in the winter of 1873-74 demanding public work.

In New York’s Tompkins Square in 1874, police entered the crowd with clubs and beat up thousands of men and women.

The most violent strikes in American history followed the panic, including by the secret labor group known as the Molly Maguires in Pennsylvania’s coal fields in 1875, when masked workmen exchanged gunfire with the “Coal and Iron Police,” a private force commissioned by the state. A nationwide railroad strike followed in 1877, in which [workers] destroyed railway hubs in Pittsburgh, Chicago, and Cumberland, Md.

In the end, the Panic of 1873 demonstrated that the center of gravity for the world’s credit had shifted west - from Central Europe toward the United States.

The current panic suggests a further shift - from the United States to China and India.

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