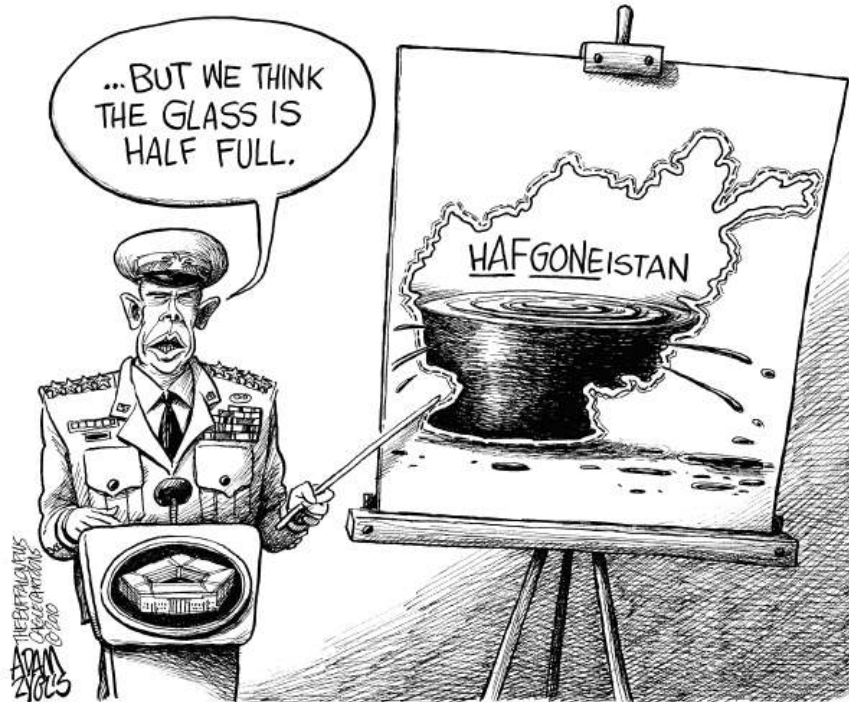


Military Resistance 8L15



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, who sent this in.]

**Secret Report Shows The
Traitor Obama Lied To U.S.
Troops At Bagram About
“Progress” In Afghanistan:
“The Country As A Whole Is
Dramatically Worse Off Than A
Year Ago”
“More And More Areas Are Becoming
Inaccessible”**

“The Green Belt Of ‘Low Risk Districts In Northern, Central And Western Afghanistan Shriveled Considerably”

The assessments of the UN accessibility maps, based on factors such as insurgent activity, political stability, coalition operations and community acceptance, contrast with US President Barack Obama’s recent statements that hail the coalition’s progress in the war.

27th December, 2010 Irish Sun & DECEMBER 26, 2010 Yaroslav Trofimov, Wall St. Journal [Excerpts]

The Afghan security situation has deteriorated this year, secret UN maps have revealed, countering the US government’s assessments of military progress since the surge of additional American troops began a year ago, a media report said.

The Wall Street Journal said it has accessed two confidential ‘residual risk accessibility’ maps, one compiled by the UN at the annual fighting season’s start in March 2010 and another at its tail end in October.

The maps, used by UN personnel to gauge the dangers of travel and running programmes, divide the country’s districts into four categories: very high risk, high risk, medium risk and low risk.

In the October map, just as in March’s, virtually all of southern Afghanistan - the focus of the coalition’s military offensives - remained painted the red of ‘very high risk’, with no noted security improvements.

At the same time, the green belt of ‘low risk’ districts in northern, central and western Afghanistan shriveled considerably.

The UN’s October map upgraded to ‘high risk’ 16 previously more secure districts in Badghis, Sar-e-Pul, Balkh, Parwan, Baghlan, Samangan, Faryab, Laghman and Takhar provinces; only two previously ‘high risk’ districts, one in Kunduz and one in Herat province, received a safer rating.

As the coalition focused on the south, the insurgents fanned out during the year to the north and the west.

In recent months, the Taliban seized control in areas of dozens of districts in those previously secure parts of the country, taking advantage of the sparse international troop presence there.

The director of communications for the UN in Afghanistan, Kieran Dwyer, said he couldn’t comment on classified maps.

But, he said, 'in the course of 2010, the security situation in many parts of the country has become unstable where it previously had not been so.'

The assessments of the UN accessibility maps, based on factors such as insurgent activity, political stability, coalition operations and community acceptance, contrast with US President Barack Obama's recent statements that hail the coalition's progress in the war.

'Today we can be proud that there are fewer areas under Taliban control and more Afghans have a chance to build a more hopeful future,' Obama told American troops during a visit to the Bagram Air Field northeast of Kabul earlier this month.

"The country as a whole is dramatically worse off than a year ago, both in terms of the insurgency's geographical spread and its rate of attacks," said Nic Lee, director of the Afghanistan NGO Safety Office.

"Vast amounts of the country remain insecure for the unarmed civilians, and more and more areas are becoming inaccessible."

MORE:

The 101st Airborne Division Is Seeing Its Worst Casualties In A Decade:

“On Average, 11 Fort Campbell Soldiers Have Died Each Month In Combat Since March”

“We Can Get The Calls At 2 O'clock In The Morning, And That Happens Seven Days A Week”

December 27, 2010 The Associated Press [Excerpts]

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. - The 101st Airborne Division, a force in America's major conflicts since World War II, is seeing its worst casualties in a decade as the U.S. surge in Afghanistan turns into the deadliest year in that war for the NATO coalition.

The Army division known as the Screaming Eagles, formed ahead of the 1944 Allied invasion of Normandy, has lost 104 men this year — or about 1 in 5 American deaths in

Afghanistan. That is close to a toll of 105 divisional deaths in Iraq during a 2005-2006 deployment that was its deadliest year in combat since Vietnam.

The 20,000-strong division from Fort Campbell has been fighting in two of Afghanistan's most violent regions, the south and the east, since it began deploying in February under President Barack Obama's plan to roll back the Taliban with more troops. It is the first time the 101st has deployed in its entirety since Gen. David Petraeus led the division during the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Few are as directly involved in dealing with each soldier's death as Kimberley McKenzie, the chief of Fort Campbell's casualty assistance center.

Among the first to be notified after a combat death, McKenzie and her nine staffers ensure families are informed quickly, helping them over the ensuing weeks and months to navigate a maze of paperwork and decisions.

"We can get the calls at 2 o'clock in the morning, and that happens seven days a week," she said.

In her office, signs of the somber work are everywhere.

Electronic bugles — which now replace live renditions of taps at many military funerals — are lined up in cases. A folded American flag, ready to be presented to a wife or a mother, sits on a desk. Wooden ceremonial display cases for a soldier's awards and decorations are stored atop filing cabinets. A large whiteboard on one wall displays the names of dozens of soldiers who have died this year.

McKenzie, 46, has been doing this job at Fort Campbell on the Tennessee-Kentucky state line since the 1990s, through the Desert Storm and Desert Shield operations against Iraq in 1990 and 1991 to the current wars in Afghanistan and Iraq.

"I have been here so long, which can be a blessing and a curse because you know so many of the soldiers," she said.

After the initial call, her team hurries to find a soldier's family. From the moment the death of a soldier is confirmed with the Department of the Army, regulations give them just four hours to notify the primary next of kin.

Often it's a nationwide search for parents or spouses who are far from Fort Campbell. A family may have moved and not told the Army, listed information may be incorrect or the soldier may be estranged from relatives. Too often, she says, a family member is listed as "address unknown."

She relies on counterparts at other military installations nationwide for help.

The notification process is highly regulated. Word must be delivered in person. Scripts are memorized and read exactly, because there's no room for error when giving the saddest news to a soldier's family. Even a simple typo or an incorrect rank is disrespectful, she says.

“At that moment we have either gained their trust, or we have lost it forever,” she said. “They need to be able to trust us from the time we knock at the door until they don’t need our assistance anymore.”

Once family is notified, her staff helps arrange for relatives to meet the body at Dover Air Force Base in Delaware. The military is responsible for preparing the body, securing a casket and transporting the remains for the funeral. Within about seven to 10 days after the death, the family visits Fort Campbell to be briefed on what is afforded survivors, including benefits, life insurance payments, social security and health insurance.

Her staff is also responsible for noncombat deaths, such as auto accidents or illness and sometimes suicides or homicides.

She has learned to set aside her own pain over the loss of so many young men and women. Her focus, she said, is on supporting the widows and parents and children.

“We have a job to do for those families and we owe it to them and the commander,” McKenzie said.

Still, she says she cannot ignore the large numbers of soldiers who have died and the sorrow she bottles up sometimes spills over. On average, 11 Fort Campbell soldiers have died each month in combat since March.

“At the end of the month, it’s almost sickening to me as a person,” she said.

Within months, thousands of soldiers from the 101st will begin returning to Fort Campbell to be greeted with cheers and hugs and McKenzie will feel some sense of comfort.

But that relief is tempered by the knowledge that soldiers from other units have taken the place of those Screaming Eagles in the combat zone.

“Until they are all home, whenever that happens, there’s always going to be someone in harm’s way,” she said.

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

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Resistance Action: Attacks On Ramadi Government Center Kill 17



A destroyed police vehicle following a car bomb and minutes later another bombing targeting the provincial headquarters in the western Iraqi city of Ramadi. The attacks killed four police. (AFP/Azhar Shallal)

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

Dec 26 (Reuters) & 27 December 2010 By Fadhel al-Badrani, Reuters & By JOHN LELAND, New York Times & (Reuters)

Twin bombings rocked a government compound in Iraq's western city of Ramadi on Monday, killing 17 people, a deputy interior minister said.

Though no one claimed responsibility for the bombing, officials in Anbar said it was likely a response to raids in the last week and a half that rounded up 93 suspected militants.

It was the second attack this month on the compound, which houses the provincial council and the police headquarters for Anbar province, and the third bombing there in the past year.

"The death toll is 17 killed and between 50 and 60 wounded," Lieutenant General Hussein Kamal, a deputy interior minister, told Reuters.

According to witnesses, the attack unfolded in two coordinated stages. Around 9:30 a.m., a minibus carrying a bomb exploded near the heavily-fortified entrance to the

compound. As responders rushed to the scene, a second bomber wearing a military uniform and an explosive vest blew himself up.

At the site of Monday's blasts, pools of blood dotted the ground, footage from Reuters Television showed. The stumps of the suicide bomber's severed legs lay at the scene. Debris from wrecked cars littered the site.

The emergency room was filled with patients wounded in the attack.

Mr. Aifan [Aifan Sadoon Al-Aifan, head of Anbar's provincial security committee] said that after so many attacks the provincial government was looking for a new place for its compound – something away from the main streets where there would not be so much traffic.

In its current location, he said, all the cars passing made it “difficult for us to prevent the attacks.”

Saif Salah al-Heti, 39, was being searched by security men when the first bomb went off, injuring his left leg and leaving him briefly unconscious. When he came to, he said, “I found a lot of martyrs and wounded people on the ground and I heard the sounds of ambulances and firefighters' vehicles.”

Another victim, Sufyan Nassir al-Dulemi, 26, remembered screaming after the first explosion for people to stay away, because there might be a second. But it was too late. The second blast “was stronger than the first one,” Mr. Dulemi said.

BAGHDAD - Insurgents using silenced weapons opened fire on the vehicle of Brigadier Shamil Dawoud, the head of the Interior Ministry's Vehicles Department, wounding him and his driver in Baghdad's western Adil district, an Interior Ministry source said.

BAGHDAD - Insurgents using silenced weapons wounded two police officers when they opened fire on the Interior Ministry's anti-crime department in Baghdad's west-central Yarmouk district, an Interior Ministry source said.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Foreign Occupation “Servicemember” Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan Monday: Nationality Not Announced

December 27 Reuters

A foreign servicemember died following an improvised explosive device attack in southern Afghanistan today.

Marine Wounded Dec. 5 In Helmand Dies Dec. 24

December 27, 2010 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 1180-10

Lance Cpl. Kenneth A. Corzine, 23, of Bethalto, Ill., died Dec. 24 of wounds received Dec. 5 while conducting combat operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan. He was assigned to 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, Calif.

Resistance Action



Destroyed police vehicles in the police compound after a car bomb explosion in Kandahar south of Kabul, Afghanistan Dec.27, 2010 killing three police.
(AP Photo/Allauddin Khan)

27 December 2010 By Tarek El-Tablawy - The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — A car bombing in the southern Taliban stronghold of Kandahar killed three people and wounded 26 others, mostly police.

The bomber struck in the crowded center of the city, near a police compound and a branch of Kabul Bank, as police officers were collecting their salaries, and witnesses described a chaotic scene after the dust and smoke cleared.

“I was sitting near the gate when this explosion occurred. We fell to the ground and we couldn’t see anything for five minutes” due to the dust and smoke caused by the blast, said Noor Mohammad, a policeman who was guarding the bank, adding that police and security guards from nearby buildings and compounds took the casualties to a hospital.

An Associated Press reporter at the scene saw pieces of the bomber’s car scattered around the street. Three police vehicles, at least two civilian cars and two shops in the area were also destroyed by the blast.

“Like The Majority Of Attacks On The Base, This Christmas Shootout Began Without Warning”

“At Least Once A Day, Taliban Fighters Attack The Outpost From The Surrounding Mountains Using Automatic Weapons And Mortars”



Pfc. Nikolai Starr of San Antonio, Texas, of 2nd Platoon Bravo Company 2-327, reacts as he shoots at Taliban forces during a firefight at an outpost in Badel, in eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistan. Maqbool/AP

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

December 26th 2010 BY Philip Caulfield, DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER [Excerpts]

A platoon of U.S. soldiers stationed in a hostile area of eastern Afghanistan spent Christmas day repelling a fierce attack from Taliban forces that staged an ambush from nearby mountains.

The soldiers, of 2nd Platoon Bravo Company 2-327, are stationed at a small hilltop base known as Combat Outpost Badel in Kunar province, a Taliban stronghold in southern Afghanistan near the Pakistan border.

There were no American casualties during the attack.

Like the majority of attacks on the base, this Christmas shootout began without warning. At least once a day, Taliban fighters attack the outpost from the surrounding mountains using automatic weapons and mortars.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE
END THE OCCUPATION**

**Great Moments In U.S. Military
History:
The Stupid, Pointless Slaughter Of
The Kabul Armored Car Security
Guards:
“When Something Like This Happens
In The Center Of Kabul, What Do You
Think Happens In The More Remote
Provinces?”
Witness Told “Not To Speak To The
Media”**



A security guard working for private armoured car company Tiger International holds up a photo of his colleague who was killed during a raid by foreign forces on the Tiger International office in Kabul December 27, 2010. Two guards were killed.
REUTERS/Ahmad Masood

“I asked them ‘What do we tell the families?’” Sakhizada told McClatchy Newspapers on Sunday. “I told them ‘you did not kill two cows. You killed two human beings. We have to answer to the families.’”

December 27, 2010 by Dion Nissenbaum, Checkpoint Kabul [Excerpts]

Nawid Shah Sakhizada said he was hanging out with colleagues at his armored car company office when one of his security guards rushed in before dawn on Friday morning with confusing news.

NATO forces were outside -- and they were on the hunt.

There had been a brief gun battle and two other guards for Tiger International had been fatally wounded in the parking lot.

As Sakhizada headed downstairs to find out what was going on, he said the NATO forces opened fire through the wall of glass windows overlooking the parking lot.

The guard leading him downstairs fell on the stairs as Sakhizada retreated to his office.

By the time the shooting was over, two Afghan guards were dead and two others were wounded.

The NATO forces, joined by Afghan colleagues, had converged on the parking lot at the Kabul office building because they had what they considered “credible” evidence that two vehicles parked there were packed with explosives in preparation for a Christmastime attempt to bomb the U.S. Embassy.

But the special forces team found no car bombs, no explosives and no indications that Tiger International was involved with any plot to attack American diplomats.

Sakhizada said the soldiers apologized for the deadly battle and cautioned him not to speak to the media.

But when he saw the official version of events, Sakhizada and other company officials decided to speak out.

“I asked them ‘What do we tell the families?’” Sakhizada told McClatchy Newspapers on Sunday. “I told them ‘you did not kill two cows. You killed two human beings. We have to answer to the families.’”

NATO officials released little information to explain why they targeted the office complex and what information led them to suspect there were explosives in the vehicles out front.

Tiger International officials said the NATO team appeared to be focused on two of its ambulances in the parking lot.

The incident drew the ire of Afghan government officials who accused NATO of failing to properly coordinate with Kabul security officials. The Afghan Interior Ministry suspended one general and fired a colonel who helped NATO carry out the raid.

“Saying sorry is not so easy,” said Mohammed Faid Wafah, a friend of Sakhizada family who came to visit the office on Sunday. “Afghan blood is not so cheap. When something like this happens in the center of Kabul, what do you think happens in the more remote provinces?”

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: ALL HOME NOW



U.S. soldiers of 2nd Platoon Bravo Company 2-327 Infantry patrol in Chowkay district near the Pakistani border in Kunar province, eastern Afghanistan, Dec 20, 2010. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)



A U.S. soldier at the site where an explosion went off on a U.S. military vehicle in Chowkay district, near Pakistani border in Kunar province, eastern Afghanistan, Dec. 21, 2010. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)



U.S. soldiers during an attack by Taliban with small arms on Badel Combat Out Post near Pakistani border in Kunar province, eastern Afghanistan, Dec 23, 2010. (AP Photo/Rafiq Maqbool)

MILITARY NEWS

The New Issue Of Traveling Soldier Is Out!

Posted At:

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/ci.php>

THIS ISSUE FEATURING:

“A WAR WITH NO CLEAR OBJECTIVE”

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/12.10.war.php>

“WE SHOULD JUST END IT. BRING THE TROOPS HOME”

“I never wanted my son to be a little old obituary in the paper”

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/12.10.troops.php>

THE POLITICIANS WON'T TALK ABOUT THE WAR:

“*But for the Olechnys, avoidance is not an option*”

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/12.10.avoidance.php>

[And More.....]

TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupations or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance to Imperial wars inside the armed forces.

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

Traveling Soldier is the publication of the Military Resistance Organization

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

“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 Douglass, 1852

**Hope for change doesn't cut it when you're still losing buddies.
-- J.D. Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

December 28, 1971
**“Members Of The Vietnam Veterans
Against The War Leaving The Statue
Of Liberty, Which They Had Occupied
For Two Days”**



(Source: Photograph Collection of the American Museum of Immigration, Liberty Island, U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS)

[This comes from the weblog maintained by James Starowicz, Veterans For Peace: imagineaworldof.blogspot.com] [From the history of the Statue Of Liberty, by the National Park Service, www.cr.nps.gov]

Tim MacCormick of New Jersey and fourteen other members of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, on the afternoon of December 26, 1971, arrived on Liberty Island by the Circle Line boat along with other tourists.

But, when the last return ship to Manhattan sailed that evening, the veterans were not aboard. Instead, just before closing time, they hid among the exhibit partitions, building materials, and storage closets which were lying about the monument's base while work was being finished on the American Museum of Immigration.

When NPS personnel made their 7:30 evening check-up of the statue, they found that the veterans had seized control of the landmark and barricaded the three ground floor entrances.

The men inside refused to speak to or admit any Park Service people, but on the door they posted a typewritten statement addressed to President Richard M. Nixon:

“Each Vietnam veteran who has barricaded himself within this international symbol of liberty has for many years rationalized his attitude to war. . . . We can no longer tolerate the war in Southeast Asia. . . . Mr. Nixon, you set the date (for leaving Vietnam), we’ll evacuate.”

On December 27, twenty-one National Park police flew to Liberty Island from Washington where they were joined by New York City police and Coast Guardsmen. These security forces stood by while the government attempted to reach a peaceful compromise with the occupiers. They were told that they would be permitted to picket and protest on the island if they would simply vacate the statue, allowing it to reopen to visitors.

The veterans rejected the offer, flew the United States flag upside down from the statue’s crown, and waited.

Law enforcement officers also waited. During that day thousands of disappointed tourists were told at the Battery that they could not go out to the statue. Congresswoman Bella Abzug (Democrat-New York) sent a telephone message of support to the demonstrators.

Meanwhile, United States Attorney Whitney North Seymour, Jr., went before District Court Judge Lawrence Pierce to request an injunction directing the veterans to open the doors, leave the statue except during regular visiting hours, and permit Park Service personnel and tourists to enter.

On the morning of December 28 Judge Pierce issued a temporary restraining order, instructing the protestors to leave the statue “forthwith.”

Two hours later, after conferring with their lawyers, the veterans removed the barricades from the entrances and emerged with “clenched fists raised.”

They had cleaned up their debris and caused no significant damage to the property. The monument was reopened to the public, with the first ferry-load of visitors arriving at 2:15 that afternoon.

Tim MacCormick issued a statement to the press explaining why they had picked this particular target:

“The reason we chose the Statue of Liberty is that since we were children, the statue has been analogous in our minds with freedom and an America we love.

“Then we went to fight a war in the name of freedom. We saw that freedom is a selective expression allowed only to those who are white and maintain the status quo.

“Until this symbol again takes on the meaning it was intended to have, we must continue our demonstrations. . . . “

MORE:

A Vietnam Veteran Who Occupied The Statue Of Liberty Remembers; An Iraq Veteran Against The War Understands

December 24, 2006 By Tim Blangger of The Morning Call

Nestled in a corner of a tiny Carbon County hollow, between an unnamed hill and an unnamed stream, Paul Fichter's home sits in quiet, exurban isolation. His lawn, a collection of lush ferns scattered among mature pine trees, is calming, meditative.

But climb the steps of Fichter's simple wooden porch and the mood changes. Next to the door, a three-foot-long Air Force missile pierces the weather-worn trailer's side at combat-ready angle, its fin end exposed.

Granted, Fichter's eccentric outdoor inventory includes a miniature Arc de Triomphe model encased in a backyard terrarium, twin Buddha-like statues, an Allentown fire hydrant and one of the city's discarded Call Box emergency telephones, the last two bought at auction.

But the missile ...

The ordnance helps Fichter disguise damage a falling tree did to his trailer several years ago. The outside of the trailer looks fine, but inside, the damage is more apparent. The roof still leaks.

For those who know Fichter, the missile also recalls the Vietnam War and the effect it had on him. He was one of 15 veterans who occupied the Statue of Liberty for three nights and two days over the Christmas holiday 35 years ago, starting on Christmas Eve.

Fichter looks good for a 61-year-old. He's stopped drinking but still smokes. He ties his long, silver-gray hair in a ponytail. When he thinks, he sometimes strokes his substantial gray beard. The war, that war, for good or bad, plays a big part in who he is.

A star football player at Emmaus High School — he was starting offensive end on the 1962 team that shared a league championship with football powerhouse Northampton that year — he was drafted after he failed to register for classes at Moravian College, which he attended for a year.

After a year in the Army, he decided to volunteer for duty in Vietnam, in part, he says, because he liked the anti-authoritarian air the veterans returning from the war displayed. He wasn't very political or even all that upset about being drafted, he remembers

But the year Fichter spent in Vietnam turned out to be a traumatic experience. When he talks about it today, his voice changes, takes on a once-removed quality. "You just didn't know who the enemy was," he says, haltingly.

Friends of Fichter's from Emmaus also served in Vietnam. But Bill Trotter, his football teammate, thinks the experience especially affected Fichter.

"He was always a very intelligent, very introspective guy. I think he had much more of a difficult time adjusting," says Trotter, now a partner in the Hotel Bethlehem. "He thought about a lot of things and I saw that intensified when he came back. He thought a lot about his experiences and it had a deep impact on him."

The decision to become part of the anti-war movement was a slow process for Fichter.

When he came home, he decided not to marry or have children. "I was in no condition to marry anyone. I knew of the problems, of what happened when guys tried," he says.

"I came to realize that, basically, I came home to a parade, which is to say Emmaus in 1968 was an environment that was still in favor of the war. I received slaps on the back and handshakes and 'Nice job; well done, lad' for what had been the most morally abominable thing I had ever done or ever hoped to do."

One night in the spring of 1971 — he remembers it was a Monday, for some reason — Fichter caught bits of a national news report from Washington, D.C., where an anti-war group, the Vietnam Veterans Against The War, was camping on The Ellipse and returning war medals.

The vets sardonically called their non-violent "assault on Congress," as Fichter puts it, Dewey Canyon III, a reference to Dewey Canyon II, the military code name given to a secret operation in Laos, Vietnam's neighbor, which began earlier that same year.

Fichter was moved by what he saw in the coverage of that event, especially images of Vietnam Vets and Gold Star mothers, women who lost sons in the war,

being turned away from the iron gates of the Arlington National Cemetery, where they had wanted to hold a demonstration.

“I came to a rapid conclusion,” he recalls. “If I was going to be involved in any capacity beyond an individual effort, this would be the organization.”

The next day, he arranged for a leave of absence from his construction job and drove to Washington to join the Dewey Canyon vets.

That trip began his involvement with the group, which included attending dozens of gatherings, conventions and protests.

Almost by chance, he came to be among the veterans who occupied the Statue of Liberty.

He first learned of the planned action at a peace encampment at Valley Forge, outside of Philadelphia.

“I was quietly approached and told that if I wanted to take part, I should be at a certain time and place the next day,” Fichter recalls. Once they were there, the group still wasn’t told of its final destination, although Fichter says at least a few of the veterans knew the details.

He believes the secrecy had much to do with a widely held belief among the vets that the government had spies inside the anti-war movement.

“There was a general expectation that we were going to spend some significant time in prison for our actions,” Fichter says. The vets feared the Nixon administration would bring down the full weight of the federal government on them, he says.

The Statue of Liberty occupation coincided with other veteran actions around the country, including a protest in which several veterans chained themselves to the fence near the Betsy Ross house in Philadelphia.

Fichter’s group stopped at a home in northern New Jersey — Fichter isn’t sure exactly where — and the group made sandwiches, which they stuffed into the pockets of their jungle fatigues. Then they drove to Manhattan and boarded the last ferry of the day to Bedloe’s Island.

The 15 men ascended the Statue of Liberty then hid in the arm, which was undergoing repairs, and waited until the staff of the National Park Service left the island.

“We wanted to stay in the statue until the war ended, but we knew that was fairly optimistic,” he says. One of the vets, armed with a roll of dimes, went to the pay phone in the statue’s lobby and began calling media outlets. Within hours, the occupation was national news.

The event itself was actually uneventful. The vets didn’t want to damage the statue, just draw attention to their opposition to the war.

The vets ate sandwiches and drank instant coffee, which they found in the canteen area of the statue.

They held a news conference and discussed the occupation with officials from the National Park Service.

Bill Garvin, one of Fichter's best buddies, took an American flag from the lobby and climbed out onto the statue, hanging the flag upside down — an international symbol of distress. The image made many newspapers the following day.

“We tried to keep a focus,” Fichter says. “We weren’t against the American people or the people who worked for the National Park Service. We showed that we were some human beings who were trying to end the war.”

The vets negotiated with park officials and, after three days, they left as a group, returning on a ferry to Manhattan. They had taken up a collection among themselves and left the money for the coffee they drank. They also left a note apologizing for any inconvenience they might have caused park workers.

No charges were filed.

In the end, says Fichter, there was no “mindless cheering and shouting.” A few other vets met the occupiers as they returned and there was a press conference at a local restaurant. Mostly, the protestors were hungry.

“We hadn’t won. The question was, did we do anything? We had tried. That was our perspective,” says Fichter.

Fichter continued to work with Vietnam Veterans Against the War but eventually came to realize he had to stop.

“I began to burn out,” he says. “I continued with local actions, but the torch was being passed. I was no longer able to function that well. I had encountered too much.”

A few weeks after the occupation, Fichter says, the Allentown office of the FBI called, leaving a message with his mother, Muriel, an English teacher at Emmaus High School. They wanted to interview Fichter — “interview being an interesting euphemism,” he says.

They didn’t ask about the statue occupation, Fichter says, but wanted to know about his involvement in the veterans’ peace group.

The interview “contributed to the hastening of my psychological decline,” Fichter says.

Vietnam began his descent, but it wasn’t until 40 years after his return that he took steps to arrest it.

Three years ago, at the start of direct U.S. involvement in Iraq, Fichter sought help from the Veterans Administration for the first time.

Fichter says the Iraqi war may have contributed to his mounting emotional problems. He can't say for sure. Doctors told him to stop following the news because doing so might upset him.

He was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress syndrome and began taking medication. He makes a point of praising his VA doctors and the help he's received.

He is now semi-retired from his landscaping and handyman jobs, collecting disability benefits.

Fichter's delayed reaction to his post-traumatic stress syndrome doesn't surprise veteran Michael Hoffman, also from Emmaus, who experienced a similar, if not quite so delayed, reaction from his Iraqi tour of duty.

"At first I was happy to be back, but slowly, I started having problems," says Hoffman, 26, who now lives outside of Philadelphia. "I started drinking continually and started having nightmares. I realized something was wrong. I was never for the war, but I had the usual soldier's mentality. I had orders. I followed the orders, and then I got to go home."

Reluctantly at first, Hoffman started speaking out against the war, then the 1997 Emmaus High School grad became one of the founding members of Iraqi Veterans Against The War.

Veterans from both Vietnam and the Iraq conflict have made strong connections, Hoffman says. "So many of the Vietnam Vets devoted their lives after Vietnam to making sure it didn't happen again. Now, they're watching my generation fight a war they swore they would never allow. It is literally killing them inside. I'm seeing Vietnam Vets who were clean and sober for years go back to drinking. Iraq is making them relive Vietnam."

Less than four years into the Iraq war, Iraqi veterans are speaking out against it, says Frank Corcoran, a Vietnam veteran who volunteers for Veterans for Peace, a Philadelphia-based group opposed to the Iraq war.

The Iraqi Veterans Against the War held national planning sessions last January in Philadelphia. A series of informational meetings, to get their word out, followed, says Corcoran.

"Most of our members are out of the service and actively speaking out," says Corcoran. "We're a lot of ex-Marines, ex-medics, folks who were deep into" the war.

That Iraqi vets are voicing their opposition to the war doesn't surprise Ted Morgan, a political science professor at Lehigh University, who teaches courses on the Vietnam war.

Opposition to the war among Vietnam vets was a "historically unprecedented movement in the military. It took an enormous breaking through of people's consciousness. Before Vietnam, there was a very strong consensus in the country that the United States could do no wrong overseas." Vietnam Veterans were part of changing public opinion, Morgan says.

“Vets in the (Vietnam) war, whether they were in the VVAW or not, were not viewed as anti-war people but as really important voices in the movement. They had super credibility for what they were saying because they had been there, engaged in combat and had seen it first hand.”

In a storage room in his trailer, Fichter keeps a box of booklets and flyers from his days in Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and he has been thinking about looking through it for the first time since he ended his involvement.

“Those were some good times,” he says. “I’d like to work on the differences between the VVAW in big cities and smaller towns. A lot of the vets from the bigger cities were socialists. Guys like me from the smaller towns, we worked at Bethlehem Steel. We didn’t want to end capitalism. We wanted to end the war.”

Fichter is also slowly working his way back. He’s happy in his home — “Hovel, Sweet Hovel,” a sign near his door reads — calmly talking about this being where he wants to settle for the rest of his life. A small stream runs behind the property and a series of landscaping lights flicker off the water at night.

He watches the stream from a window, sitting in a barber’s chair in his living room, between two bookcases. One holds books about Vietnam and a few war mementoes, including a helmet Fichter wore when he served as a military policeman. The other bookcase has a Civil War theme. “I guess I was looking for something, a war that had some meaning,” Fichter says of his interest in the 19th-century war between the states.

A third bookcase, the largest of the three, holds hundreds of dusty folk recordings, mostly on long-playing, 331/3 records. The large television near the chair is dark and silent. Folk music from a satellite radio station floats in the background.

At last, Paul Fichter may have found his peace.

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

**Two Years After The Massacre, A
Demand For Justice:
An Open Letter From Besieged Gaza,
Palestine:
“Will You Be Able To Look Back And Say
You Stood On The Right Side Of History**

Or Will You Have Sided With The Oppressor?"

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

27 December 2010 Via Hider Eid, Facebook [Excerpts]

Besieged Gaza, Palestine

We the Palestinians of the Besieged Gaza Strip, on this day, two years on from Israel's genocidal attack on our families, our houses, our roads, our factories and our schools, are saying enough inaction, enough discussion, enough waiting – the time is now to hold Israel to account for its ongoing crimes against us.

On the 27th of December 2008, Israel began an indiscriminate bombardment of the Gaza Strip.

The assault lasted 22 days, killing 1,417 Palestinians, 352 of them children, according to main-stream Human Rights Organizations.

For a staggering 528 hours, Israeli Occupation Forces let loose their US-supplied Floss, Floss, Merkava Tanks, internationally prohibited White Phosphorous, and bombed and invaded the small Palestinian coastal enclave that is home to 1.5 million, of whom 800,000 are children and over 80 percent UN registered refugees. Around 5,300 remain permanently wounded.

This devastation exceeded in savagery all previous massacres suffered in Gaza, such as the 21 children killed in Jbail in March 2008 or the 19 civilians killed sheltering in their house in the Beit Hanoun Massacre of 2006. The carnage even exceeded the attacks in November 1956 in which Israeli troops indiscriminately rounded up and killed 275 Palestinians in the Southern town of Khan Youngish and 111 more in Rafah.

Since the Gaza massacre of 2009, world citizens have undertaken the responsibility to pressure Israel to comply with international law, through a proven strategy of boycott, divestment and sanctions. As in the global BEDS movement that was so effective in ending the apartheid South African regime, we urge people of conscience to join the BEDS call made by over 170 Palestinian organizations in 2005.

Similarly, creative civilian efforts such as the Free Gaza boats that broke the siege five times, the Gaza Freedom March, the Gaza Freedom Flotilla, and the many land convoys must never stop their siege-breaking, highlighting the inhumanity of keeping 1.5 million Gazan in an open-air prison.

Two years have now passed since Israel's gravest of genocidal acts that should have left people in no doubt of the brutal extent of Israel's plans for the Palestinians. The murderous navy assault on international activists aboard the Gaza Freedom Flotilla in the Mediterranean Sea magnified to the world the cheapness Israel has assigned to

Palestinian life for so long. The world knows now, yet two years on nothing has changed for Palestinians.

The Goldstone Report came and went: despite its listing count after count of international law contraventions, Israeli “war crimes” and “possible crimes against humanity,” the European Union, the United Nations, the Red Cross, and all major Human Rights Organizations have called for an end to the illegal, medieval siege, it carries on unabated.

On 11th November 2010 UNWRAP head John Gang said, “There’s been no material change for the people on the ground here in terms of their status, the aid dependency, the absence of any recovery or reconstruction, no economy...The easing, as it was described, has been nothing more than a political easing of the pressure on Israel and Egypt.”

On the 2nd of December, 22 international organizations including Amnesty, Oxfam, Save the Children, Christian Aid, and Medical Aid for Palestinians produced the report ‘Dashed Hopes, Continuation of the Gaza Blockade’ calling for international action to force Israel to unconditionally lift the blockade, saying the Palestinians of Gaza under Israeli siege continue to live in the same devastating conditions.

Only a week ago Human Rights Watch published a comprehensive report “Separate and Unequal” that denounced Israeli policies as Apartheid, echoing similar sentiments by South African anti-apartheid activists.

We Palestinians of Gaza want to live at liberty to meet Palestinian friends or family from Tulkarem, Jerusalem or Nazareth; we want to have the right to travel and move freely.

We want to live without fear of another bombing campaign that leaves hundreds of our children dead and many more injured or with cancers from the contamination of Israel’s white phosphorous and chemical warfare.

We want to live without the humiliations at Israeli checkpoints or the indignity of not providing for our families because of the unemployment brought about by the economic control and the illegal siege. We are calling for an end to the racism that underpins all this oppression.

Will you be able to look back and say you stood on the right side of history or will you have sided with the oppressor?

We, therefore, call on the international community to take up its responsibility to protect the Palestinian people from Israel’s heinous aggression, immediately ending the siege with full compensation for the destruction of life and infrastructure visited upon us by this explicit policy of collective punishment.

Nothing whatsoever justifies the intentional policies of savagery, including the severing of access to the water and electricity supply to 1.5 million people. The international conspiracy of silence towards the genocidal war taking place against the more than 1.5 million civilians in Gaza indicates complicity in these war crimes.

We also call upon all Palestine solidarity groups and all international civil society organizations to demand:

- An end to the siege that has been imposed on the Palestinian people in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a result of their exercise of democratic choice.
- The protection of civilian lives and property, as stipulated in International Humanitarian Law and International Human Rights Law such as The Fourth Geneva Convention.
- The immediate release of all political prisoners.
- That Palestinian refugees in the Gaza Strip be immediately provided with financial and material support to cope with the immense hardship that they are experiencing
- An end to occupation, Apartheid and other war crimes.
- Immediate reparations and compensation for all destruction carried out by the Israeli Occupation Forces in the Gaza Strip.

Boycott Divest and Sanction, join the many International Trade Unions, Universities, Supermarkets and artists and writers who refuse to entertain Apartheid Israel. Speak out for Palestine, for Gaza, and crucially ACT. The time is now.

Besieged Gaza, Palestine
27 December 2010

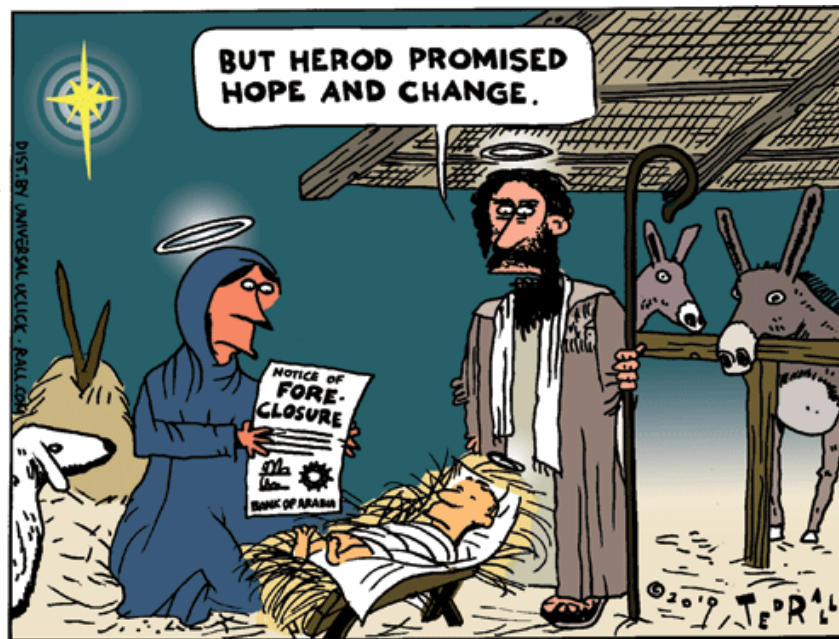
List of signatories:

General Union for Public Services Workers
General Union for Health Services Workers
University Teachers' Association
Palestinian Congregation for Lawyers
General Union for Petrochemical and Gas Workers
General Union for Agricultural Workers
Union of Women's Work Committees
Union of Synergies—Women Unit
The One Democratic State Group
Arab Cultural Forum
Palestinian Students' Campaign for the Academic Boycott of Israel
Association of Al-Quds Bank for Culture and Info
Palestine Sailing Federation
Palestinian Association for Fishing and Maritime
Palestinian Network of Non-Governmental Organizations
Palestinian Women Committees
Progressive Students' Union
Medical Relief Society
The General Society for Rehabilitation
General Union of Palestinian Women
Afaq Jadeeda Cultural Centre for Women and Children
Deir Al-Balah Cultural Centre for Women and Children
Maghazi Cultural Centre for Children

Al-Sahel Centre for Women and Youth
Ghassan Kanfani Kindergartens
Rachel Corrie Centre, Rafah
Rafah Olympia City Sisters
Al Awda Centre, Rafah
Al Awda Hospital, Jabaliya Camp
Ajyal Association, Gaza
General Union of Palestinian Syndicates
Al Karmel Centre, Nuseirat
Local Initiative, Beit Hanoun
Union of Health Work Committees
Red Crescent Society Gaza Strip
Beit Lahiya Cultural Centre

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



**Seattle Area County Government
Cancels "Israeli War Crimes" Bus**

Ads After Zionists Raise “The Threat Of Potential Violence Against Both Community Members And Buses Themselves”

“These Groups That Insist On Suppressing Free Speech About Israel Do Not Represent Many, Many Jews In This Country”

[Thanks to Michael Letwin, New York City Labor Against The War & Military Resistance Organization, who sent this in.]

December 25, 2010 Australians for Palestine & December 23, 2010, KIROTV [Excerpts]

The upcoming Metro bus ad campaign by Seattle Mideast Awareness Campaign has been cancelled by the King County Executive.

King County Executive Dow Constantine called for a halt to all non-commercial advertisements on county buses in a news release on Thursday and rejected a proposed ad from a Seattle group.

The announcement came on the heels of a dispute over an bus ad decrying “Israeli war crimes” that was paid for by a group called the Seattle Mideast Awareness Campaign and that led to a private meeting between county officials and Jewish community leaders on Wednesday.

That ad was the one rejected by Metro on Thursday.

The ad also drew attention from the Los Angeles-based David Horowitz Freedom Center, which sought to place its own ad on King County buses decrying “Palestinian war crimes.” That ad was also rejected.

The bus ads, with the message “ISRAELI WAR CRIMES: Your Tax Dollars At Work” had been approved and accepted by King County officials several weeks before.

The Seattle Mideast Awareness Coalition had signed a contract, paid the complete amount – over \$3000 – and the ads themselves had been printed and delivered to Metro Transit for affixing to 12 buses.

Several groups purporting to represent the Jewish community mounted a campaign to prevent King County from putting up the ads.

Their campaign included overwhelming Metro and King County phone lines and email boxes, raising the threat of potential violence against both community members and buses themselves, and making defamatory claims about the ads and the advertisers.

King County Executive Dow Constantine announced that the ad would not “be accepted” late in the afternoon on Thursday, citing potential disruptions and safety hazards to the Metro system.

“The ad itself is not disrupting Metro Transit operation and services,” says Seattle Mideast Awareness Campaign member Edward Mast. “The ad is not causing a public safety hazard. Those who want the ad silenced mounted a campaign to disrupt Metro and generate threats. It’s disturbing that King County has given in to those who want to stop free speech with intimidation tactics.”

Local human rights activist and Jewish-American Peter Lippman said, “The State of Israel is not the same as the Jewish people, and Israel should be subject to criticism like any other state. These groups that insist on suppressing free speech about Israel do not represent many, many Jews in this country.”

Seattle Mideast Awareness Campaign maintains that the ad slogan contains facts, not rhetoric, and that war crimes by Israel have been widely documented.

After Israel’s three-week military offensive against the captive population of Gaza in 2008-9, which resulted in the deaths of more than 1,400 Palestinians — most of them non-combatants and more than 300 of them children — a formal inquiry by the United Nations found grounds for a criminal investigation into war crimes by Israel. The UN report concluded that Israel’s assault was not in self-defense, but was “a deliberately disproportionate attack designed to punish, humiliate and terrorize a civilian population”.

In a report published on July 2, 2009, Amnesty International found evidence that Israeli soldiers used Palestinian civilians as human shields. Israeli soldiers have testified publicly to other human rights violations.

Troops Invited:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

Military Resistance Available In PDF Format

If you prefer PDF to Word format, email contact@militaryproject.org

CLASS WAR REPORTS



DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

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