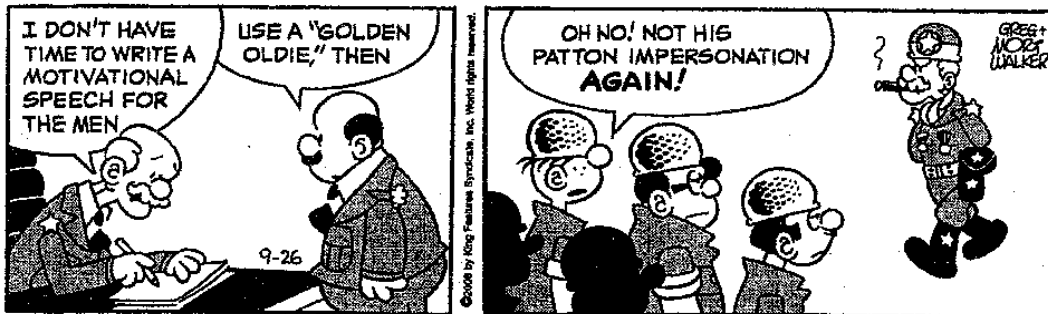
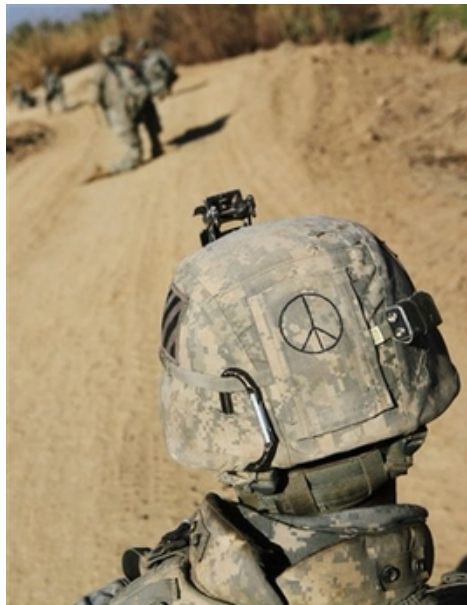


GI SPECIAL 6J9:



ACTION REPORT

“Why Wouldn’t You Be Received Well If You’re Doing Something To Actually Stop The War By Accessing The Troops Whose Role To Do Just That May Not Be Far Off Now?”



U.S. soldier in Arab Jabour, south of Baghdad, Feb. 4, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

From: Alan Stolzer, Military Project
To: GI Special
Sent: October 08, 2008
Subject: For GI Special

More evidence that friends/allies/relatives of the troops are out there waiting to be contacted never ends.

Why would it if there are so many able and ready to aid their sisters and brothers in the military who hate these wars even more than they hate the president?

Recently I made a contact who took 25 information packages left over from a previous National Guard armory outreach by the Military Project.

He wanted them for “people in the military he knew.”

Not only was he eager to get the material to them but told me he was in touch with troops drilling at an armory that could be accessed easily enough.

While I was speaking with him, another person nearby asked for some of the handouts for his friends.

While reading the Military Project “Why We Are Here” statement [see copy below] that was included in the handout, he repeated “good, good, good” indicating that’s what’s needed to reach the troops.

There’s no reason why anyone reading this can’t do the same type outreach to shopkeepers, clerks, bus drivers or ANYBODY you come in contact who can be approached in normal, social circumstances.

I assure you you’ll find sympathetic response most of the time.

Why wouldn’t you be received well if you’re doing something to actually stop the war by accessing the troops whose role to do just that may not be far off now?

MORE:

Why We Are Here

[This is the Why We Are Here statement referenced in the article above.]

The Military Project is an organizing committee of activists focused on encouraging participants in the anti-war movement to reach out to active duty, reserve and National Guard troops.

Our mission is to support and provide aid to soldiers opposed to continuing the war in Iraq.

All troops—including members of the National Guard and Reserves—have every right to question and oppose the war and occupation.

No one has more of a right.

Every time you speak out, it gives a voice to the soldiers in Iraq who don't want to be there. It gives others the courage to resist and openly dissent inside the military.

A soldier's voice, when it's raised, carries authority. People will listen.

During Viet Nam, the anti-war movement within the armed forces was the decisive factor in ending the war.

Now we're at a decisive moment in history. The majority of the American people want the troops to come home now. But it is clear that the Bush administration has no intention of ending the war.

GI resistance will stop this war.

No one has a bigger stake.

If you would like to organize with other dissenting soldiers, receive support in distributing and replacing materials, attend one of our meetings or speak to us with any questions you may have:

**Contact us:
contact@militaryproject.org**

**The Military Project
Box 126,
2576 Broadway,
New York, N.Y. 10025-5657**

MORE:

“People Need Not Be Helpless Before The Power Of Illegitimate Authority”

**THE MILITARY PROJECT: Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657
Contact@militaryproject.org**

[Based on a statement by David Cortright, Vietnam Veteran and armed forces resistance organizer.]

In the final analysis the stationing of American forces abroad serves not the national interest but the class interest of the corporate and political elite.

The maintenance of a massive, interventionist-oriented military establishment is based on the need to protect multinational investment and preserve regimes friendly to American capital.

Imperialism is at the heart of the national-security system and is the force fundamentally responsible for the counterrevolutionary, repressive aims of U.S. policy.

Only if we confront this reality and challenge it throughout society and within the ranks can we restore democratic control of the military.

Of course nothing can be accomplished without citizen involvement and active political struggle.

During the Vietnam era enlisted servicemen created massive pressures for change, despite severe repression, and significantly altered the course of the war and subsequent military policy.

To sustain and strengthen this challenge we must continue to build political opposition to interventionism and support those within the armed services, including national guard and reserves, who defy the goals and program of Empire.

The central lesson of the GI movement is that people need not be helpless before the power of illegitimate authority, that by getting together and acting upon their convictions people can change society and, in effect, make their own history.

The Military Project

MORE:

**The Military Project: Contact@militaryproject.org
Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657**

MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY PROJECT

- 1. Do not “support the troops” in the abstract. We focus on support for Armed Forces resistance, giving aid and comfort to those who are against the war.**
- 2. Are for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all occupation troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.**
- 3. Believe that oppressed peoples and nations have the right to self-determination and the right to resist Imperial invasion and occupation.**
- 4. Do not require others to be in complete agreement to work together with them towards common objectives.**

5. **Reject the idea that organizations working together on a common project must not debate differences about the best way forward for the movement. On the contrary, we encourage debate and discussion as the most useful method to arrive at the best course of action.**

6. **May choose to support candidates for elective office who are for immediate withdrawal from Iraq, but do not support candidates opposed to bringing our troops home now.**

7. **Are committed to organizational democracy. This means control of our organization by the membership, through freely elected delegates to any coordinating bodies that may be formed, whether at local, regional, or national levels. Any member in good standing may run for any position, with or without a slate. Coordinating bodies must report their actions, decisions and votes to the membership who elected them for approval or rejection.**

8. **Are committed to putting in time taking action in an organized way to reach out to members of the armed forces, including local community Reserve and National Guard units.**

9. **Are not commissioned officers active duty or drilling reserve, or any law enforcement agency.**

I understand and am in agreement with the above statement, and pledge to defend my brothers and sisters against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

(Signed)

(Date)

MORE:

THE MILITARY PROJECT

Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION:

Name (please print): _____

Armed Forces? (Branch) _____

Veteran: Years: _____

Union: _____

Occupation: _____

Mailing address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone (Landline): _____

Phone (Cell): _____

\$ dues paid and receipt given by _____ . (Calendar year basis.)

E1-E3	@	\$5
E4-E6	@	\$10
E7-E9	@	\$20
Civilians	@	\$25
Students/Unemployed	@	\$10
Civilian/Military Prisoners	@	Dues Waived

Comments:

NOTE: Civilian applicants will be interviewed, in person if possible, or by phone.

MORE:

MORE ACTION REPORTS WANTED: FROM YOU!

An effective way to encourage others to support members of the armed forces organizing to resist the Imperial war is to report what you do.

If you've carried out organized contact with troops on active duty, at base gates, airports, or anywhere else, send a report in to GI Special for the Action Reports section.

Same for contact with National Guard and/or Reserve components.

They don't have to be long. Just clear, and direct action reports about what work was done and how.

If there were favorable responses, say so. If there were unfavorable responses or problems, don't leave them out.

If you are not planning or engaging in outreach to the troops, you have nothing to report.

NOTE WELL:

Do not make public any information that could compromise the work.

Whether you are serving in the armed forces or not, do not in any way identify members of the armed forces organizing to stop the war.

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

The sole exception: occasions when a member of the armed services explicitly directs his or her name be listed as reporting on the action.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Slain Soldier Remembered At Funeral

October 01, 2008 (AP)

Kingston: An Oklahoma soldier who died in Iraq was remembered Saturday as an "all-American boy" who had already served a tour in Iraq and volunteered to go back to the war zone.

Services for Cpl. Michael Eyre Thompson, 23, were held in a crowded school gymnasium in Kingston in southern Oklahoma. A 2003 graduate of Kingston High School, Thompson died on Sept. 18 in a helicopter crash in Iraq that also killed two other Oklahoma National Guard soldiers as well as four soldiers from Texas.

Staff Sgt. Tracey Friend, one of several people who spoke at Thompson's funeral, said Thompson believed in the cause he was fighting for and wore it on his shirt sleeve.

"He could make you smile in the worst of times...People were drawn to this young man," Friend said. "He was an all-American boy, fun loving and easy going."

Friend recalled they were on guard duty on top of a bunker at approximately 2:30 one morning when they began talking about home, hunting and music. Friend said that Thompson loved music.

“He began singing Waylon Jennings at the top of his voice,” Friend said. “Lights started coming on in the neighborhood below and the Iraqis were coming out and saying, ‘Mister, please (stop).’

He looked at me and said, ‘Sgt. Friend, I don’t think they know Waylon Jennings,’ and for the next four hours, they were entertained. He didn’t shut up.”

Friend choked up when talking about the honor of escorting Thompson’s body home.

“It is a horrible loss for all of us but the honor bestowed upon me to escort him home — it is the greatest honor I have ever had in my life,” Friend said.

Meanwhile, services were held Saturday for Staff Sgt. Brandon Farley of Haworth, who also died on Sept. 18 from injuries suffered a day before when his patrol came under fire in Afghanistan.

Farley “was always interested in the military and military history,” said Victor Balagbagan, a veteran social sciences teacher at Haworth High School. Balagbagan said members of Farley’s 1997 graduating class at Haworth were among the estimated 300 people who attended Farley’s funeral service.

“Brandon didn’t know what, exactly, he wanted as far as the military was concerned. But he wanted to know that he would measure up...so that ‘I won’t let my buddies down,’” he said.

The teacher said he assured Farley he was “as strong inside as outside, and he wouldn’t let anyone down.”

He measured up, said Balagbagan, “and he did what he did with pride and dignity.”

The word hero is tossed around so often that its meaning is often diluted, Balagbagan said. “Brandon has given all. People like Brandon is what being a hero is all about.”

More than 1,000 McCurtain County residents, many waving flags, turned out Friday to honor Farley, 30, as his body was carried in a procession, led from the Idabel Regional Airport into downtown Idabel by about 100 members of the Patriot Riders, a group of motorcyclists.

He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 26th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Infantry Division at Fort Hood, Texas.

U.S. Military Patrol Bombed In Al-Doura; Casualties Not Announced

Oct 10 (KUNA)

Two bombs were detonated consecutively in Al-Doura area south of the capital Baghdad. The first device targeted a U.S. patrol, a matter that prompted a closure of the incident scene. Extent of damage has not yet been assessed.

THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR HEALTH; ALL HOME, NOW



U.S. Army soldiers 2nd Stryker Cavalry Regiment sprint across a street to avoid sniper fire as they patrol with their replacements from 1st Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade, 25th Infantry Division in Baqouba, 35 miles (60 kilometers) northeast of Baghdad, Oct. 7, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

They Figured It Out: National Intelligence Estimate Says Occupation “Losing Afghanistan”

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

October 9, 2008 All Things Considered & October 8, 2008 By MARK MAZZETTI and ERIC SCHMITT, New York Times [Excerpts]

A draft report by U.S. intelligence agencies says the situation in Afghanistan is in a “downward spiral” as Taliban fighters threaten stability in the region.

The classified National Intelligence Estimate, or NIE, won't be released until after the November presidential election. But government officials who reviewed it described its contents to New York Times reporters.

“For the first time in many years, the intelligence agencies of the U.S. government have come together and have said in the most comprehensive way that the U.S. and allies and Afghan government are in danger of ‘losing’ Afghanistan, essentially,” says Eric Schmitt, who covers terrorism and national security for the Times.

Schmitt tells NPR's Melissa Block, “This is not a phrase or assessment that intelligence analysts use lightly.”

Both major presidential candidates, Senators Barack Obama and John McCain, have called for American troop increases in Afghanistan even beyond those the White House has ordered.

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**

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004

October 10, 2002: Infamous Anniversary



Carl Bunin Peace History October 8-14

The House voted 296-133 to pass the "Joint Resolution to Authorize the Use of United States Armed Forces Against Iraq," giving President George W. Bush broad authority to use military force against Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein, with or without U.N. support.

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION
ALL TROOPS HOME NOW!**

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

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

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

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 contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Crisis-Speak – A Glossary: “Depression” “An Implicit Threat By Way Of Which Financial Institutions Are Able To Extort Ransom To The Tune Of Several Hundred Billions”



Oct 5, 2008 By Steven Randy Waldman, New York Magazine

Illiquidity

If you owe someone a dollar and you don't have one, you are illiquid.

Insolvency

If you owe someone a dollar and you don't have one, and if you sold everything that you own and you still wouldn't have one, you are insolvent. (But as long as you own something that's hard to put a value on, no one can prove that you're insolvent. Upon this rock stands the entire financial system.)

Moral hazard

Economistese for “It’s only a rental.” You get to party, and someone else cleans up the mess. It turns out that the banking system was only a rental, except that after taxpayers rebuild the engine, the bankers expect it back for another spin.

Risk

In Victorian times, what investors were paid to bear. Thanks to recent innovations in financial engineering, however, risk can be so finely sliced, traded, and transferred that no one even notices when it ends up in Aunt Millie’s bank account.

Mark-to-market valuation

The antiquated notion that a thing is worth what someone else is willing to pay for it, its current market value. Okay in rising markets, but when prices fall, techniques such as “mark-to-model” or “mark-to-myth” better support investor confidence.

Hold-to-maturity valuation

A financial asset represents a bunch of promises by someone to pay you money in the future. If you pretend you know how well those promises will be kept, you can pretend you know the value of the asset.

Libor

An interest rate that London bankers charge one another to borrow money. Important, because whatever bankers have to pay, the rest of us have to pay and then some.

TED spread

Not a condiment. A measure of stress in the credit markets, defined as the difference between what your average bank and Uncle Sam have to pay to get a three-month loan.

Counterparty meltdown

The biggest, most secret fear of the credit crisis.

Suppose Alice owes Bob a million dollars, Bob owes Sue a million dollars, and Sue owes Alice a million dollars. Since Alice, Bob, and Sue each owe and are owed a million dollars, these big obligations wash out, they are all okay.

But suppose Sue has huge gambling debts and declares bankruptcy. Now Alice owes a million dollars to Bob, but no one owes Alice anything. Alice doesn’t have the money, now that she can’t take it from Sue, so she declares bankruptcy too.

Bob still owes money to Sue, and Alice is gone, so he is broke as well. In a network of interlocking debtors, one bankruptcy can force many to go down.

Depression

An implicit threat by way of which financial institutions are able to extort ransom to the tune of several hundred billions.

MORE:

**“At Some Point We Stop Believing
Not Just In The Banks—We Stop
Believing In The Government”
“My Sense At The Moment Is That The
Momentum Of De-Leveraging Is So
Powerful That Neither The Monetary
Authorities Nor The Fiscal Authorities
Can Stop It”**



Oct 5, 2008 Financial historian Niall Ferguson, author of the forthcoming *The Ascent of Money*, interviewed by Hugo Lindgren; *New York Magazine*

You describe the U.S. government response to the financial crisis as the Great Repression. What does that mean?

My point is that we have the potential for a Great Depression, which is to say a very large number of banks to fail and a huge credit contraction. But we are desperately trying to stop it happening by pouring money from the Federal Reserve and the U.S. Treasury into the financial system.

It's more a form of denial than a solution. I don't have any doubt that a big recession is coming the way of the United States, maybe worse.

People are starting to use the D-word. But in 1929, the Federal Reserve was in its infancy and there was not a global savings glut in Asia. So don't we have good reason to believe that history won't repeat itself?

Of course, there were savings in 1929 too. It's not as if the world ever runs out of savings, it's just that they're in the wrong place in a crisis. The Federal Reserve system was very powerful in 1929, but as Milton Friedman and Anna Schwartz pointed out in their monetary history of the United States, they did all the wrong things. They systematically tightened monetary policy when there was already a credit crunch.

And one of the key points that Friedman made was that if the Fed had been much more openhanded, then the Depression might have been less severe. Well, we're putting that to the test at the moment. You could say that Ben Bernanke is running a real-time experiment with Friedman's hypothesis.

Are you at all optimistic that the Fed can do it?

We'll see.

My sense at the moment is that the momentum of de-leveraging is so powerful that neither the monetary authorities nor the fiscal authorities can stop it.

The stupid thing is that it was clear a year ago that a very large number of financial institutions were in trouble.

Future historians will look back and say the time to address the banking problem was 2007, not in 2008. What on earth were they doing for twelve months?

What effect do you see this having on New York's standing as a global financial capital?

I'm in Venice now, which used to be a financial center and is now a tourist center. And the nightmare is that a crisis of this magnitude will turn New York from a financial center into a tourist center. The good news is that London seems to be handling this crisis slightly worse than New York. My sense is that the great financial crisis we're living through will fundamentally tilt the balance of the world from West to East. Sovereign-wealth funds will matter much, much more because they've got the money and we haven't.

New York isn't quite Venice yet, but I certainly am quite relieved that I don't own a large block of real estate in Manhattan right now.

What would you say has been revealed about human behavior in the last two weeks, based on what's happened in the market?

For 20 or 30 years, people have been trying to turn finance into a branch of applied mathematics. They've been trying to reduce decisions about credit and debt to equations.

And what we've realized, belatedly, as a result of this crisis is the human factor is dominant in financial crises. That investors behave rather in the way that cattle do when the herd stampedes. The greed that made them chomp the grass suddenly turns into the fear that makes them charge for the gate. And that's something that the mathematical models never took sufficient account of.

The markets magnify the human tendency to swing wildly from euphoria to despondency. It's not surprising really that behavioral economics is gradually taking over from mathematical finance. It perfectly matches the shift in the real world.

Where are you putting your own money?

Well, I have been debating today whether gold bars really are the answer. They probably aren't. The good rule of thumb in a crisis like this is to be diversified and not to have too much debt.

I actually went and withdrew the money that I had in Washington Mutual three weeks ago.

You did? You were worried that depositors would be wiped out?

I didn't want to try out federal deposit insurance for myself, especially since I had reason to think that the whole FDIC system could itself go bust because of the magnitude of the crisis.

That's the key.

At some point we stop believing not just in the banks—we stop believing in the government.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT 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/>

And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

“We Win One In The Class War” Cook County Sheriff Refuses To Evict Renters After Foreclosures; “We Will No Longer Be A Party To Something That’s So Unjust”



[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Project]

He talked about tenants who dutifully pay their rent, then leave one morning for work only to have authorities evict them and put their belongings on the curb while they are gone. By the time they get home, “The meager possessions they have are gone,” he said. “This is happening too often.”

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

10.8.08 By DON BABWIN (AP) & by Angela Caputo, Progress Illinois.com [Excerpts]

The sheriff here said Wednesday that he’s ordering his deputies to stop evicting people from foreclosed properties because many people his office has helped throw out on the street are renters who did nothing wrong.

Tired of seeing innocent renters caught in the middle of the foreclosure crisis, Cook County Sheriff Tom Dart is putting the breaks on evictions unless lenders can provide evidence that officers are being sent to toss the right people from their homes.

“We will no longer be a party to something that’s so unjust,” a visibly angry Sheriff Dart said at a news conference.

“We have to be sure that when we are doing this — and we are destroying some people’s lives — we better be darned sure we’re talking about the right people,” Dart said.

Dart said he believes banks are not doing basic research to determine that the people being evicted are, in fact, the homeowners.

He said that in a third of the 400 to 500 foreclosure evictions his deputies had been carrying out every month, the residents are not those whose names are on the eviction papers.

Nor, he said, are banks notifying tenants that the homes they’re renting are in foreclosure. He added that when banks do learn the correct names of those living on foreclosed-upon property, their names often are simply added to eviction papers.

“They just go out and get an order the next day and throw these people’s names on there,” Dart said. “Whether they (tenants) have been notified, God only knows.”

Dart said it’s only fair for banks to give occupants of a foreclosed property adequate notice before forcing them out.

“You are talking about a lot of people in rental situations living paycheck to paycheck,” he said. “To think they are sitting on a pool of money for an up-front deposit, security deposit, is foolishness.”

Under state law, renters are entitled to 120 days notice, but in aggressive foreclosure proceedings their rights are often overlooked. Dart indicated that the law has been routinely ignored.

Too many times officers have been called to toss children and families out on the street, even though they’ve kept up with their rent, Dart said. Beginning tomorrow, the practice will stop.

“We’re talking about people who live paycheck to paycheck,” Dart said. “They’re living on the edge.”

Dart said he believes he’s the first sheriff in a major metropolitan area to stop participating in foreclosure evictions, and the publisher of a national foreclosure database said he’s probably right.

Dart said that from now on, banks will have to present his office with a court affidavit that proves the home’s occupant is either the owner or has been properly notified of the foreclosure proceedings.

He talked about tenants who dutifully pay their rent, then leave one morning for work only to have authorities evict them and put their belongings on the curb while they are gone.

By the time they get home, “The meager possessions they have are gone,” he said. “This is happening too often.”

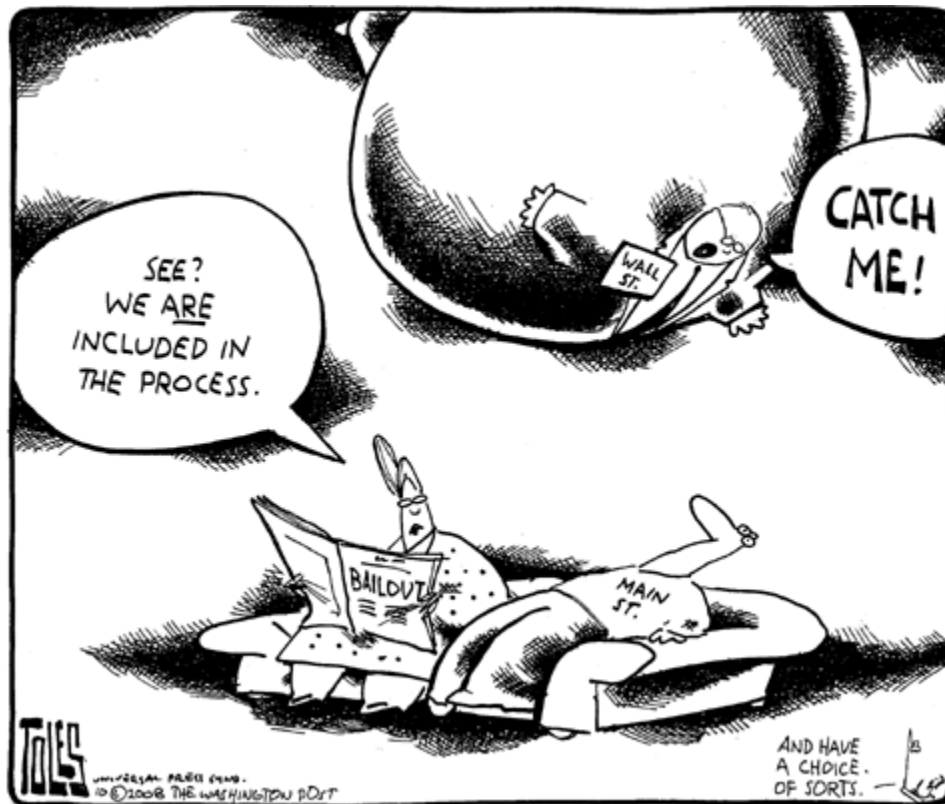
In many cases, he said, tenants aren’t even aware that their homes have fallen into foreclosure.

This week, an attorney asked that Dart be held in contempt when his deputies did not evict tenants after determining they were not the owners and did not know about their landlord’s financial problems. A judge denied the attorney’s request, Dart’s office said, and Dart said that after talking to the Cook County state’s attorney’s office, he is confident he is on solid legal ground.

“My job as sheriff is to follow court orders, absolutely,” he said. “But I’m also in charge of making sure justice is being done here and it is clear that justice is not being done here.”

Foreclosures have skyrocketed around the country in recent months and Dart said the number of foreclosure evictions in Cook County could more than double from the 2006 tally of 1,771. This year the county is on pace to see 4,500 such evictions, he said.

Dart warned that because the eviction process on foreclosures can take more than a year, the number is sure to climb even higher. “From all the numbers we have seen, we know (they) are going to be exploding,” he said.



RECEIVED

“The Incident Of Fragging Is Incorrect”

From: Steven Wyatt
To: GI Special
Sent: October 01, 2008
Subject: 538th trans Long binh

The incident of fragging is incorrect.

The grenade was in a sock with the pin pulled.

It did not go off.

I was there.

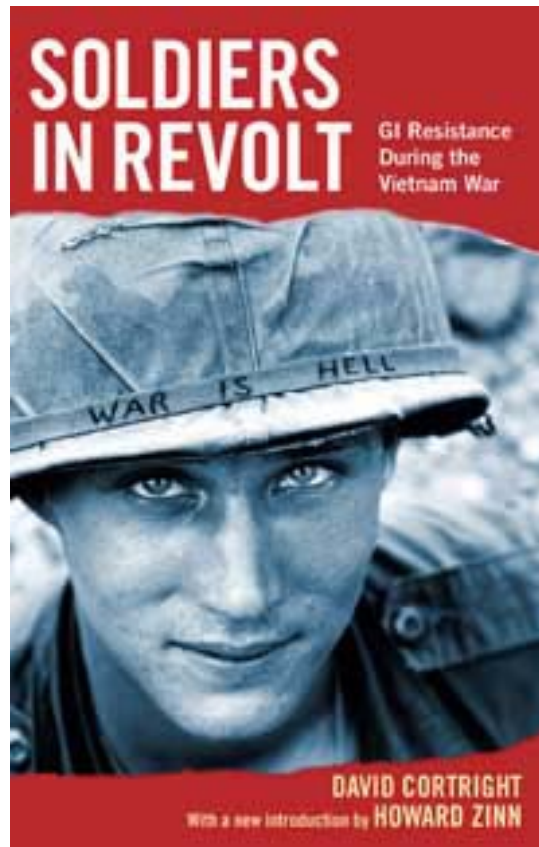
I would like to add Richard Strain received an Army accommodation medal. I'm sure if he was involved, he wouldn't have received the medal.

The first sergeant's name was Garcia.

Anything else you need, let me know. I remember it all.

[The message above refers to the boxed paragraph in the excerpt from Soldiers In Revolt, below, which originally appeared in GI Special 4L16: 12.19.06, and is certainly worth reading again. T]

**“It Was The Rebellion Of
Lowranking GIs That Forced
The Government To Abandon A
Hopeless And Suicidal Policy”
“Most Fraggings Were Aimed At
Eliminating The Abusive Practices Of
Individual Commanders”**



[SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: THE QUASI-MUTINY]

The majority of grunts in Vietnam had but one aim, to return home safely, and few were willing to risk their lives for a hopeless cause. As violent and ruthless as it may have been, fragging was an essential tool of soldier democracy, the means by which men thrust into Vietnam against their wills were able to resist military authority.

It was the final manifestation of a breakdown in the U.S. mission in Vietnam and signaled an Army at war with itself.

On April 20, 1971, Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield began the proceedings of Congress by dramatically introducing his colleagues and the nation to the most macabre development of the Vietnam War: fragging.

In a trembling voice, Mansfield grimly told of a young first lieutenant, a West Point graduate from Montana, who was murdered by his own men at Bien Hoa on March 15, just four weeks before his scheduled return to the States.

In the brief comments following Mansfield's disclosure, Senator Charles Mathias of Maryland captured the shock and dismay of those present:

"In every war a new vocabulary springs up . . . but in all the lexicon of war there is not a more tragic word than 'fragging' with all that it implies of total failure of

discipline and depression of morale, the complete sense of frustration and confusion and the loss of goals and hope itself.”

The Army began keeping records on assaults with explosive devices in 1969. Through the end of 1970, over three hundred incidents had taken place, resulting in seventy-three deaths and injury to nearly five hundred people.

By July of 1972, as the last American troops were leaving Vietnam, the total number of incidents had reached 551, with eighty-six soldiers dead and over seven hundred injured.

In effect, these are the casualty figures for the Army’s “other war” in Vietnam, its battle with the insurgents in its own ranks.

As startling as these totals may be, fraggings were in fact more frequent than the Pentagon’s figures imply.

One quite obvious deficiency is that the statistics include only assaults with explosive devices and omit the vast number of shootings with firearms, which, given greater availability, probably occurred more often.

David Addlestone reports that Army lawyers with the 173rd Airborne told of periods during ,1970 and 1971 when violent attacks were almost a daily occurrence.

In fact, assaults against commanders during the Vietnam War probably reached into the thousands.

The Pentagon figures do indicate a sharp rise in the rate of fragging, with the number of incidents increasing each year from 1969 to 1971, despite troop withdrawals:

Calendar Year	Number of Assaults	Deaths
1969	96	39
1970	209	34
1971 (first 11 months only)	215	12

Military spokesmen sometimes claim that many of these incidents involved attacks among low-ranking enlisted men, particularly blacks against whites, but the Pentagon’s own figures show that the great majority of fraggings were aimed at those in positions of authority.

Statistics supplied to the House Appropriations Defense Subcommittee for the period January 1969 to August 1971 show that, of 43 identified fragging victims, approximately 80 per cent were officers and NCOs.

Fragging was the GI’s ultimate means of resistance, a deadly and effective weapon against military authority and dangerous or oppressive policies.

A few examples will show the powerful impact of fragging.

In 1970, former Marine Sergeant Robert Parkinson of Sunland, California, appeared before a Congressional Subcommittee on Juvenile Delinquency. A crippled man, the

sergeant told how two years earlier, in Vietnam, he had attempted to crack down on widespread drug use within his unit; how he began to receive threats and eventually had to arm himself; and how on September 23, 1968, a fragmentation grenade exploded under his bunk, shattering his foot and causing severe internal injuries.

The sergeant's tragic experience was not unique, even at this early stage of the war.

Lieutenant Colonel Anthony Herbert told interviewers for Playboy magazine of similar attacks within his battalion of the 173rd Airborne before he took command in early 1969:

"There had been two attempts on the previous commander's life. There had been quite a few fraggings in that battalion, of both officers and senior enlisted men.

"One man had both legs blown off; seven people had been wounded by a grenade, and a Claymore mine had been thrown right at the tactical-operations center—a mine to kill the staff, for Christ's sake."

Most fraggings were aimed at eliminating the abusive practices of individual commanders.

On November 9, 1970, an incendiary grenade was thrown into the quarters of several notoriously rigid NCOs of the 2nd Battalion/17th Artillery at Nha Trang. The sergeants escaped unhurt, but presumably they got the message from the grunts to ease up.

A similar incident occurred several months later within the 538th Transportation Company at Long Binh. The unit seethed with discontent over the policies of the first sergeant, and talk of fagging was blatant. In April of 1971 the sergeant finally fell victim to an attack, later blamed on Sp/4's Richard Buckingham, a member of VVAW [Vietnam Veterans Against The War], and Richard Strain.

Fraggings also took place under combat conditions.

In his January 1972 article in Saturday Review, Eugene Linden recounted an episode in an armored cavalry unit near Khe San in the spring of 1971.

After four months in the bush, the company was scheduled to return to Khe San, when the commander, at the last minute, volunteered his men to stay out on patrol. That night, three Claymore mines were stolen and placed under what was thought to be the commander's armored track vehicle.

The captain was elsewhere, though, and the explosion injured (apparently accidentally) four enlisted men sleeping nearby.

Linden also reported on a fragging involving black radicals at Camp Eagle during the Laotian invasion in March of 1971. The commander of a supply unit at the camp had attempted to discipline several militants for drug use, but after jailing one of the blacks, the captain was wounded in his sleep by a Claymore mine slipped under his bunk.

Similarly, In a 1972 article for Life magazine, John Saar wrote of a fragging in the fall of 1971 in which grunts attempted to blow up their overly zealous commander but accidentally killed the wrong officer. In an unannounced urinalysis test immediately after the slaying, 25 per cent of the men were detected as heroin users and removed from the unit.

The ultimate impact of fragging lay not with any one particular incident but with its general effect on the functioning of the Army.

For every one of the more than five hundred reported assaults, there were many instances of intimidation and threats of fragging which often produced the same result.

The unexpected appearance of a grenade pin or the detonation of a harmless smoke grenade frequently convinced commanders to abandon expected military standards. Once a commander was threatened by or became the actual target of a fragging, his effectiveness and that of the unit involved were severely hampered.

Indeed, as internal defiance spread within many units, no order could be issued without first considering the possibility of fragging.

The ardent young West Point graduate, eager to succeed in combat and push his men to medal-winning heroics, was a doomed figure.

The majority of grunts in Vietnam had but one aim, to return home safely, and few were willing to risk their lives for a hopeless cause. As violent and ruthless as it may have been, fragging was an essential tool of soldier democracy, the means by which men thrust into Vietnam against their wills were able to resist military authority.

It was the final manifestation of a breakdown in the U.S. mission in Vietnam and signaled an Army at war with itself.

The plague of disaffection and defiance within the ranks, most dramatically evidenced in fragging, crippled the infantry and left the once-proud American Army helpless, more a liability than an asset to U.S. purposes.

This was perhaps best illustrated by the Army's attempted solution to the problem of fragging.

By 1970, many commanders in Vietnam apparently felt that enlisted men could no longer be trusted with weapons and began a policy of restricting access to explosive devices and rifles.

Information from various separate sources and conversations with Vietnam veterans confirm that in many units grenades and firearms were taken from all but those on guard duty and on combat patrol.

Sp/5 William Fischer, then of the 440th Signal Battalion in Mannheim, related in June 1970 (at an anti-war gathering in London's Lyceum Ballroom) how several months earlier in Vietnam a colonel refused to arm the men in his camp, despite an NLF attack, because he was "afraid of incidents."

Similarly, in 1971, members of "Better Blacks United," an anti-racist organization centered in Tuy Hoa, disclosed that commanders restricted the possession of arms among blacks and white radicals.

Correspondents for Time, the Washington Post, and other journals likewise observed instances of troops being denied access to weapons. Thus soldiers were stripped of the very weapons with which they had been sent to fight.

Limiting possession of weapons may have prevented some fraggings, but it also undermined the U.S. role in Vietnam.

An Army so utterly demoralized clearly was incapable of functioning as a credible military force.

Military officials and some journalists have asserted that the Army did not seriously fall apart until after extensive withdrawals began; that troops grew restless because they were taken out of combat and thus became bored.

Such arguments raise a "chicken and egg" dilemma: did resistance force the Pentagon to withdraw, or did withdrawal create dissent and unrest?

The actual process was no doubt a dialectic combination of the two, each process playing on the other to produce constantly deteriorating troop morale and an ever-increasing rate of withdrawal.

Nonetheless, too little attention has been directed to the question of just what influence the Army's collapse in Vietnam had on Nixon-administration disengagement policies.

It's hard to pinpoint a date when turbulence within the infantry reached a critical state, but my own guess would be that by early 1970 morale problems were already beginning to create grave difficulties.

Several combat refusals had already been reported, drug-use levels were approaching 50 per cent, and fraggings were spreading rapidly; black and white troops throughout the services were loudly clamoring for an end to the war and greater personal freedoms.

David Hackworth's description of the 173rd Brigade at An Khe, even as early as 1969, suggests an Army rapidly approaching collapse:

"Pound for pound, the Brigade was garbage. Discipline was lax; the troops were slovenly, mentally as well as physically. It was obvious that in An Khe at least they were no match for either the Viet Cong or the North Vietnamese regulars. As the sergeant had said, they preferred pot, two to one. But marijuana was only an expression of a deeper, more serious failure. . . .

“They called the hierarchy ‘motherfuckers’ and printed ‘fuck the Green Machine’ on their jackets and hats.”

There seems little doubt that troop withdrawals were in fact speeded up because of the GI revolt.

Military officials were compelled to act in order to preserve the Army as an institution and prevent even further internal disintegration.

This was done not only because of fragging and mutiny in Vietnam itself but because of the generalized crisis throughout the armed forces at the time: the plummeting reenlistment rates, soaring desertions, and rising dissent which threatened to destroy the American military apparatus.

Against such a background, it’s not surprising that voices were raised to submit to the pressures for withdrawal. Stewart Alsop, a veteran journalist with reputed close connections to Pentagon officials, penned an extraordinary Newsweek editorial, in December 1970, reporting a “growing feeling among the Administration’s policymakers that it might be a good idea to accelerate the rate of withdrawal.”

The main reason cited for this view, according to Alsop, was “that discipline and morale in the American Army in Vietnam are deteriorating very seriously.”

Similar sentiments were attributed to Pentagon officials a few weeks later in a Time magazine article on GI dissent: “Officers from Chief of Staff William C. Westmoreland on down are known to be arguing that they are not being pulled out fast enough.”

Washington Post reporters also found appeals for accelerated withdrawal rates among many leading officers who “believe that a continued presence provides little help for the Vietnamese but exacerbates the problems of drags and disaffection.”

There were also reports in early 1971 that then Secretary of Defense Laird returned from an inspection tour of Vietnam “shocked and distressed by the high level of marijuana use and the low level of morale” and urged a more rapid reduction in ground troops.

The Nixon administration claimed and received great credit for withdrawing the Army from Vietnam, but in fact it was the rebellion of lowranking GIs that forced the government to abandon a hopeless and suicidal policy.

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