

GI SPECIAL 6L9:



**“Too Many Of My
Brothers And Sisters
Have Lost Their Lives In
An Unnecessary War”**

**“There Are Quite A Lot Of
Troops Calling For Immediate
Withdrawal”**



Letters To The Editor
Army Times
12.15.08

The Nov. 17 article “Iraq pullout must go slowly, troops warn” was misleading and disingenuous, making it appear as though all soldiers hope that the Iraq pullout will be slow. The real answer is quite the contrary — troops have quite a variety of opinions on the Iraq war.

As a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War, a veterans organization that has many active military service members in its ranks, I would like to say that there are quite a lot of troops calling for immediate withdrawal.

Too many of my brothers and sisters have lost their lives in an unnecessary war.

Too many have come back broken. Iraq will not fall into anarchy. Iraq’s own leaders want us gone. This war has cost our nation trillions, broken our economy and contributed to a breakdown of the military.

Many troops believe that in order to protect the country they love, the war in Iraq needs to end even sooner than 16 months, not later.

Sgt. Selena Coppa
Wiesbaden, Germany

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

Former Mineral Wells Resident Killed In Iraq Returns For A Hero's Burial

December 11, 2008 By Lacie Morrison, Mineral Wells Index

No one spoke as the chartered Falcon 20 navigated the tarmac at Mineral Wells Municipal Airport midday Wednesday, bringing U.S. Army Sgt. John Jared Savage home.

"It's really devastating because we didn't get to see him that much," said his mother, Jacki Park, in an exclusive interview with the Index. She said her son was "one of my best friends."

Savage, 26, was killed Dec. 4 when a suicide bomber in an SUV broadsided his armored vehicle 50 feet from his base in Mosul, Iraq. One of three men killed in the attack, he died four days prior to his leave. He was in the 103rd Engineer Company, 94th Engineer Company, of Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. Their deaths brought to 4,209 the number of U.S. military personnel killed in Iraq since the beginning of "Operation Iraqi Freedom."

Approximately 100 people were on hand Wednesday for his arrival, filling the sidewalks and grass between the airport terminal and the tarmac. Savage's father, John Savage, of Peaster, Texas, wiped tears from his eyes when the flag-draped coffin emerged. He stood next to his wife, Carole, on the tarmac edge.

When someone asked how she was, Carole Savage said she was "holding."

The procession of vehicles that left the airport for Baum-Carlock-Bumgardner Funeral Home of Mineral Wells included several members of the Patriot Guard riders, their motorcycles preceding the hearse and accompanying family members. Service with full military honors is 2 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 13, at the Baum-Carlock-Bumgardner Chapel.

Park said they were notified of Savage's death by the military on Friday when two officers came to her home in Mineral Wells.

"We're proud of him and always have been," she said. "He'd even told his nieces and nephews with whom he's very close, 'I'm doing this for you, so you can live free and that's why Uncle Bud has to go.' He said, 'I'm doing this for you guys.'"

"He loved the military. It was a lifelong dream of his," said Park. She recalled stories from Savage's childhood that showed a distinct interest in the military – replacing his bed with an Army cot and footlocker, painting his room black with netting on the walls and building a Quonset hut in the backyard. "He lived it from that age."

According to Park, Savage had many relatives in the Army and Navy, including his grandfather and uncles in New York.

“He talked with them all the time,” she recalled. “I think (his desire to join) just came naturally.”

Born in Peaster, Savage moved to Mineral Wells at a young age. After the ninth grade, Park said she pulled him from public school and home schooled him until he graduated at 16 years of age.

“He went into the service in 2000 at 18 years old, as soon as he was able,” Park recalled. “He spent a year in the National Guard (before) transferring to the Army. He was excited about it all the time.”

Savage’s tenure in the Army included three tours out of the country, according to his mother. He spent three years in Germany before deploying to Iraq on his first tour in 2005 before returning home in March of 2007.

He was deployed again in September, Park said, was supposed to be gone until March of 2009 but they were coming home early.

While her son was half a world away, Park said they communicated often through letters, e-mail and the Internet. His family sent frequent care packages stuffed with cookies for him and his unit.

She described Savage as a charismatic young man with a great sense of fun and who was taught to always look for the brighter side of a situation.

“You never could get one up on his. He had a quick mind, a practical joker,” she explained. “He said it made the bad things better. He probably got that from me.”

In her last conversation with him the day before he died, Park said he was telling her about reaching a personal goal – being healthy and reaching 180 pounds from weight training.

“He could bench press 640 pounds 37 times,” Park said with pride. “I’m so glad he did his goal because that was one of his goals before he deployed to Iraq. He was an incredible young man.”

“He loved Mineral Wells,” Park said, adding that he’d planned to purchase land when he was reassigned to Texas. “This is where he wanted to be stationed. He was planning, always planning ahead. ...

“He loved this little town. This was home. He was excited about coming home.”

Savage is survived by his mother, Jaclyn Park, of Mineral Wells, Texas; sisters and brother-in-law, Joenell and Randy West, of Mineral Wells and Jamie Senecal, of Mineral Wells; daughter, Nicole Jean Savage, of Whitt, Texas; six nieces and nephews and several aunts, uncles and cousins.

Iraqi Journalist Throws Shoes At Bush In Baghdad: “This Is A Goodbye Kiss, You Dog”



An Iraqi throws a shoe at President George W. Bush during a new conference with Iraq Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki Dec. 14, 2008, in Baghdad. A man threw two shoes at Bush, one after another, during the news conference. (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) & Dennis Serdel, Vietnam Veteran, who sent this in.

[SSG N writes: Awesome good bye to a sorry sack o' sandwich stuffing. I hope he gets a medal and a statue and a hero's parade (not bush).

[How long until it gets past the censors at TroopTube? want to place bets? You tube url: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_RFH7C3vkK4.]

**“He spoke for many of us, and did what Congress never had the guts to do.” --
David McReynolds, 12.14.08**

12.14.08 By Adam Ashton, McClatchy Newspapers & By Andrea Stone, USA TODAY

BAGHDAD — An Iraqi television journalist hurled two shoes at President Bush on Sunday during a joint news conference Bush was holding with Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al Maliki to mark the signing of a U.S.-Iraq security agreement.

Bush had just finished his prepared remarks in which he said the security agreement was made possible by the U.S. surge of troops to Iraq last year, when the journalist, Muthathar al Zaidi, pulled his shoes off and hurled them at the president.

“This is a goodbye kiss, you dog,” Zaidi shouted.

Bush ducked as the shoes flew by and was not struck. **[The TV footage shows the second shoe gets Bush on the right shoulder.]**

[B]odyguards quickly wrestled Zaidi to the floor and hauled him from the room.

Two other Iraqi journalists were briefly detained after one of them called Zaidi's actions "courageous."

Zaidi works for an Iraqi satellite television station based in Cairo.

Friends said he covered the U.S. bombing of Baghdad's Sadr City area earlier this year and had been "emotionally influenced" by the destruction he'd seen.

Lawmaker Likaa' Al Yaseen, a supporter of anti-American Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr, who opposes the security agreement, said Bush "came to confirm his complete occupation of Iraq and its people. ... He is a failure. He wants to give an impression that he didn't lose in Iraq and wants to polish his picture in front of his people, the Iraqis and the world."

MORE:

In The Arab World, Shoe Flinging Is "A Gesture Of Contempt"



In this image from APTN video, the traitor Bush is brushed by a thrown shoe [blur at his right elbow] during a news conference with Iraq Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki, Dec. 14, 2008, in Baghdad, Iraq. Bush got a size-10 reminder of his unpopularity when a man hurled two shoes at him during a news conference. (AP Photo)

[And in Iraq, calling another person a "dog" is a supreme verbal insult. So the journalist got it right both ways. T]

From Wikipedia:

In the Arab world: a gesture of contempt

In the Arab world, shoe flinging is a gesture of extreme disrespect. A notable occurrence of this gesture happened in Baghdad, Iraq in 2003. When U.S. forces pulled down a giant statue of Saddam Hussein during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, many Iraqi detractors of Hussein threw their shoes at the fallen statue.

This may be an ancient gesture from the Middle East; Psalms 60:8, speaking of some of the traditional enemies of Judah, says that "Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe...." (KJV)

The shoe represents the lowest part of the body (the foot) and displaying or throwing a shoe at someone or something in Arab cultures denotes that the person or thing is "beneath them."

Showing the bottom of one's feet or shoes (for example, putting one's feet up on a table or desk) in Arab cultures is considered an extreme insult.

Examples include Iraqi citizens smacking torn-down posters of Saddam Hussein with their shoes, and the depiction of President of the United States George H. W. Bush on a tile mosaic of the floor of the Al-Rashid Hotel's lobby, forcing all visitors entering the hotel to walk on Bush's face to enter the hotel.

ENOUGH OF THIS SHIT; ALL HOME NOW



A U.S. Army, 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment at the site of a car bombing in Mosul, Nov.1, 2008. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**News From Hell:
“No Showers, No Electricity, No Hot Meals, Not Outside Communication, In Fire Fights Every Day And Often More Than One A Day”
“Soldiers At Two Other Ops Are Lucky If They Get Two Resupply Opportunities A Month”**

12/12/2008 Via Move America Forward

I'm emailing you because your email struck a sensitive note with me.

Please do not take my email as negative. It's just that I've been supporting troops in the northeastern provinces of Afghanistan (Nuristan, Kunar, Nangahar and Paktika) for about three years now beginning with the 10th Mtn 1-32 then the 173rd, 2-503 and now the 3-1, 6/4 Cavalry.

When I read your statement "In fact, snowfall should begin in these areas within the next couple of weeks..." I couldn't help but think about our Soldiers at OP Fritsche who are already under 4 feet of snow.

Who barely got simple and rustic plywood shelters built before the snowfall.

That have only dirt on the roofs to keep the bullets out but didn't have time to properly roof them before it became too cold and snowy. We have sent several 40' X 60' and 50' X 100' tarps to them to keep the melting snow from dripping through on them.

And I couldn't help but think about our Soldiers at two other Ops that have been under snow for three weeks now; who are lucky if they get two resupply opportunities a month because of their proximity to the Pakistani border, the danger of resupply (which is only at night and the helo can only stay on the ground for 5 minutes – NO exaggeration).

The Soldiers, at times, must ration everything.

No showers, no electricity, no hot meals, not outside communication, in fire fights every day and often more than one a day.

The Aimless War: Why Are We in Afghanistan?

“The Casualties Were Coming Almost Daily Now”

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) & Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in. She writes: The headline says it all.]

Dec. 11, 2008 By Joe Klein, Time Magazine [Excerpts]

“Things have gotten a bit hairy,” admitted British Lieut. Colonel Graeme Armour as we sat in a dusty, bunkered NATO fortress just outside the city of Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, a deadly piece of turf along Afghanistan's southern border with Pakistan. A day earlier, two Danish soldiers had been killed and two Brits seriously wounded by roadside bombs.

The casualties were coming almost daily now.

A week earlier, five Afghan police officers trained by Armour were murdered in their beds while defending a nearby checkpoint — possibly by other police officers. Their weapons and ammunition were stolen. “We're not sure of the motivation,” Armour said. “They may have gone to join the Taliban or sold the guns in the market.”

The war in Afghanistan — the war that President-elect Barack Obama pledged to fight and win — has become an aimless absurdity.

Another thing you should understand: thousands of U.S. troops are expected to be deployed to Helmand and Kandahar provinces next spring.

And that raises a long-term question crucial to the success of the Obama Administration: What are we doing in Afghanistan? What is the mission?

Afghanistan has never had a strong central government. It has been governed for thousands of years by local and regional tribal coalitions. The tribes have often been at one another's throats — a good part of the current “Taliban” uprising is nothing more than standard tribal rivalries juiced by Western arms and opium profits — except when foreigners have invaded the area, in which case the Afghans have united and slowly humiliated conquerors from Alexander the Great to the Soviets.

I flew by helicopter from Helmand to the enormous NATO base outside Kandahar to learn that three Canadian soldiers had been killed that morning in an ambush.

I stood in a small, bare concrete plaza as the Canadian flag was raised, then lowered to half-staff. Next the Danish flag and finally the NATO flag were raised and left to rest at

half-staff. A small group of soldiers from assorted countries stood at attention and saluted as the flags rose and fell.

There were no American flags this day, but there soon will be.

TROOP NEWS



APPEARANCES

It just looks like you're screwed, but maybe that's your plan.

**A Christmas Message From Rose
Gentle, Military Families UK, To U.S.
Troops:
“Lets Hope You Will All Be Home
Soon”**

[This is a message to Americans from Rose Gentle. Her son Gordon was killed in Iraq. She leads a campaign to bring all the Scots and other troops home from Iraq, now. Her words carry more weight, and contain more truth, than 5000 pages of bullshit from the politicians. T]

From: Rose Gentle
To: GI Special
Sent: December 10, 2008
Subject: home from iraq

we here that the British troops have to leave Iraq from march 2009
its not befor time 1000000 of Iraq have been killed and hundreds of our
troops have been killed

but we know that our forces will be sent to Afghanistan a war that we will not
win, and 100000 more will be killed ,

our forces are cent do do a job they don't com plane and they get on with it, its
the family's that have to suffer,

but Wat we are all wondering will obama stick to his word will he bring the
troops home from Iraq or
will he just be like the rest now that he has been elected in

we don't think he can do much more damage as Blair and bush have did it all
ready, the Iraq people have there security now and there forces and wont to
get on with it,

we will be watching obama with grate care to see if he is as onest as he says
he is i hope so and hope he duz well he has made history but hope he duz
not let the American people down and the forces

he has to bring the troops home,

its been 4yr now that i lost my son and that's been hell , and its hell when you
turn the TV on and here more of our troops have been killed, no mater where
they come from

lets just hope Gordon brown will keep to his word and bring them home,
and no more excuses

merry Xmas to all the troops lets hope you will all be
home soon

rose gentle military family's UK

E-Mails From Service Members Say They Are Sick And Believe It Is Because Of Air Toxins They Were Exposed To In Iraq And Afghanistan:

“Water Samples Also Contained Toxins Above Military Guidelines”

“It’s Used For Showering And People Often Brush Their Teeth With It”

Stupid Liar Petraeus Caught In Another Stupid Lie



Soldiers use a bulldozer and excavator to maneuver trash and other debris at Joint Base Balad in Iraq. Smoke and haze rise from the burn pit, which is reputed to be the cause of many service members' illnesses.

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: They've only checked one, but moved all the others? Doublespeak]

Dec 12, 2008 & 12.15.08 By Kelly Kennedy, Army Times [Excerpts]

In response to a question about the burn pit at Joint Air Base Balad, Gen. David Petraeus, the chief of U.S. Central Command, said the need for burn pits will continue, but the military is trying to minimize exposure to possible toxins.

After Military Times investigated possible chemicals and dioxins troops may have been exposed to in Afghanistan and Iraq from giant open-air pits that were burning everything from plastic bottles to used petroleum products, Sen. Russ Feingold, D-Wis., wrote a letter to Petraeus asking if the burn pits were being investigated.

Petraeus said thousands of air, water and soil samples have been tested.

However, Military Times has learned that the Balad is the only base where the burn pit specifically has been checked.

More than 100 service members have contacted Military Times saying they became sick with asthma, sleep apnea, heart palpitations, bronchitis, and lymphoma or leukemia while at Balad.

A report presented at the annual Military Health System conference earlier this year shows that burn pits at U.S. military bases in Iraq may not be the only thing troops need to worry about.

The report says particulate levels in the air in Southwest Asia are six to eight times higher than recommended limits under military regulations, and 65 of 140 water samples came back with unsafe levels of toxins during testing in 2007

Military Times has received more than 100 e-mails from service members who say they are sick and believe it is because of air toxins, possibly from burn pits, that they were exposed to in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Some say they have had letters placed in their health records; some say the letters have disappeared; others said they received no letters.

Burn pits also release particulate matter into the air.

The report presented earlier this year at the Military Health System conference, prepared by the U.S. Army Center for Health Promotion and Preventive Medicine, said 50 of 414 air samples taken in Southwest Asia from January to June 2007 came back as “very unhealthy” under Environmental Protection Agency standards.

Military researchers also found metals above safety guidelines in 26 air samples, including lead at 12 times safe levels and manganese at 3.5 times safe levels.

One sample found acrolein, which was used as a chemical weapon in World War I, at 285 times recommended levels.

A particulate matter working group created by the Defense Department in 2005 determined that “acute effects appear to be minimal,” but added that “subacute and chronic effects are unknown at this time — more research is needed,” according to minutes from a workshop.

In that 2005 workshop, several doctors voiced concerns. Dr. Vince Castranova of the Center for Environmental Health Sciences worried that ultrafine particles — thousands of

which could fit on the head of a pin — could cross the skin barrier and also be deposited in the lungs.

He said toxicity per unit mass for ultrafine matter is higher than for larger grains.

Dr. Teri Franks, a pathologist with the Armed Forces Institutes of Pathology, autopsied two soldiers who died of pneumonia in Iraq and found several types of mineral particles, including crystalline silica, aluminum silicates with iron and pure iron in the soldiers' lungs.

Water samples also contained toxins above military guidelines.

Testers found arsenic, barium, benzene, boron, cadmium, calcium, chloride, copper, fluoride, lead, magnesium, mercury, nickel, selenium, sodium, sulfate, thallium, zinc, detergents, the herbicide diquat, dissolved solids and turbidity.

Troops aren't supposed to drink this water, but it is used for showering and people often brush their teeth with it.

MORE:

**Pentagon Criminal Scum Defied
Law And Refused To Clean Up
Their Toxic Wastes Right Here In
The USA:**

**[You Think They Give A Shit About
Troops Overseas?]**

**“For More Than A Decade, EPA Officials
Have Detected Contaminants, Some
Known To Cause Cancer And Other
Health Problems, At Fort Meade And
Other Military Sites”**

December 5, 2008 By Lyndsey Layton, Washington Post Staff Writer [Excerpts]

The Justice Department dealt a blow to the Pentagon this week, saying it has no legal authority to resist orders from the Environmental Protection Agency to clean

up Fort Meade in Maryland and two other military sites that have been contaminated by chemicals.

In a Dec. 1 letter obtained by The Washington Post, Steven G. Bradbury, principal deputy assistant attorney general at Justice, said that the Pentagon had no legal grounds to resist the cleanup orders from the EPA.

The cleanup agreements drafted by the EPA for nine other sites contain “extensive provisions” that Pentagon officials said were unacceptable. But Bradbury wrote that the EPA had the legal authority to demand additional terms.

The letter was celebrated by critics of the Pentagon, the nation's largest polluter.

“Even the Bush Department of Justice is now telling the Department of Defense that it is not above the law and it cannot flaunt EPA's final orders,” said Rep. John D. Dingell (D-Mich.), chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, in a statement yesterday.

“If this were a private polluter, they probably would have been hauled into court by now.”

The EPA issued “final orders” to the Pentagon more than a year ago to clean up Fort Meade, McGuire Air Force Base in New Jersey and Tyndall Air Force Base in Florida.

Final orders are the agency's most potent enforcement tool. If a polluter does not comply, the agency usually can go to court to force action and can impose fines up to \$28,000 a day.

But the Pentagon questioned whether the EPA had legal authority to require and oversee the mitigation.

Defense officials also declined to sign legally required agreements with the EPA covering nine other military sites on the Superfund list of the most polluted places in the country.

The contracts would spell out a remediation plan, set schedules, and allow the EPA to oversee the work and assess penalties if milestones are missed.

The EPA declined to take legal action against another department within the Bush administration, so the standoff created a kind of regulatory limbo. Outraged Democrats on Capitol Hill accused the Defense Department of flouting environmental regulations and the EPA of failing to enforce those laws.

[S]ome are skeptical that the Pentagon will sign the agreements with the EPA and comply anytime soon.

For more than a decade, EPA officials have detected contaminants, some known to cause cancer and other health problems, at Fort Meade and other military sites.

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 Douglass, 1852

“Prostitution

[Misfiled, but good as new. T]

From: SSG N (ret'd)
To: GISpecial
Sent: August 10, 2008
Subject: Prostitution

Consider this: From your Stop Loss article, “Villa added that he’s skeptical the stop-loss payments will become reality.

"I guess it could help with morale because it is a good lump of change, until I actually see it, then I'll believe it," he said." and "The \$500 monthly payments will be nice, Golden said. "Honestly, I'd rather get out than go back, but ... it makes it a little easier, I guess, to know you're getting a little extra money for going back," he said."

This sound like the BS that prostitutes really like the sex.

I wonder why the Army Times decided to use these quotes.

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. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

The Last Ghost of War

The Last Ghost of War follows a class action suit against 32 American chemical companies.

In an editorial, Newsday called it "a must see" and "a catalyst for a much needed conversation on Agent Orange... In the wider court of public opinion this film by the Gardner Documentary Group can be a powerful tool.

At Tu Du Hospital in Saigon, children in a special unit have enlarged heads or are missing limbs. Pham Thi Thuy Linh born without arms, writes with her feet. Thirty-two years after the Vietnam War, she is among several million children whose parents were exposed to Agent Orange.

We meet plaintiffs in a class action suit who seek justice and compensation. Now the deadly dioxin has worked its way into the food chain and, some argue, the gene pool, with tragic results.

Vietnamese victims, their attorneys, scientists, activists, and a military historian take us to a new battlefield.

The question is: What is a chemical weapon?

And who should be held accountable in the wake of what is arguably the largest chemical warfare operation in American history?

This documentary is narrated by Kevin Kline, produced by Pham Quoc Thai and Janet Gardner and directed by Ms. Gardner

MORE:

Film Shows Agent Orange Still Withers Lives [Review]



This “Dioxin Bird” painting by Pham Thanh Liem recalls the C-130s that sprayed 20 million gallons of Agent Orange defoliant on Vietnam. Janet Gardner's film also deals with efforts by Vietnamese victims to obtain redress in U.S. courts; the dismissal of their lawsuit in 2005 is being appealed.

April, 3, 2007 By Jeff Gammage, Philadelphia Inquirer Staff Writer

Inside a special ward at Tu Du Hospital in Ho Chi Minh City, Janet Gardner met children born with grossly enlarged heads, bulging eyes, and missing limbs.

One was an armless 12-year-old girl who had learned to write with her feet. Some kids moved in wheelchairs. Others moved hardly at all.

The possible cause of the children's condition was the reason for Gardner's visit - and the force that propels her new documentary, *The Last Ghost of War*.

Thirty years after the end of the Vietnam War, the legacy of Agent Orange still tortures the Southeast Asian land.

In a 57-minute film, Gardner and co-producer Pham Quoc Thai examine the defoliant's harrowing impact on three generations of Vietnamese, following the story onto a new battlefield, a class-action lawsuit brought by aggrieved Vietnamese against 32 U.S. chemical companies.

The old news footage at the start of *The Last Ghost of War* is grainy but familiar - giant C-130 cargo planes, soaring above the jungle canopy, trailing long white clouds of vapor. Between 1962 and 1971, the U.S. military sprayed an estimated 20 million gallons of Agent Orange on South Vietnam. The goal was to improve visibility for American ground troops and deny forest cover to the enemy.

But Agent Orange contained traces of dioxin, among the most deadly materials known to man. Many Americans and Vietnamese later developed cancers, their children sometimes born with profound disabilities.

"It's very hard to prove that Agent Orange caused birth defects," said coproducer Pham, who was born and raised in Na Trang, north of the huge American military base at Cam Ranh Bay, and came to the United States at age 18 in 1971. But the law permits action against makers of products that might be proven injurious, so "it's potentially a big case."

Vietnamese who claimed they'd been injured argued in a federal court in New York in 2004 that Agent Orange should be classified as a chemical weapon. The suit was dismissed in 2005, though that ruling is being appealed, with a hearing set for June.

"The Vietnamese victims association was following the example of our veterans" - who in 1979 had sued over their own exposure, Gardner said. "The Vietnamese (government) was a little hesitant to bring it up with the U.S. government, because it's a delicate relationship. . . . It was opening a wound, a rather raw wound."

The film's title comes from the words of former American Ambassador to Vietnam Raymond Burghardt, his characterization of the Agent Orange issue. Narrated by actor Kevin Kline, the film includes an interview with a lawyer for Dow - the only one of the chemical companies that agreed to speak.

It features Philadelphia-area activist and Vietnam veteran Frank Corcoran, who has been active on Agent Orange issues.

And it introduces Vietnamese families in which all three children, or all four children, suffer terrible deformities.

The link between exposure and birth defects is still debated; Vietnamese doctors certain of it, American scientists less sure. The chemical's enduring bequest, the film suggests, can be found in places like Tu Du Hospital, and in rural villages where little medical help is available.

Gardner, who lives near Princeton, has long produced and directed fine, Asia-based documentaries, including *Precious Cargo*, the story of the 2,000 children airlifted from Vietnam in 1975, and *Dancing Through Death*, about a Cambodian classical dancer who came of age under the Khmer Rouge.

Back in the mid-1980s, after the American veterans first filed suit, Gardner was working as a reporter at the Home News in New Brunswick when an editor dropped a pile of clippings on her desk and chased her off to a court hearing. That became her first personal contact with the issue, and with a suit ultimately settled for \$180 million.

Twenty years later, she's found herself back on the Agent Orange story.

“We're just presenting the case - we want the viewer to decide,” she said. “It's the last issue of contention between the two countries.”

PBS Showing:

December 18, 2008: 11:00PM, WKAR-TV, East Lansing, MI

January 2, 2009, 9:00AM, KQED-World, Northern California Public TV
(Repeats on KQED-World Jan. 2, 2008 at 12:00PM)

January 9, 2009, 3:00AM, KET1, Lexington, KY

January 16, 2009: 10:00PM, THINKTV16, Dayton, OH
(Repeats on THINKTV16 AGAIN on Jan. 17, 2008 at 1:00PM and 2:00PM, Jan 18 at 8:00AM and 5:00PM and Jan 19 at 3:00AM)

OCCUPATION HAITI

Brutal Occupation “Has Resulted In The Death, Imprisonment Or Disappearance Of Thousands” Rats Governing Bolivia, Argentina, Chile, Uruguay, USA & Colombia Neck Deep In Haitian Blood

December 12, 2008 By Emmanuel Santos, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

MORE THAN 9,000 military and civilian personnel from the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti (MINUSTAH, by its French initials) will remain in the country until October 2009, following the UN Security Council's unanimous vote on October 15 to extend its mandate.

MINUSTAH troops have occupied Haiti since 2004 when a U.S.-backed coup overthrew democratically elected President Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

The brutal Brazilian-led UN military occupation has resulted in the death, imprisonment or disappearance of thousands of Aristide supporters.

Human rights organizations and the independent media have reported sexual assaults committed against women and children.

Brazilian leaders hope that their country's role in the occupation will lead to a future seat in the UN Security Council, where it can play a bigger political role as the region's emerging power.

Other South American countries that help maintain the occupation in Haiti include Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Colombia.

On October 31, Bolivia sent a contingent of 200 troops. Israel, the main U.S. ally in the Middle East, has played a role in maintaining the occupation by flying in Jordanian troops.

The U.S. also has military and civilian personnel on the ground.

The vote to extend the UN mandate came after warnings from the top UN envoy in Haiti, Hedi Annabi, who, according to Reuters, said that ignoring the plight of the Caribbean country and leaving its population hungry and angry could lead to a new wave of social unrest--an allusion to popular protests over rising food prices in April that ousted former Prime Minister Jacques-Édouard Alexis.

But UN concerns about political stability in Haiti are only a justification for the ongoing presence of a 9,000-strong “peacekeeping” military force that keeps the popular movement in check by targeting left-wing activists and criminalizing the poor.

In fact, Brazilian military forces are carrying out counterinsurgency operations in Haiti similar to those used in Brazil to repress the poor in the favelas and activists from the Landless Peasants Movement.

MINUSTAH troops conduct raids in the poorest neighborhoods under the pretext of disarming criminal gangs.

But those so-called “gangs” are ordinary Haitians who are being punished by the U.S. and its allies for daring to oppose the occupation. Thus, disarming criminal gangs serves to justify UN military presence there. Already, several massacres have been committed since its arrival.

Meanwhile, the Bush administration and its allies continue to spread anti-Aristide propaganda to deflect criticism by human rights organizations that accuse MINUSTAH of systematic human rights violations.

A COMBATIVE grassroots movement exploded in April changing the political landscape in Haiti and weakening both President René Préval and his Lespwa (Hope) Party. Préval's coalition was suffering, as some of the 22 National Assembly members from Lespwa joined Concertation des Parlementaires Progressistes (CPP, Coalition of Progressive Parliamentarians), a new legislative bloc that rejects neoliberal policies.

After the senate rejected two of Préval's candidates for prime minister, the government was paralyzed for four months. The impasse ended in July, when the senate confirmed Michèle Pierre-Louis as prime minister. Pierre-Louis is the founder of FOKAL, an NGO funded by financial speculator George Soros.

Furthermore, discontent is mounting against the UN occupation and the Préval/Pierre-Louis government for failing to deliver on any of its 2006 election campaign promises.

To mark the four-year anniversary of the UN occupation, protests were held in several countries on the eve of Brazilian President Luis Inácio Lula da Silva's visit to Haiti on May 28.

Solidarity activists in Brazil, Mexico and the U.S. marched to demand the immediate withdrawal of MINUSTAH from Haiti. The biggest demonstrations took place in Brazil, where labor and left-wing activists marched in several cities.

The occupation of Haiti is unpopular among Brazilians.

Over the past four years, Brazil has spent more than 464 million Reals (\$290 million) on the occupation, a major sum for a country where more than 40 million people live below the poverty line.

Meanwhile, the movement against the high cost of living continues in Haiti. On August 25, several hundred people gathered in La Savane, a poor area in the town of Les Cayes, to demand lower food and gas prices. A rapid response by MINUSTAH forces and Haitian police dispersed the crowd with tear gas.

On October 14, several hundred people gathered in front of the Commerce and Industry Ministry to protest the high cost of living and call for an end to the MINUSTAH occupation. The protest was organized by Soleil in Action Coalition, known as Aba Satan (Down with Satan)--a key player in the events leading to the April rebellion. It plans similar actions in the future.

Meanwhile, Lavalas activists and supporters are holding weekly vigils for activists who have been jailed and disappeared since the February coup.

During Lula's visit, Haitian police from the elite CIMO unit brutally dispersed a vigil of protesters demanding a prompt investigation into the disappearance of human rights activist Lovinsky Pierre-Antoine. Pierre-Antoine disappeared in 2007 after attending a meeting with human rights activists from Canada and the U.S.

Haitian activists, along with international supporters, have in the past organized successful campaigns to free human rights activists, Lavalas leaders and former Aristide collaborators. In July 2006, former Prime Minister Yvon Neptune was released after spending two years in jail. In August 2006, Annette Auguste, a folk singer and activist popularly known as So Anne, was also released.

Presently, a local and international campaign is underway to free Ronald Dauphin, an Aristide supporter arrested by right-wing paramilitaries during the 2004 coup.

Five years later, he has yet to be convicted for any crime.

DESPITE THE repression carried out by MINUSTAH, Haitian National Police and right-wing death squads since 2004, ordinary people continue the fight to return the democratically elected president from his forced exile in South Africa.

While it's true that Aristide implemented neoliberal policies, he remains popular among the majority of Haitians. Four years after the coup, Fanmi Lavalas (FL or Lavalas), the center-left populist party founded by Aristide 12 years ago, is still a mass political organization. Although it is split into two different wings internally, its grassroots supporters are united in confronting the UN occupation by organizing nationwide demonstrations.

This is a testament to the determination of ordinary Haitians, who also face one of the worst humanitarian catastrophes on the planet after four hurricanes struck the country in less than two months. Soon after, the agricultural sector collapsed, depriving workers and peasants of one of their main sources of income in a country where the unemployment rate is 80 percent.

But the destructive effects of nature could have been avoided had there been more investment on infrastructure, health care and food subsidies.

Haiti is more vulnerable today because the occupation has rolled back many of its democratic freedoms. During the coup, schools and hospitals were destroyed by right-wing paramilitaries, as they entered the country from neighboring Dominican Republic, where they received training and arms from the Dominican government and the U.S.

The government's response to the crisis hasn't been enough--largely due to Haiti's dependence on outside powers. In the agriculture department, for instance, some 800 NGOs control part of the budget, undermining the state's ability to deal with the crisis.

And even though Haiti is facing a crisis of indescribable proportions, it hasn't stopped paying back its foreign debt. As of this writing, Haiti's payments amount to \$1 million a week. Activists worldwide are pressing the World Bank to forgive Haiti's \$1.7 billion foreign debt, but so far, it has refused.

PRIOR TO the recent devastation, independent journalists revealed a plan to demolish Cité Soleil, a poor neighborhood in Port-au-Prince, to extend the UN military base. The U.S. is funding the base extension.

Haiti Liberté reporter Kim Ives explains the importance of this military base for the U.S.:

First, as Port-au-Prince's largest, poorest and most pro-Aristide slum, it has been a hotbed of anti-occupation resistance for the past four years. Although most of the popular organizations carrying out armed struggle were dismantled in early 2007, unrest still continues there, particularly with Haiti's (and the capitalist world's) worsening economic crisis.

Hence, military domination of this important northern flank of Haiti's capital is critical.

As in the past, the military occupation of Haiti is part of a larger plan to keep the region under U.S. dominion. Haiti shares the Windward Passage with Cuba, a strait that has great importance for the U.S., and the island of Hispaniola with the Dominican Republic.

In the early 1990s, Haiti's election of Aristide under a populist platform gave hope to millions of people at a time when most governments in the region were implementing neoliberal policies. A series of U.S.-backed regimes and interventions to derail the movement for change followed.

Solidarity with the Haitian people should be part of a broader anti-imperialism that calls for an end to the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq and Palestine as well as an immediate withdrawal of the UN from Haiti and elsewhere.

At the same time, activists must point out Aristide's role in accepting neoliberal policies that impoverished the poor, while supporting ordinary people's struggles to return him to complete his term.

Demanding immediate cancellation of Haiti's foreign debt is also important, because it could free up needed resources to feed people.

In the long term, however, it will take the unity of workers and peasants in the entire region to free Haiti from the yoke of foreign intervention and exploitation.

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

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

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Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now!
(www.ivaw.org/)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

Is The Federal Reserve Bank Of The United States Filled With Worthless Paper? After Demanding “Transparency” From Private Banks, Fed Refuses To Let The Public Know How Big It’s Losses Are On The Toxic Paper It Bought From Wall St. With \$2 Trillion Of Our Money; “It Would Be A Dangerous Step To Release This Otherwise Confidential Information”

[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Vietnam Veteran, who sent this in.]

“If they told us what they held, we would know the potential losses that the government may take and that’s what they don’t want us to know,”

Dec. 12 By Mark Pittman, Bloomberg [Excerpts]

The Federal Reserve refused a request by Bloomberg News to disclose the recipients of more than \$2 trillion of emergency loans from U.S. taxpayers and the assets the central bank is accepting as collateral.

Bloomberg filed suit Nov. 7 under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act requesting details about the terms of 11 Fed lending programs, most created during the deepest financial crisis since the Great Depression.

The Fed responded Dec. 8, saying it’s allowed to withhold internal memos as well as information about trade secrets and commercial information. The institution confirmed that a records search found 231 pages of documents pertaining to some of the requests.

“If they told us what they held, we would know the potential losses that the government may take and that’s what they don’t want us to know,” said Carlos Mendez, a senior

managing director at New York-based ICP Capital LLC, which oversees \$22 billion in assets.

Total Fed lending exceeded \$2 trillion for the first time Nov. 6.

It rose by 138 percent, or \$1.23 trillion, in the 12 weeks since Sept. 14, when central bank governors relaxed collateral standards to accept securities that weren't rated AAA.

Bloomberg News, a unit of New York-based Bloomberg LP, on May 21 asked the Fed to provide data on collateral posted from April 4 to May 20. The central bank said on June 19 that it needed until July 3 to search documents and determine whether it would make them public. Bloomberg didn't receive a formal response that would let it file an appeal within the legal time limit.

On Oct. 25, Bloomberg filed another request, expanding the range of when the collateral was posted. It filed suit Nov. 7.

In response to Bloomberg's request, the Fed said the U.S. is facing "an unprecedented crisis" in which "loss in confidence in and between financial institutions can occur with lightning speed and devastating effects."

"Notwithstanding calls for enhanced transparency, the Board must protect against the substantial, multiple harms that might result from disclosure," Jennifer J. Johnson, the secretary for the Fed's Board of Governors, said in a letter e-mailed to Bloomberg News.

"In its considered judgment and in view of current circumstances, it would be a dangerous step to release this otherwise confidential information," she wrote.

Fed Chairman Ben S. Bernanke and Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson said in September they would meet congressional demands for transparency in a \$700 billion bailout of the banking system.

The Freedom of Information Act obliges federal agencies to make government documents available to the press and public.

"There has to be something they can tell the public because we have a right to know what they are doing," said Lucy Dalglish, executive director of the Arlington, Virginia-based Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press.

"It would really be a shame if we have to find this out 10 years from now after some really nasty class-action suit and our financial system has completely collapsed," she said.

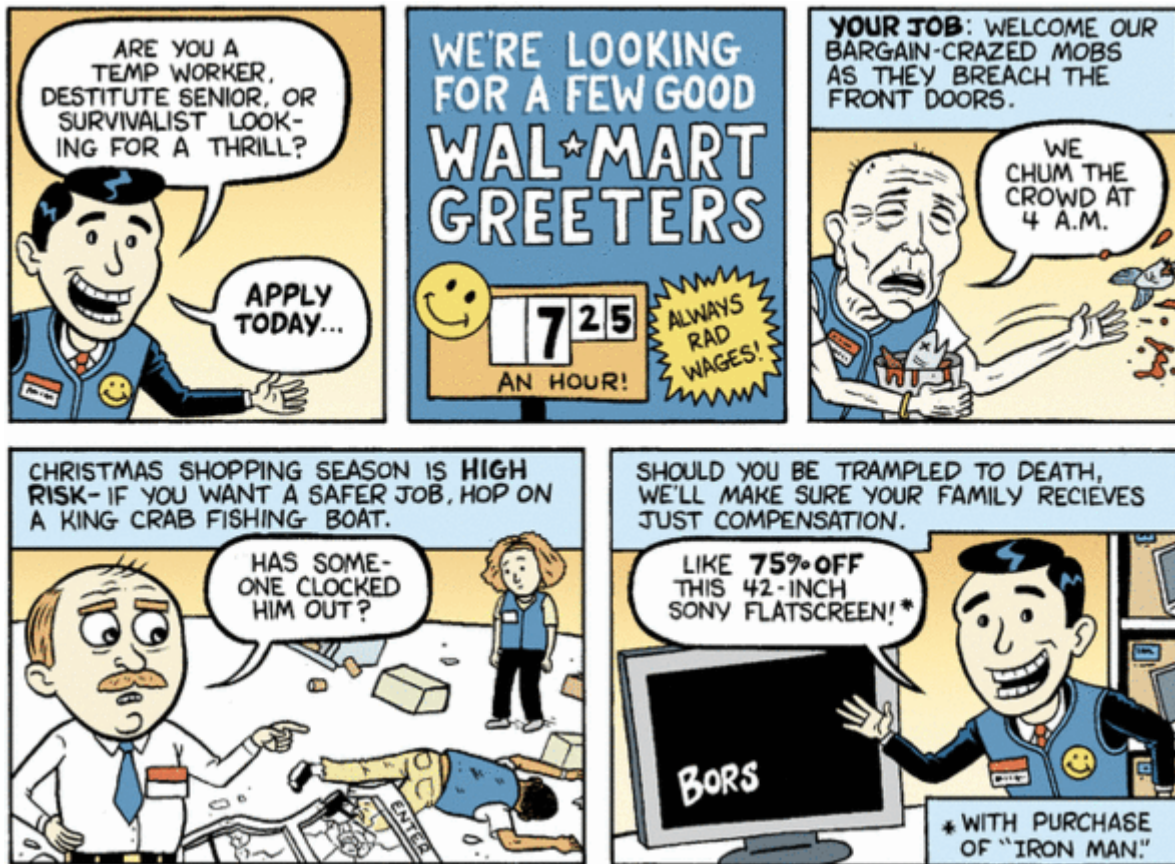
The Fed's five-page response to Bloomberg may be "unprecedented" because the board usually doesn't go into such detail about its position, said Lee Levine, a partner at Levine Sullivan Koch & Schulz LLP in Washington.

"This is uncharted territory," said Levine during an interview from his New York office.

“The Freedom of Information Act wasn’t built to anticipate this situation and that’s evident from the way the Fed tried to shoehorn their argument into the trade-secrets exemption.”

The Fed lent cash and government bonds to banks that handed over collateral including stocks and subprime and structured securities such as collateralized debt obligations, according to the Fed Web site.

Borrowers include the now-bankrupt Lehman Brothers Holdings Inc., Citigroup and New York-based JPMorgan Chase & Co., the country’s biggest bank by assets.



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