

Military Resistance 8A8



“I Am Thoroughly Opposed To The Army As A Whole, And The War In The Middle East” [An Army Sergeant Sends An Open Letter To Active Duty Soldiers]

[Traveling Soldier is the newsletter of the Military Resistance Organization.]

From Traveling Soldier, December 2009, Issue 26

From the editors: To protect the writer, ID has been removed from this email as published here. The Military Resistance organization, which produces Traveling Soldier, will follow up with the writer privately. We welcome other letters from members of the armed services.

Dear Traveling Soldier,

I was promoted to Sergeant less than a year ago.

Although I am thoroughly opposed to the Army as a whole, and the war in the Middle East (I spent 15 months over there for no good reason), I decided that I could take advantage of the system and become one of the few Non-commissioned Officers that refuses to buy into the Army BS. Goodness knows we could use more of those.

I was leaning heavily on the example set before me by some of the best Sergeants I had worked with, all of whom hated the Army with a fervent passion, but got their jobs done no less effectively.

I respected them because I could relate to them, and I would have taken a bullet for them without a second thought (whereas I would have had to take a moment to think about it for all of my "hooah" super-goArmy-high-speed NCOs).

With this conviction in hand, I PCS'd to my current unit, ready to show soldiers that leaders can be normal people, that being an asshole doesn't come with the stripes.

Within a few short months of coming here, I was forced to realize that if I don't lead their way (ordering the privates around like dogs and treating them as if they had no ability to think for themselves), then they would find a way to bust me down a peg.

I had already developed common ground with my soldiers, a level of trust that most leaders who demand respect and obedience rarely ever experience. But since this was contrary to how the Army (and those so-called "leaders" who value regulations over sincere trust and respect) does things, they set out to take me down.

I was mentioned by name in a unit anonymous survey for a charge that could have legal consequences if it were even remotely true. Although this accusation is minor, being anonymous and lacking evidence as it was, the message was all too clear to me: "Continue treating your subordinates like real people, and you will soon be one of them."

I refuse to conform to this.

I firmly believe that, as a leader, if you want to develop the trust necessary to survive in a combat zone, it requires you being a member of the team in garrison.

You can't bark orders and turn your back one day, and then expect a soldier to take a bullet for you the next.

That's not how it works.

For all of you Privates out there reading this, know that there are Sergeants who hate the Army just as much as you do.

Sergeants who would rather be at your side when the shit hits the fan than standing over you expecting you to handle it alone.

There are Sergeants who would rather lose their rank than conform to the Army's expectations of dictatorship in leaders.

Your leader and friend,
SGT A

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

ACTION REPORTS

“He Saw So Many Things And Questioned What They Were Doing There” [NYC Outreach To New York National Guard: Railroad Station]

From: SD
To: Military Resistance
Sent: January 07, 2010
Subject: NYC outreach to NY Army National Guard: railroad station

During p.m. rush hour on Tuesday, AS and I met two young National Guard members who were very receptive to conversation with us, but would not accept any literature, saying that they were "not allowed to accept materials" and that their supervisor was expected, as they looked about a bit nervously.

Still, they were friendly and one of the Guard knew of us from the Harlem Armory as "the people with the cookies and brownies" when they reported for drill weekends. Even

though they were too nervous to accept even a business card from us, it was a good brief encounter - and show of our support of them.

We then ran into two older Guard members, one of whom had "just returned" from deployment in Iraq.

He said that he had watched the video about Camilo.

They both accepted literature, "Sir, No Sir!" DVD's and both were extremely receptive, especially the Guard who had just returned from deployment.

When I asked him where he had been based (citing where my son was stationed in Iraq in 2006), he told me and said that he "he saw so many things and questioned what they were doing there."

Solidarity,
SD

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 Military Resistance 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:

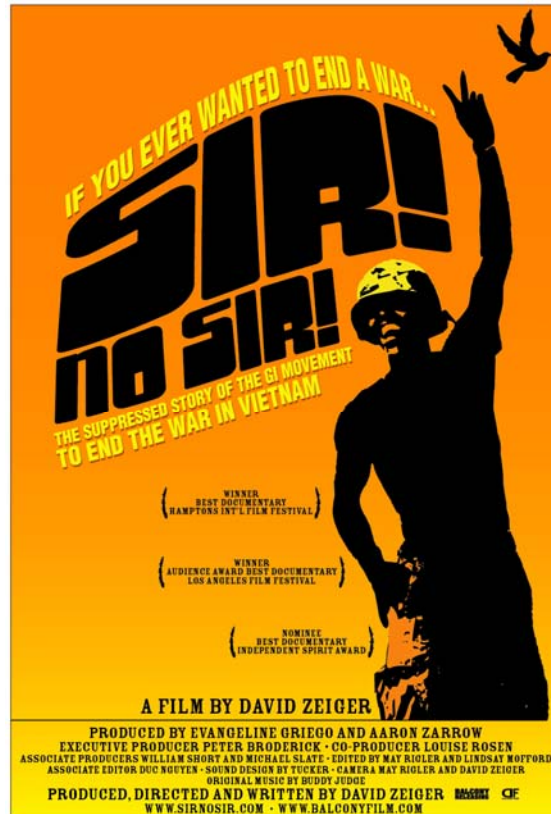
Do not make public any information that could compromise the work.

All identifying information – locations, personnel – will be omitted from the reports.

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

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 wars.

The sole exception: occasions when a member of the armed services explicitly directs identifying information be published in reporting on the action.



Sir! No Sir!:

The Sir! No Sir! DVD is on sale now, exclusively at http://www.sirnosir.com/home_dvd_storefront.html

Also available is a Soundtrack CD (which includes the entire song from the FTA Show, "Soldier We Love You"), theatrical posters, tee shirts, and the DVD of "A Night of Ferocious Joy," a film about the first hip-hop antiwar concert against the "War on Terror."

**BUY SIR! NO SIR! FOR ACTIVE DUTY
SOLDIERS NOW**

HELP GET SIR! NO SIR! INTO THE HANDS THAT NEED IT MOST

Dear Sir! No Sir! supporters,

Displaced Films, Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), and a growing number of organizations have been working to distribute free DVDs of Sir No Sir to soldiers.

Hundreds have been distributed and we want to see that number grow into the thousands.

The response has been tremendous.

David Zeiger and Jade Fox
Displaced Films
jadefox@sirnosir.com

To Whom it May Concern:

I just wanted to say thank you for this film, for raising my awareness, I never even knew some of these things happened.

I think this probably is one of the most important documentaries made about war resistance.

Thank you again,
SGT Spencer Batchelder

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

Forward Military Resistance 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 Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

U.S. Marine Killed By IED Near Nawa; Four More Badly Wounded

1.10.10 The Associated Press

LONDON - An explosion outside a small village in southern Afghanistan claimed the life of a veteran British war correspondent, officials said Sunday. It was the British media's first casualty in the conflict.

The blast, which also killed a U.S. and an Afghan soldier with whom Sunday Mirror journalist Rupert Hamer was traveling, brings the number of reporters who have died in Afghanistan since the Sept. 11 attacks to 18, according to figures kept by the New York-based Committee to Protect Journalists.

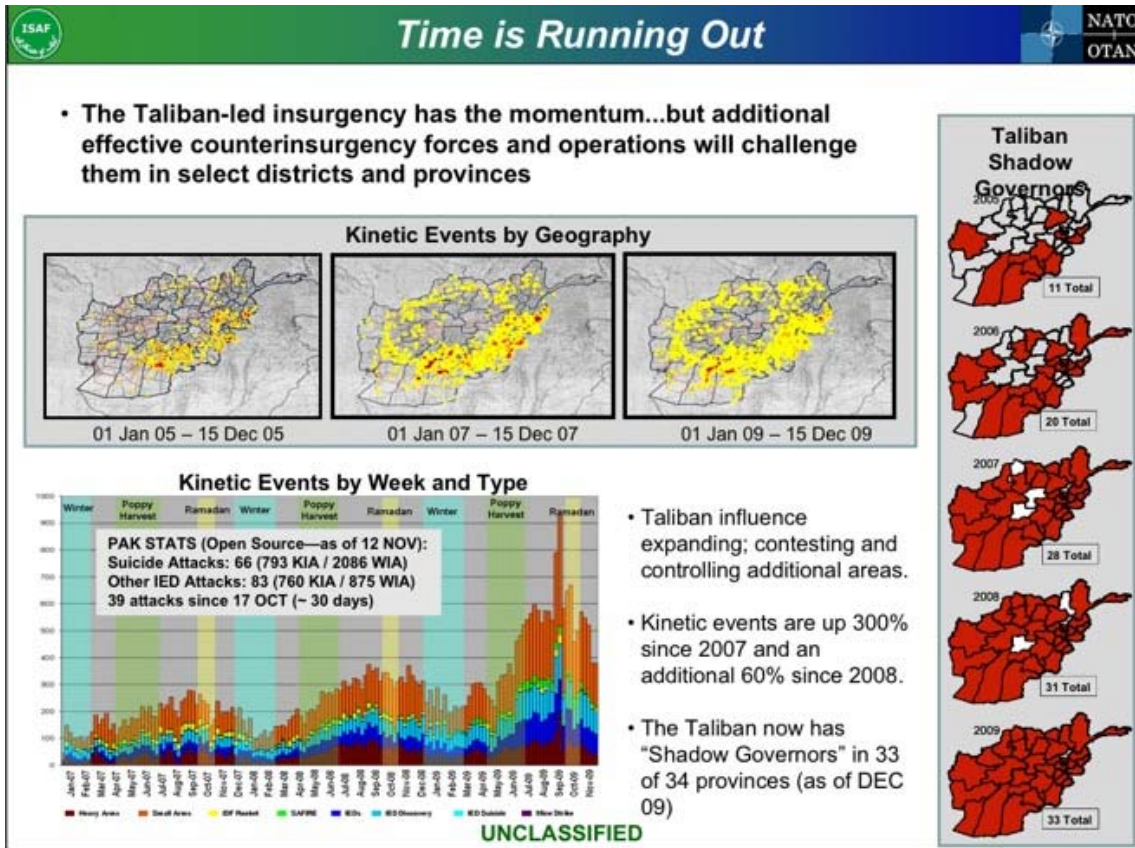
Hamer, 39, and photographer Philip Coburn, 43, were accompanying a U.S. Marine patrol Saturday when their vehicle was hit by a makeshift bomb near the village of Nawa in Helmand, the Defense Ministry said.

An U.S. Marine was also killed in the blast, the ministry said, as was an Afghan soldier. Coburn was seriously wounded in the explosion but remains in stable condition, the military said. Four U.S. Marines were also left badly hurt. No further detail was provided on their condition.

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

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

**Top U.S. Intel Officer Says “Afghan
Insurgency Can Sustain Itself
Indefinitely”
The “Strength And Ability Of Shadow
Governance Increasing”**



[ISAF/NATO MILITARY] ["Kinetic Events" means resistance attacks. T]

[Thanks to Sandy Kelson, Military Resistance and Linda O, who sent this in.]

January 8, 2010 By Noah Shachtman, Wired.com [Excerpts]

The Taliban not only has the "momentum" after the most successful year in its campaign against the United States and the Kabul government.

"The Afghan insurgency can sustain itself indefinitely," according to a briefing from Major General Michael Flynn, the top U.S. intelligence officer in the country. "The Taliban retains required partnerships to sustain support, fuel legitimacy and bolster capacity."

And if that isn't enough, Flynn also warns that "time is running out" for the American-led International Security Assistance Force. "Regional instability is rapidly increasing and getting worse," the report says.

The "loosely organized" Taliban is "growing more cohesive" and "increasingly effective." And the "strength and ability of shadow governance increasing," according to the presentation. The Taliban's "organizational capabilities and operational reach are qualitatively and geographically expanding."

Improvised bomb "events" have nearly tripled since 2007 — 7228 this year, compared to 2718 two years ago.

The bombs have grown bigger — the majority are now 25 pounds or more. “80 to 90 percent” of them are made with homemade fertilizer, rather than military ordnance. That makes it much harder to track and block the distribution of the bomb-making material.

Add to that steady supply of cash, thanks to the drug trade and the corrupt Kabul government, and a glut of weapons and ammunition,” and it becomes clear why, in Flynn’s words, “the insurgency is confident... looking toward post-ISAF Afghanistan.”

Flynn’s presentation also, indirectly, warns that one of the central U.S. tactics in Pakistan — drone strikes against suspected militants — could backfire. “Violations of Pakistan sovereignty may contribute to radicalizing the population and diminishes credibility of the GoP (Government of Pakistan).” Such violations “demonstrate(e) an inability of the government; perception they cannot protect their own; exacerbates anti-western sentiment.”

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPREHENSIBLE REASON TO BE IN THIS EXTREMELY HIGH RISK LOCATION AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT THAT THE PACK OF TRAITORS THAT RUN THE GOVERNMENT IN D.C. WANT YOU THERE TO DEFEND THEIR IMPERIAL DREAMS:
That is not a good enough reason.**



US soldiers patrol in Nuristan province in December 2009. (AFP/File/Tauseef Mustafa)

TROOP NEWS

**THIS IS HOW OBAMA BRINGS THE TROOPS
HOME:
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE**



The remains of Spc. David A. Croft Jr., right, Jan. 7, 2010 at Dover Air Force Base, Del. Croft, 22, of Plant City, Fla., died Jan. 5 in Baghdad of wounds sustained when insurgents attacked with an IED and small arms fire. (AP Photo/ Steve Ruark)

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. Phone: 888.711.2550

Military Resistance Available In PDF Format

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

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

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

**I say that when troops cannot be counted on to follow orders because they see the futility and immorality of them THAT is the real key to ending a war.
-- Al Jaccoma, Veterans For Peace**

**“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.**

**Firearms are second only to the Constitution in importance; they are the peoples' liberty's teeth.
-- George Washington**

Homeland Security



From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance
Sent: January 08, 2010
Subject: Homeland Security

Homeland Security

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
Jan. 8, 2010

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

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**

“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

January 10, 1776: Magnificent Anniversary #1



Thomas Paine

Carl Bunin Peace History January 7-13

Thomas Paine anonymously published his influential pamphlet, “Common Sense.”

In it Paine questioned the fundamental legitimacy of the rule of kings, and advocated the doctrine of independence for Americans, and the rights of mankind.

Quotations:

“He who is the author of a war lets loose the whole contagion of hell and opens a vein that bleeds a nation to death.”

“We have it in our power to begin the world over again.”

January 1831: Magnificent Anniversary #2



The masthead of William Lloyd Garrison's abolitionist newspaper, The Liberator, denounces slavery. [Wwnorton.com/]

January 1831:

William Lloyd Garrison, abolitionist, announces his anti-slavery newspaper, The Liberator.

"I am aware that many object to the severity of my language, but is there not cause for severity? I will be harsh as truth, and as uncompromising as justice.

"On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation.

"No! No! Tell a man whose house is on fire to sound a moderate alarm...but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present...

"I am in earnest--I will not equivocate--I will not excuse--I will not retreat a single inch--AND I WILL BE HEARD."

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

Got an opinion? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send to contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request identification published.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW



CLASS WAR REPORTS

Dress Rehearsal For Revolution:

[An Eyewitness Report]

“Down With Tyrant, Be It A Monarch Or A Supreme Leader”

“The District Was Practically Under People’s Control”

“We Ordered The Guards To Disarm. The Fear The Special Forces Were Experiencing Was Beautiful In The Eye Of The People”

“People Were Happy Because They Could See That A Number Of Those Who Are Fully Armed With The Most Advanced Oppressive Apparatuses Who Would Attack Anybody Were Now Begging Them To Spare Their Lives”

Some of the guards begged us not to take their helmets as people would smash their heads; we responded those who kick the young people with their boots, hitting them by their motor-bikes, and breaking their arms and shoulders with their batons and sticks do not deserve anything better.

Together with some of the frontmost young people we ordered the guards to disarm. We warned the guards that if they would not give up their arms they would be killed; we took their batons, bullet-proof vests, helmets, backpacks and other apparatuses they were carrying and threw them among the crowd.

27 December 2009 A Report by Siyavash Shahabi from Tehran; Signals-my.blogspot.com

Translated by Siyaves Azeri

Around 11.20 furious crowds opened their way toward College Bridge through southern alleys of Enqelab Street.

People had already been involved in fighting against the Special Force motor-bikers; in response to continuous use of tear gas by Special Forces people burned the trash bins and blocked the roads.

Consequently, people took over the control of the alleys.

These were the people that had been barbarically attacked by Special Forces and paramilitary groups (Basij) around Vali-e Asr Junction. Basij forces attacked people using batons, wooden sticks, blades, metal chains, and stones and would fiercely beat anybody they would capture.

However, in the alleys around Daneshjou Park motor-bikers and Basij forces could not advance because people attacked them using stones.

Young protestors gathered the trash bins from cross streets and brought them to the entrance of the bridge.

People started banging on bins like drums; the drum-like sound had filled the air. A short while later people took the bins to the middle of the street and put them on fire.

An Elegance Jeep of police forces was attacked by the people; protestors smashed the windows of the Jeep but it managed to escape.

From 11.10 on the district was practically under people's control.

The crowds were chanting "Down with Dictator," "Down with Khamanei," "Down with Tyrant, Be it a Monarch or a Supreme Leader," "Down with Islamic Republic," "All these Crowds are on the Streets Against the Supreme Leader"...

The first attack of Special Force motor-bikers from the bridge was responded massively by people throwing stones on the forces; Special Forces were pushed to retreat.

The crowd under the bridge was in perfect control of the situation and could prevent the forces from advancing.

The crowd under the bridge was way larger than the crowd close to the entrance of the bridge toward Vali-e Asr (west) Junction. People tried to block the way using cement blocks, metal side-railings of the bridge, and the railings of the BRT (transit way) line; they led the automobiles toward Enqelab Square (westbound) to prevent Special Force motor-bikers from advancing toward Vali-e Asr Junction.

Special Forces and fascist Basij could not advance beyond Vali-e Asr.

They were also under people's widespread attacks from the west side.

Special Forces tried to attack the crowds a number of times but they were retreated each time.

After we learned that Special Forces were being attacked from west side we realized they were not attacking us (on the east side) but they were escaping the people's attacks from the west.

During one of the attacks a young man were shot by a Basij militia who was trapped on the bridge; unfortunately, he lost his life. Some women took off their scarves to band the wound but it was too late.

They raised their bloody scarves and chanted "Down with Khamanei" while weeping.

I do not have the precise number of those who lost their lives but I eye witnessed three instances of Basij shooting people: two caused death and one wounded a person.

Angry people attacked the Basij Forces and beat them fiercely. I think a person was thrown off the bridge in this clash. I am not sure about this incident, but I know Basij Forces on the bridge were attacked severely by the people.

In the meantime, some Basij and Intelligence members were identified within the crowd; some of them were busy photographing and filming people's faces.

They were also fiercely beaten by people; their apparatuses such as professional photography and filming cameras and walkie-talkies were confiscated by people and thrown into the fire.

A photographer was shouting "I am green" but then he was asked why he took pictures of people's faces. He tried to escape but he was fiercely beaten by the people.

Another person who was carrying a radio transmitter and who tried to protect the photographer claimed to be "green" too but he was also beaten by the crowds; his transmitter was also confiscated and thrown into the fire.

The two could escape later after severely beaten.

As soon as a Basij or Intelligence member was identified, he would be attacked by people, beaten and then released.

I tried to save one of these guys from the people but I was beaten myself. People would not accept the idea that someone would protect these guys.

A middle-aged woman who wiped my face and head told "these dishonored guys are not human beings; you should not protect them!"

Angry crowds inflamed by the death of the young man started to throw stones toward the Special Forces under the bridge. People's attack was so fierce that the Special Forces could not react to it. They retreated toward our side but they were encircled and attacked from our side too.

One Special Forces member was captured by people; the attack was so quick that other members of the force could not save him.

People beat him fiercely and set his motor-bike on fire.

He was later let go while he was bleeding and wounded on his head.

People were chanting “Down with Khamanei,” “Down with Islamic Republic,” “Independent, Freedom, Iranian Republic,” “Freedom, Freedom.”

Some thirty members of the Special Forces retreated toward Saderat Bank, Hafez Branch with their motor-bikes and were encircled there.

A few meters away people smashed bank windows and were chanting against the regime. People were throwing stones toward Special Forces from both sides and from the top of the bridge. The air was filled with sounds of “Down with Khamanae,” “Down with Islamic Republic,” “All these Crowds are on the Streets against the Supreme Leader,” “Down with Islamist Bandits,” the cries of the youths, the smoke of burning plastic and tear gas.

Together with some of the frontmost young people we ordered the guards to disarm.

We warned the guards that if they would not give up their arms they would be killed; we took their batons, bullet-proof vests, helmets, backpacks and other apparatuses they were carrying and threw them among the crowd.

Some of the guards begged us not to take their helmets as people would smash their heads; we responded those who kick the young people with their boots, hitting them by their motor-bikes, and breaking their arms and shoulders with their batons and sticks do not deserve anything better.

Link of one of the films about this moment:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HqGYnjqHdOw>

We found 20 “on-scene arrest forms” in one of the backpacks and passed some of them to the people. These forms were entitled as “Forms of on-scene arrest of agents responsible for social unrest.”

The forms contain identity of the detainee, detainee’s situation when arrested (this is the type of conviction such as throwing stone, chanting, clapping and whistling, blocking the road etc), personal belongings such as mobile phone, camera, explanation about the officer in charge of arrest, and his signature. On the lower left corner of the form, in a fainter color, it reads “Vice-presidency of the Intelligence of the Operations of the Second Unit.”

On the back page, there is another form that contains details about “Western Tehran Guide.” It has the title “Order publishing advertisement in Western Tehran Guidebook (Summer Special Issue)” and it contains this address on the top right corner: Shahid Chamran Highway, Modiriyat Bridge, Blvd. Farhang, No. 11, Tel. 20 61 056. The serial number of the particular form that I have is 1621. No doubt that this company is one of the many belonging to Revolutionary Guards (Pasdaran).

While people were throwing stones toward Special Forces they set their motor-bikes on fire.

Within a few seconds all the bikes and buildings close by were on fire. People would buzz the doors and would ask the residents of the nearby buildings to come out due to fire. But thanks to the shape and material of the buildings no building was burned.

The guards broke the door of a building where they had taken refuge and escaped inside from the fire. If they had not done this and could not escape they would burn in fire.

I personally do not either approve or support such an act (killing people) under any circumstances. However, it is important to maintain a point: some time ago, Asqar Karimi, in New Channel TV, during a live program called upon police and militia forces of the Islamic Regime and told that there would come a time that they would beg the Worker-communist Party to stop people from chopping them off.

Such a thing happened on December 27.

When I was in the frontmost and confiscating the armament of the police forces, they were begging us to stop people from killing them. But who could stop the deep hatred and anger of the people?

Some of those in the frontmost line asked the people to stop throwing stones; they suggested capturing guards, taking their photographs and recording their identities.

The fear the Special Forces were experiencing was beautiful in the eye of the people.

Nobody was happy for use of violence against them.

People were happy because they could see that a number of those who are fully armed with the most advanced oppressive apparatuses who would attack anybody regardless of their age were now begging them to spare their lives.

People were swearing at these guys and chanting “Seyyed Ali where are your soldiers?” and “This is the fate of those who kill the youth!”

This is the message that people relayed to the entirety of oppressive machinery of the Islamic regime.

Three to four Basij militias attacked the people from under the bridge and started shooting with their handguns. Two more people were injured.

People started throwing stones on them; the Basij militia could escape since they continued shooting. The Basij militia shot randomly; one of the bullets hit a young man's back. Most probably the bullet hit his spine because he said he couldn't feel his feet. I could clearly see that the bullet had entered his back toward his spine and the backbones. Three people immediately took him away from the clash scene with a motor-bike.

As the Special Forces and Basij militia attacked again people retreated toward under the bridge and cross streets. This gave the Special Forces that had been trapped in a bank the opportunity to escape.

As the trapped forces escaped and the Special Forces started a new attack on people, protestors retaliated by throwing stones; the forces started shooting on people in response. People were clapping and laughing and joking that "our prisoners fled."

The streets were under people's control once again.

However, as the guards and militia kept shooting fiercely people had to retreat and the forces took the control of the bridge. Firefighters immediately opened the way and extinguish the burning motor-bikes.

At 12.30, I and several others went toward Vali-e Asr Street using the cross streets and joined the people there. We were very tired and did not have the power to advance further.

The guards and militia attacked people and shooting them. A young man named Morteza was hit in his chest; we helped him out of the clash scene into a building. After a while Morteza got better; it was calmer outside; we proceeded toward Vali-e Asr Square and from there toward Felestin Square. From there we started going back toward Hafez Bridge. Special Forces had taken complete control of the neighborhood; no anti-regime slogans, fire and smoke was in the air.

We returned toward Enqelab Square; lots of people were on the streets. Basij hooligans were on the streets and chanted "Hezbollah, Mashallah!"

People were laughing at what they called the defeat march of Basij.

There were fierce debates among people.

Everybody spoke their view and analysis. A number of times I heard people talked about the presence and role of communists in today's protests and that communists should assume a more central role. Fierce political debates took place on the sidewalks.

We kept advancing toward Azadi Square. Basij militia and Special Forces were present at all junctions and swear at people.

We saw lots of forces close by the main building of traffic police of Greater Tehran headquarters.

We were surprised seeing so many guards there but as we got closer we saw the trace of people's attacks on the building and then we realized the extent of the events today. People had attacked the headquarters from two sides.

The windows of a bank by the headquarters and the entrance of the building were smashed by stones.

On the streets, two automobiles, one of them belonging to police forces, had been set on fire.

People had got into more intense clashes with police forces here. The yard of the headquarters was full of Special Forces members. A little further down members of the Leader's Special Guard's were all over the place on their motor-bike wearing chemical war masks. They were maneuvering and intimidating people and swearing at them; they were asking people to leave the streets.

As we got closer to Azadi Underpass cars started honking continuously.

One officer kicked a car and took the plate off; passengers started fighting with him fiercely; the Basij militia intervened, prevented further clashes and started beating everybody.

A female passenger of the car fought hardly and got the plate back.

The officer tried all he could to retreat the woman hitting her by fist, kicking her, swearing at her but the women eventually got the plate back.

The people who surrounded them started clapping and applauding the woman; this made the officer even angrier; he started swearing at people and chanting against them but even the Basij militia didn't support him.

As he started chanting "Down with Monafeq" people started laughing at him; he got angrier but there was nothing he could do.

The sidewalks on the two sides of Azadi Street were full of people who tried to cover the demonstration passage from Emam Hossein Square to Azadi Square in their own manner.

People cheerfully and openly talked about the role they had taken that day in the clashes right in front of the angry and bewildered Basij militia and Special Forces and would recite the events they had witnessed or heard about.

The sound of laughter and cheer of young boys and girls had filled the air of Ashura!

<p>A revolution is always distinguished by impoliteness, probably because the ruling classes did not take the trouble in good season to teach the people fine manners. -- Trotsky, History Of The Russian Revolution</p>

Living On Nothing But Food Stamps:

“About Six Million Americans Receiving Food Stamps Report They Have No Other Income”
“About One In 50 Americans Now Lives In A Household With A Reported Income That Consists Of Nothing But A Food-Stamp Card”
“Unemployed And Receiving No Cash Aid — No Welfare, No Unemployment Insurance, And No Pensions, Child Support Or Disability Pay”



Isabel Bermudez worked in Gulf Coast real estate, but she lost everything in the recession. "Every door I've knocked on to get help for my family and myself has been closed," she said. "My mother was a drug addict. I persevered to give my daughters a better life." Photo: Stephen Crowley/The New York Times

[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: "Is this the freedom were fighting for in IraqAfPakVietYemenistan?"]

January 2, 2010 By JASON DEPARLE and ROBERT M. GEBELOFF, The New York Times Company

CAPE CORAL, Fla. — After an improbable rise from the Bronx projects to a job selling Gulf Coast homes, Isabel Bermudez lost it all to an epic housing bust — the six-figure income, the house with the pool and the investment property.

Now, as she papers the county with résumés and girds herself for rejection, she is supporting two daughters on an income that inspires a double take: zero dollars in monthly cash and a few hundred dollars in food stamps.

With food-stamp use at a record high and surging by the day, Ms. Bermudez belongs to an overlooked subgroup that is growing especially fast: recipients with no cash income.

About six million Americans receiving food stamps report they have no other income, according to an analysis of state data collected by The New York Times.

In declarations that states verify and the federal government audits, they described themselves as unemployed and receiving no cash aid — no welfare, no unemployment insurance, and no pensions, child support or disability pay.

Their numbers were rising before the recession as tougher welfare laws made it harder for poor people to get cash aid, but they have soared by about 50 percent over the past two years.

About one in 50 Americans now lives in a household with a reported income that consists of nothing but a food-stamp card.

“It’s the one thing I can count on every month — I know the children are going to have food,” Ms. Bermudez, 42, said with the forced good cheer she mastered selling rows of new stucco homes.

Members of this straitened group range from displaced strivers like Ms. Bermudez to weathered men who sleep in shelters and barter cigarettes.

Some draw on savings or sporadic under-the-table jobs. Some move in with relatives. Some get noncash help, like subsidized apartments. While some go without cash incomes only briefly before securing jobs or aid, others rely on food stamps alone for many months.

The surge in this precarious way of life has been so swift that few policy makers have noticed. But it attests to the growing role of food stamps within the safety net.

One in eight Americans now receives food stamps, including one in four children.

Here in Florida, the number of people with no income beyond food stamps has doubled in two years and has more than tripled along once-thriving parts of the southwest coast.

The building frenzy that lured Ms. Bermudez to Fort Myers and neighboring Cape Coral has left a wasteland of foreclosed homes and written new tales of descent into star-crossed indigence.

A skinny fellow in saggy clothes who spent his childhood in foster care, Rex Britton, 22, hopped a bus from Syracuse two years ago for a job painting parking lots.

Now, with unemployment at nearly 14 percent and paving work scarce, he receives \$200 a month in food stamps and stays with a girlfriend who survives on a rent subsidy and a government check to help her care for her disabled toddler.

A grandmother whose voice mail message urges callers to “have a blessed good day,” Wanda Debnam, 53, once drove 18-wheelers and dreamed of selling real estate.

But she lost her job at Starbucks this year and moved in with her son in nearby Lehigh Acres. Now she sleeps with her 8-year-old granddaughter under a poster of the Jonas Brothers and uses her food stamps to avoid her daughter-in-law’s cooking.

“I’m climbing the walls,” Ms. Debnam said.

Florida officials have done a better job than most in monitoring the rise of people with no cash income. They say the access to food stamps shows the safety net is working.

But others say the lack of cash support shows the safety net is torn.

The main cash welfare program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, has scarcely expanded during the recession; the rolls are still down about 75 percent from their 1990s peak.

A different program, unemployment insurance, has rapidly grown, but still omits nearly half the unemployed.

Food stamps, easier to get, have become the safety net of last resort.

“The food-stamp program is being asked to do too much,” said James Weill, president of the Food Research and Action Center, a Washington advocacy group.

“People need income support.”

The Times collected income data on food-stamp recipients in 31 states, which account for about 60 percent of the national caseload.

On average, 18 percent listed cash income of zero in their most recent monthly filings. Projected over the entire caseload, that suggests six million people in households with no income.

About 1.2 million are children.

The numbers have nearly tripled in Nevada over the past two years, doubled in Florida and New York, and grown nearly 90 percent in Minnesota and Utah. In Wayne County,

Mich., which includes Detroit, one of every 25 residents reports an income of only food stamps. In Yakima County, Wash., the figure is about one of every 17.

With their condition mostly overlooked, there is little data on how long these households go without cash incomes or what other resources they have. But they appear an eclectic lot. Florida data shows the population about evenly split between families with children and households with just adults, with the latter group growing fastest during the recession.

They are racially mixed as well — about 42 percent white, 32 percent black, and 22 percent Latino — with the growth fastest among whites during the recession.

With nearly 15,000 people in Lee County, Fla., reporting no income but food stamps, the Fort Myers area is a laboratory of inventive survival.

When Rhonda Navarro, a cancer patient with a young son, lost running water, she ran a hose from an outdoor spigot that was still working into the shower stall.

Mr. Britton, the jobless parking lot painter, sold his blood.

MORE:

In England, Elderly Must Burn Books To Keep Warm: “Heating Homes Has Become A Luxury Rather Than A Necessity For Many People – Particularly The Elderly, Low Paid And Unemployed”

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

5th January, 2010 Daily Mail

Volunteers have reported that ‘a large number’ of elderly customers are snapping up hardbacks as cheap fuel for their fires and stoves.

Temperatures this week are forecast to plummet as low as -13°C in the Scottish Highlands, with the mercury falling to -6°C in London, -5°C in Birmingham and -7°C in Manchester as one of the coldest winters in years continues to bite.

Workers at one charity shop in Swansea, in south Wales, described how the most vulnerable shoppers were seeking out thick books such as encyclopaedias for a few pence because they were cheaper than coal.

One assistant said: 'Book burning seems terribly wrong but we have to get rid of unsold stock for pennies and some of the pensioners say the books make ideal slow-burning fuel for fires and stoves.'

A lot of them buy up large hardback volumes so they can stick them in the fire to last all night.'

A 500g book can sell for as little as 5p, while a 20kg bag of coal costs £5.

Since January 2008, gas bills have risen 40 per cent and electricity prices 20 per cent, although people over 60 are entitled to a winter fuel allowance of between £125 and £400.

Jonathan Stearn, energy expert for Consumer Focus, said: 'If pensioners are taking such desperate measures to heat their homes it is shocking. With low wholesale prices and increasing profit margins, there is clearly room for energy companies to make price cuts immediately.'

Ruth Davison, of the National Housing Federation, said: 'The spiralling cost of energy means heating homes has become a luxury rather than a necessity for many people – particularly the elderly, low paid and unemployed.'



RECEIVED

Monthly Rallies to Support Travis Bishop: “Bishop Refused Orders To Deploy To Afghanistan”

12/29/2009 G.I.VOICE

Coffee Strong and Veterans For Peace join together to ask the larger peace community to join us in a series of monthly rallies in support of Travis Bishop.

To recap what has happened, Leo Church was released from the Regional Correction Facility at Ft Lewis, and Coffee Strong and Vets For Peace representatives were present on a frigid December 8 morning to welcome Leo.

Now the larger peace and clergy communities are gathering together to commit to a series of rallies throughout coming months until Travis Bishop is also released. The larger community will gather each 4th Sunday of the month, from 1:30 to 3:30 to support Travis Bishop. Letter writing is encouraged, which we will discuss each day a rally takes place, so that participants know how to address their letters (see retravisbishop.wordpress.com/.../amnesty-international-declares-travis-bishop-a-prisoner-of-conscience-launches-international-letter)

We cannot be certain what type of treatment Travis Bishop is receiving. We know that sexual humiliation was taking place, and both "sexual harassment (a violation of Eight Amendment constitutional rights) and Sixth Amendment rights (to counsel) have been violated" according to the civilian defense attorney, James Branum.

Other attorneys and military veteran bloggers have long commented on reports of human rights abuses in the RCF, which Leo Church attested to. This includes the use of female guards to sexually humiliate prisoners. The reports include the 2005 case of Michael Levitt who plugged up his cell toilet in response to reported sexual humiliation by guards, and was then chained to a "stress-chair" (with metal frames but not seat) for 109 hours.

Travis Bishop was recognized by Amnesty International as a "Prisoner of Conscience." Bishop refused orders to deploy to Afghanistan based on religious concerns, and applied for Conscientious Objector status. He went AWOL (absent without leave) from Fort Hood Texas, on the day of his deployment to give himself "time to prepare for my application process." He was away from his unit for about a week, during which he drafted his CO application and sought legal advice. He returned voluntarily, and on his return to the unit he submitted his application, but was court martialed as the Army was still reviewing his application.

Travis Bishop is also an accomplished country musician. He opened for Toby Keith while serving in Baghdad with the 3rd Signal Brigade in 2007, as well as country stars Keith Anderson and Chely Wright. GI Voice is calling on country musicians, fans and the larger community to support Travis Bishop.

DATES TO CALENDAR: all rallies will take place between 1:30 and 3:30 on the 4th Sundays of each month, from January thru June. PLEASE CHECK THIS WEBSITE FOR FURTHER UPDATES.

We are proud to support Travis Bishop, and hope to see you at one of the upcoming rallies each month until his release. Coffee Strong is committed to education as a tool to support soldiers' healing and growth. Sgt Bishop provides us with an understanding of how training and accurate information are compromised in the Army:

"Maybe it's because since day one of anyone's career in the military, fierceness and bravado are pounded into every potential soldier, and fear and doubt are viewed as weaknesses." Regarding his personal commitment to Conscientious Objection he says: "Does a Soldier who feels as I feel tell someone in their Command? Or a peer? And risk persecution and ridicule? I never heard the word 'coward' used more than when I say the words conscientious objector around a group of Soldiers."

Ultimately, we support the work Bishop and his attorney, James Branum are doing. Branum states he will continue to demand the Army provide CO training: "and my hope is that when troops are going to be deployed, they'll be read their Bishop rights."

For further information regarding monthly vigils, contact Andrew at Coffee Strong at 253-581-1565 or Molly at 253-327-8700. Contact Gerry Condon, President, Vets for Peace, Seattle at 206-499-1220.

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