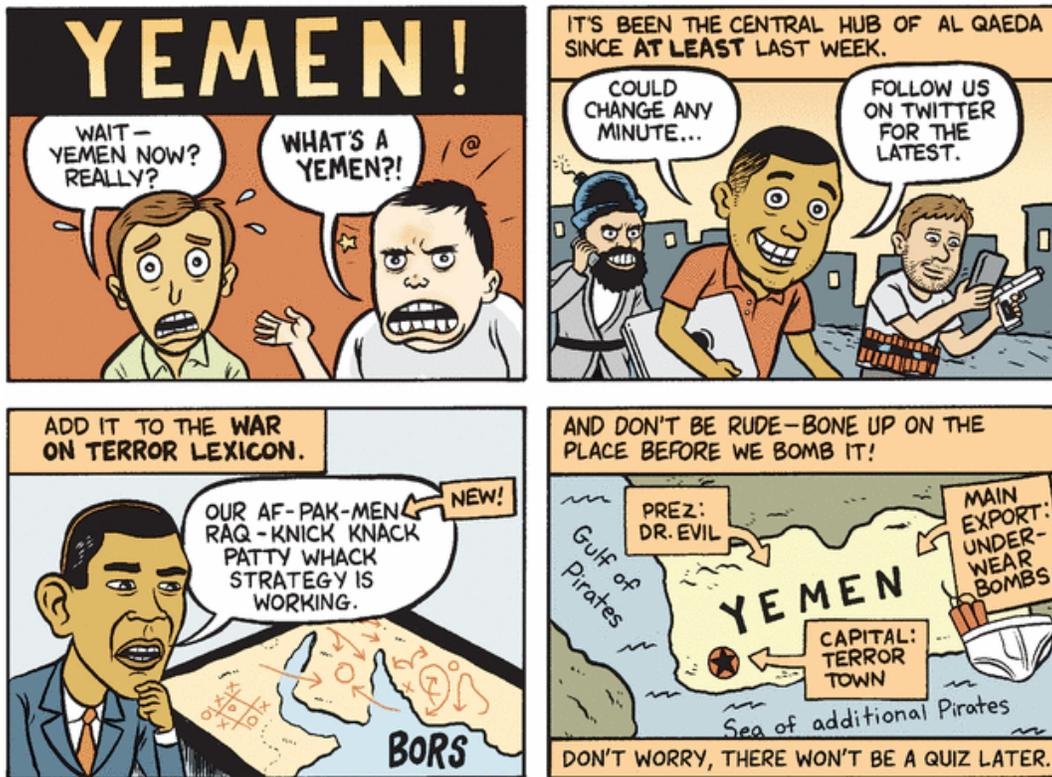


Military Resistance 8A9



Reconciliation

#1:

**Iraq Veterans Against The War
Activist Says He Regrets His Time
As Guantánamo Guard:
He Meets With His Former Prisoners:
“His Time At Guantánamo Now Haunts
Him”**



Brandon Neely, center, was a Guantánamo Bay guard, and Ruhai Ahmed, left, and Shafiq Rasul were prisoners. Photo: Jeff Overs

Mr. Neely, who has served as the president of the Houston chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War, says his time at Guantánamo now haunts him, and has granted confessional-style interviews about the abuses he says he witnessed there.

January 10, 2010 By BRIAN STELTER, The New York Times

New to Facebook, Brandon Neely was searching the site for acquaintances in 2008 when he typed in the names of some of the detainees he had guarded during his tenure as a prison guard at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

Mr. Neely, an Army veteran who spent six months at the prison in 2002, sent messages to one of the freed men, Shafiq Rasul, and was astonished when Mr. Rasul replied.

Their exchanges sparked a face-to-face meeting, arranged by the BBC, which will be shown on Tuesday.

Mr. Neely, who has served as the president of the Houston chapter of Iraq Veterans Against the War, says his time at Guantánamo now haunts him, and has granted confessional-style interviews about the abuses he says he witnessed there.

In a message to Mr. Rasul, Mr. Neely apologized for his role in the imprisonment.

Gavin Lee, a BBC correspondent, learned about the Facebook messages from Mr. Rasul, who lives in Britain, and thought the situation was incredible. Mr. Lee tracked down Mr. Neely — on Facebook, naturally — and asked, “would you consider meeting face to face?”

“He thought about it and he said, ‘I would love to,’ ” Mr. Lee recalled last week. “I would love to apologize in person.”

It took months to find a time, however, and Mr. Rasul was uncertain. He told the BBC that some members of his family had said to him, “Why do you want to meet someone like that for? The way he treated you, you stay away from him.”

The BBC paid for Mr. Neely’s flight to London last month, where a camera crew filmed him meeting Mr. Rasul and a second former detainee, Ruhai Ahmed, on a Saturday afternoon. (Both men have pursued legal action against former Defense Secretary Donald H. Rumsfeld.)

The cameras were there for a second conversation the morning before Mr. Neely’s flight home to Houston. “To see it happen was extraordinary,” Mr. Lee said.

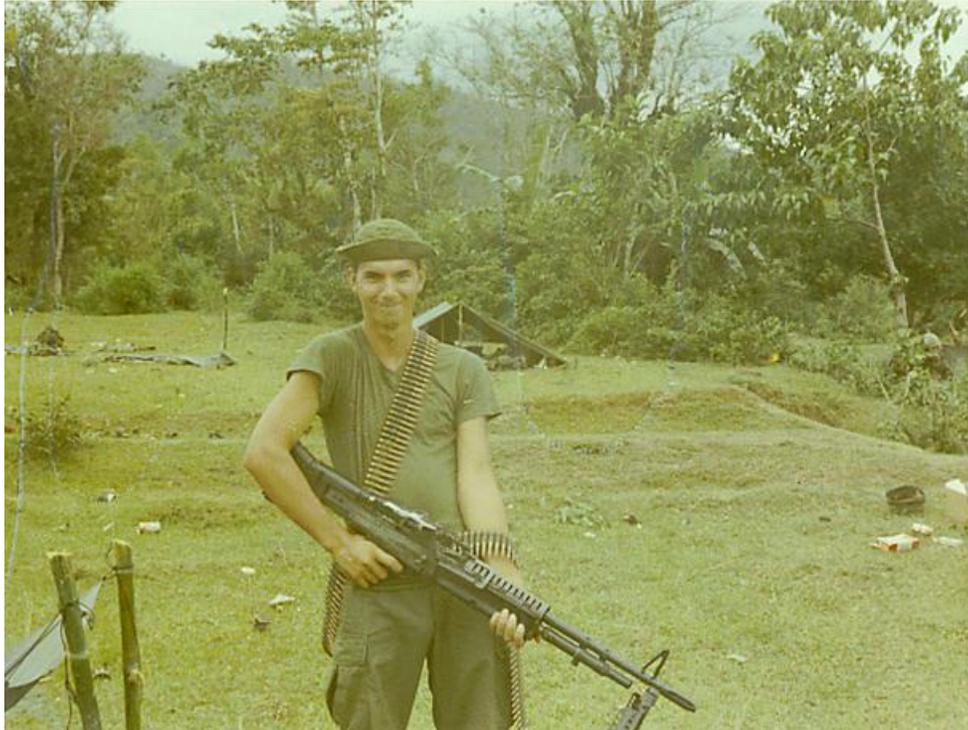
In a segment that will be telecast on Tuesday’s “BBC World News America,” Mr. Ahmed is shown saying to Mr. Neely, “You look different without your cap.”

“You look different in jumpsuits,” Mr. Neely responds.



Reconciliation #2: “It’s The First Time Christal And Her Father Have Ever Spoken About The War”

**“I Can’t Understand Going Into Iraq,
Losing All Those People. But I Didn’t
Understand The Vietnam War Either”**



Delmer Presley was a radio telephone operator in Vietnam in 1969, when this photo was taken. When he was drafted at age 18, he told officials he was flat-footed and colorblind, but he landed in the war. Family photo

January 10, 2010 By Helena Oliviero, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Christal Presley bites her lower lip when she hears her father's voice on the other end of the telephone.

She's on edge. It doesn't take much to set him off.

And she's about to ask about the one thing no one in her family can ever talk about: Vietnam.

The Atlanta woman still gets flashbacks of her father, Delmer Presley, locking himself in his bedroom for days at a time, curled up like a baby, his eyes big and wild.

On the phone, she can't help but feel like the scared little girl who sometimes took refuge in a closet and wrote stories by the light of a flashlight.

But she's 31 now. She can no longer hide from her father — or a war that ended before she was born.

"I want to know if you are still up for it," says Christal. "It will just be some questions."

"Questions about what?" grumbles her father, who lives in their rural Virginia hometown.

She holds her breath.

“Questions about the war,” she says.

“I don’t want to talk about the war,” he says. “I don’t know anything about a war.”

He hangs up.

Moments later, Christal’s mother calls back.

“He says he’ll do it,” Judy Presley says. “Did you hear me? He says he’ll do it.”

An only child, Christal has long suffered from anxiety and depression. Two years ago, a psychiatrist suggested she might even suffer from the condition tormenting her father — Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

For Christal, it would be what is known as intergenerational PTSD, described as a psychiatric problem passed on to family members who didn’t experience the trauma themselves. While many experts believe children can be affected by a parent’s PTSD, some question whether the children themselves suffer from the condition.

What is clear is war can deeply affect the children of soldiers — whether the war raged in the 1960s or it’s taking place today in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Christal and her father, a Vietnam vet drafted as a teenager, barely spoke while she was growing up. Struggling to deal with the relentless fear he experienced in Southeast Asia, Delmer was easily reminded of the horrors once he came home.

Eating at restaurants, Christal would pray no one would drop a spoon.

Her mother repeatedly told her, “It’s not his fault. It’s not his fault.” Then she’d whisper: “It’s Vietnam.”

As the years went on, Christal found she not only inherited her father’s deep brown eyes and wrinkled forehead, but also his nervous energy and anti-social behavior. She avoided getting to know people and making new friends.

As an adult, she knew that, to confront her own demons, she’d have to confront those of her father.

Christal decided to approach her father and ask about his past, his fears, the anxiety he carried with him.

She persuaded him to talk to her every day for a month, and she created a Web site, United Children of Veterans, where she would blog daily about their conversations. The very name of her project conjures up images hellish and hopeful, depending on which avenue it would take: “30 Days with My Father.”

For Christal, an instructional mentor with Atlanta Public Schools who’s finishing up a Ph.D. in education, it would be part of a larger effort to conquer her fear and heal her relationship with her dad.

Delmer, one of 10 children, grew up in Davenport, Va., a community of farmers and coal miners.

Apart from his one year in Vietnam, he's never traveled more than 100 miles from his tiny town. After getting married, he settled in nearby Honaker.

Delmer received his draft letter in 1968 — the year of the Tet offensive, a bloody campaign launched by the Viet Cong that helped turn the American public against the war.

Only 18, he told officials he was flat-footed and colorblind, to no avail. He landed in Vietnam in April 1969, a radio telephone operator in charge of his platoon's communications.

Morale was low when Delmer arrived, and the war was escalating.

In that initial conversation with his daughter, Delmer remembers underground tunnels covered in bamboo, teeming with snakes.

"We used to have to send men down there to check the tunnels out," he says. "I never went down there. Just stuck my head in.

"I was too big," he jokes, laughing. "Too big and ugly."

Christal wants to know more.

"If you could give any advice to families of veterans, Dad, what would you tell them?"

"They need to find a group to get in and get counseling," he says. "Either that, or they'll jump off a cliff."

"What should families of veterans expect?" she asks.

"War changes a person," he says. "It changes people. I can't explain it. ... It changes everything."

It's the first time Christal and her father have ever spoken about the war. As she hangs up the phone, Christal is thrilled with how it went. But hours later, she talks to her father again. He is seething mad.

Their talk has stirred emotions he wasn't ready to deal with. He questions her motives and, inexplicably, accuses her of taking drugs.

Christal wants to end the project now, tell him that she can't reason with a crazy person. Instead, she tells him that she loves him.

"I have a story to tell just like you do, and I need your help. It doesn't mean you have to talk about the war. You can say whatever you want," she says.

There's a long silence.

“I just want to get to know you, for you to get to know me,” she says.

“You do this project,” he finally says, his voice shaking. “You do this project and write whatever you want.”

For years, Delmer dealt with inner turmoil by working 12 hours a day, six days a week, welding mining equipment.

Then, in the 1980s, his hands began to shake so much he couldn’t keep his grip on a welder’s torch.

He also had cysts removed from his fingers and a tumor removed from his lung — problems he believes were caused by wartime exposure to Agent Orange (a now-banned defoliant that’s been linked to leukemia, cancer and other health woes) though doctors say there’s no way to know for sure. His nightmares became more intense.

“If there was a storm and I was sleeping, I would wake up and not know if I was home in my bed or in the jungles of Vietnam,” he says.

“I thought I was losing my mind.”

In 1985, he was diagnosed with PTSD — a condition he had never heard of. Six years later, his symptoms worsening, he went on disability.

Despite counseling and medication, Delmer finds his mind is never far from the battlefield.

Recently, while grocery shopping, Delmer heard a balloon pop and he went berserk.

“I almost tore a tomato stand down,” the 60-year-old says. “It’s embarrassing but you just can’t help it.”

Almost a month into the conversations with his daughter, Delmer tells of the death of one young soldier that haunts him to this day.

The two were walking about 20 yards apart when the other man stepped on an explosive booby trap.

“He had only been in Vietnam a week,” he says. “He showed me a picture a day or two earlier of his baby girl. She was just 3 months old. ... I’ve had dreams over and over about him never getting to hold that baby.”

He’s also tormented by “search and destroy missions.”

“That was the order — to burn whole villages. ... These houses were made of straw and they would burn easily. You could see the people with their clothes burning. ... You couldn’t understand what they were saying, but everyone cries in the same language.

“I know I did some things I shouldn’t have done. I knew better. I did. I just didn’t consider those people human. I never saw a Vietnamese before in my life, and I hated them. ... I was trained not to see them as human.”

Thirty days into the conversations — which have now continued beyond the month originally planned — Christal isn’t nervous anymore. The talks aren’t forced. Her dad is not defensive. He really wants to talk.

Delmer tells her about how he washed his socks in streams in Vietnam and stored his canned food inside them after they dried. He talks about the pet monkey, JoJo, he had in Vietnam.

Delmer has questions, too, for his daughter, who lives in the big city. What does it mean to be a mentor to teachers? Does she see homeless people in Atlanta?

Are any of them Vietnam vets?

Christal talks to her dad about relationships and why he doesn’t get close to anyone.

“Well, you didn’t get attached to anybody, because they died,” he says, reverting to his wartime mentality.

“They got killed. And you didn’t want to get hurt.”

Christal is also learning more about who her dad is and discovering his sense of humor.

“You like talking to me?” he asks.

“Yes,” she says.

“Wait till you get my bill. You’ll change your mind.”

“What could Mom and I have done?” Christal asks tentatively. “What could we have done to make things better — to have better supported you back then?”

“You could have took me out back and shot me,” he says. “That would have solved your problems. Put a little poison in my coffee.”

She presses.

“Nothing,” he says. “It was all my fault. My problems. I just tried to keep it balled up inside of me.”

“A lot of people think when you come home, the war is over, but that’s when it really starts,” he says.

What’s helped Delmer over the years is his guitar, he says. He plays at churches, funerals and schools.

Christal thinks about what could have helped her and her conclusion is basic. She wishes she’d had other children of veterans to talk to.

It's something she's created now.

Christal's blog and Web site, which started in November, has received more than 10,000 visitors. She gets dozens of e-mails and comments from children of veterans across the country.

One woman begs for advice because her father, a Vietnam veteran, is scaring her kids. A Vietnam vet tells her he has not spoken to his own children in 23 years.

Christal asks her father about the current battles in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"I wish they weren't going on," he says.

"I can't understand going into Iraq, losing all those people. But I didn't understand the Vietnam War either."

Today, about 2 million U.S. children have a parent in either the active or reserve component of the military, according to a 2009 RAND Corporation study. The study found children in military families are more likely to miss school activities and feel that people don't understand their problems.

She has changed, too.

Since she began the dialogue with her father, Christal has seen changes in herself. She no longer makes excuses to avoid social get-togethers. And Delmer also sees himself changing. He said the project has helped him open up and relax.

When Christal went home for Christmas, she braced herself for flashbacks as she curved up the mountain to her childhood home.

The flashbacks never came.

Her father lit candles and played "Silent Night" on his guitar. He gave her money for Christmas. She used the money to buy a guitar.

"Dad, tell me some things you like about me," she says.

"Christal, I just like that you're smart and stuff," he says. "You're witty. You got my sense of humor. You are headstrong like me. You don't let anyone push anything over on you. You are a whole lot smarter than me."

He's proud Christal just completed her Ph.D.

"Tell me what I mean to you," she says.

"You mean the world to me, buddy," he says. "Why? Didn't you know it? Didn't you know that Christal?"

She closes her eyes.

Deep in her heart, she knew it. She just needed to hear it.

Epilogue:

The project reached the 30-day mark during her Christmas visit home. Christal and her father have decided to continue to talk every day, going far beyond the original 30 days.

Tom Howe, president of Veterans and Military Families for Progress, a Washington, D.C.-based nonprofit, has asked Christal to be part of a team that will make recommendations to the White House on how the government can better help soldiers returning from war - and their families.

Christal also is going to Vietnam in March for about three weeks. She will be one of 12 people from across the country going on a trip organized by a group called "Soldier's Heart."

Delmer continues to play guitar every day. A song he wrote and performs about Vietnam was recently played over the loudspeaker at an elementary school near his home. He got a standing ovation.



Christal Presley spends time with her dad, Delmer Presley, over the recent holidays. She used money he gave her for Christmas to buy a guitar. Delmer is a longtime guitar player. Family photo

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Resistance Action

Jan 7 (Reuters) & (KUNA) & Jan 9 (Reuters) & Jan 10 (Reuters) & 1.11.10 AP & Reuters

A roadside bomb went off near an Iraqi army patrol, wounding three soldiers in southeastern Mosul, police said.

A bomb attached to a pickup truck in an Iraqi lawmaker's convoy wounded three of his bodyguards, when it exploded in Abu Nawas Street in central Baghdad Monday, officials said.

A roadside bomb went off near a police patrol, wounding three policemen in the Suleikh district of northern Baghdad, police said.

A police official at the scene told The Associated Press that the legislator, Izzat al-Shabander, was not in the convoy when it was targeted.

A bomber riding a bicycle targeted a local pro-government militia checkpoint in Balad, 80 km (50 miles) north of Baghdad, wounding eight, on Wednesday, police said.

A police source told KUNA a booby-trapped car blew up in Ras Al-Jadeh region west of Mosul killing two members of a police patrol.

Insurgents in a speeding car shot and wounded an off-duty Iraqi soldier in central Kirkuk, and also shot and wounded an off-duty Iraqi soldier in front of his house in southeastern Kirkuk, on Friday, police said.

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

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Six Foreign Soldiers Killed In Afghanistan; Three Americans Among The Dead

1.11.10 By Sardar Ahmad, AFP & The Associated Press

Six foreign soldiers -- three Americans and at least one French -- were killed Monday.

In addition to the Americans and the French soldier, two others had died of their wounds. An official speaking on condition of anonymity told AFP one of the two was also French.

One of those whose nationality was not officially identified was killed by an improvised bomb in southern Afghanistan

In the attack on French troops, insurgents raided a convoy of French and Afghan forces northeast of Kabul, according to President Nicolas Sarkozy's office.

A French officer was killed during a joint patrol with Afghan troops in Alasay, a valley largely under insurgent control that foreign troops are trying to reclaim. Another French service member was seriously wounded in the attack 50 miles northeast of Kabul. There were eight French troops in the patrol, said spokesman Col. Jacky Fouquereau.

The Americans died in a firefight with militants during an "operational patrol" in southern Afghanistan, U.S. military spokesman Col. Wayne Shanks said. He declined to provide on the exact location of the clash or their branch of service pending notification of family members.

U.S. Service Member Killed Sunday By Something Or Other Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan

1.11.10 By Sardar Ahmad, AFP

Officials said Monday that bombs killed another American service member and two Afghan road construction workers in separate attacks Sunday in southern Afghanistan.

Soldier Who Grew Up In San Jose Killed In Afghanistan On Christmas

12/28/2009 Lisa Fernandez, San Jose Mercury News

Patty Gutierrez was enjoying Christmas breakfast with her three boys when two Army chaplains knocked on her door.

Her husband of 13 years had been killed by a bomb in Afghanistan. Instead of returning to her in three weeks as planned, Staff Sgt. David Gutierrez, a San Jose native, was never coming home again.

"I woke up Christmas morning," Patty Gutierrez said by phone from her home in Fort Lewis, Wash. "But when the knock came, it wasn't Christmas anymore."

Gutierrez, who grew up in Sunnyvale, has told the couple's three boys — Gabriel, 4; Jeremiah, 6; and Andrew, 12 — about their dad.

"But the 12-year-old is the only one who really understands," she said.

The boys had last seen their father on Christmas Eve on a Webcam, opening presents via computer. The family tried to connect every day online.

According to the Department of Defense, David Gutierrez, 35, a graduate of Santa Teresa High School who attended San Jose City College, is one of about 700 Army soldiers — an estimated 65 of them Californians — to have died during Operation Enduring Freedom so far.

The chaplains gave Gutierrez's widow "very generic" details about her husband's death. She said she was told that her husband died Friday morning after an improvised explosive device erupted on a rooftop near the village of Howz-e Madad.

He was on foot, she learned, and not protected by the armored vehicle he typically rode in as part of his infantry unit (2nd Battalion, 1st Infantry Regiment, 5th Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division). He was taken to Kandahar Air Field, where he was pronounced dead.

Patty Gutierrez is waiting to hear when her husband's body will be sent back, so she can make funeral arrangements. But she said she knows he'll be laid to rest in Gilroy, where the couple buried a baby girl in 2008.

As an Army wife, Gutierrez had frequently considered the possibility of her husband's death. "But I thought it would never happen to me. It wasn't supposed to happen to him."

Her husband had long wanted to serve his country. His father, Hector Gutierrez, had served during the Vietnam War. And although David was a great cook who toyed with the idea of opening his own restaurant one day, he had re-enlisted for the third time this fall, promising to serve for another six years for a total of 20 in the Army.

"He was a proud, proud American," Gutierrez said of her husband. Her voice is steady as she speaks of him, but she acknowledges being overcome by waves of unexpected grief — like Monday morning, in the shower.

The two met when he was a bouncer at a now-defunct downtown club called San Jose Live, and he had flirted with her at the door. Two months later, the two jetted off to Las Vegas to marry; her girlfriends had flaked out on a planned trip, and he stepped up so she wouldn't be disappointed.

"He said, 'I want to go with you,' " she said. — 'And if we're going to Vegas, let's get married.' "

They'd already been married two years when David Gutierrez enlisted after leaving City College in 1998. The couple moved a lot: He was assigned to Kentucky, South Korea, Hawaii, Thailand. He served in Iraq in 2004 and 2005. And he was deployed to Afghanistan in July 2009; a two-week vacation with his family was to have begun on Jan. 17.

Away from combat, Gutierrez was someone to be reckoned with on the football field. He joined a community league near his base in Washington state, called the South Sound Shockers football team. His coach, Stephen Matychowiak, praised Gutierrez, a fullback, as a "great teammate and a good person."

"I know people always say what a wonderful guy someone is once they die," he said in a phone interview. "But this guy, I can say that and really mean it. He always brought a smile and his upbeat personality with him. He would get down to business on the football field, but he was a real family man. He was completely in love with his wife."

And his wife was completely in love with him.

Despite the fact that her husband was off for many weeks each year, she felt blessed that she saw him most months before his deployment to Afghanistan. She said while her friends credit her for being a good mother, it was her husband who "made me such a good woman."

"He had his life in the uniform," she said. "But when he came home, he was the patient one, my go-to guy."

When she hit a low point last year after the death of their daughter, Reyna, who had been diagnosed in the womb with a chromosome disorder known as Edward's Disease, Gutierrez remembers being angry and throwing things. It was her husband who helped calm her.

"He just opened his arms and let me fall into them," she said.

"Every time he hugged me, I just felt calm. I would always have to fall asleep with his arms over me."

Soldier From Chicago Killed In Afghanistan

23 December, 2009 Military-World

Thomas Ware said he was furious when he found out his son, Albert, was going to join the military in 2004.

He fought to get his son out of war-torn Liberia to bring him to America.

"Why would I take him from war for him to go back into war?" he said.

But he gradually came to accept it and had a moment of pride when his son came home this summer in between duty in his decorated uniform, buffed up and more disciplined.

"Daddy, I'm a sergeant now," Thomas Ware remembered Albert saying.

Albert Ware, 27, an Army infantryman from Chicago, was killed by an improvised explosive device in Afghanistan on Friday.

The husband and father of three was on his second tour of duty in Afghanistan. "We're proud of him. He made the ultimate sacrifice fighting for our freedom," Thomas Ware said Tuesday at his South Side home.

Thomas Ware immigrated to Chicago from Liberia as an exchange student in 1984. After marrying Anna, he spent two years fighting red tape to get his son out of Liberia. The country was engulfed in a civil war, and there were reports of young boys joining the fight.

Thomas Ware hadn't seen his son since he was 2. When Albert, then a scrawny 12-year-old, got off the plane, chewing gum and clinging to a flight attendant, it was awkward at first.

But they eventually bonded over their mutual love of soccer. As Albert grew, his father made sure that he stayed focused in school and away from gangs.

"I wanted to make up for all the lost time," he said. "We came to be close friends."

Albert Ware loved to cook Liberian food -- Fufu, jollof rice and palm butter. At Corliss High School, he took honors classes and was on the soccer, wrestling and football teams.

Ware attended Chicago State University for a year and transferred to Kennedy-King College before deciding to join the military. He served in the National Guard for 2 1/2 years before joining the Army.

He saw the military as a way to support his wife, Plichette, and children, T'John, 5; Heaven, 4; and Musu, 3. He also had aspirations of becoming an Army Ranger.

"He was a respectable man," said his stepmother, Anna. "He didn't throw a mean word to anyone. He did something with himself. A lot of parents can't say that about their child."

The last time Anna and Thomas Ware talked to Albert was Thursday. "We told him we were proud of him and for him to hurry back," his mother said. "We didn't know it was goodbye."

When the soldiers came late Friday night to tell them about their son's death, Thomas shattered his front window with his fist.

"You see it on the news, and you pray that they don't come to knock on your door," he said. "Now we're that family. It becomes real."

He also is survived by a sister, Ciatta. Funeral arrangements have not been made.

Taliban Making “Almost Undetectable” IEDs Out Of Wood:

Brigade Commander Says “His Troops Were Becoming ‘IED-Shy’, Because Of The Stress Levels Created By This New Generation Of Weapons”

[Thanks to Sandy Kelson, Military Resistance & SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. SSG N (ret'd) writes: “Will our new goal be to destroy all the trees to deprive them of their weapon of choice?”]

10 January 2010 By Andrew Johnson, The Independent [UK]

Taliban fighters have developed a deadly new generation of their most lethal weapon, the improvised explosive device, or IED, which is almost undetectable because it has no metal or electronic parts, military experts said last week.

Chris Hunter, a former bomb disposal expert who served in Iraq and now runs his own consultancy said the new weapons were being manufactured from wood in Pakistan.

IEDs have proved the Taliban's most deadly weapon: three out of five coalition troops killed last year in Afghanistan were victims of the bombs. At least 48 of the 108 British fatalities were caused by IEDs.

Earlier in the war, IEDs would be mostly triggered by two hack-saw blades separated using a spacer. When the blades were stepped on or driven over they would complete an electronic circuit which so detonated the explosive – often an artillery shell.

Mr Hunter added that the metal saw blades have now also been replaced with graphite blades and the artillery shells with ammonium nitrate. The damage is caused by the power of the blast rather than metal fragments, or shrapnel.

The number of IEDs used in Afghanistan has increased by 400 per cent since 2007 and the number of troops killed by them by 400 per cent, and those wounded by 700 per cent according to a report by a US group called Homeland Security Market Research.

One brigade commander posted to Afghanistan said that sniffer dogs were the most reliable way of detecting IEDs, but this method took a long time and required a lot of animals.

Already convoys have to move at very slow speeds while roads ahead are checked for explosives.

He added his troops were becoming "IED-shy", because of the stress levels created by this new generation of weapons.

“The More Soldiers They Send Here, The Worse It Gets”

“The Wakhan Cafe Has Signs That Say: ‘Locked Down! No Problems’ — They Deliver”

Jan 10, 2010 By Todd Pitman, The Associated Press [Excerpts]

KABUL — The man on the motorcycle was going the wrong way down a one-way street, gesturing indignantly for the phalanx of traffic-clogged cars in front of him to move.

“Brother, why are you angry with us?” said a passenger leaning out of one of the vehicles blocking his path. “It’s you who are going the wrong way!”

“I’m not angry at you, I’m angry at Afghanistan,” the man cried back, waving his arm dismissively as he negotiated his bike onto a crowded sidewalk and drove off in a trail of exhaust fumes. “These are sad days.”

The Obama administration is hoping to reverse that trend as an additional 30,000 American and 7,000 NATO troops pour into the conflict in coming months. But “the more soldiers they send here, the worse it gets,” said 19-year-old carpet seller Hamid Hashimi.

And just like 2001, President Hamid Karzai is derided as the “mayor of Kabul” by critics who say his authority doesn’t extend much further than the city limits.

Guerrilla attacks have made even provinces surrounding the capital unsafe. Hashimi said his family owns land in Wardak province, which neighbors the city, but he hasn’t been home in years because the roads are too dangerous.

Alongside billboards advertising modern utilities like BlackBerry smartphones are others hawking armored transport. The local “Scene” magazine includes ads for shops selling bulletproof vests, and most of the people pictured inside its “Party Scene” section are foreign correspondents who came to cover the war.

Downtown, protective blast walls have grown larger outside U.S. and U.N. facilities, and some streets have been closed to public traffic. Helmeted soldiers peek out of sandbagged guard posts at government ministries. Residents like Hashimi cringe whenever they walk past — fearful the offices will be targeted by bombers.

Outside Thai and Indian restaurants in one posh neighborhood, bodyguards in black suits stand in the middle of streets like gangsters, holding small, Uzi-like automatic weapons as officials climb into black SUVs with tinted windows. And when security prevents dining out, the Wakhan cafe has signs that say: “Locked Down! No problems” — they deliver.

The U.S. Congressional Research Service said in a recent report that foreign assistance pledged to Afghanistan since 2001 has topped \$58 billion, about \$38 billion of it from the U.S. alone.

But “what happened to all this money?” said Bashardost. “Has garbage been cleaned up? Have all the streets been paved?”

Many think some of those funds have been diverted to places like the city’s Shirpoor neighborhood, where the powerful clique Washington brought to power eight years ago bulldozed dozens of crumbling mud-brick homes occupied by squatters and divvied the land among cronies.

Residents deride the gaudy mirrored mansions as “poppy palaces” because they are believed to have also been constructed in part with money from the drug trade.

Few believe their owners could have built them with paltry official salaries; they cost hundreds of thousands of dollars and rent for \$20,000 per month.

“We’ve built a lot of buildings,” lawmaker Shukria Barakzai said with a sigh at a recent government ceremony commemorating the deaths of thousands of Afghan police and soldiers.

“But we’ve lost a lot of hope.”

REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: ALL HOME NOW



U.S. Marines from 3rd Battalion 4th Marines, patrol in the small town of Delaram in Nimroz province, southern Afghanistan January 6, 2010. REUTERS/Marko Djurica

TROOP NEWS

**NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



Essex Junction, Vt., Friday, Jan. 8, 2010. Two hundred more Afghanistan-bound troops from the Vermont National Guard are shipping out. They are members of a special training unit of the 86th Infantry Brigade Combat Team based in Rutland. (AP Photo/Toby Talbot)

**U. S. Government Accused Of
Refusing To Share “The Latest
Technology It Uses Against Roadside
Bombs”**

**U.S. General Says “UK And Other
Coalition Forces Have Been Denied
Information That Could Save Lives”**

January 11, 2010 The Mail [UK]

The United States was accused last night of refusing to share with Britain the latest technology it uses against roadside bombs which have killed scores of Allied troops in Afghanistan.

U.S. Army Lt. Gen. Thomas Metz, who retired last week as the chief officer specialising in countermeasures against the attacks, claims the UK and other Coalition forces have been denied information that could save lives.

Metz has urged the Pentagon to share top-secret methods used by U.S. forces to detect the so-called Improvised Explosive Devices and the terror networks which build them.

IEDs kill more Coalition forces than any other weapon used in Afghanistan.

The officer said IEDs were often located using unmanned drone aircraft equipped with sensors to detect where ground has been disturbed to bury explosives.

It is understood Britain does not possess this technology.

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.**

Comfortably Numb In America



From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance

Sent: January 09, 2010
Subject: Comfortably Numb In America

Comfortably Numb In America

"When I was a child I caught a fleeting glimpse out of the corner of my eye.
I turned to look, but it was gone, I cannot put my finger on it now. The child
has grown, the dream is gone. I have become comfortably numb."
Pink Floyd
The Wall

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 Then Solomon Islands
Government Was Harboring Illusions
Of Independence”
“Such Illusions Were And Are
Unacceptable To Australian
Governments, Indeed To The Australian
Ruling Class”**

From: Max Watts, Australian Correspondent, Military Resistance
To: Military Resistance
Sent: December 27, 2009
Subject: ONCE AGAIN: THE HONIARA CONNECTION AND THE MARCUS-MOTI-
SOGEVARA AFFAIRES

**[From Max Watts, who began helping GIs resisting the Vietnam War in the 1960's,
and has never stopped helping soldiers resisting Imperial wars.]**

December 2009

Three years and four months ago I wrote a story about THE HONIARA CONNECTION AND THE MARCUS-MOTI AFFAIRES - subtitle: RENEWED AUSTRALIAN FLAG IMPERIALISM IN THE SOLOMON ISLANDS (1)

It was, I'd say, a good, interesting, story. (I would say that, wouldn't I?)

The Essential of that story was that the then Solomon Islands government, headed by one Manasseh SOGEVARA (Soggi for short) was harboring illusions of independence.

Such illusions were and are unacceptable to Australian governments, indeed to the Australian ruling class.

If not nipped early on, such illusions endanger Australian neo-colonialism, "Dollar Imperialism", which has replaced the classic "Flag Imperialism" in the former colonies of most Imperialist Powers. Including Australia.

The Sogevara government had to got, got rid of, but unfortunately the Prime Minister Sogevara would not go quietly.

Despite the beneficial occupation of his country by "RAMSI" (mostly Australian) troops he resisted. In various, complex, ways.

He wins the elections, and when his electoral victory is disallowed, his supporters demonstrate in the capital, Honiara.

The RAMSI (Australian) troops fire, mostly, it is true, tear gas, but enough to turn demonstration into a riot, an anti-Chinese pogrom. (There are no, or too few, Jews, in the Solomons for pogromming, so the Chinese will have to do, take their place).

Although the RAMSI/Australians jails two pro-Sogevara members of parliament, Soggi wins a thin majority, becomes Prime Minister, and forms his new, quite independentist, government. Soggi wanted to investigate the riots, the Australian role in the riots.

He asked his proposed Attorney-General, Julian Moti, for advice, and Moti suggests a commission headed by an Australian, unprejudiced, a recently retired judge, known for his human rights records. Pro-Aboriginal, even - though Jewish - pro-Palestinian. Marcus Einfeld.

Einfeld accepts the job, comes to Honiara, set up the commission. He returns to Sydney on a Friday, and - so a very good, inside, source, - on the following Monday "they tipped the dirt bucket over him."

Just to show what is what, and who is boss, Julian Moti is arrested in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea, by Australian police.

But Motie skeddadles to the Solomons on a PNG military plane. PNG Prime Minister Somare, already affected by the independence virus, has disobeyed Canberra. So does Solomons PM Sogevara, who continues to harbor, support and accept Julian Moti.

PM Soggy is even nasty to Australian High Commissioner to the Solomons (Patrick) Cole, whom he accuses of trying to overthrow his, Soggy's, government and interfering in Solomonian politics. PM Soggy expels the Australian High Commissioner. Oz (then) PM Howard spits tacks, says he will not accept such a formal expulsion.

We note that the Einfeld story now really takes off. Einfeld's Honiara inquiry Commission is strongly dissed (denounced) by Howard and then Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer, who says Einfeld is only there to ease the pressure on two Soggy "henchmen".

Einfeld is declared as already "disgraced" by then Australian Prime Minister John Howard. There has been no Einfeld trial yet, nor has the Honiara commission really started enquiring. But Howard and Downer link Moti, Einfeld, Moti, and Soggevara well in advance of any trial or enquiry. These three are to be "got". Got rid of.

For a while all this getting goes as well as expected.

Einfeld, facing a traffic-offense perjury trial, resigns from the Enquiry, which runs dead. Soggy finally loses his parliamentary majority and, despite multiple manoeuvres, the Prime Ministership. Government. The new, pro-Australian, Solomons government immediately fires Attorney General, Moti, and in a series of complex moves sends Julian to Australia, where he is immediately arrested in Brisbane for allegedly having sex with a then 13 year old girl in Vanuatu in 1997.

For a while it looks like Moti, unemployed, facing a complex trial, will probably going to join Einfeld in (well, a different state) slammer.

Einfeld, Moti, and Soggy have been "got". Got rid of. Order reigns, and we should not hear any more about these matters.

But a fly falls into the ointment.

A Queensland Supreme Court Judge, a Ms. Debra Mullins, sees nothing of import or sub-judice in the various Howard-Downer et al. politics and declarations linking Moti to Einfeld and Soggevara, but she does get annoyed when she finds out that the Australian Federal Police had been paying \$ 67,576.26 to Moti's "alleged victim" plus \$ 81,639.25 to her parents and brother - just because the (female) alleged victim of Motis' alleged rape in 1997 has "threatened" to withdraw her charges...

This is the kind of thing, paying prosecution witnesses to come and testify, the Police and governments do, but should not be seen doing. Judge Mullins is upset, and dismisses the charges against Moti. (201) He remains broke, unemployable, but he - lucky Moti, a senior lawyer says to me - will not be going to jail.

Soggy has not, like Allende, been shot, he has only lost his government and remains as leader of the opposition in parliament.

Only Marcus Einfeld remains in jail. That should teach him to inquire into riots in Honiara ! Or have dead women drive his car. (201)

nb tres bene: Don't try to tell this story to your friends, acquaintances or country-men.

They will switch to the more newsworthy Tiger Woods, who apparently has neither had sex with minors nor opposed any new or old Imperialism.

People don't want to hear about Moti, Einfeld, Sogevara. Those stories fill them with "abscheu", or Ekel. Good German for: Disgust.

(11) if anyone needs more precisions, em to rosiek@bigpond.com

(201) Some Maxist thoughts about the Einfeld-Moti-Sogevara "case":

a/ Progress is a double-edged sword: Once upon a time there were no women judges, no government spokespersons, nor - as in our Ally, Saudi Arabia, no women drivers.

If only women had not been allowed to become judges! Ms. Debra Mullins could not - from the Brisbane, Queensland, Supreme Court - throw out the sex charges against Julian Moti just because the Australian Federal Police had been paying \$ 67,576.26 to his "alleged victim" plus \$ 81,639.25 to her parents and brother - after the (female) alleged victim threatened to withdraw her charges... (these charges had already been dismissed in August 1999 in Vanuatu).

b/ If only.... women driving were not permitted in Florida, or Australia ! Marcus Einfeld would hardly have said that Ms Teresa Brennan was driving his car three years after her death, when he was booked for speeding in Sydney.

c/ And if Ms Deli Osa had not, for a while, been spokesperson for Soggy in Honiaray, she would not have been able to send me almost daily bulletins from government house in Honiara! I would not have been able to follow the downfall of the Sogevara government, step by step. Of course, once Soggy had fallen, Deli went silent and I no longer receive these fascinating details of how the Solomons once again became "wise" and did what Canberra told them...

(202) a/ Few of the many Australians who followed Einfeld's deboires with his traffic ticket would have been able to read my 2006 article. Australians were not "allowed" to see it. My various editors all loved it, but pointed out that it included much that was, then, "sub judice" and that they could not afford a law suit... and would, sorry, unfortunately, not be able to run it. Only my courageous radio station 3 CR did go with it...

b/ The story did run, almost uncut, in the Honiara Islands Sun. But Honiara, which is on Guadalcanal Island in the Solomons, is far away. In Australia, as in most Bourgeois (Capitalist) Democracies, you may often say what you want as long as no one, or only a few, hear you.

(203) Einfeld, I guess, will stay in jail.

His case, I am told partout (all over), has nothing to do with politics, only with driving, women, perjury. Any attempt at discussing this case brings out Abscheu and Ekel, i.e. disgust at his dishonesty. (stupidity? mental breakdown?) Some lawyers tell me that like Caesar's wife Judges should stay above suspicion, that they never did like him, that "he lied". A judge!!! (Max thinks: I have never met a judge who does not lie, who could be a judge if s/he told the truth... Max thinks of the Dred Scott case (look it up, if interested!) or the German Supreme Court Judge who told him that of course he once condemned a Belgian worker to death (by beheading) for stealing a bicycle - in 1942 - but if it was law then it was legal.)

Moti will stay unemployed, in any case not an Attorney General. He may sue the Australian? what? Murdoch Paper, government? Federal Police? Howard/Downer for? their subjudice? comments - which they ran big way before any Einfeld or Moti trials.

If mentioned the case, the police bribery, is mentioned, people speak of Tiger Woods. (with abscheu and ekel, the turning away, the disgust).

Sogevara should thank his stars that Downer is not Kissinger, nor Howard Nixon. Not that they are nicer, but they for sure are smaller. Allende was got, dead. Soggy so far remains alive, heading the Solomons opposition in Parliament.

And I may yet try and run this story even in Australia.

(301) MAXISMS:

A/ IF IT'S IN THE PAPERS, IT MAY BE TRUE

B/ IN A CAPITALIST DEMOCRACY YOU CAN almost SAY WHAT YOU WANT, AS LONG AS NO ONE HEARS YOU.

C/ FREEDOM OF THE PRESS: YOU CAN PRINT WHAT YOU WANT, IN YOUR OWN NEWSPAPER. (IF YOU DON'T OWN ONE, TOUGH TITTIES).

D/ NORMALLY THE RULING CLASS(ES) RULE.

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/)

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

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

RECEIVED

“Join Us As We Sail Together To Gaza This Spring!” [Free Gaza Movement News]

From: Ewa Jasiewicz
To: Military Resistance
Sent: January 11, 2010
Subject: Free Gaza Movement News: 'We're Sailing Again - Join Us!'

This spring, the Free Gaza Movement is sending at least six boats to Gaza to break Israel's illegal blockade on 1.5 million Palestinians. This blockade constitutes an act of collective punishment, a crime prohibited under international humanitarian law. Gaza's man-made and internationally perpetuated crisis is set to deepen as Egypt builds an Iron wall 30 meters deep and 20 meters high on the southern Rafah border, closing off the final route for Palestinians to get basic supplies.

The urgency of breaking the blockade grows by the day, as Palestinians living in this prison are denied their most basic rights.

Our mission will include two boats committed by a Turkish NGO plus a cargo ship purchased with donations from the Malaysian people. This ship will be loaded with cement, water filtration systems and paper - all essential reconstruction materials denied entry to Gaza by Israel.

Free Gaza's missions were the first to challenge Israel's hermetic closing of Gaza when we sailed two small boats into Gaza in August 2008. We did not ask permission of Israel or Egypt to travel to Gaza and sailed directly from international waters into the waters of Gaza. Since then, we have been the catalyst for a growing international movement of civilian advocates, including the Gaza Freedom March and Viva Palestina.

Of course we will face Israel's illegal naval blockade. But we have broken through it before and we will do it again. We are writing to ask you to make sure the mission is funded and publicized.

We sailed four more successful missions to Gaza since August 2008, and we intend to come back this year with a small flotilla, so you still have time to get boats and come with us. We are calling on all NGOs, human rights organizations and communities around the world to join us. If you already have funding for boats, we can provide the logistical and technical advice on how get them ready to join the flotilla. If you want to help in other ways, we have listed five below.

Fundraise for this trip. Consider organizing a big or small fundraiser in your community. We already have people available to speak at your events.

<http://www.freegaza.org/en/join-in/speaker-bureau>. Friends returning from the Gaza Freedom March, or the Viva Palestina convoy can be especially helpful by turning report backs into fundraisers.

Get your community involved and turn this flotilla into a global effort. Our boats will carry building supplies and school supplies, both banned by Israeli authorities. Contribute by donating paper, ink or books for our Right to Read campaign: <http://www.freegaza.org/right-to-read>. If you can donate reconstruction supplies, please contact us. Get your children and their schools involved by having them write letters to children in Gaza that we will carry on our boats and deliver.

Publicize the trip. Once we have announced the date, help us get the message out to the media and to your elected officials to assure the passengers and boats will sail safely.

Ask your Member of Parliament/Congress to come with us. We already have MPs from South America, South Africa, Malaysia, Turkey and Europe who are going. If you have contacts with other high profile people, please let us know.

Volunteer as land crew, media or support crew in your countries.

To help, organize a fundraiser, suggest passengers and offer support, please email us at friends@freegaza.org, and we will follow up immediately. We have only two to three months to finish organizing, raise the additional funds, and to set sail.

Join us as we sail together to Gaza this spring!

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

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

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