

# CURRENT NEWS

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## EARLY BIRD

May 28, 2012

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### PANETTA INTERVIEW

1. **Interview With Defense Secretary Panetta**

(ABC)....Jake Tapper

This Memorial Day weekend, as the country pays tribute to its fallen heroes, we also remember that, for the the eleventh consecutive Memorial Day, we are a nation at war, with 88,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines fighting in Afghanistan and countless others monitoring hot spots around the globe: on warships in the Persian Gulf amidst the nuclear standoff with Iran; down the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen, as al-Qaida continues to threaten to attack the U.S. homeland; in Pakistan, where tensions with our supposed ally continue to mount; and from the South China Sea, as the world's largest nation, China, seeks to build its military might. And to talk about all of this, let's bring in our exclusive headliner, the secretary of defense, Leon Panetta. Secretary Panetta, welcome back to "This Week."

2. **Panetta: Cuts To Defense Spending Would Be 'Disastrous'**

(Los Angeles Times)....Kim Geiger

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta warned Sunday that it would be "disastrous" for Congress to allow cuts in defense spending to take place as scheduled in January.

3. **Looming Cuts Would Be 'Disastrous'**

(Washington Times)....Sean Lengell

..."I think what both Republicans and Democrats need to do, and the leaders of both sides, is to recognize that if sequester takes place, it would be disastrous for our national defense, and very frankly, for a lot of very important domestic programs," Mr. Panetta said on ABC's "This Week."

4. **Panetta Vows 'Enduring Presence' In Afghanistan**

(Washington Post)....Nia-Malika Henderson

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said in an interview broadcast Sunday that the United States would have an enduring presence in Afghanistan after 2014, when there will be a major troop drawdown.

5. **Panetta: U.S. On 'Right Track' In Afghanistan**

(ArmyTimes.com)....Associated Press

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta on Sunday defended the Obama administration's plans to wind down the more than decade-long war in Afghanistan, saying the U.S. is on "the right track."

6. **NATO Has Fight On Its Hands In Afghanistan: Panetta**

(Reuters.com)....Lesley Wroughton, Reuters

NATO forces still have a fight on their hands in Afghanistan, where the Taliban has displayed resilience although its fighters have not regained territory they lost during the decade-long war, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said on Sunday.

7. **Leon Panetta Dismisses Romney's Afghanistan Criticism**  
(ABCNews.com)....Jake Tapper  
Defense Secretary Leon Panetta dismissed presumptive Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney's criticism of President Obama's Afghanistan strategy, saying it is appropriate for the U.S. to set a date certain for ending military operations in the country at the end of 2014.
8. **Doctor Jailing Won't Help U.S. And Pakistan, Panetta Says**  
(Bloomberg.com)....Jeff Plungis, Bloomberg News  
Pakistan's imposition of a 33-year prison term on a doctor who aided the U.S. in the hunt for Osama bin Laden won't help to re-establish normal relations with the U.S., Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said.
9. **US Will Not Be Price 'Gouged' By Pakistan: Panetta**  
(Yahoo.com)....Agence France-Presse  
US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta vowed Sunday not to let the United States be "gouged" by Pakistan on the price it charges for overland deliveries of American military supplies to Afghanistan.
10. **Panetta Says No Need For US Boots In Yemen**  
(Yahoo.com)....Agence France-Presse  
The United States can deal with Al-Qaeda's spreading presence in Yemen without US forces on the ground, relying instead on targeted operations, US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said Sunday.
11. **Panetta Says Military Option Against Iran Is Now Ready**  
(Jerusalem Post)....Yoni Dayan  
The military option against Iran is available if needed, US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta said on Sunday in an interview with ABC News' This Week.
12. **Asked To Confirm Military Is Ready For Iran Strike, Panetta Says Pentagon Has Plans For Everything**  
(ABCNews.com)....Jake Tapper  
During an interview for "This Week," Defense Secretary Leon Panetta assured me that the United States has readied plans to carry out a military strike on Iran to prevent the regime from obtaining nuclear weapons if diplomacy fails to dissuade the country from its current path.

## AFGHANISTAN

13. **Inquiry Ordered Into Deaths Of Afghan Family**  
(New York Times)....Alissa J. Rubin and Rod Nordland  
Both President Hamid Karzai and NATO commanders ordered an investigation on Sunday into reports that a family of eight had been killed in a coalition airstrike in eastern Afghanistan.
14. **NATO Disputes Afghans' Claim Of 8 Civilian Deaths**  
(Washington Post)....Associated Press  
...Separately, NATO reported that three coalition service members were killed Sunday in eastern Afghanistan--two during an insurgent attack and one in a roadside bombing. Four others, including a British soldier, were killed in the south Saturday, bringing to 169 the number of NATO deaths in Afghanistan this year.
15. **Risk Of Electrocution**  
(Marine Corps Times)....Dan Lamothe and Gidget Fuentes  
At least four Marines have been electrocuted in Afghanistan since November, highlighting another hazard for ground forces fighting in Helmand province.
16. **Afghanistan: The Taliban's High-Tech Urban Strategy**  
(Newsweek)....Ron Moreau and Sami Yousafzai  
The guerrillas use teams of young techies to attack Afghan cities.

## MIDEAST

17. **U.S. Diplomats Among Targets Of Iran-Linked Plot**

(*Washington Post*)....Joby Warrick

In November, the tide of daily cable traffic to the U.S. Embassy in Azerbaijan brought a chilling message for Ambassador Matthew Bryza, then the top U.S. diplomat to the small Central Asian country. A plot to kill Americans had been uncovered, the message read, and embassy officials were on the target list.

18. **After Talks Falter, Iran Says It Won't Halt Uranium Work**

(*New York Times*)....Thomas Erdbrink

Iran's nuclear chief, reversing the country's previous statements, said on state television on Sunday that the country would not halt its production of higher-grade uranium, suggesting that the Iranian government was veering back to a much harder line after talks in Baghdad with the West last week ended badly.

19. **U.N. Council Condemns Syria In Massacre Of 116**

(*Washington Post*)....Liz Sly and Colum Lynch

The U.N. Security Council on Sunday blamed the Syrian government for most of the deaths in a massacre of 116 civilians in the village of Houla, issuing a unanimous statement condemning the killings that was supported by Syria's staunch allies Russia and China.

## PAKISTAN

20. **Frustrations Grow As U.S. And Pakistan Fail To Mend Ties**

(*New York Times*)....Steven Lee Myers and Eric Schmitt

...The failed diplomacy of the last week highlighted the inability of both countries to repair a relationship that was badly frayed by the secret raid that killed Bin Laden in May of last year and then was nearly ruptured by the NATO attack in November. It has raised questions over whether even a more limited security relationship between the two countries is even possible.

21. **Pakistan's Power Crisis Enrages 'Shattered' Populace**

(*Washington Post*)....Richard Leiby

Some say daily blackouts may pose a greater threat to stability than militants do.

## MEMORIAL DAY

22. **Father Of Prisoner Of War Speaks At Annual Rally**

(*MiamiHerald.com*)....Stacy A. Anderson, Associated Press

The father of a U.S. soldier who was taken prisoner in Afghanistan thanked the motorcycle riders of Rolling Thunder on Sunday for raising awareness of missing-in-action troops and prisoners of war.

23. **'Until They Take Care Of Everybody'**

(*Washington Times*)....David Hill

...About 2,500 riders participated in the first ride, using their roaring engines as a way to grab the attention of U.S. officials. It would be an understatement to say the event has grown since then.

24. **Virginia Beach Church Pays Tribute To Fallen Troops**

(*Norfolk Virginian-Pilot*)....Hattie Brown Garrow

On the lawn of Eastern Shore Chapel Episcopal Church, a field of American flags waved in the wind, as if saying hello to the cars zooming past on Laskin Road.

25. **Memorial Day: Gold Stars, Taps**

(*Chicago Tribune*)....John Byrne

CIA's Petraeus feels 'nothing short of awe' for U.S. troops.

26. **New Heroes, Fresh Heartbreak**

(*Newport News Daily Press*)....Tom Philpott

Even as the war in Afghanistan is featured less often on evening newscasts or front pages of our newspapers, Americans still involved in the fight continue to die there, deepening the pool of Memorial Day remembrances with new heroes and fresh heartbreak.

## DEFENSE DEPARTMENT

### 27. DoD's Next Crisis: Excess Inventory

*(Defense News)*....Zachary Fryer-Biggs

With billions of dollars in excess inventory stuffed in warehouses, and a flood of items expected to return from Afghanistan in the near future, the U.S. Defense Department is facing an inventory crisis without an easy way to eliminate extra items, a former director of the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) said.

### 28. Gays Graduate Openly At Military Academies

*(ArmyTimes.com)*....Brian Witte, Associated Press

Gay students at America's military service academies are wrapping up the first year when they no longer had to hide their sexual orientation, benefiting from the end of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that used to bar them from seemingly ordinary activities like taking their partners openly to graduation events.

## ARMY

### 29. West Point Is Divided On A War Doctrine's Fate

*(New York Times)*....Elisabeth Bumiller

...Now at another critical moment in American military history, the faculty here on the commanding bend in the Hudson River is deep in its own existential debate. Narrowly, the argument is whether the counterinsurgency strategy used in Iraq and Afghanistan--the troop-heavy, time-intensive, expensive doctrine of trying to win over the locals by building roads, schools and government--is dead. Broadly, the question is what the United States gained after a decade in two wars.

## MARINE CORPS

### 30. When The Tragedy Of Two Marines Killed In A Crash Becomes A Nightmare

*(TheDailyBeast.com)*....Miranda Green

...Twelve years after their husbands died piloting a flawed plane, two widows are fighting to clear their names. Miranda Green on why the Marines won't budge.

## AIR FORCE

### 31. First Female Fighter Pilot To Lead Wing

*(Air Force Times)*....Kristin Davis

The first U.S. woman fighter pilot is set to become the first woman to command an Air Force fighter wing.

## ASIA/PACIFIC

### 32. Dozens Of N. Korea Officials Dead: Report

*(New York Daily News)*....Tina Moore

Thirty North Korean officials involved in talks with South Korea have been executed or died in "staged traffic accidents," according to a shocking new report.

### 33. Budget Axe Risks Survival Of Defence Contractors, Threatens Innovation

*(The Australian)*....Brendan Nicholson

AS many as half of the 3000 small and medium-sized local companies that provide equipment for the Australian Defence Force are at risk of collapse because of budget cuts and delays to projects.

## MEDAL OF HONOR



34. **They Earned It**  
(*Army Times*)....Michelle Tan  
The selfless actions of at least 10 troops show they deserve the award they've been denied: the Medal of Honor.
35. **Long Battle To Get Civil War Officer Medal Of Honor In Its Final Charge**  
(*Washington Times*)....Stephen Dinan  
When the House this month voted to waive the time constraints on issuing the Medal of Honor for Lt. Alonzo Cushing, it brought the artillery officer and hero of the Union stand at Pickett's Charge one step closer to the military's highest honor--though in the eyes of his supporters, it's 149 years late.

## EDUCATION

36. **Discovering A Way To Serve**  
(*Washington Post*)....Daniel de Vise  
Bob Nobles and Cornell Wright might not have a chance to serve their country when they are adults. No matter: They are serving it now.

## VETERANS

37. **New Jobs Program Targets Older Vets**  
(*Washington Post*)....Steve Vogel  
For Cheryl Blackburn, an Army veteran who lost her job as a leasing consultant in March, the search for new employment has been frustrating.
38. **Veterans' New Fight: Reviving Inner-City America**  
(*Christian Science Monitor (csmonitor.com)*)....Mary Wiltenburg  
How some veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are helping turn around a drug-infested neighborhood of Baltimore – and themselves.
39. **Historic Rate Of Veterans Seek Disability**  
(*Norfolk Virginian-Pilot (pilotonline.com)*)....Marilynn Marchione, Associated Press  
America's newest veterans are filing for disability benefits at a historic rate, claiming to be the most medically and mentally troubled generation of former troops the nation has ever seen.
40. **In Memory Day Honors Vietnam Veterans Absent From Famous Wall**  
(*Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*)....Torsten Ove  
The Vietnam War is a bad and fading memory, but it's still claiming victims. Jim Brahney, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel from McCandless, was among them.
41. **Homeless, Not Helpless**  
(*Washington Post*)....Annie Gowen  
Four years ago, Veronica Witherspoon was stationed in Baghdad, enduring roiling sandstorms and nearly daily rocket fire as she worked as a Navy petty officer at Camp Victory.

## BOOKS

42. **Drones: How Obama Learned To Kill**  
(*Newsweek*)....Daniel Klaidman  
The Obama campaign touts a commander in chief who never flinches, but the truth is more complex. In an excerpt from his new book, *Kill or Capture: The War on Terror and the Soul of the Obama Presidency*, Daniel Klaidman reveals:

## COMMENTARY

43. **The V.A.'s Shameful Betrayal**

(*New York Times*)....Mike Scotti

...While the schedulers played games with the numbers, veterans were dealing with mental wounds so serious that getting proper attention at the right time might have made the difference between life and death. Even worse was that the V.A. had failed twice before to change; the inspector general found similar problems in 2005 and in 2007. This suggests a systematic misrepresentation of data and an unwillingness to stop it.

44. **How To House Homeless Vets**

(*Los Angeles Times*)....Bobby Shriver

Three years into President Obama's administration, the Los Angeles area has the highest reported number of homeless veterans in the nation. It's time to do something.

45. **Michael Ware On The Things War Makes You See**

(*Newsweek*)....Michael Ware

As thousands of veterans return, one reporter faces the abyss -- and survives.

46. **Al Qaeda's 'Final Trap' In Yemen: Costly Demise Planned For U.S.**

(*TheDailyBeast.com*)....Bruce Riedel

Al Qaeda's attack on Yemen's capital, Sana, this week is a graphic demonstration that its franchise in Arabia is getting more dangerous, benefiting from the weakness of the Yemeni state.

47. **Present Policy Is Producing No Results**

(*China Daily*)....Ted Galen Carpenter

US leaders have painted themselves into a corner regarding policy toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

48. **A Defense Posture We Can Afford**

(*Weekly Standard*)....Stuart Koehl

Strategy should drive procurement.

49. **Soldiers Deserve More Scrutiny Of Effects Of Brain Traumas**

(*Boston Globe*)....Editorial

...Two recent announcements mark an important shift in how the government identifies, treats, and prevents brain injuries sustained in war.

50. **Give Heroes Their Due When They've Earned It**

(*Army Times*)....Editorial

From its inception in 1861 through the Vietnam War, the Medal of Honor was awarded in wartime at a rate of 2.3 to 2.9 per 100,000 troops on active duty. But since 9/11, that rate is down to just one Medal of Honor for every 100,000 troops.

51. **Cleaner Energy**

(*New York Times*)....Editorial

...Some of the Republican opposition to federal support reflects budgetary concerns, some an unwillingness to do anything that could challenge the dominance of fossil fuels. Some if it is inexplicable.

## COMMENTARY -- MEMORIAL DAY

52. **Honoring The Exchange Of Life For Life**

(*At War (NYTimes.com)*)....Alex Horton

...Memorial Day for those of us who have fought is not simply a broad recognition of the sacrifices rendered by the dead, but an understanding of the exchange of life for life.

53. **They Fought Like Hell -- So He Could Fight Like Hell For His Country**

(*New York Daily News*)....Arthur Browne

A Memorial Day tribute to a heroic World War I soldier and his unit.

54. **Empty WWII Grave Holds A Story That Now Has Ending***(Chicago Tribune)*....John Kass

There are many graves at St. Casimir Cemetery on the Far South Side of Chicago, and one belongs to Emil Wasilewski.

55. **Honoring Valor Of 2 Buds From Same Hood***(New York Daily News)*....Denis Hamill

Remember these two men this Memorial Day. They were born during World War II and grew up in Woodside, Queens, where they were in the same kindergarten class at Public School 76. They would later both serve in Vietnam, the war that defined their generation.

56. **The Patriotism Of Sacrifice***(Boston Globe)*....Roland Merullo

If Memorial Day is about anything, it's about sacrifice. Originally conceived as a day on which to remember Americans who died in battle, the holiday memorializes those who risked every individual hope and joy for the sake of the greater good.

57. **Memorial Day***(Washington Post)*....Editorial

Remembering the casualties: those who died and those who bore scars seen and unseen.

58. **This Memorial Day***(New York Times)*....Editorial

There was a time, not so long ago, when Memorial Day, and the knowledge that school would soon be ending, was the dock from which we looked out upon the sea of summer.

59. **'A Free And Undivided Republic'***(Miami Herald)*....Editorial

Memorial Day honors our war dead, military veterans who paid the ultimate price to secure our nation's freedom.

## CORRECTIONS

60. **Corrections***(New York Times)*....The New York Times

An obituary on Friday about Wesley A. Brown, the first black graduate of the United States Naval Academy, referred incorrectly to Mr. Brown and other students at the academy. They are called midshipmen, not cadets. (Students at the United States Military Academy at West Point are cadets.)

ABC

May 27, 2012

## 1. Interview With Defense Secretary Panetta

**This Week On ABC,  
10:30 A.M.**

**JAKE TAPPER:** Good morning, everyone. George Stephanopoulos has a well-deserved morning off.

This Memorial Day weekend, as the country pays tribute to its fallen heroes, we also remember that, for the the eleventh consecutive Memorial Day, we are a nation at war, with 88,000 soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines fighting in Afghanistan and countless others monitoring hot spots around the globe: on warships in the Persian Gulf amidst the nuclear standoff with Iran; down the Arabian Peninsula in Yemen, as al-Qaida continues to threaten to attack the U.S. homeland; in Pakistan, where tensions with our supposed ally continue to mount; and from the South China Sea, as the world's largest nation, China, seeks to build its military might.

And to talk about all of this, let's bring in our exclusive headliner, the secretary of defense, Leon Panetta. Secretary Panetta, welcome back to "This Week."

**DEFENSE SECRETARY PANETTA:** Nice to be with you, Jake.

**TAPPER:** So I want to get to some specifics in a moment, but before I do, just broadly speaking, in this era of terrorist threats -- nonstop terrorist threats -- as a former director of the CIA and the current secretary of defense, what is it like having this responsibility? How often does a terrifying message come on your desk about some threat and you just think, oh, my god?

**PANETTA:** Well, you don't get a hell of a lot of sleep. Let's put it that way. (Chuckles.)

There are a lot of challenges. You know, as director of the CIA, you've got an awful lot of intelligence about all the horrible things that can go on across the world.

In this job, I get the same intelligence, but I'm responsible for a lot of the operations dealing with those threats. And you know, it's a much bigger place than it was at the CIA. We've got 3 million people. But I have -- probably the greatest strength of our country is men and women in uniform that serve this country and put their lives on the line. And that's something I get to see up close, and I'm very proud of them and proud of what they do.

**TAPPER:** So turning to Afghanistan, which might be one of the biggest challenges, definitely one of the biggest challenges that the nation faces right now and you face, at the NATO summit President Obama and the administration made it clear that the combat mission ends come midnight December 31st, 2014.

But the chairs of the Senate and House Intelligence Committees just returned from Afghanistan, and they say that from their briefings there, they believe the Taliban is actually stronger now than since the surge began. Do we have a plan in place in case, after the U.S. combat mission ends, Afghanistan or parts of it start falling to the Taliban?

**PANETTA:** Well, the most important point is that we're not going anywhere. We're going to -- we have an enduring presence that will be in Afghanistan. We'll continue to work with them on counterterrorism. We'll continue to provide training, assistance, guidance. We'll continue to provide support.

We are making good progress. I mean, the Taliban -- my view is that they have been weakened. We have not seen

them able to conduct any kind of organized attack to regain any territory that they've lost. We've seen the levels of violence going down. We've seen an Afghan army that is much more capable at providing security. We've seen transitions take place where we're beginning to transition. Now we're at about 50 percent of their population that's been transitioned to their control. We're going to be at 75 percent --

**TAPPER:** Right. Mr. Secretary --

**PANETTA:** So we're on the right track.

**TAPPER:** But you're not naive. I mean, there are problems with the Afghan forces and you -- the military's always planning for a worst-case scenario. I'm assuming there is some sort of plan just in case the residual forces left there are not enough.

**PANETTA:** Listen, we still have a fight on our hands. The American people need to know that. The world needs to know that we still have a fight on our hands. We're still dealing with the Taliban. Although they've been weakened, they are resilient.

We have the concern about the safe haven in Pakistan, the fact that they can seek refuge in that safe haven. That's a -- that's a concern. And we have continuing concerns about the level of corruption in Afghan society.

But we're on the right track. General Allen has laid out a plan that moves us in the direction of an Afghanistan that can truly govern and secure itself. And that is going to be our greatest safeguard to the potential of the Taliban ever coming back.

**TAPPER:** At the NATO summit in Chicago, General Allen, who is the commander of the NATO alliance troops there, ISAF troops, provided a briefing. And he was asked

about the so-called green-on-blue attacks -- Afghan army, Afghan police forces attacking U.S. forces -- and this was his response. I want to get your reactions.

**GEN. JOHN ALLEN** (Commander, U.S. Forces Afghanistan): (From video.) There's a good-news story here. That is that the Afghans have arrested more than 160 individuals in the last several months that they believe could have been in the throes of planning for an attack on ISAF forces. So the process is working.

**TAPPER:** That does not seem like a good-news story to me, that there are 160 Afghan security forces that were considered to be threats. That seems like a lot.

**PANETTA:** Well, you know, as General Allen pointed out, you know, we are making progress on that front.

It is a concern. Of course it's a concern. It's the kind of thing that the Taliban will use to come at our forces. And it's an indication again that because they can't organize efforts to come at us, they're going to use this kind of tactic to try to frighten us.

And it's not going to work, for several reasons. Number one, the Afghan army has put into place a very thorough effort to review those that, you know, are serving.

Secondly, our forces are going to be vigilant as well in terms of how they operate, to make sure that they watch their backs as we go through this process.

And thirdly, I think overall what we're seeing is the basic training that's going into the Afghan army is one that truly is testing the qualifications and quality of individuals that are going to be fighting on behalf of Afghanistan.



TAPPER: Mitt Romney has had this to say about the president's Afghan strategy and the date certain.

MITT ROMNEY (R): (From video.) I mean, you just scratch you head and say, how can you be so misguided and so naive? His secretary of defense said that on a date certain, the middle of 2013, we're going to pull out our combat troops from Afghanistan. Why in the world do you go to the people that you're fighting with and tell them the day you're pulling out your troops?

TAPPER: You know, first of all, there's a factual error that Mr. Romney made that I'm sure you want to correct. But the larger point about getting a date certain for the withdrawal or the end of the combat mission, could you address that as well after you correct that?

PANETTA: (Chuckles.) Well, okay. I think, you know, without getting into the campaign rhetoric of what he's asserting, I think you've got 50 nations in NATO that agreed to a plan in Afghanistan. It's the Lisbon Agreement, an agreement that, you know, others, President Bush, President Obama, everyone has agreed is the direction that we go in in Afghanistan.

What is that direction? It's to take us to a point where we draw down by the end in 2014. That is the plan that has been agreed to, and it's a plan that is working.

And, very frankly, the only way you get this accomplished in terms of the transition that we have to go through is to be able to set the kind of timelines that have been set here in order to ensure that we fulfill the mission of an Afghanistan that governs and secures itself. That's what this is about.

TAPPER: You mentioned Pakistan just a minute ago. This week, the Pakistani doctor

who helped the U.S. find bin Laden was sentenced to 33 years in prison by the Pakistan government. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton says the arrest was unwarranted. Congress has proposed cutting aid to Pakistan by \$33 million, \$1 million for each year of his sentence. Realistically, is there anything that the U.S. can do to help this doctor? It certainly seems like this is a shot across the bow saying anyone who ever helps the United States -- you know, the U.S. is not going to be there, and you're going to be held accountable by your own government.

PANETTA: All right. It's -- it is so difficult to understand and it's so disturbing that they would sentence this doctor to 33 years for helping in the search for the most notorious terrorist in our times.

This doctor was not working against Pakistan. He was working against al-Qaida. And I hope that, ultimately, Pakistan understands that, because what they have done here, I think, you know, does not help in the effort to try to re-establish a relationship between the United States and Pakistan.

TAPPER: Secretary Panetta, can we call Pakistan an ally when they do something like this, when they sentence a doctor who helped the United States find bin Laden, who has killed more Muslims than I can count? How can we call them an ally when they sentenced this guy to prison?

PANETTA: Well, Jake, this has been one of the most complicated relationships that we've had, working with Pakistan. You know, we have to continue to work at it. It is important. This is a country that has -- that has nuclear weapons. This is a country that still is critical in that region of the world.

It's an up-and-down relationship. There have been periods where we've had good cooperation and they have worked with us, and there have been periods where we've had conflict. But they're dealing with the terrorist threat just like we are.

So our responsibility here is to keep pushing them to understand how important it is for them to work with us to try to deal with the common threats we both face. And what they did with this doctor doesn't help in the effort to try to do that.

TAPPER: And you've been in the middle of a very difficult negotiation with the Pakistanis about the lines of transit through which we supply U.S. troops in Afghanistan by using Pakistan, and they shut them down after that incident at the border in November. They initially charged about \$250 per truck. They are now trying to charge \$5,000 per truck. We already give them -- the U.S. taxpayer already gives the Pakistanis billions of dollars a year, and now they're trying to charge \$5,000 per truck.

How high are you willing to go in this negotiation? Are you willing to pay more than a thousand dollars a truck?

PANETTA: We're going to pay a fair price?

TAPPER: And what's that, a few hundred dollars per truck?

PANETTA: We're going to pay a fair price. They're negotiating what that price ought to be. You know, clearly we don't -- we're not about to get gouged in a price, we want a fair price.

TAPPER: Let's move to Yemen right now. We saw this past week a suicide bombing that killed a hundred soldiers. The al-Qaida affiliate in Yemen has attempted at least twice to bring down a U.S. plane. You've said al-Qaida in Yemen poses the greatest threat to the United

States, but you've also said you will not send American troops into the country.

If this is the biggest threats to the U.S., why would we not try to play a bigger role?

PANETTA: Well, our whole effort there is aimed at going after those terrorists who threaten to attack our country. We've been successful. We've gone after a number of key targets there. We'll continue to do that.

TAPPER: But I think -- I think the question is whether or not the smaller counterterrorism approach to this is enough. What we're seeing in Yemen seems to be a possible nightmare scenario of a terrorist haven. Let me just show you a map. Our Martha Raddatz was there this week, helped us put together this map. The portions shaded in red are territory in which al-Qaida has a strong and significant presence. As you can see, that's most of the country, and they're starting to hold those territories. I know I'm not telling you anything you don't know, but can we really fight them without boots on the ground there?

PANETTA: The answer is yes because, very frankly, what we're targeting, the operations we're conducting require the kind of capabilities that don't necessarily involve boots on the ground but require the kind of capabilities that target those that we're after who are threats to the United States. That's what this mission is about.

TAPPER: President Obama recently said that -- recently told John Brennan, his counterterrorism adviser at the White House, that he wanted a little bit more transparency when it comes to drones, which are -- is one of the approaches that you're alluding to in Yemen.

The Times of London reported last week that the

civilian casualties in Yemen as a result of drone strikes have, quote, "emboldened al-Qaida."

Is it or not a serious risk that this approach to counterterrorism, because of its imprecision, because of its civilian casualties, is creating more enemy than it is killing?

PANETTA: First and foremost, I think this is one of the most precise weapons that we have in our arsenal. Number two, what is our responsibility? Our responsibility is to defend and protect the United States of America.

And using the operations that we have, using the systems that we have, using the weapons that we have is absolutely essential to our ability to defend Americans. That's what counts, and that's what we're doing.

TAPPER: Let's turn now to Iran. Our diplomats were in Baghdad this week negotiating as part of the international coalition trying to convince Iran to stop its suspected nuclear weapons program, but we recently saw an Iranian diplomat seemingly bragging to The New York Times about out-negotiating us.

Are they not just running out the clock? And are these negotiations once a month enough?

PANETTA: We with the fundamental premise here. The fundamental premise is that neither the United States or the international community is going to allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon. We will do everything we can to prevent them from developing a weapon.

The international community has been unified. We've put very tough sanctions on them, as a result of that. And we are -- you know, we're -- we are prepared for any contingency in that part of the world. But our hope is that

these matters can be resolved diplomatically.

TAPPER: The ambassador to Israel -- the American ambassador to Israel said a few days ago that the U.S. is, quote, "ready," from a military perspective, to carry out a strike on Iran. That's true?

PANETTA: One of the things we do at the Defense Department, Jake, is plan. And we have -- we have plans to be able to implement any contingency we have to in order to defend ourselves.

TAPPER: There's been a lot in the press in the last few days about the fact that the Obama administration cooperated with the filmmakers Kathryn Bigelow and Michael Boal, who are making this bin Laden film. What is your response to the controversy? And can you assert that nothing inappropriate was shared with these filmmakers?

PANETTA: Yeah. Nothing inappropriate was shared with them. Jake, you know, we get inquiries every day from the entertainment industry. We get inquiries from people writing articles, from people writing books, people doing television shows. And the process that we've established is that, you know, we will work with those individuals; we'll try to make sure that we give them accurate information so that the historic record is protected. But, you know, we do not share anything that is inappropriate with anyone.

TAPPER: You were head of the CIA when bin Laden was captured. Now, you're head of the Pentagon. There was an effort by the Obama campaign to talk more about the capture and killing of bin Laden. What is your take on this? Are you uncomfortable at all with what some have described as chest thumping?

PANETTA: You know, I guess my view, having participated in that operation, is that it was -- it was something very special in terms of both the intelligence and military communities working together to go after bin Laden and doing it successfully. And whether you're Republicans, whether you're Democrats, whether you're independents, I think this country ought to be proud of what our intelligence and military community did.

And you know what? I'll let history be the judge as to whether or not that was a successful mission.

TAPPER: Well, obviously it was a successful mission, but the politicization of it, that doesn't make you uncomfortable at all?

PANETTA: You know, I would hope that both Republicans and Democrats would be justly proud of what was accomplished.

TAPPER: There are massive mandatory budget cuts heading your way -- I know you're more than aware of this -- coming to domestic programs and the defense budget if Congress doesn't come to an agreement on deficit reduction. You said the defense cuts would lead to a hollow military. But in a recent interview, Senator Majority Leader Harry Reid said this: To now see the Republicans scrambling to do away with the cuts to defense that would be required by this agreement. I will not accept that. My people in the state of Nevada and, I think, the country have had enough of whacking all the programs. We have cut them to a bare bone, and defense is going to have to bear their share of the burden.

Is that language okay with you, that language from the Democratic leader of the Senate?

PANETTA: Well, you know, my view is that when you're facing the size deficits and debt that we're facing, that obviously defense has to play a role in trying to be able to achieve fiscal responsibility, and we provided a budget that we think meets not only the goal of saving but also, more importantly, protects a strong national defense for this country.

The thing that does concern me is the sequester, which involves another \$500 billion in defense cuts.

TAPPER: That's these automatic cuts I'm talking about.

PANETTA: These automatic cuts that would take place that I think would be disastrous in terms of our national defense. And I would say this: I think what both Republicans and Democrats need to do, and the leaders on both sides, is to recognize that if sequester take place, it would be disastrous for our national defense and, very frankly, for a lot of very important domestic programs. They have a responsibility to come together, find the money necessary to de-trigger sequester. That's what they ought to be working on now.

TAPPER: Lastly, several key members of the president's Cabinet -- Secretaries Clinton, Geithner, most prominently -- have said if there is a second Obama term, they will not be in it. Will you?

PANETTA: (Chuckles.) You know, one thing I've learned over 40 years is that when you have jobs in Washington, you do it day by day. And that's what I'm doing as secretary of defense. And I serve at the will of the president, and that's what I intend to continue to do.

TAPPER: If there is a President Mitt Romney and he



asks you to stay on, as President Obama did with Secretary Gates, would you consider?

PANETTA: I don't engage in hypotheticals. (Laughter.)

TAPPER: All right. Secretary Panetta, thank you so much for joining us. We really appreciate your time.

PANETTA: Thank you.

Los Angeles Times  
May 28, 2012

## 2. Panetta: Cuts To Defense Spending Would Be 'Disastrous'

By Kim Geiger

WASHINGTON --

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta warned Sunday that it would be "disastrous" for Congress to allow cuts in defense spending to take place as scheduled in January.

In an interview that aired on ABC's "This Week," Panetta said the Pentagon "has to play a role in trying to be able to achieve fiscal responsibility," but warned against allowing the cuts, which would take place as a result of the failure to reach a deficit reduction deal last year. The cuts to Medicare and defense spending are to be made through a process known as sequestration.

"I think what both Republicans and Democrats need to do, and the leaders on both sides is to recognize that if sequester takes place, it would be disastrous for our national defense and very frankly for a lot of very important domestic programs," Panetta said. "They have a responsibility to come together, find the money necessary to de-trigger sequester. That's what they ought to be working on now."

Panetta also responded to Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney's criticism of the Obama

administration's handling of the drawdown in Afghanistan.

Romney said earlier this year that it was "naïve" and "misguided" to announce withdrawal plans publicly.

"Why in the world do you go to the people that you're fighting with and tell them the day you're pulling out your troops?" Romney said at a campaign event in February.

Panetta dismissed Romney's criticism as "campaign rhetoric."

"I think you've got 50 nations in NATO that agree to a plan in Afghanistan," Panetta said. "It's to take us to a point where we draw down by the end of 2014. That is the plan that has been agreed to, and it's a plan that is working."

Washington Times  
May 28, 2012  
Pg. 1

## 3. Looming Cuts Would Be 'Disastrous'

By Sean Lenggell, The Washington Times

Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said Sunday that more than \$500 billion in defense-related cuts scheduled to kick in early next year would be "disastrous" to national security and begged lawmakers to restore the money.

The cuts were included in last summer's bipartisan debt and budget agreement that allowed the White House to raise the debt ceiling. Since then, members of Congress from both parties have pushed to undo the Pentagon's portion of the \$1.2 trillion "sequestration" budget cuts that also target nondefense domestic programs.

"I think what both Republicans and Democrats need to do, and the leaders of both sides, is to recognize that if sequester takes place, it would be disastrous for our national

defense, and very frankly, for a lot of very important domestic programs," Mr. Panetta said on ABC's "This Week."

"They have a responsibility to come together and find the money necessary to de-trigger sequester."

Mr. Panetta said the Defense Department has been diligent about trimming costs to help the federal government shrink its ballooning debt and deficit.

"We provided a budget that, we think, meets not only the goal of savings, but also, more importantly, protects a strong national defense for this country," he said.

However, Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, Nevada Democrat, has taken a hard line on keeping the automatic cuts in place, saying last week that he wouldn't accept Republican attempts to do away with them.

In Sunday's appearance on ABC's "This Week," Mr. Panetta also left open the possibility of military strikes against Iran should negotiations fail to halt the Islamic republic's suspected nuclear weapons program.

Mr. Panetta said that while he hopes the matter can be resolved diplomatically, the Pentagon has developed multiple plans to deal with threats "in that part of the world."

"The international community has been unified. We've put very tough sanctions on them, as a result of that," he said. But "we have plans to be able to implement any contingency we have to in order to defend ourselves."

The secretary's words were in response to a question about recent comments made by American ambassador to Israel Daniel B. Shapiro that the U.S. already has made preparations for a potential strike on Iran.

The U.S. and five other nations in recent days have been in talks with Iran regarding its nuclear program.

On Afghanistan, Mr. Panetta said the U.S. will continue to have an "enduring presence" in the country after a planned major pullout of U.S. and NATO forces there by the end of 2014.

"The most important point is that we're not going anywhere," he said. "We'll continue to work with [Afghan officials] on counterterrorism. We'll continue to provide training, assistance, guidance. We'll continue to provide support."

The heads of the House and Senate intelligence committees, upon returning from a trip to Afghanistan earlier this month, said the Taliban has grown stronger since President Obama's deployment of 33,000 more troops to Afghanistan in 2010.

But Mr. Panetta said that U.S. forces continue to make "good progress" fighting the Taliban, and that the rebel insurgency, though resilient, has been weakened.

"We have not seen them able to conduct any kind of organized attack to regain any territory that they've lost," he said. "We've seen the levels of violence going down. We've seen an Afghan army that is much more capable at providing security."

The secretary said he is still concerned about a high level of corruption in Afghan society and about Taliban safe havens in neighboring Pakistan. But he said that Marine Corps Gen. John R. Allen, the top allied commander in Afghanistan, "has laid out a plan that moves us in the direction of an Afghanistan that can truly govern and secure itself."

"That is going to be our greatest safeguard to the

potential of the Taliban ever coming back," he said.

Mr. Panetta also repeated U.S. criticisms of Pakistan for convicting a doctor who helped find Osama bin Laden in that country, calling the 33-year prison term "disturbing" and saying Dr. Shakil Afridi "was not working against Pakistan."

Dr. Afridi had run a vaccination program that helped the CIA collect DNA samples that confirmed bin Laden was in the Pakistani town of Abbottabad. Mr. Panetta said the treason conviction is casting a pall over the "complicated" relationship between the two countries.

"It's an up-and-down relationship. There have been periods where we've had good cooperation, and they have worked with us," he said. "What they have done here does not help in the effort to try to re-establish a relationship between the United States and Pakistan."

Washington Post  
May 28, 2012  
Pg. 2

#### **4. Panetta Vows 'Enduring Presence' In Afghanistan**

By Nia-Malika Henderson

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said in an interview broadcast Sunday that the United States would have an enduring presence in Afghanistan after 2014, when there will be a major troop drawdown.

He also pushed back against reports that the Taliban is gaining strength in that country.

"Well, the most important point is that we're not going anywhere. We're gonna, we have an enduring presence that will be in Afghanistan," Panetta said on ABC News's "This Week."

"We'll continue to work with them on counterterrorism. We'll continue to provide training, assistance, guidance. We'll continue to provide support," he said. "We are making good progress. I mean, the Taliban, my view is that they have been weakened. We have not seen them able to conduct any kind of organized attack to regain any territory that they've lost. We've seen levels of violence going down. We've seen an Afghan army that is much more capable at providing security."

Mitt Romney, who is set to clinch the Republican presidential nomination this week, has criticized the Obama administration for setting a date for withdrawal and called the approach to Afghanistan misguided.

Responding to Romney's position, Panetta said, "I think, without getting into the campaign rhetoric of what he's asserting, I think you've got 50 nations in NATO that agree to a plan in Afghanistan. It's the Lisbon agreement, an agreement that, you know, others — President Bush, President Obama -- everyone has agreed is the direction that we go in in Afghanistan.

"What is that direction? It's to take us to a point where we draw down by the end of 2014. That is the plan that has been agreed to. And it's a plan that is working. And very frankly, the only way to get this accomplished in terms of the transition that we have to go through is to be able to set the kind of timelines that have been set here in order to ensure that we fulfill the mission of an Afghanistan that governs and secures itself. That's what this is about."

During the interview, Panetta also raised an alarm about looming cuts to the defense budget, saying that

they would be "disastrous" for national security and urging Republicans and Democrats to work together to avoid a budget showdown.

"Well-- my view is that when you're facing the size deficits and debt that we're facing, that obviously defense has to play a role in trying to be able to achieve fiscal responsibility,"

The Defense Department, he said, "provided a budget that, we think, meets not only the goal of savings but also, more importantly, protects a strong national defense for this country. The thing that does concern me is the sequester which involves another \$500 billion in defense cuts."

Republicans and Democrats have been foreshadowing a tough fight over massive budget cuts, set to happen at the end the year as part of a deficit reduction agreement reached after the failure of the so-called supercommittee. In January, \$110 billion in automatic cuts to Medicare and the Pentagon are scheduled to occur in a process known as sequestration.

"I think what both Republicans and Democrats need to do, and the leaders on both sides is to recognize that if sequester takes place, it would be disastrous for our national defense and very frankly for a lot of very important domestic programs," Panetta said. "They have a responsibility to come together, find the money necessary to de-trigger sequester. That's what they ought to be working on now."

ArmyTimes.com  
May 27, 2012

#### **5. Panetta: U.S. On 'Right Track' In Afghanistan**

By Associated Press

WASHINGTON--Defense Secretary Leon Panetta on Sunday defended the Obama administration's plans to wind down the more than decade-long war in Afghanistan, saying the U.S. is on "the right track."

"We still have a fight on our hands," Panetta said Sunday on ABC's "This Week."

"The American people need to know that. The world needs to know that ... but we're on the right track," he added.

Last week, NATO allies affirmed a plan to end combat operations inside Afghanistan by the end of 2014. Republicans, including Mitt Romney, have criticized President Obama's insistence on setting a firm timetable for the war because they say it shows a lack of commitment to the region and encourages enemy fighters to wait out a U.S. departure.

Panetta said critics of the plan should be mindful that the timetable has been embraced by some 50 allied nations.

"That is the plan that has been agreed to. And it's a plan that is working," Panetta said.

"And very frankly, the only way to get this accomplished-- in terms of the transition that we have to go through--is to be able to set the kind of timelines that have been set here in order to ensure that we fulfill the mission of an Afghanistan that governs and secures itself," he added.

Panetta also reiterated his criticism of the conviction of a Pakistani doctor who helped the CIA find and kill terrorist leader Osama bin Laden, calling the lengthy prison sentence handed to Dr. Shakil Afridi "disturbing."

"It is so difficult to understand and it's so disturbing that they would sentence this doctor to 33 years for helping in the search for the most notorious terrorist in



our times," Panetta said. "This doctor was not working against Pakistan."

U.S. officials have urged Pakistan to release the physician, who ran a vaccination program for the CIA to collect DNA and verify the al-Qaida leader's presence at the compound in the town of Abbottabad where U.S. commandos killed him in May 2011.

The capture of bin Laden strained the U.S. relationship with Pakistan, as did U.S. airstrikes that accidentally killed 24 Pakistani soldiers near the border. Pakistan responded to the airstrikes by closing key transit routes into Afghanistan. The chilly U.S.-Pakistan relationship was on public display at last week's NATO meeting, where Obama left Pakistan off a list of nations he thanked for help getting war supplies into Afghanistan.

Panetta called the U.S. relationship with Pakistan "one of the most complicated we've had."

"This is a country that still is critical in that region of the world," he said. "It's an up-and-down relationship. There have been periods where we've had good cooperation and they have worked with us."

Reuters.com  
May 27, 2012

## 6. NATO Has Fight On Its Hands In Afghanistan: Panetta

By Lesley Wroughton, Reuters  
WASHINGTON -- NATO forces still have a fight on their hands in Afghanistan, where the Taliban has displayed resilience although its fighters have not regained territory they lost during the decade-long war, Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said on Sunday.

Panetta said plans for foreign troops to hand over

security responsibilities to Afghan forces starting in mid-2013 were on track and necessary to ensure that the Taliban, which governed Afghanistan before the U.S.-led invasion, is kept at bay.

U.S. President Barack Obama, who ordered a surge of U.S. troops in Afghanistan in 2009, has outlined plans to withdraw foreign combat forces from there by the end of 2014 and to take on a supportive role for the Afghan army.

Afghanistan security forces have grown to around 330,000 but still lack capabilities in intelligence, air power and logistics. At the same time, a spate of attacks against foreign troops this year by Afghans in military uniforms have raised questions about their loyalty to the government and whether some are under the influence of the Taliban.

"The world needs to know that we still have a fight on our hands," Panetta told ABC's "This Week" program. "We're still dealing with the Taliban. Although they've been weakened, they are resilient."

The defense secretary said the Taliban has been unable to conduct any kind of organized attack to reclaim territory lost to NATO and Afghan forces, adding: "We've seen levels of violence going down. We've seen an Afghan army that is much more capable at providing security."

The White House, looking toward the November presidential election, is keen to dispel notions that Obama is rushing for the exits in Afghanistan, at a time when public support for the war is plummeting.

The broad concern, however, is that the Taliban is staying out of harm's way and will resurface quickly once the bulk of foreign troops have left.

"Have you ever heard the word 'victory' come through the lips of this president, because we're always talking about withdrawal, withdrawal, withdrawal," Senator John McCain, ranking member of the Foreign Relations Committee and the Republican candidate for president in 2008 who lost to Obama, told Fox News Sunday.

"The Taliban believes we are leaving" after Obama's announcements of a withdrawal schedule, McCain said.

"The president has overridden the recommendation of his military commanders who he has put in their positions, and the president has increased the risk every time."

Panetta said there continues to be concerns about the Taliban operating from safe havens in Pakistan. He said U.S. relations with Pakistan were "complicated".

"This has been one of the most complicated relationships that we've had, working with Pakistan. You know, we have to continue to work at it. It is important. This is a country that has - that has nuclear weapons," Panetta said.

"So our responsibility here is to keep pushing them to understand how important it is for them to work with us to try to deal with the common threats we both face," Panetta added.

Panetta said it was "so disturbing" that the Pakistani government sentenced a doctor to 33 years in prison on treason charges for helping the CIA track down al Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

Dr. Shakil Afridi "was not working against Pakistan. He was working against al Qaeda. And I hope that ultimately Pakistan understands that," he said. "Because what they have done here, I think, you know, does not help in the effort to try to re-establish a relationship

between the United States and Pakistan."

ABCNews.com  
May 27, 2012

## 7. Leon Panetta Dismisses Romney's Afghanistan Criticism

By Jake Tapper

Defense Secretary Leon Panetta dismissed presumptive Republican presidential nominee Mitt Romney's criticism of President Obama's Afghanistan strategy, saying it is appropriate for the U.S. to set a date certain for ending military operations in the country at the end of 2014.

At a campaign event on Feb. 1, Romney called out Panetta for outlining plans for withdrawing forces from Afghanistan, where the U.S. has fought since 2001.

"You just scratch your head and say how can you be so misguided? And so naïve?" Romney said of Obama's Afghanistan strategy. "His secretary of defense said that on a date certain ... we're going to pull out our combat troops from Afghanistan... Why in the world do you go to the people that you're fighting with and tell them the day you're pulling out your troops?"

But in a "This Week" interview, Panetta countered that the timeline has been the long-time plan first put in motion under President Bush, and confirmed by President Obama and NATO leaders at a summit in Chicago last week.

"I think you've got 50 nations in NATO that agree to a plan in Afghanistan," Panetta told me on "This Week." "It's to take us to a point where we draw down by the end of 2014... That is the plan that has been agreed to. And it's a plan that is working."

"And very frankly, the only way to get this accomplished

in terms of the transition that we have to go through is to be able to set the kind of timelines that have been set here in order to ensure that we fulfill the mission of an Afghanistan that governs and secures itself," Panetta added.

While the U.S. has worked to transition control of security to Afghan forces, concerns remain that the Taliban may be able to re-assert control over the country after U.S. and NATO forces withdraw.

But Panetta said the U.S. is making progress, and will maintain "an enduring presence" in the country, aiding in counter-terrorism and training efforts beyond 2014 in order to combat the return of the Taliban or al Qaeda.

"The world needs to know that we still have a fight on our hands," Panetta said. "We're still dealing with the Taliban. Although they've been weakened, they are resilient... But we're on the right track."

And on this Memorial Day weekend, Panetta said it was important to "get the mission accomplished" in Afghanistan to honor the service members who have died there.

"I think all of us have to be constantly vigilant that whatever battle we engage in, that we not only achieve the mission but we make damn sure that we do everything possible to ensure that every life was lost for a cause that we still commit ourselves to," Panetta said.

Bloomberg.com  
May 27, 2012

## **8. Doctor Jailing Won't Help U.S. And Pakistan, Panetta Says**

By Jeff Plungis, Bloomberg News

Pakistan's imposition of a 33-year prison term on a doctor who aided the U.S. in the hunt for Osama bin Laden won't

help to re-establish normal relations with the U.S., Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said.

"It is so difficult to understand, and it's so disturbing that they would sentence this doctor to 33 years for helping in the search for the most notorious terrorist of our times," Panetta said today on ABC's "This Week."

A court in Pakistan's northwestern tribal region convicted the doctor, Shakil Afridi, of treason on May 23. Afridi was charged with running a fake vaccination program in Abbottabad, the town where bin Laden hid for as long as five years, to obtain a DNA sample from those living in the compound where the al-Qaeda leader was shot dead by Navy SEALs in May 2011.

The jailing will challenge already complicated U.S.-Pakistan relations, Panetta said. Pakistan remains an important nation in the region because it has nuclear weapons, Panetta said.

"It's an up-and-down relationship," Panetta said. "They're dealing with the terrorist threat just like we are."

"Our responsibility here is to keep pushing them to understand how important it is for them to work with us to try to deal with the common threats we both face," Panetta said.

### **Afghan Progress**

On Afghanistan, Panetta said progress has been made to reduce organized attacks by the Taliban, and violence has subsided. The Afghan army is more capable of providing security, with more than 50 percent of the population under local control, he said. Yet the job isn't over, he said.

While the drawdown of U.S. troops is on schedule for 2014, it doesn't mean the U.S. will be completely out of Afghanistan, Panetta said. Support will continue

for counterterrorism efforts, training and guidance, he said. U.S. officials are concerned about neighboring Pakistan remaining a safe haven for terrorists.

"We still have a fight on our hands," Panetta said. "We're still dealing with the Taliban. Although they've been weakened, they are resilient."

In a May 25 interview on CNN, U.S. Marine Corps General John Allen, commander of NATO's International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, said the U.S. will transfer command of combat operations to the Afghan military after 2013, and he will report to the president by the end of this year on steps needed to withdraw 23,000 troops.

Afghan leaders have arrested more than 160 people in their security forces in the past several months who might be plotting attacks against the international troops, Allen said.

"It's a concern, of course it's a concern," Panetta said on ABC today. "It's the kind of thing that the Taliban would use to come at our forces. And it's an indication again that because they can't organize efforts to come at us, they're going to use this kind of tactic to try to frighten us."

Yahoo.com

May 27, 2012

## **9. US Will Not Be Price 'Gouged' By Pakistan: Panetta**

By Agence France-Presse

US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta vowed Sunday not to let the United States be "gouged" by Pakistan on the price it charges for overland deliveries of American military supplies to Afghanistan.

Pakistan closed the land route to US supplies in November as punishment for

a botched US air strike that mistakenly killed 24 Pakistani soldiers, but have been in negotiations to reopen the border crossing.

US defense officials have said the Pakistanis are demanding several thousand dollars for every truck crossing its border with the supplies, up from \$250 per truck before the closure.

"We're not about to get gouged in the price. We want a fair price," Panetta said on ABC's "This Week."

Without the Pakistani supply lines, the United States has had to rely on a much longer, more expensive northern route to resupply its forces in Afghanistan.

The supply lines impasse is just one of a host of issues that have opened deep schisms in relations between the two countries, supposed allies in the US battle against Islamic extremists.

Relations plunged to an all-time low after a US raid by US special operations forces killed Al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden in a compound in a Pakistani garrison town on May 2, 2011.

The United States has moved gingerly to make up with the Pakistanis, who were incensed that they learned of the raid only after it had been carried out.

But the issue flared anew last week when a Pakistani court sentenced a doctor who helped the United States gather DNA data used to track down bin Laden to 33 years in prison for helping the Americans.

"It is so difficult to understand and it's so disturbing that they would sentence this doctor to 33 years for helping in the search for the most notorious terrorist in our times," Panetta said.

"What they have done here," he added, "does not help



in the effort to try to reestablish a relationship between the United States and Pakistan."

The Senate Appropriations Committee has voted to cut US aid to Pakistan by a symbolic \$33 million -- \$1 million for each year of jail time given to Shakeel Afridi, the doctor.

The measure, an amendment to the \$52 billion US foreign aid budget, passed in a 30-0 vote in a sign of growing frustration with Pakistan.

Yahoo.com  
May 27, 2012

## 10. Panetta Says No Need For US Boots In Yemen

By Agence France-Presse

The United States can deal with Al-Qaeda's spreading presence in Yemen without US forces on the ground, relying instead on targeted operations, US Defense Secretary Leon Panetta said Sunday.

Panetta, in an interview with ABC television's "This Week," defended the use of drones as "the most precise weapon we have" in the campaign against Al-Qaeda.

"Our whole effort there is aimed at going after those terrorists who threaten to attack our country," he said.

"We've been successful. We've gone after a number of key targets there. We'll continue to do that."

Al-Qaeda in the Arabian peninsula, which US intelligence considers a top threat to the US homeland, has expanded its presence in Yemen amid unrest and political turmoil there.

The Yemen-based Al-Qaeda affiliate has twice tried to bring down US airliners, including the failed underwear bombing of a Detroit-bound jet on December 25, 2009.

Panetta was asked whether Al-Qaeda could be stopped without US boots on the ground.

"The answer is yes, because very frankly, what we're targeting, the operations we're conducting, require the kind of capabilities that don't necessarily involve boots on the ground, but require the kind of capabilities that target those that we're after who are threats to the United States."

The United States has military advisers assisting Yemeni forces and has carried out regular drone strikes against Al-Qaeda suspects there, mainly in the south and southeast.

Yemen's army launched a major offensive on May 12 to capture Al-Qaeda-controlled areas in the southern province of Abyan.

A suicide bomber blew himself up last week in the middle of an army parade rehearsal in the capital Sanaa, killing 96 soldiers and wounding at least 300 others.

Al-Qaeda said it was behind the attack, the deadliest against Yemeni troops since newly-elected President Abdrabuh Mansur Hadi vowed to destroy the militant network at his swearing in ceremony last February.

Jerusalem Post  
May 28, 2012  
Pg. 2

## 11. Panetta Says Military Option Against Iran Is Now Ready

By Yoni Dayan

The military option against Iran is available if needed, US Secretary of Defense Leon Panetta said on Sunday in an interview with ABC News' This Week.

"The fundamental premise is that neither the United States nor the international community is going to allow Iran to develop

a nuclear weapon," he said. "We will do everything we can to prevent them from developing a weapon."

Panetta referenced comments made earlier this month by US Ambassador to Israel Dan Shapiro that Washington has a military contingency plan, should diplomatic talks fail to convince Iran to abandon its nuclear program.

"It would be preferable to solve this diplomatically and through the use of pressure, than to use military force," Shapiro said. "But that doesn't mean that option isn't fully available. Not just available, it's ready. The necessary planning has been done to ensure that it's ready."

"The international community has been unified," he said. "We've put very tough sanctions on them as a result of that... We are prepared for any sort of contingency in that part of the world."

During the interview, the US secretary of defense also addressed the issues of NATO's involvement in Afghanistan as well as the growing threat of cyber warfare.

Panetta met with Defense Minister Ehud Barak at the Pentagon earlier this month, with the aim of coordinating strategy with the US ahead of the second round of talks between Western powers and Iran in Baghdad last week.

A senior US official was quoted on Saturday by Israel Radio as saying that the US was planning on increasing sanctions on Iran until it ceased enriching uranium.

ABCNews.com  
May 27, 2012

## 12. Asked To Confirm Military Is Ready For Iran Strike, Panetta

## Says Pentagon Has Plans For Everything

By Jake Tapper

During an interview for "This Week," Defense Secretary Leon Panetta assured me that the United States has readied plans to carry out a military strike on Iran to prevent the regime from obtaining nuclear weapons if diplomacy fails to dissuade the country from its current path.

"One of the things that we do at the Defense Department, Jake, is plan. And we have -- we have plans to be able to implement any contingency we have to in order to defend ourselves," Panetta said.

The secretary of defense was responding to my question about recent comments made by American ambassador to Israel Daniel Shapiro — and reported by ABC News' Alexander Marquardt — that the United States has already made preparations for a potential strike on Iran. The United States, joined by five other countries, is currently engaged with Iran in negotiations over its nuclear program.

"It would be preferable to solve this diplomatically and through the use of pressure, than to use military force," said Shapiro. "But that doesn't mean that option isn't fully available. Not just available, it's ready. The necessary planning has been done to ensure that it's ready," he said.

During our interview, Panetta expressed hope that the nuclear standoff with Iran could be solved peacefully, but left no doubt as to the position of the United States: An Iran with nuclear weapons is not on the table.

"The fundamental premise is that neither the United States or the international community is going to allow Iran to develop a nuclear weapon. We will do everything we can to

prevent them from developing a weapon," he said.

New York Times  
May 28, 2012  
Pg. 8

### 13. Inquiry Ordered Into Deaths Of Afghan Family

By Alisha J. Rubin and Rod Nordland

KABUL, Afghanistan-- Both President Hamid Karzai and NATO commanders ordered an investigation on Sunday into reports that a family of eight had been killed in a coalition airstrike in eastern Afghanistan.

NATO and Afghan provincial government officials gave somewhat divergent accounts of the episodes. The casualties took place in eastern Paktia Province on Saturday night when the family's home was hit by a bomb, said Rohullah Samoon, a spokesman for the governor of Paktia. Six children were killed, four boys and two girls, as well as their mother and father, whose name was Safiullah.

They lived in Sar Khilo village in the remote Gerdi Seri District, he said, adding that the circumstances of the bombing were not clear, but that the operation was carried out without coordination with Afghan security forces.

However, a spokesman for the Afghan National Army in Paktia, Col. Fazli Khuda, said that it was a joint operation to target insurgent fighters from the Haqqani faction who operate there. Sar Khilo is a remote, mountainous area on the border between Paktia and Khost Provinces and is dominated by the Zadran tribe, which is the same tribe as the Haqqani clan.

The Haqqanis, the insurgent group dominant in southeastern Afghanistan, are

believed to be behind some of the bloodiest and most audacious attacks that have taken place in Afghanistan in the past three years, including the 19-hour-long attack on the American Embassy in September and more recent multiple attacks in Kabul in April that targeted the embassy neighborhood as well as the Parliament and an area near a NATO camp.

According to the NATO account, on Saturday evening a combined NATO and Afghan force on a ground patrol came under heavy attack by more than 20 insurgents, said Maj. Martyn Crighton, a spokesman for the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force. "They were attacked by a large group of insurgents in southern Paktia and they returned fire and requested close air support and received it," he said. "We are trying to determine whether the mission has any direct correlation to the claims of civilian casualties."

Although no NATO soldiers were killed in the fighting in Paktia, seven coalition soldiers were killed over the weekend in different episodes in southern and eastern Afghanistan, according to a NATO spokesman. The nationalities of the soldiers were not released pending the notification of family members.

On Saturday, four coalition soldiers were killed in three roadside bombings in southern Afghanistan, NATO said Sunday. Two of the soldiers were killed in one of the explosions, and the other two died in separate episodes. On Sunday, three coalition soldiers died in eastern Afghanistan. One died in a roadside bombing and the other two in an insurgent attack.

So far this month, 33 NATO service members have been killed in Afghanistan, but

with this weekend's losses and the death of a NATO troop member on Friday, the monthly toll is 41.

That is still sharply lower than coalition casualties last May and continues a trend of fewer coalition casualties over the last two months as the allied countries increasingly hand over responsibility for security to Afghan forces and some nations, like France, prepare to leave ahead of schedule.

*An employee of The New York Times contributed reporting from Khost, Afghanistan.*

Washington Post  
May 28, 2012  
Pg. 11

### 14. NATO Disputes Afghans' Claim Of 8 Civilian Deaths

*Local officials say family was killed in airstrike Saturday night*

By Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan-- The U.S.-led coalition on Sunday disputed reports that eight civilians, including children, were killed in a NATO airstrike in a remote part of eastern Afghanistan.

Afghan officials said an airstrike Saturday night killed eight members of a family, but a senior NATO official said that so far, there is no evidence of any civilian casualties. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorized to disclose the information.

Separately, NATO reported that three coalition service members were killed Sunday in eastern Afghanistan-- two during an insurgent attack and one in a roadside bombing.

Four others, including a British soldier, were killed in the south Saturday, bringing to 169 the number of NATO

deaths in Afghanistan this year. The British Ministry of Defense said the soldier was killed in an explosion in the Nahr-e Saraj region of southern Helmand province. The nationalities of the other three troops have not been disclosed.

The coalition said it was trying to learn more about allegations that civilians were killed in the NATO operation that foreign forces conducted Saturday night in Paktia province. The killing of civilians by foreign forces has been a major irritant in Afghan President Hamid Karzai's relationship with his international partners. He warned this month that civilian casualties could undermine a strategic partnership with the United States that is to govern long-term relations after most international troops withdraw from the nation by the end of 2014.

Karzai appointed a delegation to travel to Paktia and determine what happened.

Afghan and coalition officials frequently offer differing accounts of military operations. When local residents report that civilians were killed, the coalition says the victims had been identified as insurgents. Later, if investigations prove that civilians were inadvertently killed, the coalition acknowledges its mistake.

Rohullah Samon, a spokesman for the provincial governor, said Mohammad Shafi, his wife and their six children were killed in an airstrike around 8 p.m. in the village of Suri Khail in Gurdia Saria district.

"Shafi was not a Taliban. He was not in any opposition group against the government. He was a villager," Samon said. "Right now, we are working on



this case to find out the ages of their children.”

Attacks that kill Afghan civilians damage the population's trust in international forces that have been fighting in the country for more than a decade. Although Taliban attacks have killed more civilians than have foreign forces, public anger over the issue is usually directed at the international troops.

Tensions spiked after Afghan officials reported that 18 civilians were killed in four recent airstrikes in Logar, Kapisa, Badghis and Helmand provinces. That prompted Karzai's recent warning.

“If the lives of Afghan people are not safe, the signing of the strategic partnership has no meaning,” a statement from the president's office said.

Last year was the deadliest on record for civilians in the Afghanistan war, with 3,021 killed as insurgents ratcheted up violence with suicide attacks and roadside bombs, the United Nations said in its most recent report on civilian deaths.

The world body attributed 77 percent of the deaths to insurgent attacks and 14 percent to actions by international and Afghan troops. Nine percent of deaths were classified as having an unknown cause. The United Nations attributed 187 civilian deaths last year to aerial attacks, an increase of 9 percent over 2010.

Elsewhere Sunday, two civilians were killed when their vehicle struck a roadside bomb in Marjah district of Helmand province, provincial spokesman Daud Ahmadi said.

### *Marine deaths show troops face another danger in Afghanistan*

At least four Marines have been electrocuted in Afghanistan since November, highlighting another hazard for ground forces fighting in Helmand province.

Cpls. Adam Buyes, Connor Lowry and Jon-Luke Bateman and Lance Cpl. Kenneth Cochran were killed in three incidents. Buyes died Nov. 26, Bateman and Cochran on Jan. 15 and Lowry on March 1.

Buyes was a radio operator with 3rd Reconnaissance Battalion, out of Okinawa, Japan. He died in Sangin district after leaving a patrol base on foot with his unit, according to documents outlining a command investigation into his death. His three-foot radio antenna hit a power line hanging about eight feet high, causing “sparks/fire” beneath his feet, the documents said.

“Initially, Cpl. Buyes was groaning, taking approximately one breath every five seconds, and had a weak pulse,” the documents say.

“Shortly thereafter, Cpl. Buyes stopped groaning and his breathing and pulse diminished quickly, until the corpsman could not detect any pulse or breathing.”

The documents were released to Marine Corps Times through a Freedom of Information Act request.

Lowry was an ammunition technician with Golf Battery, 2nd Battalion, 11th Marines, out of Camp Pendleton, Calif. He died in a vehicle's gun turret in an incident involving a low-hanging power line in Kajaki district, Marines in his unit told Marine Corps Times during an April embed with their unit. A Marine official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the wire touched Lowry directly before his death.

Bateman and Cochran died in Musa Qala district in an accident involving an electric generator, according to a report in the Pahrump Valley Times, a newspaper in Bateman's hometown area. A Marine official said they were electrocuted by a live wire near the generator, rather than the machine itself. Bateman was an infantryman with Camp Pendleton's 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines, and Cochran was a water support technician with 9th Engineer Support Battalion, out of Okinawa, Japan.

Maj. Gen. Charles Gurganus, the top commander in Helmand, said the Corps is exploring modifying some vehicles to prevent electrocution. Marines familiar with areas containing power lines also must make sure others are too, he added.

-- **Dan Lamothe and Gidget Fuentes**

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### **16. Afghanistan: The Taliban's High-Tech Urban Strategy**

*The guerrillas use teams of young techies to attack Afghan cities.*

By Ron Moreau and Sami Yousafzai

Qari Jamal has returned safely from a reconnaissance mission in Kabul. Short, thin, and immaculately dressed, the fresh-faced 25-year-old relaxes in a house near the Afghan-Pakistan border and tells how he toured the city with his digital camera, looking like an innocent civilian as he scouted sites for future Taliban attacks. “The work is both easy and difficult,” he says. “We have to photograph and survey the area, get the exact GPS coordinates, and note the daily movements of the security forces guarding the installation, without getting

caught.” Polishing his glasses on his long, spotlessly white shirttail, he mentions one of the targets he and other undercover Taliban have been casing near NATO headquarters: the Ariana Hotel -- a CIA operations center, Jamal calls it. “This is a most attractive target for the fedayeen,” he says. He's talking about suicide bombers.

The young Afghan belongs to a dangerous new breed of Taliban militants. He grew up in a city, not in a mud-hut village in the backcountry, and he got his education not only at a madrassa but also at a public high school in Pakistan, and then at a college where he majored in information technology. His beard is neatly trimmed, and he doesn't even carry a gun. Instead, he says, his weapons are a MacBook computer, a clutch of mobile phones, and an array of IT gadgets, from digital cameras to webcams and GPS devices. Citified techies like him are playing an essential role in helping the guerrillas to reshape their strategy with attention-grabbing surprise assaults in places that previously were spared from the heaviest fighting.

As brutal as the Taliban's leaders can be, they're not stupid. After two years of losing ground to the Americans in the countryside, they've concluded that splashy operations against urban targets have big advantages over attacks in rural areas: they generate more local and international publicity, require fewer fighters, and give the insurgents the appearance of being stronger than they may actually be. “This year 70 percent of our focus will be on the cities,” says a Taliban commander in Ghazni province who has seen the latest strategic plan for urban warfare from the Taliban's ruling council, the

Quetta Shura. "That's the best way to put pressure on the government and the Americans, and to show them that we are as strong in the cities as we are in the countryside."

The deadly new campaign has already begun. Immediately after President Obama's latest surprise visit to Afghan President Hamid Karzai in Kabul this May, a team of Taliban suicide bombers attacked a residential compound where Americans and other foreigners were living on the outskirts of the capital. Seven Afghans were killed in the assault. The previous month, guerrillas wielding machine guns, rocket-propelled grenade launchers, and small arms had seized two high-rise construction sites in Kabul and opened fire on NATO headquarters, the Afghan Parliament, and the American and several other embassies. The attack mirrored a similar operation the insurgents launched against the U.S. Embassy and the NATO command last September.

Most other news outlets have attributed practically all of the recent attacks in Kabul not to the mainstream Taliban but to the Haqqani Network, an allied but distinct insurgent group. Those reports have it wrong, Taliban sources insist. Senior Taliban commanders boasted to Newsweek of those attacks at the time, and some expressed frustration that the Haqqanis were given credit. Lutfullah Mashal, the spokesman for Afghanistan's National Directorate of Security, confirms to Newsweek that the recent attacks in the capital were carried out by regular Taliban under the direction of Hajji Lala.

That's the code name used by the Taliban's seniormost commander in the capital, Mullah Hayatullah -- the

mastermind of the new urban strategy, according to Jamal and other Taliban sources. A logistics expert who keeps a steady stream of money, arms, and explosives flowing steadily into Kabul, he's also the Taliban's chief of operations on the eastern front and the Quetta Shura's shadow governor of Kabul. Lala's bloody résumé doesn't end there. Mashal says he was probably behind the assassination of former Afghan president Burhanuddin Rabbani, the chairman of Karzai's High Peace Council.

As if that weren't enough, he's also believed to have orchestrated the assassination of another High Peace Council member, Arsala Rahmani, on May 13. Rahmani had been the Taliban's deputy education minister before the fall of the regime in 2001, and before his death he was said to maintain close ties to his former associates. The Taliban's chief spokesman, Zahirullah Mujahid, has denied that his group had any part in either killing, but senior Taliban sources tell Newsweek that the militants are determined to eliminate anyone, whether on the Kabul side or within their own ranks, who promotes peace negotiations between the insurgency and Karzai's administration. The Taliban made an exception of sorts for talks with the Americans in Qatar, in hope of winning the release of senior insurgent commanders from Guantánamo Bay, but they abruptly broke off the dialogue in March, calling it "pointless."

Instead, Taliban leaders have set out to transform and revitalize their war against Karzai and the Americans, assembling dozens of technologically sophisticated young militants like Jamal to help make it happen. The young wizards use

their specialized skills to perform all sorts of essential duties, not only gathering and transmitting intelligence but facilitating communications and maintaining electronic security as well. They're particularly valuable in urban reconnaissance. As experienced city dwellers they know how to blend in, checking out potential targets, ambush sites, and escape routes without attracting attention where an ordinary village-bred guerrilla couldn't help being conspicuous.

More than that, however, they know how to put together meticulously detailed information about streets and buildings, using tools the old-style Taliban never dreamed of, like Google Maps, GPS, and video. Urban reconnaissance teams are now working in several major Afghan cities, says Jamal. "Almost every day our mujahedin are walking the streets of Kabul, Kandahar, and Mazar-i-Sharif, taking photos, drawing maps and gathering information," he says. "Our teams are checking daily the security at embassies, hotels, and even guest houses where foreigners stay."

Some team members will drive around town with dashboard-mounted webcams, collecting images of sensitive neighborhoods, government buildings, and military facilities and transmitting them to Jamal and other remote operators. All this data helps insurgent commanders to plan and organize their attacks like never before. And when the shooting stops, the reconnaissance teams will return to the scene with cameras to do post-operation damage assessments in order to improve planning for future attacks. "IT is making things easy for the mujahedin," Jamal says. "The technology was made by infidels, but Allah has

turned it into a very positive and useful tool for jihadists."

The militants keep finding new uses for the foreigners' tools. They use email and even Internet chat rooms to send intelligence wherever it's needed. The Internet has revolutionized the insurgents' training system as well. The techies are able to set up real-time instruction sessions, where Taliban master bombmakers demonstrate their techniques via webcam as students watch from mud-brick houses hundreds of miles away. "We don't have to all gather in one place," Jamal says. "Now we can switch on a webcam and teach one man, a group, or groups, sitting in different places, how to make IEDs and other explosives." The webcam classes can be less dangerous, too: there's no need for militants to gather in large numbers for training or strategy sessions, exposing themselves to the risk of armed drone attacks.

But the Americans have some new technological tricks of their own. Among the most visible is a network of hundreds of U.S. spy balloons known as aerostats. Insurgents say the big stationary blimps have severely hampered their ability to get around undetected. More than 100 feet long and packed with surveillance cameras and electronic eavesdropping equipment, the airships float tethered above cities, U.S. bases, and strategic highways. "These balloons are very dangerous," says Jamal. "The photos and videos they take have led the enemy to our mujahedin's hideouts." He says he and his colleagues have tried to figure out ways to thwart the eyes in the sky, but so far without success. All they can do is keep to the shadows and hope to hide themselves in crowds.

Jamal says he's intensely security-conscious. In case he's



ever arrested and his computer is seized, he disguises his digital folders and files. Under innocuous-sounding labels like "Pashto Poetry," "Pashto Dance," and "Jokes," he keeps sensitive and incriminating information such as detailed maps of the neighborhood around the U.S. Embassy and contact information for fellow militants. "If a policeman opens my laptop, he will think I'm not serious -- just a lover of music, dancing, and jokes," he says. In real life, he says, he despises such frivolities: "We believe that music makes Muslims lazy and neglectful of their Islamic obligations and values."

Cities are rife with such temptations. Nevertheless, one of the chief reasons behind the Taliban's strategic shift has been the lack of any plausible alternative. Since the U.S. military surge began two years ago, the guerrillas have been mostly driven out of their former southern strongholds. One senior Taliban commander in the south says the Americans' night raids and drone attacks have all but demolished the insurgents' rural infrastructure. "They [the Taliban] don't have the manpower to put up a big fight in the countryside," says an Afghan intelligence officer who requested anonymity to speak. "So now their main target will be attacking and terrorizing the cities."

Even so, the new urban campaign has angered many of the Taliban's surviving commanders in the countryside. They say inordinate amounts of money and resources are being funneled to operations in Kabul while the longtime rural insurgency goes begging. "There is too much money available now to fund attacks in the cities," complains an angry insurgent commander in the east. "I hear they are paying \$1 million to buy safe houses

in Kabul." It's not just the money, he says; it's everything: "Requests for planning urban operations get approved months before our requests for the funding of rural offensives."

That's not the only sore subject. The insurgency is split from top to bottom over whether the Taliban should start talking to Karzai. Some senior commanders privately support reaching out to Kabul to see what kind of peace deal can be struck, despite Mullah Mohammad Omar's unbending opposition to dealing with Karzai. The Taliban's supreme leader has repeatedly denounced the Afghan president as a traitor and an American stooge. This past March Maulvi Ishmael, the former head of the insurgency's military committee and a powerful southern commander, was arrested at gunpoint by Taliban militiamen for allegedly daring to sponsor unauthorized peace talks between local Taliban officers and representatives of Kabul's High Peace Council. There are even unconfirmed reports that in April he was hanged from a tree in Helmand province for his transgression.

The guerrillas are at odds among themselves over whether Ishmael merited such a fate. "He cheated me and Islam and got the punishment he deserved," says Mullah Bismullah Akhund, a Ghazni-province subcommander who supported Ishmael before the arrest. Others see the situation very differently, arguing that his imprisonment -- or worse -- has weakened the insurgency and damaged the morale of guerrilla fighters who were loyal to him. "His arrest has directly impacted our offensive in Ghazni, disappointed each Talib, and sown confusion in our ranks," says the eastern commander. "If the leadership

arrests him, then why not arrest those talking to the Americans in Qatar?" At present, of course, the question is academic, since both the Taliban and the Americans say no one is talking in Qatar these days.

The Taliban's new urban strategy seems unlikely to fully offset the guerrillas' evident weakness and disarray in the countryside. It's true that the militants' high-profile suicide attacks will probably deepen the Afghans' sense of insecurity and intensify their fears that the Kabul government is too weak and incompetent to protect them. But rising violence in the cities won't add to the insurgents' popularity among the urban population. And by ruling out peace talks with Kabul, the Taliban is offering only more bloodshed to the war-weary people of Afghanistan.

*Ron Moreau is Newsweek's Afghanistan and Pakistan correspondent, and has been covering the region for the magazine for the past 10 years. Since he first joined Newsweek during the Vietnam War, he has reported extensively from Asia, the Middle East, and Latin America.*

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Pg. 1

## 17. U.S. Diplomats Among Targets Of Iran- Linked Plot

*Embassy in Azerbaijan  
faced threat; Probe ties  
assassination bids to broader  
campaign*

By Joby Warrick

In November, the tide of daily cable traffic to the U.S. Embassy in Azerbaijan brought a chilling message for Ambassador Matthew Bryza, then the top U.S. diplomat to the small Central Asian country. A plot to kill Americans had been uncovered, the message read,

and embassy officials were on the target list.

The details, scant at first, became clearer as intelligence agencies from both countries stepped up their probe. The plot had two strands, U.S. officials learned, one involving snipers with silencer-equipped rifles and the other a car bomb, apparently intended to kill embassy employees or members of their families.

Both strands could be traced back to the same place, the officials were told: Azerbaijan's southern neighbor, Iran.

The threat, many details of which were never made public, appeared to recede after Azerbaijani authorities rounded up nearly two dozen people in waves of arrests early this year. Precisely who ordered the hits, and why, was never conclusively determined. But U.S. and Middle Eastern officials now see the attempts as part of a broader campaign by Iran-linked operatives to kill foreign diplomats in at least seven countries over a span of 13 months. The targets have included two Saudi officials, a half-dozen Israelis and — in the Azerbaijan case — several Americans, the officials say.

In recent weeks, investigators working in four countries have amassed new evidence tying the disparate assassination attempts to one another and linking all of them to either Iran-backed Hezbollah militants or operatives based inside Iran, according to U.S. and Middle Eastern security officials. An official report last month summarizing the evidence cited phone records, forensic tests, coordinated travel arrangements and even cellphone SIM cards purchased in Iran and used by several of the would-be assailants, said two officials who have seen the six-page document.

Strikingly, the officials noted, the attempts halted abruptly in early spring, at a time when Iran began to shift its tone after weeks of bellicose anti-Western rhetoric and threats to shut down vital shipping lanes. In March, Iranian officials formally accepted a proposal to resume negotiations with six world powers on proposals to curb its nuclear program.

"There appears to have been a deliberate attempt to calm things down ahead of the talks," said a Western diplomat briefed on the assassination plots, who spoke on the condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the intelligence. "What happens if the talks fail — that's anyone's guess."

Less clear is whether the attempts were ordered by government officials or perhaps carried out with the authorities' tacit approval by intelligence operatives or a proxy group such as Hezbollah. Many U.S. officials and Middle East experts see the incidents as part of an ongoing shadow war, a multi-sided, covert struggle in which Iran also has been the victim of assassinations. Four scientists tied to Iran's nuclear program have been killed by unknown assailants in the past three years, and the country's nuclear sites have been hobbled by cyberattacks. Iran has accused the United States and Israel of killing its scientists, but it has repeatedly denied any role in plots to assassinate foreign diplomats abroad.

The Obama administration has declined to directly link the Azerbaijan plot to the Iranian government, avoiding what could be an explosive accusation at a time when the two governments are engaged in negotiations on limiting Iran's nuclear program. U.S. officials

say they are less convinced that top Iranian and Hezbollah leaders worked together to coordinate the attempted hits, noting that both groups have a long history of committing such acts on their own, and for their own purposes.

"The idea that Iran and Hezbollah might have worked together on these attempts is possible," said a senior U.S. official who has studied the evidence, "but this conclusion is not definitive."

#### **'Walking a fine line'**

Attacks directly targeting American diplomats are rare but not unknown. In 2002, Laurence Foley, a senior official at the U.S. Embassy in Jordan, was fatally shot by suspected Islamist extremists outside his home in Amman, and other diplomats have been killed in recent years in Pakistan, Sudan and Iraq. U.S. intelligence officials believe that Americans would probably have been killed if an alleged Iranian plot to kill Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Washington last year had succeeded.

In Azerbaijan, however, embassy officials have been alerted to plots against employees at least three times in the past two years. In each case, the alleged planners were discovered and the threats quietly put down by Azerbaijani authorities, working closely with American counterterrorism officials, according to U.S. and Middle Eastern officials familiar with the incidents. Azerbaijan, a majority-Muslim country of 9 million, has had a troubled history with its much larger neighbor to the south, but it publicly seeks to maintain friendly relations with Iran, whose population is 16 percent ethnic Azerbaijani.

Embassy employees were told little about the threats.

Bryza, the ambassador at the time, worked with embassy security officers to quietly tighten procedures while officials in Washington tried to assess the seriousness of the threats, the officials said. Bryza, who left the State Department this year after the Senate blocked confirmation of his re-nomination to the ambassador's post, declined to comment about the events.

"They were walking a fine line, trying to avoid panic while taking the necessary precautions," said a former State Department official who dealt regularly with the embassy. "There was a constant operational concern during that time."

The most recent threat came to light after a foreign spy agency intercepted electronic messages that appeared to describe plans to move weapons and explosives from Iran into Azerbaijan. Some of the messages were traced to an Azerbaijani national named Balagardash Dashdev, a man with an extensive criminal background and, according to a Middle East investigator involved in the case, deep ties to a network of intelligence operatives and militant groups based inside Iran.

Working from inside Iran, officials said, Dashdev in late October began coordinating the shipment of explosives, weapons and cash to Azerbaijani contacts, including relatives and former criminal associates. As U.S. and Middle Eastern intelligence deepened their surveillance, they began to discern what the Middle Eastern investigator described as a "jumble of overlapping plans," some specifically aimed at Azerbaijan's small Jewish community and others targeting diplomats and foreign-owned businesses in Baku, the

country's sprawling capital on the Caspian Sea.

During the late fall and early winter, the weapons were smuggled into the country along with at least 10 Iranian nationals recruited to help carry out the plot, U.S. and Middle Eastern officials said.

The Azerbaijani participants had been paid a cash advance and were beginning to conduct surveillance on a list of targets — including a Jewish elementary school, a U.S.-owned fast-food restaurant, an oil company office and "other objects in Baku," according to a brief statement issued by the Azerbaijani government after a series of raids in which about two dozen alleged accomplices were arrested between January and early March.

The Obama administration acknowledged in March that the U.S. Embassy may have been among the intended targets. But in the months since then, the suspects under questioning revealed extensive details about the "other objects in Baku" that had been on the target list, confirming that the would-be assassins intended to go beyond attacks on buildings.

"They were going after individuals," said the former State Department official who worked closely with the embassy in Baku. "They had names [of employees]. And they were interested in family members, too."

The alleged plot leader, Dashdev, would tell investigators that the planned attacks were intended as revenge for the deaths of the Iranian nuclear scientists, attacks that Iran has publicly linked to Israel and the United States. Iran vehemently denied involvement in any assassination plot inside Azerbaijan, and the Iranian Embassy in Baku suggested in



a statement that the plot was fiction.

"We believe that the glorious people of Azerbaijan understand that this part of the script of Iranophobia and Islamophobia is organized by the Zionists and the United States," the statement read. Attempts to contact Iranian officials for additional comments for this article were unsuccessful. Dashdev, who confessed to his role in a videotaped message broadcast on Azerbaijani television, remains in custody and could not be reached for comment. Baku officials have repeatedly accused Iran of stirring up unrest among pro-Iranian extremists to drive a wedge between Azerbaijan's population and its government, which cooperates closely and openly with Western counterterrorism agencies.

"What we are trying to do is build a strong, independent nation that is a responsible actor," Elin Suleymanov, Azerbaijan's ambassador to Washington, said in an interview. "We have told all our friends and neighbors that expressing disagreement in a civilized way is more beneficial than resorting to terrorism or promoting radicalization."

#### **String of foiled attacks**

U.S. and Middle Eastern officials say the Azerbaijan plot fits a pattern seen in numerous other recent attempts linked to Iran. The foiled assassination of Saudi Arabia's ambassador to Washington involved a similar plan to hire criminal gangs — in this case, members of a Mexican drug cartel — to kill a senior diplomat in a public setting, U.S. intelligence officials note.

The report presented to U.S. officials last month asserts extensive links between attempted assassinations of diplomats in five other

countries: India, Turkey, Thailand, Pakistan and the former Soviet republic of Georgia. Each attempt was carried out by operatives with direct ties to Iran or Hezbollah and directed against diplomats from countries hostile to Iran, the reports states.

Israeli and Indian officials have described substantial Iranian links to a car bombing in February that seriously wounded the wife of an Israeli diplomat in New Delhi. In that Feb. 13 attack, an assailant on a motorcycle attached a magnet bomb to a diplomatic car in which the woman was riding, injuring her and her driver. Indian police have charged an Indian man — a free-lance journalist working for Iranian news organizations — with organizing the attack with the help of three Iranian nationals who had entered the country.

The next day, an alleged plot to kill Israeli diplomats in Bangkok was thwarted when a bomb being assembled exploded prematurely.

The car bombs prepared for use in both attacks were virtually identical, with a magnetic outer shell that was smuggled into the two countries, to be combined later with C4 military explosives obtained from a still-unknown source. Two of the Iranian nationals allegedly involved in the Bangkok attempt were captured, and they, like the suspects in Azerbaijan, are continuing to provide clues to investigators.

The suspects, thought to be low-level operatives, either do not know or will not say who ordered the attacks, leaving investigators to speculate about how far up within Iran's government the plots may have originated.

"There is not yet a smoking gun," said the Western diplomat briefed on the evidence. "But

the pattern is clear, and each day the volume of evidence grows."

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Pg. 4

### **18. After Talks Falter, Iran Says It Won't Halt Uranium Work**

By Thomas Erdbrink

TEHRAN--Iran's nuclear chief, reversing the country's previous statements, said on state television on Sunday that the country would not halt its production of higher-grade uranium, suggesting that the Iranian government was veering back to a much harder line after talks in Baghdad with the West last week ended badly.

The official, Fereydoon Abbasi, said there would be no suspension of enrichment by Iran, the central requirement of several United Nations Security Council resolutions. He specifically said that applied to uranium being enriched to 20 percent purity—a steppingstone that puts it in fairly easy reach of producing highly enriched uranium that can be used for nuclear weapons.

"We have no reason to retreat from producing the 20 percent, because we need 20 percent uranium just as much to meet our needs," Mr. Abbasi said, according to Iranian state television.

Mr. Abbasi's statement will be of particular concern to the United States and Israel because Iran is producing more of its 20 percent enriched uranium in a deep underground site that is considered highly resistant to bombing. The site, called Fordow, is on a military base and was discovered by Western intelligence agencies several years ago, but Iran only acknowledged the work there in 2009.

The Fordow plant, near the holy city of Qum, is so

deep that Israeli officials say if Iran makes progress there, it will have entered a "zone of immunity" where it would be safe from Israeli or American military action. Getting Iran to halt its 20 percent enrichment, and ultimately dismantle and close the Fordow plant, has been described by American officials as their top priority.

Mr. Abbasi's remarks, which included an announcement that Iran would start building two nuclear power plants in 2013, are bound to complicate the already difficult nuclear talks between Iran and the world powers, which are to be continued in Moscow on June 18. If the talks fail, the powers are planning to tighten sanctions on Iranian exports and financial dealings as early as July 1, including placing an embargo on all sales of Iranian oil to Europe.

Iran's enrichment of uranium is at the center of those discussions, with Western countries suspecting the country of stockpiling enriched uranium that could be rapidly converted into weapons-grade material. Iran says it only wants to produce civilian nuclear energy.

Before the meeting in Baghdad, Mr. Abbasi had hinted that Iran was ready to compromise on its program of enriching uranium up to 20 percent with the isotope capable of sustaining nuclear fission, which it says it needs to fuel an aging United States-designed medical reactor.

Iranian negotiators were under the impression that the Obama administration and its allies, in return, were willing to allow Iran to continue to enrich up to a lower percentage. But during the Baghdad meeting it became clear that such an offer was not on the table, at least for now.

Instead, the world powers offered another proposal, which

called for Iran to export its stockpile of the more highly enriched uranium and suspend any further production. In exchange, the country was to receive supplies of medical isotopes.

That plan was turned down by Iran's negotiators, who made a counterproposal that would have allowed Iran to continue to enrich uranium. It also called for nuclear disarmament and, among other things, cooperation in the fight against Somali pirates in the Horn of Africa.

Both sides expect the other to take the first significant steps, without wanting to compromise on critical issues, said a European diplomat familiar with the talks.

Iranian officials have been unclear about how much of the higher enriched uranium they want to produce. A Friday report by the International Atomic Energy Agency said that Iran had produced 145 kilograms of uranium enriched up to 20 percent, more than it ordered from Argentina in 1988, the last time it needed a stockpile for its medical reactor. In other words, it has already made enough to keep its reactor, which produces medical isotopes, running for another two decades. Iran's insistence on producing more--though it has no reactor to burn the additional fuel--has increased suspicions about its intentions.

In April, Mr. Abbasi said that Iran planned to build five more medical reactors, and that it needed to create a stockpile of fuel for that purpose.

Western powers fear that Iran, if needed, could quickly enrich the uranium to weapons-grade levels of 90 percent or above. But that would require a repiping of its equipment and would most likely be

detected by the energy agency's inspectors.

The energy agency's report also said that in one instance uranium enriched up to 27 percent was found. Mr. Abbasi said it was a technical or operational mistake. Western experts on Friday agreed that such an explanation was plausible.

President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran, who has been largely sidelined in the nuclear talks by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, urged the country's Parliament on Sunday to stand with him against the "evil ones" who he said had encircled the nation.

On Saturday, Mr. Abbasi, a former nuclear scientist who survived an assassination attempt two years ago that is believed to have been mounted by Israel, also highlighted complications in the talks with the energy agency, which took place in Tehran two days before the meeting with the world powers.

After the talks wrapped up, the energy agency's secretary general, Yukiya Amano, who had flown to Tehran for the first time since his appointment in 2009, said that he was near an agreement with the Iranians on extra inspections, including at Parchin, a military base near the capital where the agency suspects military nuclear activities are under way.

Iran's nuclear chief made clear that such an agreement would only be signed if the agency presented evidence that proved Iran was pursuing illegal nuclear activities on the site.

"The reasons and documents have still not been presented by the agency to convince us to give permission for this visit," Mr. Abbasi was quoted as saying by the Fars news agency on Saturday.

David E. Sanger  
contributed reporting.

Washington Post  
May 28, 2012  
Pg. 1

## 19. U.N. Council Condemns Syria In Massacre Of 116

By Liz Sly and Colum Lynch

BEIRUT — The U.N. Security Council on Sunday blamed the Syrian government for most of the deaths in a massacre of 116 civilians in the village of Houla, issuing a unanimous statement condemning the killings that was supported by Syria's staunch allies Russia and China.

The killings on Friday, which included at least 32 children, represented one of the bloodiest single incidents yet in the 14-month-old uprising against President Bashar al-Assad's rule and have served to highlight the failure of a U.N. monitoring mission to halt the violence, which appears to be steadily rising again.

After meeting in a closed-door emergency session Sunday, the 15-member Security Council issued a statement directly accusing Syria of carrying out the killings "of dozens of men, women and children and the wounding of hundreds more. . . in attacks that involved a series of government artillery and tank shellings on a residential neighborhood."

The "outrageous use of force" against civilians constitutes a violation of international law and of Syria's commitment to abide by a U.N.-mandated peace plan, the statement added, calling on Syria to immediately comply with the Security Council resolution endorsing the plan by withdrawing all of its troops and tanks from residential areas.

Russia and China, which have in the past blocked

criticism of Syria's behavior, signed on to the statement, signaling their strongest condemnation yet of the Syrian government. But Russia's deputy U.N. envoy, Alexander Pankin, told reporters after the session that the events leading up to the incident remained "murky." He raised the prospect that a "third force" had carried out the killings to undermine the U.N. monitoring mission on the eve of Monday's visit to Damascus by Kofi Annan, the joint U.N.-Arab League special envoy.

Meanwhile, Germany's U.N. ambassador, Peter Wittig, said there appeared to be no question that the government was responsible. There is "a clear footprint of the government in this massacre," he said.

The exact details of the killings remained unclear, with the chief of the U.N. mission in Syria telling diplomats in New York that he believed the majority of the deaths were caused by government shelling, and residents of Houla claiming that most of those killed had been shot, hacked or bludgeoned to death in their homes by pro-government militias.

The U.N. statement noted that some of the victims had been killed by "shooting at close range and by severe physical abuse."

The Syrian government denied responsibility, saying the killings were the work of "armed terrorists," a phrase repeatedly used by authorities in Damascus to describe the opposition.

Syrian Foreign Ministry spokesman Jihad Makdissi said at a news conference in Damascus that "hundreds of gunmen" carried out the attacks, according to the official Syrian Arab News Agency. They were armed with "heavy weapons,



like mortars, machine guns and antitank missiles, which are newly used in the confrontation with state forces," he said.

The gunmen killed two Syrian army officers and a soldier, injured 16 and massacred civilians in another village near Houla, Makdissi added, without saying how many people were killed there. He said Syrian tanks were not deployed inside Houla and described their positions outside the village as "defensive."

#### **Observers verified shelling**

Briefing Security Council diplomats by video from Damascus, Maj. Gen. Robert Mood, head of the U.N. Supervision Mission in Syria, said that 116 people are thought to have died in Houla and that U.N. observers who visited the town verified that most appeared to have been killed in shelling by government tanks and artillery.

Mood reported that there were "multiple" Syrian army tanks in the Houla area, contradicting the Foreign Ministry spokesman's account and in violation of Syria's commitment to the U.N. peace plan.

He also said there was "clear evidence" of the aftermath of shelling and mortar attacks, according to a diplomat who was at the briefing.

In a letter to the Security Council, U.N. Secretary General Ban Ki-moon said U.N. observers who visited the town saw 85 bodies at a mosque with gunshot and artillery wounds. They also saw more than a dozen other bodies, including those of women and children, some of whom appeared to have suffered "severe physical abuse," the letter said.

Residents of Houla said most of the victims had been killed at close range by the

armed civilians known as the shabiha.

Houla is the name given to a cluster of four small Sunni communities on the northwestern edge of the central city of Homs. It is surrounded by five villages inhabited by members of Assad's minority Alawite sect. The killers were armed civilians from those villages, residents say, underscoring the danger that Syria's conflict could descend into sectarian war.

Houla residents have acknowledged that at least two Syrian army officers were killed in clashes that erupted between local rebels and Syrian forces Friday afternoon. But they assert that the government then embarked on a spree of punitive shelling against the village, after which the shabiha stormed homes in the area and randomly butchered men, women and children.

"Some of them were killed by gunshots at close range, some of them were killed with bayonets, and some of them had their heads smashed," said a Houla resident who uses the alias Hamza al-Omar.

#### **Escalating violence**

The conflicting accounts pointed to the difficulty of establishing what is happening in Syria at a time when journalists' access to the country is restricted and the complexity and scope of the violence appear to be deepening.

A correspondent for Britain's Channel 4 television who visited Houla on Sunday alongside Syrian troops said that although it was clear the army was present in the village, it was also clear the troops were encountering resistance from armed rebels. He said that the troops were pinned down by fire for several hours and that one soldier was shot.

In his letter to the Security Council, Ban said violence is on the rise again, after a shaky cease-fire that went into effect April 12 had somewhat reduced the bloodshed. "Violence against civilian population and clashes between government forces and armed opposition groups in various parts of Syria have escalated in the past two days," he wrote.

As the Security Council was meeting, opposition groups reported the deaths of at least 21 people in an intensive bombardment of the city of Hama, another opposition stronghold. But activists in the town said they feared dozens more had been killed in the shelling, which continued late into the night.

*Lynch reported from the United Nations.*

New York Times  
May 28, 2012  
Pg. 8

### **20. Frustrations Grow As U.S. And Pakistan Fail To Mend Ties**

By Steven Lee Myers and Eric Schmitt

WASHINGTON--When Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton met Pakistan's president at the NATO summit meeting in Chicago last week, the two spent most of the meeting talking politics, and Mrs. Clinton was nothing if not blunt.

President Asif Ali Zardari complained about the difficulties of unifying Pakistan's fractious political parties to support a more aggressive campaign against extremists and noted it was an election year in both countries.

"We don't have the resources or control over these groups," he said, referring to militants based in Pakistan's borderlands. He added, "We're

backed into a corner because you haven't apologized" for a NATO attack in November that killed 24 Pakistani soldiers at an outpost on the border with Afghanistan.

Reflecting the Obama administration's mounting frustration, Mrs. Clinton told him that the only way countries have defeated insurgencies like the ones threatening Pakistan and its neighbor was by forging national unity and exercising political will.

"It's going to take leadership," she told a subdued Mr. Zardari, according to officials from both countries familiar with the hourlong meeting at McCormick Place last Sunday. "It's going to take leadership from you and others."

Mr. Zardari's visit to the summit meeting--after an 11th-hour invitation intended as a conciliatory gesture--went well for neither the United States nor Pakistan. It not only failed to resolve a six-month deadlock over the transportation of supplies to Afghanistan, but it also underscored the poisonous distrust and political chasms in an uneasy alliance that is central to the Obama administration's plan to end the war in Afghanistan.

"You have to look at the meeting in context of whether it's worth the investment having Pakistan as a partner," one Obama administration official said bitingly. The best that that official could say of Mrs. Clinton's meeting with Mr. Zardari was that it was "not a total waste" since she was able to deliver such a pointed message.

Far from moving toward some kind of easing of tension, relations have only worsened since then. On three days last week, American drones fired missiles at what were thought to be insurgent hide-outs in

northwestern Pakistan, ending a brief lull heading into the NATO summit meeting and ignoring demands by Pakistan's Parliament to end the strikes altogether. And on Wednesday, a court in Pakistan convicted a doctor who helped the C.I.A. in the search for Osama bin Laden, sentencing him to 33 years in prison for treason.

The next day the Senate approved a new cut of \$33 million in American military assistance to Pakistan, \$1 million for each year of his sentence.

The failed diplomacy of the last week highlighted the inability of both countries to repair a relationship that was badly frayed by the secret raid that killed Bin Laden in May of last year and then was nearly ruptured by the NATO attack in November. It has raised questions over whether even a more limited security relationship between the two countries is even possible.

"It's an up-and-down relationship," Defense Secretary Leon E. Panetta said Sunday on ABC's "This Week."

Officials from both countries expressed a desire to resolve their differences, but it appeared that both were drifting ever farther apart. "We need to scale back expectations for each other," Sherry Rehman, Pakistan's ambassador to the United States, said in an interview.

For Mr. Zardari, the visit to Chicago was a political disaster at home, exposing the increasingly embattled president to blistering criticism. In a clear diplomatic slight, President Obama refused to hold a meeting with him, speaking to him for only a few minutes on the way to a group photograph of the world leaders who came to Chicago to

map out an end to the war in Afghanistan.

While Mr. Obama later expressed support for "a successful, stable Pakistan," he added, "I don't want to paper over the differences there."

In Pakistan, Imran Khan, a former cricket star who has become one of the most popular opposition leaders, declared the visit a disgrace to the country, and accused the United States and NATO of ignoring the demands of its Parliament and its own sacrifices in the fight against terrorists. "This is not our war," Mr. Khan said of Afghanistan, "so let's get out of it."

The tensions over Afghanistan, over Pakistan's perceived unwillingness to strike against insurgents within its borders and over the continued American drone strikes have resisted a year of efforts to ease them. Mrs. Clinton has now met Mr. Zardari three times since the Bin Laden raid; after the first two she had expressed hope that the relationship was "back on track," as she put it in Islamabad in October.

After Pakistan's Parliament completed a review of relations with the United States in April, Mrs. Clinton and others in the State Department expected that they could reach a new understanding on security cooperation, which has been more or less delayed since November. A series of American delegations visited officials in Pakistan--led by Deputy Secretary of State Thomas R. Nides and Marc Grossman, the administration's special envoy--only to find Pakistan changing its demands in response to domestic politics and, some said, Mr. Zardari's weakened position.

The Pakistani Parliament demanded an unconditional apology for the November

attack and an immediate end to the C.I.A. drone strikes, but it also paved the way for a reopening of NATO supply lines through Pakistan, though at a cost that the administration and members of Congress viewed as extortion.

A brazen attack on Kabul and other Afghan cities in April by the Haqqani network, Islamic militants operating from a base in Pakistan, simply hardened the administration's stance, especially on the apology, something that also would be politically risky for Mr. Obama's re-election campaign.

Even so, a team of American specialists remained in Islamabad to try to hammer out an agreement to reopen the supply routes. Pakistan, stung by the suspension of American military assistance last year, demanded a fee of \$5,000 for each truck that crossed its territory from the port in Karachi to Afghanistan. Before the November attack, NATO had paid \$250.

The Pakistanis also asked for an indemnity waiver in case American cargo is damaged, for some repairs to the port of Karachi, and for road improvements near the border crossings, the senior American official said.

Before the summit meeting in Chicago, the two sides appeared to narrow the difference, with Pakistan asking for \$3,000 and the United States offering to pay up to \$1,000. In hopes of finishing the deal, NATO extended a late invitation to Mr. Zardari to attend, but even the narrow issue of supply routes proved too divisive to resolve.

By the time Mrs. Clinton sat down with Mr. Zardari last Sunday, the administration had lowered its expectations. Tactically, the officials said, she pressed him to tell the NATO

leaders that he was committed to resolving the dispute over the transit of supplies, which he did in a closed meeting the next day.

Most of Mr. Zardari's meeting with Mrs. Clinton was spent on his difficulties unifying the country's political blocs. He responded defensively. "Zardari made it clear it's an election season where he is, and he knows it is here, too," one administration official said.

Mrs. Clinton suggested specific ways to overcome the differences over counterterrorism operations--and to sell them to politicians in Pakistan. The officials declined to discuss those ideas, even on the condition of anonymity. The meeting ended without any clear commitments.

"The secretary," the official said, "sought to make this very clear: Are you guys ready to move and get your whole leadership on the same page? Because sometimes it looks to us like you're not."

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Washington Post  
May 28, 2012  
Pg. 10

## **21. Pakistan's Power Crisis Enrages 'Shattered' Populace**

*Some say daily blackouts may pose a greater threat to stability than militants do*

By Richard Leiby

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan--In the militant-infested northwestern city of Peshawar, hundreds of businessmen recently marched in a mock funeral procession--but not to protest bombings or kidnappings. The "corpse" they carried was an electric meter.

In other areas of the country, shopkeepers have threatened mass suicide to protest 18 to 20 hours of power blackouts every day. Mobs are descending on utility offices to destroy records and



meters, and they have attacked political parties' headquarters during riots that sometimes turn deadly.

This month, Pakistan tumbled into sovereign default for the first time in its history because the government failed to reimburse millions to independent power providers — more proof that, after years of mismanagement and neglect, the nation's energy sector is in extremis.

Now some experts suggest that the power crisis is more of a threat to Pakistan's stability than is terrorism — a bitter outcome given the massive amount of aid the United States has poured into energy projects here over the decades.

A long-running Islamist insurgency has carved 2 percent from the nation's GDP, said Sakib Sherani, a former government economic adviser, whereas rotating daily blackouts — referred to here as "load shedding" — have resulted in a 4 percent loss.

The shutdowns paralyze commerce, stoke inflation and unemployment, and further enrage a restive populace. Load shedding averages five to 10 hours a day in some urban areas and more than double that in rural ones.

Shopkeepers and factories use backup generators if they have them, but businessmen say the rising cost of fuel to run the machines hurts their bottom line.

"We have been shattered by these problems, and the government is responsible," said Muhammad Naeem, sitting in the darkened office of the marble and granite company he runs in Islamabad. Persistent outages have forced him to cut shifts by half and reduce his payroll from 35 people to eight as production has fallen off, he said.

Pakistani officials, while accusing previous governments of neglecting a predictable crisis, say coal, nuclear and hydropower projects are in the works, as are electrical grid and dam repairs to boost capacity. But relief is years away.

"The government knows the suffering of people. It is trying its best to resolve the electricity shortage problems," said Zargham Eshaq Khan, a spokesman for the Ministry of Water and Power. "The results will be evident in time."

#### **U.S. assistance on energy**

Many power-improvement efforts are backed by the U.S. Agency for International Development, which says it has made the energy sector its priority in Pakistan. With \$865 million in overall assistance this year, Pakistan is on the receiving end of the second-largest USAID program in the world, according to State Department officials. The share of aid devoted to energy this year is \$112 million.

Yet, for all its efforts, USAID has earned scant credit among the Pakistani public, polls have shown. And reliance on non-Pakistani contractors and high administrative costs have fueled resentment, according to a recent Congressional Research Service report on aid to Pakistan.

Some Pakistanis are critical of a U.S. approach in which money was spread around too thinly for years, instead of focusing on more visible, large-scale public works projects. "The U.S. authorities' main problem is that they don't support tangible projects," said Arshad Abbasi, an analyst on water and energy issues.

U.S. officials say they have struck a good balance in funding, and USAID has decided to focus on fewer

projects without cutting the total dollar amount.

But Congress seems hardly in the mood to keep shipping money to Islamabad, which has blocked NATO supply convoys from traveling through its territory into Afghanistan for the past six months. Lawmakers have bridled at the Obama administration's request for \$2.4 billion in aid to Pakistan for 2013.

"Pakistan is like a black hole for American aid," Rep. Gary L. Ackerman (D-N.Y.) said during a House Foreign Affairs subcommittee hearing this month. "Our tax dollars go in. Our diplomats go in, sometimes. Our aid professionals go in, sometimes. Our hopes go in. Our prayers go in. Nothing good ever comes out."

During the past decade, he added, "we have sunk \$24 billion in foreign assistance into Pakistan. It's hard to fathom how so much money can buy so little."

The help on energy goes back much further. In the 1960s and '70s, a consortium of U.S. construction firms, backed with USAID funds, built two huge earthen dams, considered at the time to be marvels of engineering, to harness the hydroelectric might of the Indus basin waters that emanate from the Himalayas.

The dams accounted for 70 percent of the country's power output at the time, and they still produce electricity, but Pakistan did not maintain them. USAID has funded repairs to the largest dam, Tarbela, but Congress has not released money for refurbishing the other, Mangla.

#### **A sector riddled with problems**

Even with U.S. and other donor money, the problem is monumental. Pakistani power stations are running at 20 to 25 percent capacity, experts say;

transmission lines are rickety and failing.

The government's energy-sector debt, caused by subsidies and uncollected bills, is estimated at \$4.4 billion. Pakistan defaulted on obligations of nearly \$500 million to a group of nine independent utility companies that are supposed to be guaranteed payments. The default, which stems from a complex arrangement involving energy producers and distributors and the state oil company, could lead to a downgrade in the country's credit rating.

"After this fiasco, who do you think will invest in setting up power plants in Pakistan?" asked Farooq Tirmizi, a blogger and head of business reporting for the Express Tribune, an English-language daily. "The silence from international investors will be deafening. You might even hear it over the roar of your generators which you will have to run almost constantly."

Load shedding has stoked public unrest for several years, but the power crisis seems to have finally come to the forefront of political discourse, even if government leaders have no immediate solutions.

On a day this month when Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani's cabinet was supposed to be focused on reopening the NATO routes and mending Pakistan's relationship with the United States, it was instead consumed by hours of debate over how to deal with the energy crisis.

One proposal is to crack down on individuals and industries that pirate electricity from the grid or just don't pay their bills — a perennial problem. But the government is known to protect the deadbeats if they are prominent enough.

"Politicization takes place, so you provide electricity whether a person pays or not," said Abdullah Yusuf, chairman of an advisory committee for the nine power producers. And, on a smaller scale, meter readers take bribes to instruct residents on how to disable the devices and, thus, lower their bills or evade payment altogether.

USAID's \$112 million contribution this year for energy does not impress Yusuf. "In relation to the quantum of the problem, it is actually peanuts," he said. "If you want to see positive results, there has to be a bigger commitment."

Just as searing summer temperatures took hold last week, the government announced energy price increases in an effort to pay its bills.

"As a small business, we are paralyzed — our job depends on electricity," said Raja Hassan, 25, who owns a photocopying machine that he sets up in a busy Islamabad market, dispensing copies for a few cents per page. He rents a space in front of a toy shop that has no generator, so when the power cuts off, he is out of business.

In some northwestern regions, where support for militants is strong, 22-hour-a-day load shedding has been reported. It could hardly get worse — but it may feed the country's other existential threat.

"The energy crisis is a fertile breeding ground for extremism and insurgency against the state," said Sherani, the economist. "You see the huge demonstrations, the people are jobless, and the businesses have shut down — so that is like playing into the hands of extremists. It is serving their cause."

*Special correspondent  
Shaiq Hussain in Islamabad  
contributed to this report.*

MiamiHerald.com

May 27, 2012

## **22. Father Of Prisoner Of War Speaks At Annual Rally**

By Stacy A. Anderson,  
Associated Press

WASHINGTON -- The father of a U.S. soldier who was taken prisoner in Afghanistan thanked the motorcycle riders of Rolling Thunder on Sunday for raising awareness of missing-in-action troops and prisoners of war.

At the annual Rolling Thunder rally on the National Mall, Bob Bergdahl promised his son: "You will come home. We will not leave you behind."

Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl, 26, of Hailey, Idaho, was taken prisoner in Afghanistan nearly three years ago. He is the subject of a proposed prisoner swap in which the Obama administration would allow the transfer of five Taliban prisoners long held at the U.S. military prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba.

Bergdahl said he couldn't be happier with the government's efforts to return his son.

"This is a complicated issue and it's going to demand all aspects of American government. And we need joint cooperation, we need every level, every agency and every dimension of American government to cooperate and pay attention," he said. "We're on a mission to get our son home and we're not going to stop until we accomplish that."

Motorcyclists attending the ceremony wore yellow wristbands with Bergdahl's name and the date he went missing on them. Many also wore the traditional biker

gear of leather vests and riding boots, even though temperatures reached the 90s.

Hundreds of thousands of bikers, including military veterans and non-veterans, gathered in the nation's capital this weekend for the Rolling Thunder rally.

Washington Times

May 28, 2012

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## **23. 'Until They Take Care Of Everybody'**

*Thunder still on its mission for POW/MIA remembrance*

By David Hill, The  
Washington Times

As hundreds of thousands of motorcyclists gathered Sunday morning outside the Pentagon for the 25th annual Rolling Thunder ride into the District, Jim Bradley couldn't help but marvel at the scene.

Mr. Bradley, a retired Air Force lieutenant, rode in his first Rolling Thunder 15 years ago and has come back every year since — each time leaving in awe of the boundless patriotism and sheer scale of the event, which is held to honor veterans, including prisoners of war and service members missing in action.

"It's important that the people up on Capitol Hill know that it's the politicians' responsibility to account for everyone they send over there," said Mr. Bradley, 73, of Apollo Beach, Fla. "We're here to let them know that we're going to be here until they take care of everybody."

An estimated 400,000 people rode in Sunday's rally, traveling en masse through the District and to the Mall to cap a weekend of vigils, concerts, speeches and other events.

The first Rolling Thunder was in 1988, organized by a group of Vietnam War veterans who sought to bring attention

to the veterans unaccounted for overseas.

About 2,500 riders participated in the first ride, using their roaring engines as a way to grab the attention of U.S. officials.

It would be an understatement to say the event has grown since then.

"#This is just phenomenal. I've never seen so many bikes in my life," said Kaye Hollifield of Edenton, N.C. "#We just can't afford to forget the price that they've paid."

Many of the riders were decked out in jeans and leather vests with military insignia on the hot, humid afternoon, looking every bit the part of a tough, grizzled biker gang while also fostering a strong, positive message.

"#When you usually see a crew of bikers go down the road, you want to move out of the way and go somewhere else," said Rich Anderson, 49, a retired Army specialist from Bristow, Va. "#But when you see them in a pack, all with the flags, it kind of brings out a different feeling."

While many riders were veterans, many more were civilians who came to honor friends, family members and even complete strangers who have devoted their lives to protecting the country and in some cases paid the ultimate price.

"#I've lost uncles and friends and everything. I'll do anything to support a soldier," said Mike Evangelho of Brick, N.J., a civilian who brought along a friend who served in Vietnam.

Organizers consider Rolling Thunder to be more of a demonstration than a parade, as it has the very serious goal of raising awareness of the more than 80,000 U.S. service members who are unaccounted for since World War II, including Army Sgt. Bowe



Bergdahl being held captive by the Taliban - the only current U.S. POW from the war in Afghanistan.

#If they think there's no patriotism in the United States, let them come here, # Mr. Bradley said. #These are people that want to show some appreciation for the military and pay their respects to those who never come back. #

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot  
May 28, 2012

## 24. Virginia Beach Church Pays Tribute To Fallen Troops

By Hattie Brown Garrow, The Virginian-Pilot

VIRGINIA BEACH--On the lawn of Eastern Shore Chapel Episcopal Church, a field of American flags waved in the wind, as if saying hello to the cars zooming past on Laskin Road.

A woman pulled to a stop, held her cellphone out the car window and snapped a photograph before driving away.

There are 6,460 miniature flags in all - one for each American service member killed during the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. Parishioners planted them in the ground Sunday, just in time for Memorial Day.

The morning began with an outdoor service. Facing a wooden cross, the congregation - about 270 people in all - gathered on benches and folding chairs, under a canopy of trees.

Afterward, flags in hand, they headed for two grassy areas in front of the church to create the patriotic display.

The Rev. James Sell, the transitional rector, had heard of similar flag plantings at other churches. He pitched the idea to parishioners and asked for donations to cover the cost of

the flags. They were eager to help.

Marty Thumel researched the names of the fallen. She compiled the typed list - including date of death, age, rank and unit - in a burgundy binder. It spans 70 pages, double-sided.

"I wanted each of these flags to have a name," Thumel said.

Sunday afternoon, the flags flapped in the breeze, a stunning reminder of the many lives lost in the past decade. They sat in the shadow of a larger American flag atop a metal pole. There they'll remain through Flag Day - June 14 - and maybe even until the Fourth of July if the grass doesn't get too high.

An SUV pulled into the largely empty church parking lot. A man stepped out, then a woman. They walked to the edge of the lawn and paused. His arm draped over her shoulder.

They stayed only a few minutes - to pay tribute, he said, wishing to remain anonymous.

Chicago Tribune  
May 27, 2012  
Pg. 25

## 25. Memorial Day: Gold Stars, Taps

*CIA's Petraeus feels 'nothing short of awe' for U.S. troops*

By John Byrne, Tribune reporter

The crowd that filled Daley Plaza Saturday for Memorial Day ceremonies was as quiet as the throng of NATO protesters in the same spot just over a week earlier had been boisterous.

But Ald. James Balcer, 11th, a Marine veteran who emceed Saturday's event, told attendees--many of whom either served in the military or had a family member killed in combat--that a connection exists between the two.

Last week the NATO summit was held here. Protesters were allowed to protest and voice their opinion," Balcer said. "Why? Because the people in this audience, your loved ones, provided them and all Americans with that right to peaceful protest."

David Petraeus, director of the CIA and a retired general who led forces in Iraq and Afghanistan, addressed the crowd, calling those who have served in overseas conflicts over the past decade "the new greatest generation."

"I felt nothing short of awe watching our troopers faithfully carry out their difficult missions day after day, month after month, year after year," Petraeus said.

The annual awarding of gold star banners to the family of military members from Illinois who died in the past year was possibly more solemn than usual, given the event also paid tribute to the 150th anniversary of taps, a bugle call that has become synonymous with the deaths of American service members.

It also marked the first Memorial Day since American troops left Iraq at the end of 2011.

But there was still a litany of Illinois combat deaths to be read, with people stepping forward as the names of their family members echoed off the buildings around the plaza.

Katie Tobin came from Winchester, a town about 250 miles southwest of Chicago, to accept a banner on behalf of her husband, Andrew Tobin, a 24-year-old Army sergeant who was killed in Kandahar, Afghanistan, on Aug. 24. when his unit got caught in a gunfight.

"I wanted to remind Americans there's still a war going on, and people are still dying, and there's people still suffering," Tobin said about

her reasons for coming to Chicago. "Memorial Day isn't about barbecues and hot dogs, it's about thanking a soldier for volunteering."

Newport News Daily Press  
May 28, 2012

## Military Update

## 26. New Heroes, Fresh Heartbreak

By Tom Philpott

Even as the war in Afghanistan is featured less often on evening newscasts or front pages of our newspapers, Americans still involved in the fight continue to die there, deepening the pool of Memorial Day remembrances with new heroes and fresh heartbreak.

To glimpse what's still being sacrificed on Afghan soil, Courtney Knox, the 24-year-old widow of Army Sgt. JaBraun Knox, of Auburn, Ind., agreed to tell us about her husband and how he died May 18 at a forward operating base near Asadabad, Afghanistan. The first thing to understand about JaBraun, Courtney said after finalizing his funeral arrangements, is that he "loved making people smile." And no one was more important to him than Braylon, his 6-month-old son.

Courtney and JaBraun began dating her senior year at DeKalb High School in Auburn. A year older than JaBraun, Courtney was a basketball star who went on to score more than 1,000 points for Huntington University. JaBraun, a three-sport athlete himself, had hoped to play college football. As that dream passed, he took community college courses but didn't enjoy them.

"He had absolutely no plans of ever joining the Army," Courtney said. But by late 2008, the economy had tanked and JaBraun got laid off from his factory job. Suddenly



the military seemed to offer options.

"He had no idea what he wanted to do and just felt he was stuck," Courtney said. So JaBraun visited a joint-service recruiting office at the mall to learn about becoming a Marine. He would quip he ended up a soldier because every other recruiter except Army that day had gone to lunch.

He entered boot camp in January 2009 and by summer was deployed to Iraq, two days after his 21st birthday. Courtney was surprised but supported his decision. Iraq, however, was dangerous.

"He never told me too much because I'm a worrier," Courtney said. "He did say there were always a lot of close calls, closer ones than he had imagined. He had a hard time talking about it too when he was home. He would always get kind of choked up and never gave me specific details."

During leave half way through his year in Iraq, JaBraun proposed to Courtney. They agreed on a courthouse wedding before he returned to Iraq.

JaBraun explained to Courtney's parents, Matt and Kim Beerbower, how their daughter was the "love of my life" and that if something happened to him, marrying now would ensure that she was taken care of financially, through his military life insurance and death gratuity.

He promised later to fulfill their expectation of a traditional church wedding and reception. He kept that promise. The couple returned to Indiana to make their vows "before God," Courtney said, in November 2010. Braylon was born in October 2011, two weeks before JaBraun left for Afghanistan. He was a cannon crewman with 1st Battalion (Air Assault), 377th

Field Artillery Regiment, 17th Fires Brigade out of Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash.

JaBraun's crew fired howitzers on enemy positions to protect forces on patrol and to answer enemy rocket attacks on their mountain base. The attacks occurred daily, he soon learned. In fact, as Courtney traveled back home to Indiana, and JaBraun arrived at his forward operating base, enemy rockets landed that day inside their perimeter.

"They were new and didn't know where things were," Courtney recalled JaBraun telling her about his scramble to find shelter. "He said some guy actually pushed him out of the way [of a rocket] and the guy who did ended up losing his leg. He called me and he was upset about that. He knew then how serious it was over there."

With warmer weather, the rocket attacks intensified, to six or eight a day, he told her. They were connected through Skype several times a day. Courtney also sent perhaps 20 photos a day of Braylon via email. JaBraun watched their son grow even as the danger around him intensified.

On a surprise visit home in April, JaBraun said Skype failed to capture how his son had gotten so much bigger and how alert he was. He spent every possible hour there at home with him, Courtney said, while she continued to substitute teach for school staff on maternity leave.

After getting ready for bed JaBraun's last night home, Courtney found him on the floor beside Braylon's crib, holding the sleeping infant's hand.

"He did that for about 20 minutes. It was really emotional. I just let him be, let him have his time with him before he left."

Back in Afghanistan, the couple resumed multiple Skype

sessions every day. On May 16, JaBraun had an important message to deliver.

"He just started telling me how much he loved me and how proud he was and what a good mom I was. He was going on and on and on. I said 'What is this about?'"

"I don't know," he said. "I just don't tell you enough how much you mean to me, how much I love you. I need to start doing that more."

Two days later, Courtney's dad, a school guidance counselor, found her in her classroom. He said they had to go home.

"I asked why. He said he just had to drive me home. I kind of stared at him. He said, 'Braylon is fine. But we need to go.' I instantly knew something had happened to JaBraun."

A soldier and chaplain waited at her parents' home. They said JaBraun had been killed. His base had been receiving incoming fire when a round hit an ammunition pile in his gun pit.

JaBraun's funeral, to be held soon after Memorial Day, is expected to be well attended and exceed the funeral home's capacity of 300 mourners, Courtney said. So it's been moved to the World War II Museum in Auburn where she and JaBraun had hosted their wedding reception not so long ago.

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Defense News

May 28, 2012

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## 27. DoD's Next Crisis: Excess Inventory

By Zachary Fryer-Biggs

With billions of dollars in excess inventory stuffed in warehouses, and a flood of items expected to return from Afghanistan in the near future, the U.S. Defense Department is facing an

inventory crisis without an easy way to eliminate extra items, a former director of the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) said.

That could translate to yet another cost that Pentagon planners have failed to foresee, and one they'll have to address as the department tries to cut expenses.

Keith Lippert, a retired U.S. Navy vice admiral who stepped down as DLA director in 2006, told an audience May 23 at the Defense Logistics and Materiel Readiness Summit in Alexandria, Va., that the inventory problem facing DoD is troubling given current fiscal pressures, and certain to get worse.

"There is a need to dispose of material," he said. "We have to free up this warehouse space, and in terms of priorities of all the things that they do at DLA and the services ... if there are 25 things that have to be done, disposal is probably number 26."

The excess inventory is all-encompassing: parts and supplies for vehicles, gear, weapons--everything the U.S. military has needed over a decade of fighting two wars.

"You add to this everyone coming back from Afghanistan and Iraq, all the material coming in, it's just going to compound the problem," Lippert said.

Beyond the issue of priority, Lippert said, excess inventory is also a practical problem. Many of the items must either be sold for pennies on the dollar, marketed for a higher value through foreign military sales, or destroyed, simply because the U.S. lacks enough space to store all the items once they return from overseas. All three solutions require manpower that is already stretched thin trying to keep track of needed parts in warehouses with too many items.

### Lack of Metrics

Recognizing its growing stockpiles that include more than \$9 billion of excess in an inventory valued at roughly \$100 billion, according to 2010 figures released by DoD, the department launched the Comprehensive Inventory Management Program in 2010.

A Government Accountability Office report on the program, released in May, found that DoD has likely avoided \$1 billion in cost, but that a lack of metrics could seriously harm its efforts to cut inventory.

"As part of the plan, DoD is developing metrics to assess the effectiveness and efficiency of its inventory management, but it has not determined if it will incorporate these metrics into guidance," the report said. "This may hamper its ability to assess inventory management performance and sustain management attention on improvement."

The report, however, did cite the systemic inventory issues that have plagued the Pentagon for years.

"Since 1990, we have identified DoD supply chain management as a high-risk area due in part to ineffective and inefficient inventory management practices and procedures, weaknesses in accurately forecasting the demand for spare parts, and challenges in achieving widespread implementation of key technologies aimed at improving asset visibility," it said. "These factors have contributed to the accumulation of billions of dollars in spare parts that are excess to current requirements."

Concerned about the pace at which the DoD is eliminating inventory, Lippert, who is the chief strategy officer at Accenture National Security

Services, said that without action, the Pentagon will be overwhelmed.

"All the reduction that may happen will be offset because here comes this other stuff," he said. "And if you think disposal is a challenge now, just wait till all this comes back, because inventory is going to grow and it's going to become a bigger challenge."

Although the GAO report points to concerns about DoD's ability to reduce its existing stockpiles, Lippert said that stronger action, possibly in the form of congressional hearings, is likely needed to cause real change.

"It's probably going to take some kind of burning platform to get everyone's attention other than a new GAO report," he said.

### Analyzing Data

Part of what has made the process so difficult has been the lack of data on inventory, but that has changed in recent years, experts said.

"There's a lot of data that's being generated, automated data," said Col. Edward Mays, assistant commander for acquisition, logistics and product support at Marine Corps Systems Command. "It exists, but we haven't had the time to think about how to use it."

Now, with usable data, the armed forces are starting to use statistical analysis to more intelligently manage inventory and service schedules, although on only a small scale.

Mays leads a small group at his command that is attempting to find inefficiencies and savings. In the year it has been operating, the group identified nearly \$50 million in mine-resistant ambush-protected vehicle servicing and parts savings, among other areas.

The emphasis on analysis comes as the focus on war fighting begins to decline and fiscal restraint enters regular parlance.

"We supported the war fighter, but many things fell to the side," Mays said. "As we went off to war, we haven't really thought much about policy. We've been running really hard, we've been doing a lot of things, but we haven't thought about policy."

Mays said that his work is being considered by the chain of command, but that the magnitude of the problem makes solutions difficult to implement. The use of the statistical analysis that and others are doing can be a boon in the new age of efficiency, Lippert said.

"There's no doubt in my mind that there are all kinds of savings here," he said.

ArmyTimes.com  
May 27, 2012

### 28. Gays Graduate Openly At Military Academies

By Brian Witte, Associated Press

ANNAPOLIS, Md.--Gay students at America's military service academies are wrapping up the first year when they no longer had to hide their sexual orientation, benefiting from the end of the "don't ask, don't tell" policy that used to bar them from seemingly ordinary activities like taking their partners openly to graduation events.

For the first time, gay students at the U.S. Naval Academy in Annapolis were able to take a same-sex date to the academy's Ring Dance for third-year midshipmen. The U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., officially recognized a club for gay students this month. And

gay cadets at the U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., are relieved they no longer have to worry about revealing their sexuality.

Several gay students from the nation's major military academies said the September repeal of "don't ask, don't tell," an 18-year-old legal provision under which gays could serve as long as they didn't openly acknowledge their sexual orientation, meant significant change.

"For the most part, it allows us to be a complete person, as opposed to compartmentalizing our lives into different types of boxes," said newly commissioned Air Force 2nd Lt. Dan Dwyer, who graduated from the Air Force Academy on Wednesday. West Point held its graduation Saturday, and the Naval Academy's was set for Tuesday.

Official recognition by the Air Force school in May of the social club Spectrum means gay students there won't have to meet underground anymore.

Students and gay alumni also say the repeal is creating professional benefits by opening doors to mentorship possibilities. Being open about their orientation gives students and experienced military personal one more common experience that can foster a mentoring relationship, they said.

"That's what makes this type of networking a little bit more meaningful in our lives, because they've gone through the same thing and, yeah, it's great to have that family. It's great to have that support," Dwyer said.

Dwyer did not know that a gay alumni group of academy graduates even existed before repeal of "don't ask, don't tell." On Thursday, Trish Heller, executive director of the academy's gay alumni group



called The Blue Alliance, swore him in as an Air Force officer.

"That was all based on the networking and mentorship relationship from Blue Alliance and Spectrum that would not have happened before, because we just didn't have that much of a presence and that much of a connection with the cadets," Heller said.

At West Point, the alumni gay advocacy group Knights Out was able to hold the first installment in March of what is intended to be an annual dinner in recognition of gay and lesbian graduates and cadets. Cadet Kaitlyn Kelly was among the dozens of cadets who attended the privately sponsored dinner. The 22-year-old Chicago resident was finally able to openly introduce her civilian girlfriend at an event marking 100 days before graduation.

"It was a remarkable thing for me, because I had taken her to previous things ... but I had to do the ambiguous, 'Oh, she's my best friend,'"

Kelly emphasizes that she had always been respected by her fellow cadets and officers at West Point and that changes in her day-to-day life have not been dramatic. But both she and fellow graduating cadet Idi Mallari said the repeal lessened their stress.

"My friends and I, we were so relieved that we didn't have to worry about that. Where we might not have necessarily worried about it 100 percent, it was still something in the back of your mind that you kind of always have to watch your step," Kelly said.

Mallari, who was awarded a Purple Heart during his prior service in Iraq as a combat medic, said everyone at the academy has been accepting, with just a couple of exceptions.

"I think it has to do with the fact that we're here at West

Point and everybody here is just a little more educated," said Mallari, a 26-year-old Chicago resident.

In Annapolis, a gay couple attending the U.S. Naval Academy and their classmates posed for a photo in front of the academy's Bancroft Hall with a dozen heterosexual couples for the Ring Dance, when students in their third year receive their class rings.

Midshipmen Andrew Atwill, of Fulton, Ky., and Nick Bonsall, of Middletown, Del., said they received many compliments for bravely standing out in a way students had not before, and they did not receive any negative feedback from attending together.

"Because they made us feel so comfortable for going to the dance with each other, we didn't have to worry about any negative consequences," Atwill said.

*Associated Press Writer Michael Hill in Albany, N.Y., contributed to this report.*

New York Times

May 28, 2012

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## **29. West Point Is Divided On A War Doctrine's Fate**

By Elisabeth Bumiller

WEST POINT, N.Y.--For two centuries, the United States Military Academy has produced generals for America's wars, among them Ulysses S. Grant, Robert E. Lee, George S. Patton and David H. Petraeus. It is where President George W. Bush delivered what became known as his pre-emption speech, which sought to justify the invasion of Iraq, and where President Obama told the nation he was sending an additional 30,000 American troops to Afghanistan.

Now at another critical moment in American military

history, the faculty here on the commanding bend in the Hudson River is deep in its own existential debate. Narrowly, the argument is whether the counterinsurgency strategy used in Iraq and Afghanistan--the troop-heavy, time-intensive, expensive doctrine of trying to win over the locals by building roads, schools and government--is dead.

Broadly, the question is what the United States gained after a decade in two wars.

"Not much," Col. Gian P. Gentile, the director of West Point's military history program and the commander of a combat battalion in Baghdad in 2006, said flatly in an interview last week. "Certainly not worth the effort. In my view."

Colonel Gentile, long a critic of counterinsurgency, represents one side of the divide at West Point. On the other is Col. Michael J. Meese, the head of the academy's influential social sciences department and a top adviser to General Petraeus in Baghdad and Kabul when General Petraeus commanded the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Nobody should ever underestimate the costs and the risks involved with counterinsurgency, but neither should you take that off the table," Colonel Meese said, also in an interview last week. Counterinsurgency, he said, "was broadly successful in being able to have the Iraqis govern themselves."

The debate at West Point mirrors one under way in the armed forces as a whole as the United States withdraws without clear victory from Afghanistan and as the results in Iraq remain ambiguous at best. (On the ABC News program "This Week" on Sunday, the defense secretary, Leon E. Panetta, called the Taliban

"resilient" after 10 and a half years of war.)

But at West Point the debate is personal, and a decade of statistics--more than 6,000 American service members dead in Iraq and Afghanistan and more than \$1 trillion spent--hit home. On Saturday, 1,032 cadets graduated as second lieutenants, sent off in a commencement speech by Vice President Joseph R. Biden Jr. with the promise that they are "the key to whatever challenges the world has in store."

Many of them are apprehensive about what they will find in Afghanistan--the news coming back from friends is often not good--but still hope to make it there before the war is largely over. "We've spent the past four years of our lives getting ready for this," said Lt. Daniel Prial, who graduated Saturday and said he was drawn to West Point after his father survived as a firefighter in New York City on Sept. 11, 2001. "Ultimately you want to see that come to fruition."

At West Point the arguments are more public than those in the upper reaches of the Pentagon, in large part because the military officers on the West Point faculty pride themselves on academic freedom and challenging orthodoxy. Colonel Gentile, who is working on a book titled "Wrong Turn: America's Deadly Embrace With Counterinsurgency," is chief among them.

Colonel Gentile's argument is that the United States pursued a narrow policy goal in Afghanistan--defeating Al Qaeda there and keeping it from using the country as a base--with what he called "a maximalist operational" approach. "Strategy should employ resources of a state to achieve policy aims with the least amount of blood and treasure spent," he said.



Counterinsurgency could ultimately work in Afghanistan, he said, if the United States were willing to stay there for generations. "I'm talking 70, 80, 90 years," he said.

Colonel Gentile, who has photographs in his office of five young soldiers in his battalion killed in the 2006 bloodshed in Baghdad, acknowledged that it was difficult to question the wars in the face of the losses.

"But war ultimately is a political act, and I take comfort and pride that we as a military organization, myself as a commander of those soldiers who died, the others who were wounded and I think the American Army writ large, that we did our duty," he said. "And there is honor in itself of doing your duty. I mean you could probably push back on me and say you're still saying the war's not worth it. But I'm a soldier, and I go where I'm told to go, and I do my duty as best I can."

Colonel Meese's opposing argument is that warfare cannot be divorced from its political, economic and psychological dimensions--the view advanced in the bible of counterinsurgents, the U.S. Army/Marine Corps Counterinsurgency Field Manual that was revised under General Petraeus in 2006. Hailed as a new way of warfare (although drawing on counterinsurgencies fought by the United States in Vietnam in the 1960s and the Philippines from 1899 to 1902, among others), the manual promoted the protection of civilian populations, reconstruction and development aid.

"Warfare in a dangerous environment is ultimately a human endeavor, and engaging with the population is something that has to be done in order to try to influence their trajectory," Colonel Meese said.

In Afghanistan, Gen. Stanley A. McChrystal so aggressively pushed the doctrine when he was the top commander there that troops complained they had to hold their firepower. General Petraeus issued guidelines that clarified that troops had the right to self-defense when he took over, but by then counterinsurgency had attracted powerful critics, chief among them Mr. Biden and veteran military officers who denigrated it as armed nation building.

When Mr. Obama announced last June that he would withdraw by the end of this summer the 30,000 additional troops he sent to Afghanistan--earlier than the military wanted or expected--the doctrine seemed to be on life support. General Petraeus has since become director of the Central Intelligence Agency, where his mission is covertly killing the enemy, not winning the people.

Now, as American troops head home from Afghanistan, where the new strategy will be a narrow one of hunting insurgents, the arguments at West Point are playing out in war colleges, academic journals and books, and will be for decades. (The argument has barely begun over whether violence came down in Iraq in 2007 because of the American troop increase or the Anbar Awakening, when Sunni tribes turned against the insurgency.) To Col. Gregory A. Daddis, a West Point history professor, the debate is also about the role of the military as the war winds down. "We're not really sure right now what the Army is for," he said.

To officers like Brig. Gen. H.R. McMaster, much of the debate presents a false either-or dilemma. General McMaster, who used counterinsurgency to secure the Iraqi city of Tal Afar

in 2005 and returned recently from Kabul as head of a task force fighting corruption, said that without counterinsurgency, "There's a tendency to use the application of military force as an end in itself."

To John Nagl, a retired Army lieutenant colonel who fought in Iraq, wrote a book about counterinsurgency and now teaches at the United States Naval Academy, American foreign policy should "ensure that we never have to do this again."

Does counterinsurgency work? "Yes," he said. "Is it worth what you paid for it? That's an entirely different question."

TheDailyBeast.com  
May 27, 2012

### 30. When The Tragedy Of Two Marines Killed In A Crash Becomes A Nightmare

*Twelve years after their husbands died piloting a flawed plane, two widows are fighting to clear their names. Miranda Green on why the Marines won't budge.*

Twelve years ago, Connie Gruber received news that every wife of an armed serviceman dreads.

"I was at home with the baby and my mom and it was around 3 a.m., so we were all asleep. And that's when the nightmare began, with the knock on the door," Gruber remembers.

The nightmare deepened a few months later when a Marine Corps press release named her late husband and his pilot as responsible for the V-22 Osprey crash that took their lives and killed 17 others.

For more than a decade she has fought to clear her husband, Maj. Brooks Gruber, of the charges. She argues adamantly that pilot error was

not the reason for the crash but the Marines' determination to get the V-22 aircraft ready for deployment above all else.

Her case sheds light on the plane's history of mechanical flaws, responsible for some of the 38 lives lost in crashes, and on the military's stubborn resistance to reevaluating its own findings despite mounting skepticism and a congressman's investigation.

Major Gruber was a helicopter pilot before he started training to fly the V-22 Osprey in 1997.

"Brooks loved that plane," Connie Gruber says. "The first time he flew it he came home and was so excited, like a kid. He said it smelled like a new car and felt like a rocket."

The V-22 was touted for its ability to span distances fast like a plane and take off and land like a helicopter. When it began production in 1981 it was the answer to rescue missions and transportation of troops. But eight years later Dick Cheney, then running the Pentagon, tried to kill the program completely, telling a Senate committee that it was unnecessary and costly. Congress overruled him, though, and partial production of the aircraft started with a budget worth \$40 billion.

The Osprey had its first fatal crash in 1991. Two died, and the accident was attributed to faulty wiring. The next year seven more people were killed when a V-22's engine caught on fire.

Gruber, 34, stationed in Marana, Ariz., in 2000, found the aircraft fraught with maintenance and technology issues--such as bolts coming loose and hydraulic wires being crossed, which often grounded planes before missions.

April 8 was the day the entire Osprey fleet at Marana was scheduled to be in the air for the first time. Connie Gruber

remembers talking briefly to her husband before the mission. It was the last time she would hear his voice.

"He was so excited about this big mission, and they were going to have all the planes up ... but as I hung up the phone I remember thinking, how are they going to have all these aircraft up at one time when they are all in a constant state of repair?" she says.

The fleet was to fly at night with a full passenger load for a mock hostage situation. But when Brooks Gruber, the copilot, and the pilot, Lt. Col. John Brow, set up for landing, they descended too quickly, which gave the aircraft little uplift and caused it to go into what is known as a Vortex Ring State. That stalled one of the Osprey's two helicopter rotors, making the aircraft flip upside down and plummet to the ground.

When Connie Gruber received the accident report in the summer, detailing the factors that led to the crash, pilot error wasn't cited as a cause. In fact, the Marine Corps report expressly states, "We found nothing that we would characterize as negligence, deliberate pilot error or maintenance/ material failure." But a Marines statement later released to the press contradicted the accident report, reading "Unfortunately, the pilots' drive to accomplish that mission appears to have been the fatal factor."

"We had two tragedies at that moment," Gruber recalls. "It wasn't just us trying to come to terms with Brooks's death, it was this accident report. It was like my husband dying two times--first in the flesh and second in the press with his name."

Appalled by the blame-shifting, Connie and Brow's widow, Trish, wrote to Rep. Walter Jones, a North Carolina

Republican who serves on the Armed Services Committee. He took up the wives' cause and agreed that the pilots were not at fault.

"The Marine Corps didn't understand" Vortex Ring State, he says. "Bell-Boeing--the aircraft manufacturers--didn't understand it, and these Marine pilots didn't know how to react."

It took another crash in December 2000, which killed four due to a hydraulic and software error, before the Marine Corps grounded the Osprey fleet. For 18 months the aircraft was redesigned and retro-fitted with a VRS warning signal.

A 2001 Government Accountability Office report found that the Osprey testing process before the tragedy in Marana had been sped up. According to the report, "development testing was deleted, deferred or simulated in order to meet cost and schedule goals." Additionally, it found the aircraft was "far less reliable than what is required."

In that same year a devastating audio recording surfaced of the commanding officer of the Osprey squadron. He was heard telling his men to forge maintenance records and manipulate V-22 data so full production of the fleet would get the green light.

The leak prompted a military investigation that ended with the lieutenant losing his position. He and one other officer received only a letter of reprimand.

"To me it's very simple," Gruber says. "It was a premature mission in an immature aircraft. Brooks flew an airplane that was ultimately downed, grounded for nearly two years, so that adequate testing and life-saving redesign could make it safe for the pilots who flew after him."

However, the Osprey continues today with a less-than-perfect record. A 2010 crash in Afghanistan killed four people and was initially attributed to engine failure. Later, a senior military officer changed the cause of the crash to pilot error.

The most recent Osprey crash occurred April 11 during an annual exercise in Morocco, killing two Marines. The cause has not yet been determined.

Critics say such crashes should not be happening, especially since the V-22 has been around for decades.

"This plane wasn't under fire. It wasn't in a combat situation. If we are just going from point A to point B we shouldn't expect these planes to crash," says Ben Freeman, national-security investigator for the Program on Government Oversight.

He says federal officials support the Osprey program despite its shortcomings for a simple reason: "It has the military equivalent of sex appeal."

"It's truly pretty marvelous technology, to go from being a helicopter to a plane. So that alone has a sort of star power," he says. "I think there is a military need for a program like the Osprey's, but the Osprey isn't fulfilling that need."

The Marine Corps remains adamant that the V-22 is safe, pointing to the list it compiled of Class A Mishaps--incidents involving fatalities or more than \$2 million in damage--which currently ranks the Osprey the third-safest rotorcraft.

"It is highly capable, reliable, and among the safest aircraft in the Marine Corps' inventory," Marine Capt. Richard Ulsh says.

Some critics challenge the list because the numbers are gathered internally and do not

include accidents that occur on the ground.

Richard Whittle, author of *The Dream Machine*, a comprehensive book on the V-22's history, says people have a false perception of the current Osprey.

"There's the Osprey of the dark ages," plagued by crashes, "and there's the Osprey of today," which is unmatched in its ability, he says.

Representative Jones continues to push for a military statement exonerating Gruber and Brow. He's collected statements from the three investigators who compiled the original 2000 accident report, who all say the pilots weren't at fault, and has personally met with the last four Marine Corps commandants.

The Marines, for their part, consider the matter closed. "The Marine Corps is unaware of any new evidence that warrants questioning the findings from the original mishap investigation," says Ulsh.

The two widows aren't giving up.

"Most people don't Google their family and find a negative connotation," Trish Brow says. "My husband was doing his job, he found a new aerodynamic situation with the aircraft, and he lost his life ... and now he's blamed for it."

*Miranda Green is a reporter for The Daily Beast.*

Air Force Times

June 4, 2012

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### 31. First Female Fighter Pilot To Lead Wing

The first U.S. woman fighter pilot is set to become the first woman to command an Air Force fighter wing.

Seymour Johnson Air Force Base, N.C., announced that Col. Jeannie Leavitt will



take the helm of the 4th Fighter Wing in a June 1 ceremony. She replaces Col. Patrick Doherty, who will become director of Air Force assignments at Joint Base San Antonio-Randolph, according to a May 24 announcement.

Leavitt was the service's first female mission-qualified fighter pilot and the first woman to graduate from the Air Force Weapons School, the base said in a news release. She later served as an instructor at the school. This is the colonel's third assignment at Seymour Johnson during her 21-year career. She has logged more than 2,500 hours in the F-15E Strike Eagle.

In 2010, the National Aeronautical Association awarded Leavitt the Stinson Trophy, which recognizes a living woman for an outstanding contribution, a meritorious flight or a technical development in aviation.

-- Kristin Davis

New York Daily News  
May 27, 2012

## 32. Dozens Of N. Korea Officials Dead: Report

Thirty North Korean officials involved in talks with South Korea have been executed or died in "staged traffic accidents," according to a shocking new report.

The Amnesty International investigators say another 200 people were rounded up and executed or sent to political prison camps.

The 30 men were killed - sometimes using a firing squad, according to reports - for failing to improve relations between the North and the South, and are considered scapegoats for the new low point in inter-Korean relations.

North Korea appears to be putting the final touches on

the test detonation of a nuclear device.

Kim Min-seok, a spokesman for South Korea's Ministry of Defence, said intelligence reports indicate the North is ready to carry out the long-awaited test.

--Tina Moore

The Australian  
May 28, 2012

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**Exclusive**

## 33. Budget Axe Risks Survival Of Defence Contractors, Threatens Innovation

By Brendan Nicholson,  
Defence Editor

AS many as half of the 3000 small and medium-sized local companies that provide equipment for the Australian Defence Force are at risk of collapse because of budget cuts and delays to projects.

The warning is contained in a confidential business intelligence report to Industry Minister Greg Combet from his own department's "enterprise connect" group, which was set up to help companies "transform and reach their full potential".

These small to medium enterprises employ 15,000 people, most of them highly skilled and irreplaceable once they move on.

The intelligence report says that these companies play a crucial role across the defence sector, "driving innovation and delivering niche capabilities".

Now lack of certainty may drive many of them out of business.

The companies make everything from parts for the Joint Strike Fighter to top-secret software for locating enemy submarines. "SMEs play a crucial role in ensuring the long-term viability and prosperity of

the broader domestic defence sector," the report says.

"A significant number are not sustainable and there is a risk that many of these clients will not survive, let alone drive innovation and become globally competitive."

Drafted even before the Gillard government cut an additional \$5.5 billion from Defence in the latest budget, the report warns: "The most significant and immediate issue facing defence SMEs is a lack of predictable and continual work flow."

The Gillard government has defended offering assistance to some manufacturing industries, such as the car industry, saying that it was an enabler of skills and innovation.

In an opinion piece in The Weekend Australian, Trade Minister Craig Emerson said Australia "will continue to lose businesses whose practices are based on low wages and outmoded technologies". But, he added, "we can gain many more businesses by playing to our strengths ... and our acquired endowments of skills, innovative flair and entrepreneurship."

The Coalition's spokesman on defence materiel, Gary Humphries, said the damage being done to enterprising defence companies gave the lie to the government's claims to be backing those with skills and innovation. He said he would be raising the industry's fears about the future with government officials at Defence estimates hearings this week.

"This represents a serious deterioration in the conditions defence companies are facing," Senator Humphries said.

"The government's haphazard approach to procurement is leaving hundreds of companies with high costs and uncertainty.

"We're seeing a serious withering of both investment and skills in these industries, which is precisely the opposite of what the 2009 white paper promised."

Senator Humphries said that, as the industry floundered, more of Australia's defence capability would have to be purchased overseas.

"That poses a risk to Australia's security," he said.

The Australian Strategic Policy Institute's defence budget specialist, Mark Thomson, warned last week that severe budget cuts over several years had effectively killed off the plans outlined in the Rudd government's 2009 defence white paper for a potent "Force 2030" equipped with submarines, surface warships, aircraft and other weapons.

The confidential report says a problem for companies is the government's failure to keep to its own Defence Capability Plan, the document produced in conjunction with the white paper through which the government signalled its requirements so that industry could plan and invest to produce the required equipment.

"Enterprise Connect business advisers noted current significant delays in defence projects and divergence from plans set down in the Defence Capability Plan," it says.

A South Australian company that invested \$10 million to obtain work on the Joint Strike Fighter is now in difficulty because of delays to the project, the report says. The delays made it difficult for companies to retain a skilled workforce in the face of competition from other areas, especially the resources industry.

The report gives the example of a small company that developed an innovative system to replace 40-year-



old clamps used by the navy. The new devices were based on research by the Australian Defence Science and Technology Organisation. "The company invested heavily in the technology to deliver a product that was significantly safer, faster and more effective," it says.

"Currently the company is yet to obtain a Defence contract, is facing financial instability after investing significant personal funds and struggling to retain a team who are necessary to ultimately deliver the technology."

"Meanwhile," says the report, "the Canadian Defence Force is trialling the technology."

The 2009 white paper promised to increase defence spending in real terms by 3 per cent a year until 2017-18 and by 2.2 per cent for a decade after that.

That was soon quietly watered down to become "an average of 3 per cent" and Defence Minister Stephen Smith has confirmed the 3 per cent has vanished.

"The deeper you dig into it the worse it looks," an industry official told The Australian.

One of the most telling items in the recent budget papers was the forecast for projects to be approved over the next year.

In last year's budget the forecast for 2012-13 was \$1.174bn. This year that forecast has shrunk to \$248m.

For the following year, the forecast in last year's budget was \$2.658bn worth of projects approved and that has dropped to \$828m.

That's nearly \$1bn gone this financial year and nearly \$2bn gone in the next; in the year after that it's another \$1.7bn.

In a typical year about half of that money is spent in Australia.

Industry figures say that will damage defence companies, especially the small ones, and could cost Australia expertise in key security areas.

Many companies prepared for increased production after the Rudd govt released the 2009 defence white paper, which promised a mass of new ships and aircraft.

The intelligence report says business advisers have provided varying forecasts for their clients' futures, ranging from concerns that only 50 per cent will survive in the long term and only 20 per cent would be profitable to the more positive.

"Firm viability looks reasonably secure in the short to medium term, however there is uncertainty beyond two to three years," it says.

"Typically, firms highly exposed to the defence sector are at greater risk of firm failure while more diversified SMEs have a more optimistic future."

But the report also warns that diversification is often contrary to the niche capability SMEs must deliver in order to prosper in the defence sector and it is often even unattainable.

"The defence sector is unique. Projects are intermittent with long lead times and frequent delays leading to projects that are often high risk," it says.

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### 34. They Earned It

*The selfless actions of at least 10 troops show they deserve the award they've been denied: the Medal of Honor*

By Michelle Tan

Drenched in fuel, his uniform burned off his body, Army Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn C. Cashe crawled out of his

Bradley Fighting Vehicle. The Bradley was engulfed in flames after striking a bomb buried in the road, but Cashe ignored the flames searing his flesh and the rattle of enemy gunfire and went back into the vehicle again and again, pulling out every one of his six soldiers from the wreckage.

Three weeks later, with second- and third-degree burns over more than 70 percent of his body, Cashe died. And for his heroic actions that day outside Daliaya, Iraq, Oct. 17, 2005, the Army awarded him the Silver Star for valor. Now, seven years after his death, a growing chorus of voices argue Cashe's heroism should have rated a Medal of Honor.

In fact, Cashe is just one of at least 10 troops, including four soldiers, three Marines, two airmen and a sailor, whose selfless acts on the battlefield probably would have earned them Medals of Honor in past wars, according to an exhaustive Military Times side-by-side analysis.

No one really knows why that is. But a likely explanation is a directive, issued at the outset of the war in Afghanistan, that urged field commanders to be highly discriminating in valor award nominations in order to "preserve the integrity of the military awards program."

There also might be some reluctance to equate today's warriors with the storied heroes of World War II, Korea and Vietnam. Pentagon spokeswoman Eileen M. Lainez said the criteria for the Medal of Honor have not changed, but noted that contemporary warfare has. Today's troops contend with small groups of insurgents employing asymmetric warfare tactics, rather than the organized formations of enemy

forces in uniform that marked past wars.

She also said that awards citations do not reflect the full range of reports, statements and other evidence that "informs the military personnel who initiate and review the award recommendations."

Whatever the reason, a Military Times analysis of Medal of Honor and service cross awards dating back to 1861 shows that today's troops are being awarded these top valor decorations at a rate that is by far the lowest since the Civil War.

It is just as clear that in many cases, the citations for modern-day Silver Stars, Navy Crosses, Air Force Crosses and Distinguished Service Crosses describe heroic acts that, in prior wars, would have earned the combatants the nation's highest award for valor, the Medal of Honor.

#### Inconsistent standards

Marine Sgt. Rafael Peralta has become the poster child for that argument.

Peralta and fellow Marines were searching homes in Fallujah, Iraq, when they came under withering enemy gunfire just as they entered the back room of a house.

Shot and severely wounded, Peralta fell to the ground. But when the insurgents threw a grenade into the room, witnesses said later, Peralta reached out and pulled the grenade to his body, absorbing the brunt of the blast and shielding his Marine brothers. Peralta died; at least five other Marines in the room survived.

Peralta was nominated for the Medal of Honor, but in what has become one of the most controversial and well-known cases since the beginning of the two wars, awards officials downgraded the nomination when an investigation ordered

by former Defense Secretary Robert Gates ruled there was insufficient evidence to prove that Peralta consciously acted to protect his fellow Marines. When Peralta was ultimately awarded the Navy Cross, his family refused to accept it.

Critics cried foul. Rep. Duncan Hunter, a California Republican, combat veteran and Marine Reserve officer, continues to urge the Pentagon to reconsider the case.

Hunter's interest goes well beyond the Peralta case. He repeatedly has questioned the entire awards system, citing the actions of four service members in particular — Cashe; Peralta; Air Force Staff Sgt. Robert Gutierrez; and Marine Capt. Brian Chontosh — as having been shortchanged in the awards process.

Each received either the Silver Star or a service cross. Each, Hunter argues, deserved more — and it's likely many others have also been short-changed. He wants the Defense Department to review the process and criteria for awarding the Medal of Honor.

"When you have DoD saying fighting in Helmand or Kunar is not as barbaric as World War II, but you still have Marines and soldiers breaking down doors and getting into sustained firefights, you have them patrolling remote areas of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border, their story doesn't fit. And we just want to know why," Hunter said. "There wasn't a single living recipient [of the Medal of Honor from these wars] until 2010. In that long combat, in different terrain, in Iraq and Afghanistan, and the heroism displayed by thousands of people, there wasn't a single action that was deserving of the Medal of Honor committed by a person who lived through that action? I just don't buy it."

The standards for the Medal of Honor are so inconsistent, Hunter and other critics say, that the same actions that earn one person a Silver Star might bring the Medal of Honor to someone else.

In fact, it may all boil down to the nomination.

#### **Who deserves the MoH?**

From World War I through the Vietnam War, including World War II and the Korean War, the Medal of Honor was awarded at a rate of 2.3 to 2.9 per 100,000 troops. But since the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, the rate has been 0.1 per 100,000.

A similar disparity occurs at the next tier of valor awards: Distinguished Service Cross, Navy Cross and Air Force Cross, awarded today at a rate of about 2 per 100,000 active-duty troops, versus 20 per 100,000 during the Vietnam War and as high as 167 in World War I.

Ten service members — six soldiers, two Marines and two sailors — have been awarded the Medal of Honor for actions in Iraq or Afghanistan. Only three are living. Army Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta was the first living recipient of the Medal of Honor since Vietnam — another factor that rankles critics of the process. It took nine years of war before a living service member was awarded an MoH.

Francis Harvey, Army secretary from November 2004 to March 2007, endorsed at least two Medal of Honor nominations: Army Cpl. Tibor Rubin for his actions during the Korean War, and Army Maj. Bruce Crandall for his actions in Vietnam.

Harvey said he does not remember seeing a current service member nominated for an MoH during his tenure.

"As a civilian... you rely on the fact that they are being judged by their fellow soldiers,

people who have been trained in combat, many of whom have been in combat," Harvey said.

That few cases make it that far doesn't surprise retired Army Lt. Gen. Guy Swan, who served as director of operations for Multi-National Force-Iraq and now is a vice president for the Association of the United States Army.

"The current conflicts have raised the bar to some degree, in my mind," Swan said. "Is that fair? I don't know. ... But there is a raising of the bar in this force, in everything we do. Soldiers are held to a higher standard in everything they do, not just the Medal of Honor."

Lee Freund, head of the Marine Corps' Military Awards Branch, said no two cases are really alike.

"Not every circumstance and detail is exactly the same, and the board members who review these things, they look at all the nitty-gritty details," he said. "It is going to be subjective, but that's the nature of military awards, as it has been throughout our history."

In the end, however, the integrity of the awards can be marred by inconsistency in determining which actions merit the MoH and which do not.

Nicholas Eslinger was an Army second lieutenant and platoon leader in the 101st Airborne Division in October 2008 when he and his soldiers were on a dismounted patrol in Samarra, Iraq. An insurgent threw a grenade into their formation, and Eslinger sprinted six feet to the grenade, picked it up and threw it back; it exploded as he yelled for his men to take cover. Eslinger, who is now a first lieutenant, received the Silver Star.

Yet his actions very closely mirror those of Medal of Honor recipient Army Staff Sgt. Leroy Petry.

On May 26, 2008, Petry and his fellow Rangers came under attack as they moved to clear a courtyard in Afghanistan. Petry was shot in both legs. A grenade exploded and knocked down two of the other Rangers. When a second grenade landed a few feet away, the wounded Petry moved forward, picked it up and hurled it away from his fellow soldiers. But as he released the grenade, it exploded, blowing off Petry's right hand at the wrist and peppering him with shrapnel.

The difference between Eslinger and Petry had less to do with bravery than injury. Eslinger was fortunate enough to have more time, and came away unscathed. Petry just had less time to do exactly the same thing.

Then there is the case of Sgt. James Witkowski, an Army reservist who gave his life to save others on Oct. 26, 2005. Witkowski was a gunner in a Humvee turret, riding in a 23-vehicle supply convoy to Forward Operating Base Suse northeast of Kirkuk, Iraq.

As the convoy rumbled down the road, several improvised explosive devices went off, and the convoy was peppered with rocket-propelled grenades, small-arms fire, mortars and armor-piercing rounds.

Witkowski was firing back with the .50-cal when an enemy grenade landed in his turret. He kept shooting, then laid his body on the grenade, absorbing the blast.

He was posthumously awarded a Silver Star.

His story is similar to that of Army Pfc. Ross McGinnis, who was also manning the .50-cal on a Humvee in Adhamiyah, Iraq, when a grenade clattered into the turret. "Grenade!" McGinnis shouted to the other four soldiers in the truck. Then



he covered the grenade with his body. He, too, died of his wounds.

The difference between Witkowski and McGinnis: The latter was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, which President George W. Bush presented to his parents at a White House ceremony.

#### **Few MoH nominations**

The process for nominating troops for the Medal of Honor varies slightly among the services, but all nominations are reviewed and endorsed by the chairman of the Joint Chiefs and the secretary of defense before they are submitted to the president for a final decision.

But very few nominations actually emerge from the war zone.

Army commanders have forwarded only seven Medal of Honor nominations; all but one were approved (that one was downgraded to a Distinguished Service Cross).

Two Marines have been awarded the Medal of Honor, while two other nominations were downgraded and awarded as Navy Crosses. The Navy has awarded two SEALs the Medal of Honor.

No airman has been awarded the Medal of Honor for actions in Iraq or Afghanistan; five have been awarded the Air Force Cross. Army commanders have two years from the date of the action to nominate a soldier for the Medal of Honor, while Marine commanders have three years. The medal, if approved for a soldier, must be awarded within three years from when the action took place, said Lt. Col. Ralph Perkins, chief of the Army Awards and Decorations Branch. A medal for a Marine must be awarded within five years, Freund said.

"Determining the most appropriate level of award for a Marine or sailor who performs

an act of valor is, by its nature, a challenging process that requires the commanders to distinguish between varying levels of valor and achievement in combat," Freund said.

Army Maj. Gen. Reuben Jones is now deputy commander for operations at Installation Management Command but served from 2006 to 2009 as the adjutant general of the Army, where he was responsible for the processing and managing of awards nominations. He acknowledges that the awards process is subjective.

The process, he said, "is bureaucratic, but I think a lot of that bureaucracy is there to ensure we get it absolutely right."

Sometimes it's the service member's chain of command that submits an award nomination, only to later realize that their troop likely should have been nominated for a higher-level award.

In the cases of Cashe and Witkowski, their commanders initially nominated them for Silver Stars.

Col. Gary Brito, who was Cashe's battalion commander, said he learned more and more about Cashe's actions over time because several witnesses were wounded and not initially available for input; others had been medically evacuated back to the U.S.

"With what we knew at the time, the Silver Star was suggested as an appropriate award, but more information came in through witness statements, forensics," he said. "And that night was not the end of our chaos. It continued up until two or three days before we left."

As he learned more about Cashe's actions, Brito said, he made a personal decision to "at least request an upgrade." He hasn't quit since.

"I'm continuing the effort to make a final submission for the award of the Medal of Honor," Brito said.

Brito declined to provide specifics, but he said he has additional witness statements and information that were not available when Cashe was nominated for the Silver Star.

"I'll be the first to say I would not pursue this if, in my heart, I didn't feel it was justified," he said. "I fully respect the thoroughness and the procedures that the military awards branch has to follow... and whatever decision comes out of it, we've fought the good fight and done all we can."

Maj. Patrick McNamara was the executive officer of Witkowski's transportation company. When he and the commander at that time, Maj. Sean Cannon, who is now a colonel, learned about Witkowski's actions, they were "just in awe," McNamara said.

"Had Sgt. Witkowski not been on that mission, it would have been several caskets that would have been sent home that night," he said.

It was clear that Witkowski's actions warranted a valor award, McNamara said.

"That was without question," he said. The question was what award they would suggest.

"At our level, at the company level, a captain and a commander who's a major, the Medal of Honor was, to us, something that was in a different universe. The Silver Star was something we decided on. This was a big deal what he did and it needs to be recognized. There really wasn't much discussion about the Medal of Honor at the time."

"Now, seven years later, looking back and with some empirical evidence of citations and other Medals of Honor that have been presented since then,

I think Sgt. Witkowski's actions were just as noteworthy and comparable," he said.

McNamara said he hopes Witkowski's award will be reviewed and upgraded.

#### **Nature of combat a factor**

That McNamara never considered anything higher than a Silver Star doesn't surprise retired Army Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Schloesser, who commanded the 101st Airborne Division in Afghanistan in 2008-2009. He vetted and endorsed four successful nominations for Medal of Honor awards for his troops and oversaw an exacting nomination process in his unit.

"I think that generally speaking, most commanders don't even think about putting someone in for the Medal of Honor," he said. "Part of this is the nature of these wars that we're fighting — or have fought, in the case of Iraq. The majority of our combat, while it is incredibly vicious and brutal, it happens on a small level — platoons, mostly. It doesn't involve large units, so you don't often see really senior commanders actually seeing that combat right on the ground."

Schloesser believes decades from now "we will be discovering an act of valor by a soldier, Marine, sailor or airman in Iraq or Afghanistan that we'll turn around and present a Medal of Honor for."

#### **A 'clear' choice**

Army Maj. Dan Kearney nominated a living soldier for the Medal of Honor — perhaps the first such nomination in a generation.

Kearney commanded B Company, 2nd Battalion, 503rd Infantry Regiment, during its 2007-2008 deployment to Afghanistan. One of his troops, Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta, ran through heavy enemy fire to rescue a badly wounded comrade Oct. 25, 2007.

Kearney had already thought about what it takes to earn a Medal of Honor, so he was ready when he learned of Giunta's actions.

"I had something in mind — that individual had to take part in an event that would have changed the outcome of events in the regional command and obviously the brigade," Kearney said. "Giunta repatriated an American soldier. Had we lost an American soldier, the amount of assets and manpower and money that would have been lost would have been insurmountable."

As soon as he heard about Giunta's actions, Kearney said, he knew what he was going to do.

"I immediately looked at my first sergeant and said, 'We're putting him in for a Medal of Honor. That was even before I knew he was shot in his breast plate and before I knew he killed those other guys,'" he said. "The thing we knew was we had a man missing, no one knew where he was, that Sal just went running into the dark into an ambush and came back with Josh Brennan, and went back into the fight."

Putting together the Medal of Honor nomination took months, but Kearney said the whole chain of command was convinced Giunta was worthy.

"This was so clear in everybody's minds that he deserved it that nobody had any hesitation, and nobody had any trouble capturing that in words," he said.

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#### **DoD Stands By Medal Of Honor Criteria**

Pentagon spokeswoman Eileen M. Lainez issued a statement to Military Times saying the criteria for the Medal of Honor have not changed over the generations.

However, she added that "World War II, the Korean

War, and the Vietnam Conflict frequently involved close conflict with an organized enemy formation — an attribute different from contemporary operations. The conduct of warfare has evolved significantly over the past 30 years.

"Technological advancements have dramatically changed battlefield tactics, techniques and procedures since that time," Lainez wrote. "Persistent surveillance and reconnaissance platforms... coupled with improved intelligence and more robust data sharing and communications capabilities,... provide commanders with the capability to quickly engage known insurgent positions with precision-guided stand-off weapons, reducing the number of individual combat actions."

She continued: "The current conflict is an asymmetric war being fought against small bands of non-uniformed insurgents, who inflict damage on our Service members by utilizing tactics and techniques that minimize their risk of being personally engaged by our superior forces... which also reduce individual combat actions."

Since September 2000, there have been 47 Medals of Honor awarded, more than three-quarters for past conflicts, said Doug Sterner, military awards expert and curator of the Military Times "Hall of Valor" database, the nation's most comprehensive such resource. Of those, only 10 have been for current conflicts; all the rest were for past wars.

"DoD says there is not a problem with the awards process. However, just in the last 12 years, they have found 37 mistakes that were made in wars decades old," Sterner said, citing the May 16 posthumous

award of a Medal of Honor to a Vietnam veteran.

"Decades from now they will finally correct the records when [today's troops] are old and forgotten? Wouldn't it be better for them to do it now, today? Every generation needs its heroes. ... DoD needs to ensure this generation is not robbed of its heroes."

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#### **Who Merits The Medal Of Honor? A Side-By-Side Analysis**

Excerpts from award citations compare troops who were awarded Medals of Honor with those awarded lesser honors:

##### **1. Breaking An Ambush Marine Cpl. Dakota L. Meyer**

Medal of Honor; Sept. 8, 2009, Kunar province, Afghanistan

Meyer maintained security at a patrol rally point while other members of his team moved on foot with two platoons of Afghan National Army and Border Police into the village of Ganjgal. ... The patrol was ambushed by more than 50 enemy fighters firing rocket-propelled grenades, mortars and machine guns from houses and fortified positions on the slopes above. ... With a fellow Marine driving, Meyer took the exposed gunner's position in a gun-truck as they drove down the steep terrain. ...

Disregarding intense enemy fire, ... Meyer killed a number of enemy fighters with the mounted machine guns and his rifle, some at near point-blank range, as he and his driver made three solo trips into the ambush area. During the first two trips, he and his driver evacuated two dozen Afghan soldiers, many of them wounded. When one machine gun became inoperable, he directed a return to the rally point to switch to another gun-

truck for a third trip into the ambush area ... Despite a shrapnel wound to his arm, Meyer made two more trips into the area to recover more wounded Afghan soldiers and search for missing U.S. team members. Still under heavy enemy fire, he dismounted the vehicle on the fifth trip and moved on foot to locate and recover the bodies of his team members.

##### **No Award: Army Capt. Will Swenson**

Sept. 8, 2009, Kunar province, Afghanistan

Fought in same battle with Meyer. Award under review. Said Meyer: "If it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be alive today."

##### **2. Saves Lives In A Burning Vehicle**

##### **Army Sgt. 1st Class Alwyn Cashe**

Silver Star (posthumous); Oct. 17, 2005, Daliaya, Iraq

... The lead Bradley Fighting Vehicle, of which Cashe was gunner .... struck a victim-detonated pressure-switch IED. The blast ignited the fuel cell on the vehicle causing fuel to spew everywhere. The vehicle erupted in flames. Cashe was initially slightly injured and drenched with fuel. Despite his condition, he bravely managed to get out of the gunner's hatch, crawl down the BFV and assist the driver out of the hatch. The driver had been burned and Cashe extinguished his flames. Six soldiers and a translator were in the back of the Bradley. Flames had engulfed the entire vehicle. The squad leader inside the vehicle managed to open the troop hatch door to help the soldiers escape. ... Cashe rushed to the back of the vehicle, reaching into the hot flames and started pulling out his soldiers. The flames gripped his fuel-soaked uniform. Flames quickly spread all over his body. Despite the



terrible pain, Cashe placed the injured soldier on the ground and returned to the burning vehicle to retrieve another burning soldier while he was still on fire. A crew from a trail Bradley arrived within moments and assisted. ... The national translator was killed, and 10 soldiers were injured. Cashe[s] ... injuries were the worst as he suffered from second-and third-degree burns over 72 percent of his body.

**Army Capt. James Allen Taylor**

Medal of Honor; Nov. 9, 1967, Que Son, Vietnam

Taylor's troop was engaged in an attack on a fortified position west of Que Son when it came under intense fire from an enemy strong point located immediately to its front. One armored cavalry assault vehicle was hit immediately by recoilless rifle fire and all five crew members were wounded. Taylor rushed forward, aware the vehicle may explode, and extracted the wounded to safety despite the hail of enemy fire and exploding ammunition. Within minutes a second armored cavalry assault vehicle was hit. Despite the intense enemy fire, Taylor moved on foot to rescue the wounded men from the burning vehicle and removed all the crewmen to safety. Moments later, the vehicle exploded.

As he was returning to his vehicle, a bursting mortar round wounded Taylor, yet he valiantly returned to his vehicle to relocate the medevac landing zone to an area closer to the front lines. His vehicle came under machine-gun fire from an enemy position not 50 yards away. Taylor engaged with his machine gun, killing the three-man crew.

Another vehicle was struck when it arrived at the new medevac site. Taylor again rushed and pulled the wounded

from the vehicle and loaded them aboard his vehicle.

**3. Shielding Others From A Grenade**

**Marine Sgt. Rafael Peralta**

Navy Cross (posthumous); Nov. 15, 2004, Fallujah, Iraq

Clearing scores of houses in the previous three days, Peralta asked to join an under-strength squad and volunteered to stand post the night of Nov. 14, allowing fellow Marines more time to rest. The following morning, during search and attack operations, while clearing the seventh house of the day, the point man opened a door to a back room and immediately came under intense, close-range automatic weapons fire from multiple insurgents. The squad returned fire, wounding one insurgent. While attempting to maneuver out of the line of fire, Peralta was shot and mortally wounded. After the initial exchange of gunfire, the insurgents broke contact, throwing a fragmentation grenade as they fled the building.

The grenade came to rest near Sergeant Peralta's head. Without hesitation and with disregard for his own safety, Peralta pulled the grenade to his body, absorbing the brunt of the blast and shielding fellow Marines only feet away.

**Marine Pfc. James Anderson Jr.**

Medal of Honor (posthumous); Feb. 28, 1967, Cam Lo, Vietnam

Company F was advancing in dense jungle northwest of Cam Lo in an effort to extract a heavily besieged reconnaissance patrol.

Anderson's platoon was the lead element and had advanced only about 200 meters when the Marines came under intense enemy small-arms and automatic weapons fire. The platoon returned fire. Anderson

was tightly bunched with other members of the platoon only 20 meters from the enemy positions. As the firefight continued, several of the men were wounded. Suddenly, an enemy grenade landed in the midst of the Marines and rolled alongside Anderson's head. Unhesitatingly and with disregard for his safety, he grasped the grenade, pulled it to his chest and curled around it as it went off.

Although several Marines received shrapnel from the grenade, [Anderson's] body absorbed the major force of the explosion.

**4. Fighting To Save Others While Wounded**

**Air Force Staff Sgt. Robert Gutierrez Jr.**

Air Force Cross; Oct. 5, 2009, Herat province, Afghanistan

While assigned as a combat controller to an Army Special Forces detachment, Gutierrez and his team conducted a ... nighttime raid to capture the number two Taliban leader in the region. ... The team was attacked with a barrage of rifle and heavy machine-gun fire.

Gutierrez was shot in the chest, his team leader was shot in the leg, and the 10-man element was pinned down in a building with no escape route. ...

Gutierrez ... refused to relinquish his duties as joint terminal attack controller.

Under intense fire, he engaged Taliban fighters with his M-4 rifle and brought in three A-10 strafing runs against enemy forces just 30 feet away. After the first A-10 attack, the team medic performed a needle decompression to re-inflate Gutierrez's collapsed lung, allowing him to direct the next two strafing runs, which decimated the enemy force and allowed the team to escape. Throughout the four-hour battle, Gutierrez's

valorous actions ... helped save the lives of his teammates and dealt a crushing blow to the regional Taliban network.

**Airman 1st Class William H. Pitsenbarger**

Medal of Honor (posthumous); April 11, 1966, Cam My, Vietnam

Pitsenbarger was aboard a rescue helicopter on a medevac call. ... Pitsenbarger volunteered to ride a hoist more than 100 feet through the jungle to the ground. On the ground, he organized and coordinated rescue efforts, cared for the wounded, prepared casualties for evacuation, and ensured that the recovery operation ran smoothly. ... As each of the nine casualties evacuated that day were recovered, Pitsenbarger refused evacuation in order to get one more wounded soldier to safety. After several pickups, one of the two rescue helicopters was struck by heavy enemy ground fire and was forced to leave for an emergency landing. Pitsenbarger stayed behind to perform medical duties. The area came under sniper and mortar fire. During a subsequent attempt to evacuate the site, American forces came under heavy assault.

When the enemy launched the assault, the evacuation was called off and Pitsenbarger took up arms with the besieged infantrymen. He resisted the enemy, braving intense gunfire to gather and distribute vital ammunition to American defenders. As the battle raged on, he repeatedly exposed himself to enemy fire to care for the wounded, pull them out of the line of fire, and return fire whenever he could. He was wounded three times. ... In the vicious fighting that followed, the American forces suffered 80 percent casualties as their perimeter

was breached. Pitsenbarger was fatally wounded.

### **5. Silencing An Enemy Ambush**

#### **Marine 1st Lt. Brian R. Chontosh**

Navy Cross; March 25, 2003, Ad Diwaniyah, Iraq

While leading his platoon toward Ad Diwaniyah, Chontosh's platoon moved into a coordinated ambush of mortars, rocket-propelled grenades and automatic weapons fire.

With coalition tanks blocking the road ahead, he realized his platoon was caught in a kill zone. He had his driver move the vehicle through a breach, where he was immediately taken under fire from an entrenched machine gun. Chontosh ordered the driver to advance directly at the enemy position, enabling his .50-caliber machine gunner to silence the enemy. He then directed his driver into the enemy trench, where he exited his vehicle and began to clear the trench with an M16A2 service rifle and 9mm pistol. His ammunition depleted, Chontosh ... twice picked up discarded enemy rifles and continued his attack. ... He cleared over 200 meters of the enemy trench, killing more than 20 enemy soldiers and wounding several others.

#### **Army Pfc. Lewis Albanese**

Medal of Honor (posthumous) Dec. 1, 1966, Phu Muu II, Vietnam

Albanese's platoon, while advancing through dense terrain, received intense automatic weapons fire from close range. Albanese was ordered to provide security for the left flank of the platoon, which received fire from enemy in a well-concealed ditch. Realizing the imminent danger to his comrades, Albanese fixed

his bayonet and moved into the ditch. His action silenced the sniper fire, enabling the platoon to resume movement toward the main enemy position. The ditch was actually a well-organized complex of enemy defenses designed to bring devastating flanking fire on the forces attacking the main position. Albanese, disregarding the danger, advanced 100 meters along the trench and killed six of the snipers, who were armed with automatic weapons. Having exhausted his ammunition, Albanese was mortally wounded when he engaged and killed two more enemy soldiers in fierce hand-to-hand combat.

### **6. Absorbing A Grenade Blast**

#### **Army Sgt. James Witkowski**

Silver Star (posthumous); Oct. 26, 2005, Ashraf, Iraq

Witkowski's convoy was ambushed and came under fierce, sustained attack from small-arms fire, roadside bombs, insurgents throwing hand grenades and from rocket-propelled grenades throughout a mile-long kill zone.

Witkowski manned a .50-caliber machine gun on his armored truck and held the attackers at bay with sustained suppressive fire. An enemy grenade landed in his gun turret. Had he jumped aside, the grenade explosion would have killed three fellow soldiers.

Witkowski stayed at his post, continued firing and took the full blast of the grenade.

#### **Army Pfc. Ross A. McGinnis**

Medal of Honor (posthumous); Dec. 4, 2006, Adhamiyah, Iraq

His platoon was conducting combat control operations in an effort to reduce sectarian violence in the area. While McGinnis was manning the M2 .50-caliber machine gun, a

fragmentation grenade thrown by an insurgent fell through the gunner's hatch into his vehicle. Reacting quickly, he yelled "grenade," allowing all four members of his crew to prepare for the grenade's blast. Rather than leaping from the gunner's hatch to safety, McGinnis made the decision to protect his crew.

McGinnis covered the live grenade, pinning it between his body and the vehicle and absorbing most of the explosion. McGinnis' gallant action directly saved four men from certain serious injury or death.

### **7. Bravery Against An Overwhelming Force**

#### **Air Force Capt. Barry F. Crawford Jr.**

Air Force Cross; May 4, 2010, Laghman province, Afghanistan

While attached to Army Special Forces Operational Detachment Alpha and their Afghan partner force, Crawford ... received a high volume of accurate machine gun and sniper fire from an enemy force well over 100 fighters. ... Crawford took decisive action to save the lives of three wounded Afghan soldiers and evacuate two Afghan soldiers killed in action ... [and] ran into the open to guide the helicopter to the landing zone. Once the pilot had eyes on his position, Crawford remained exposed, despite having one of his radio antennas shot off mere inches from his face, while he vectored in the aircraft. ...

Crawford then bounded across open terrain, engaged enemy positions with his assault rifle and called in AH-64 strafe attacks, allowing the aid-and-litter teams to move toward the casualties. ...

The team's exposed position once again came under attack from two enemy trucks. As one of the aid-

and-litter teams was pinned down by enemy fire, and the medical evacuation helicopter took direct hits from small-arms fire, it departed with only four casualties, leaving one wounded Afghan soldier on the ground. Crawford developed, coordinated and executed a plan to suppress the enemy, enabling the helicopter to return to the hot landing zone to retrieve the last casualty.

The assault force conducted a two-kilometer movement over steep terrain with little to no cover. The ground force commander and Crawford's element were ambushed and pinned down from multiple enemy positions. Crawford again engaged the enemy with his assault rifle while integrating AH-64s and F-15Es in a coordinated air-to-ground attack plan that included strafing runs along with 500- and 2,000-pound bomb and Hellfire missile strikes. Throughout the course of the 10-hour firefight, Crawford braved enemy fire while controlling over 33 aircraft and more than 40 airstrikes.

#### **Air Force Chief Master Sgt. Richard Loy Etchberger**

Medal of Honor (posthumous) March 11, 1968, Laos

Etchberger and his team of technicians were manning a defensive position at Lima Site 85 when the base was overrun by an enemy ground force. Receiving sustained and withering heavy artillery attacks directly on his unit's position, Etchberger's entire crew lay dead or severely wounded. With little or no combat training, Etchberger singlehandedly held off the enemy with an M-16, while simultaneously directing airstrikes into the area and calling for air rescue.

Because of his selfless actions, he was able to deny the



enemy access to his position and save the lives of his remaining crew.

When rescue aircraft arrived, Etchberger repeatedly risked his life, exposing himself to heavy enemy fire to place three surviving comrades into rescue slings hanging from the hovering helicopter waiting to airlift them to safety. With his remaining crew safely aboard, Etchberger finally climbed into an evacuation sling, only to be fatally wounded by enemy ground fire as he was being raised into the aircraft.

#### **8. Sacrificing Self To Save Others**

**Marine Lance Cpl. Donald J. Hogan**

Navy Cross (posthumous) Aug. 26, 2009, Helmand province, Afghanistan

While on a dismounted patrol in Helmand province, Hogan's squad came under attack from an enemy fighter attempting to command detonate a directional fragmentation improvised explosive device. Hogan observed a kite string leading onto the road from an adjacent corn field being pulled taut in an attempt to activate the IED. Hogan recognized the attack was imminent and that he had only moments to react. Hogan hurled his body into the nearest Marine in an effort to keep him from the effects of the imminent explosion. Hogan then turned in the direction of the IED and placed himself in the road so that he could effectively yell warnings to the rest of his squadmates. This desperate effort to warn the rest of the patrol bought the remaining Marines valuable seconds to begin moving away from the IED before it detonated.

**Marine Cpl. Jason L. Dunham**

Medal of Honor (posthumous) April 14, 2004, Karabilah, Iraq

Dunham's squad was on a reconnaissance mission in Karabilah when they heard rocket-propelled grenade and small-arms fire erupt approximately two kilometers to the west. Dunham led his Combined Anti-Armor Team toward the engagement to provide fire support. .... As Dunham and his Marines advanced, they took enemy fire.

Dunham ordered his squad to dismount their vehicles and led one of his fire teams on foot several blocks south of the ambushed convoy. Discovering seven Iraqi vehicles in a column attempting to depart, Dunham and his team stopped the vehicles to search for weapons. As they approached the vehicles, an insurgent leaped out and attacked Dunham, who wrestled the insurgent to the ground and, in the ensuing struggle, saw the insurgent release a grenade. Dunham immediately alerted his fellow Marines to the threat.

Dunham covered the grenade with his helmet and body, bearing the brunt of the explosion and shielding his Marines from the blast.

#### **9. Emergency Medical Aid Without Concern For Safety**

**Navy Lt. Mark L. Donald**  
Navy Cross; Oct. 25, 2003, Afghanistan

... part of a multi-vehicle mounted patrol ambushed by heavy fire from rocket-propelled grenades and small arms. ... Donald exited the vehicle and began returning fire. While under heavy and continuous machine gun fire, he pulled the wounded Afghan commander to relative safety ... left his position, exposing himself to the small-arms fire, and pulled a wounded American trapped ... to cover

behind the vehicle. He covered the wounded with his own body while returning fire and providing care. ... He then took charge of an Afghan squad in disarray, deployed them to break the ambush, and continued to treat critically injured personnel ... . That afternoon, while sweeping an area of earlier action, a U.S./Afghan element was ambushed near Donald's position. Knowing personnel were gravely wounded, Donald ran 200 meters between opposing forces, exposing himself to continuous fire to render medical treatment to two wounded personnel ... .

Under intense enemy fire, wounded by shrapnel, and knowingly within dangerously close range of attacking U.S. Army AH-64 Apache helicopter rockets, he organized the surviving Afghan soldiers and led a 200-meter fighting withdrawal to friendly positions. ... and withdrew to base before treating his own wounds.

#### **Navy Hospital Corpsman 2nd Class David Robert Ray**

Medal of Honor (posthumous) March 19, 1969, Ah Hoa, Vietnam

An estimated battalion-sized enemy force launched a determined assault ... and penetrated the barbed-wire perimeter. Enemy fire caused numerous casualties among the Marines who had immediately manned their howitzers during the rocket and mortar attack.

Ray moved from parapet to parapet, rendering emergency medical treatment to the wounded. Although seriously wounded, he refused medical aid and continued his lifesaving efforts. While he was bandaging and attempting to comfort another wounded Marine, Ray was forced to battle two enemy soldiers who attacked his position, killing one and

wounding the other. Rapidly losing strength as a result of his wounds, he managed to move through the hail of enemy fire to other casualties. Once again, he was faced with the intense fire of oncoming enemy troops and ... succeeded in treating the wounded and holding off the enemy until he ran out of ammunition and was fatally wounded. Ray's final act of heroism was to protect the patient he was treating. He threw himself on the wounded Marine, thus saving the man's life when an enemy grenade exploded nearby.

#### **10. Throwing Back A Grenade**

**Army 2nd Lt. Nicholas M. Eslinger**

Silver Star; Oct. 1, 2008, Samarra, Iraq

Under limited visibility conditions, while moving dismounted through heavily populated streets ... 1st platoon was attacked with a single anti-personnel hand grenade. ...

Eslinger realized that if the grenade detonated where it landed, it would kill or injure at least six soldiers. ...

Eslinger ran toward the grenade approximately six feet in front of him, and covered it with his body. When the grenade did not immediately go off, he threw it back over the wall in the direction of the enemy. ...

knowing there was a high probability that the grenade could detonate and kill him as he tried to save his soldiers. Upon throwing the grenade, he yelled for his men to get down and take cover. As they were following his order, the grenade detonated; no soldiers were wounded or killed by the grenade's explosion. Following the blast, Eslinger took immediate action to eliminate the enemy threat ... [leading] to the detention of

the individual that threw the grenade ...

**Army Staff Sgt. Leroy A. Petry**

Medal of Honor; May 26, 2008, Paktya province, Afghanistan

Petry moved to clear the courtyard of a house that potentially contained high-value combatants. While crossing the courtyard, Petry and another Ranger were wounded by automatic weapons fire from enemy fighters. Still under enemy fire, and wounded in both legs, Petry led the other Ranger to cover. He reported the situation and engaged the enemy with a hand grenade, providing suppression as another Ranger moved to his position. The enemy responded by maneuvering closer and throwing grenades. The first grenade explosion knocked his two fellow Rangers to the ground and wounded both with shrapnel. A second grenade landed only a few feet away. Instantly realizing the danger, Petry moved forward, picked up the grenade, and in an effort to clear the immediate threat, threw the grenade away from his fellow Rangers. As he was releasing the grenade, it detonated, amputating his right hand at the wrist and further injuring him with multiple shrapnel wounds. ... Despite the severity of his wounds, Petry placed a tourniquet on his right wrist before communicating the situation by radio in order to coordinate support for himself and his fellow wounded Rangers.

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**Time, effort, accuracy essential to nomination process**

When it comes to the Medal of Honor, retired Army Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Schloesser has the Midas touch: Of the six troops awarded the nation's top decoration for valor in

Afghanistan, he vetted and endorsed four.

Another four troops were awarded the MoH for actions in Iraq.

Schloesser describes a painstaking process — that began before deployment — to ensure that every valor award nomination is fully worthy of the heroism behind it.

"I do think that this whole process of nominating and selecting and presenting, if possible, especially in theater, is truly one of the most important things a commander does in combat," said Schloesser, who commanded the 101st Airborne Division during its 2008-2009 deployment to eastern Afghanistan.

But the awards process can be difficult, Schloesser and other battlefield commanders told Military Times.

When he commanded Regional Command-East, Schloesser and his command team reviewed the Medal of Honor nominations for Army Staff Sgt. Salvatore Giunta, the first living recipient of the award for actions in Iraq or Afghanistan; Army Staff Sgt. Robert Miller; Army Staff Sgt. Leroy Petry; and Marine Cpl. Dakota Meyer.

Schloesser said he vividly remembers preparing the nomination for Giunta.

"We went over it and over it," he said. "I take this extraordinarily seriously. In times of really extended combat like this, you see that the public tends to glamorize service. Every returning soldier, Marine, sailor and airman that comes from the combat zone is treated like and is called a hero. It's the job of the commander in combat to determine who, in fact, are heroes based on brave, intrepid, gallant acts, at risk to their own lives."

But because the process can be difficult, Schloesser

assembled a board of his most senior leaders — his command sergeant major, his two one-star deputies and his O-6 chief of staff — to help him sift through all the valor award nominations — Silver Star, Distinguished Service Cross, Medal of Honor — that reached the headquarters.

"The board was, to me, very important because I had a large mix of wide experience of combat," Schloesser said. "We were able to, in many cases, really put the potential award into context."

Army Col. Bill Ostlund, who was Giunta's battalion commander, addressed the awards issue with his battalion leadership team before the unit's 2007-2008 deployment.

"Prior to deploying, prior to being confronted with the harsh realities of combat and the associated emotions, [we] sat down and reviewed [the Army military awards regulation] and agreed on an interpretation of the regulation's purposeful vague guidance," he said.

Included were Ostlund's command sergeant major, executive officer, operations officer, operations sergeant major, company commanders and first sergeants for this meeting.

"It takes a lot of vested people to gather the facts, write the awards, board them and submit them to higher headquarters," Ostlund said. "We put together a matrix, and it was a guide that proved key to our confidence in being able to competently assemble award recommendations."

The leadership team also put together guidance for commanders on how to effectively write award nominations.

"Our intent was [to be] efficient and effective," he said. The preparation paid off. To date, the battalion's

soldiers during that deployment have been awarded one Medal of Honor, two Distinguished Service Crosses and 26 Silver Stars, in addition to a Presidential Unit Citation and a Valorous Unit Award.

Schloesser recalled investing significant time and effort on the Medal of Honor nominations.

"These become binders of 100 pages ... because you're required to have sworn statements, and they have to be written in a way that completely demonstrates and supports this level of conspicuous intrepidity and gallantry."

A Medal of Honor nomination should capture the entire event, from terrain and weather, to the proximity of the enemy and their firepower, enemy casualties, and the impact of the nominated service member's actions, he said.

"This is really because they're trying to protect the integrity of the award," Schloesser said. "It's a very significant amount of work that has to be done, [and] the process itself is meant to protect the integrity of the award and ensure someone does not receive these awards without absolutely, positively deserving them."

Retired Army Lt. Gen. Mike Oates agreed.

Oates, who served as deputy commander of the 101st Airborne Division and later as the commander of the 10th Mountain Division, said that because the awards process has "a lot of subjectivity associated with it" commanders must take the time to properly put together the nomination packets.

"It's not about making the language flowery or emotional," said Oates, who helped shepherd the Medal of Honor nomination for Sgt. 1st Class Jared C. Monti, who was posthumously awarded



the medal for actions in Afghanistan in 2006. "In fact, the strongest nominations are the ones that are most clear and objective about what a soldier did... that way, the person who is reading the award recommendation can close their eyes and see clearly what has happened."

Commanders who take the time and effort to put together the awards packets typically are the ones who have the most success in getting their awards approved, Oates said.

"Commanders have to be consistent, and they have to support their recommendations with objective information," he said. "If you write a good recommendation, I think you're generally going to be successful in recognizing soldiers for their acts of heroism. You just can't be sloppy about it and expect the institution's going to fix that for you."

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May 28, 2012  
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### **35. Long Battle To Get Civil War Officer Medal Of Honor In Its Final Charge**

By Stephen Dinan, The Washington Times

When the House this month voted to waive the time constraints on issuing the Medal of Honor for Lt. Alonzo Cushing, it brought the artillery officer and hero of the Union stand at Pickett's Charge one step closer to the military's highest honor--though in the eyes of his supporters, it's 149 years late.

Cushing still has a few steps to go.

The Senate must pass the waiver, and then President Obama must concur with the Defense Department, which has recommended Cushing for the medal, a century and a half

after he and his men faced the furious attack of Gen. George Pickett's Virginians, whose repulsed assault on Cemetery Ridge at Gettysburg has been deemed the turning point in the war.

For Cushing's supporters, the path to the medal has been tortuous, but they say seeing it awarded as the country nears the 150th anniversary of Gettysburg would be fitting tribute.

Congress must get involved because the law sets a time limit on how long after the action someone can be nominated. With the waiver moving now through Capitol Hill, backers are cautiously optimistic.

"We'll believe it when we see it, but I am really happy about it," said Kent Masterson Brown, a Kentucky lawyer who in 1993 published a biography of Cushing that has helped arm a disparate group of folks pushing for Cushing's recognition.

Cushing, a Wisconsin-born West Point graduate, was in command of an artillery battery in the middle of what became known as "The Angle," a stone wall that became the fulcrum for some of the fiercest fighting in the entire war. With Cushing's battery down to two guns, Gen. Alexander Webb told him to withdraw to the rear, but the 22-year-old lieutenant instead asked for and was granted permission to advance.

Weak from two previous wounds, he gave orders through his aide, Sgt. Frederick Fuger, who called them out to the battery. A third bullet pierced his heart, killing Cushing on the battlefield.

Both Fuger and Webb were awarded the Medal of Honor for their actions during Pickett's Charge, but Cushing was not.

Usually, those pushing for honors for long-dead military men are descendants. But this time, it's people with

much more tenuous personal connections, but who saw an injustice to be corrected.

Mr. Brown is one of those.

He first encountered Cushing's story in 1964 when as a teenager his family stopped at Gettysburg, and he saw the park's cyclorama, the giant 360-degree painting that depicts the furious final Confederate assault. At one point in the presentation, the spotlight focused on Cushing, the young lieutenant dying near his guns.

In the ensuing years, Mr. Brown dabbled with trying to track down information on the young soldier, finally hitting pay dirt when he learned of a trunk of Cushing's letters sent back home to his family, then living in Chautauqua County in New York. His book helped spark interest in giving Cushing the Medal of Honor.

"I spent more years working on him than he did living," Mr. Brown said. "I absolutely just love this kid."

Even as Mr. Brown was working, Cushing was getting a boost back in Wisconsin from Margaret Zerwekh, a nonagenarian who lives on part of what used to be the Cushing family's farm, along the Bark River in Delafield, west of Milwaukee.

"I'm interested in history, and I'm interested in the people who owned my land," said Ms. Zerwekh, who helped spur Cushing's case through letters to presidents, senators and congressmen, her first being written in 1987 to then-Sen. William Proxmire, Wisconsin Democrat.

She's been written up in the New York Times, and her dedication to the cause has been infectious for those around her. Delafield's government has written a letter pleading Cushing's case.

And in recent years, Ms. Zerwekh has been aided by David Krueger, who serves as Delafield's point man in trying to push for recognition.

"Not only the United States, but the world changed because of what a handful of guys did right there. This was the largest two armies to fight on this continent, the largest bombardment on this continent," Mr. Krueger said. "After a series of defeats the previous two years, the boys in blue held fast."

Alonzo Cushing never married, leaving him without the descendants who usually push for legacy recognition. But pressure has built organically, including a Facebook page "Give Alonzo Cushing the Medal of Honor."

A decade ago, the situation came to the attention of then-Sen. Russell D. Feingold, who in 2003 officially nominated Cushing for the Medal of Honor. Mr. Feingold lost his re-election bid in 2010, but in true bipartisan spirit, the cause was picked up by Wisconsin Sens. Herb Kohl, a Democrat, and Ron Johnson, the freshman Republican who defeated Mr. Feingold.

In the House, meanwhile, Wisconsin Democratic Rep. Ron Kind and Wisconsin Republican Rep. F. James Sensenbrenner Jr. pushed for action and, along with the support of some members of Congress from New York, eventually won passage of the amendment as part of the annual defense policy bill earlier this month.

The legislation must see action in the Senate, but the defense bill is deemed a must-pass measure, so barring any calamity or unforeseen opposition from the Pentagon or White House, Cushing should finally get his medal.

The Defense Department didn't return messages seeking comment.

Now out of office, Mr. Feingold said that with Cushing finally nearing the ultimate military honor, credit belongs to the Wisconsinites who wouldn't relent.

"Sir Francis Bacon said that truth is the daughter of time, but in this case truth had some help from a group of devoted citizens with immense pride in Alonzo Cushing's actions and Wisconsin history," Mr. Feingold said. "They deserve our congratulations as well."

It's not unprecedented for Congress to get involved in Medal of Honor matters, though more often it has been to waive the time limits for awarding the medal to troops who fought in Vietnam or World War II.

One time Capitol Hill did intervene on behalf of Civil War soldiers came five years ago, when Congress passed legislation urging the president to award the medal to Pvt. Philip G. Shadrach and Pvt. George D. Wilson, who were part of Andrews' Raiders, the two dozen Union men who made a daring raid into the Confederacy to cut telegraph and railroad lines.

Eight of the men were hanged as spies, and some who escaped became the first to receive the newly created Medal of Honor in 1863. Eventually, almost all of the men eligible received the medal, but Shadrach and Wilson still remain unrecognized.

As for Cushing, he appears to be on a glide path. But there still remains the matter of who would actually accept the medal.

Mr. Krueger and Ms. Zerwekh both hope the medal would come to Delafield to be displayed there in a community that has a Cushing Park and a Cushing Elementary

School. But Ms. Zerwekh said Chautauqua County in New York, where Mr. Brown found the bundle of Cushing's letters in a trunk in the historical society, also might like the medal.

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### 36. Discovering A Way To Serve

*At Baltimore's Kennedy Krieger high School, the Young Marines program helps a group of special-needs students grow and give to their country*

By Daniel de Vise

BALTIMORE — Bob Nobles and Cornell Wright might not have a chance to serve their country when they are adults. No matter: They are serving it now.

"Good morning, Young Marines," barked 1st Sgt. Vivian Price-Butler, greeting Bob and Cornell and eight other boys Friday morning in her small classroom at Kennedy Krieger High School.

"Good morning, First Sergeant," they replied in unison, standing straight and still.

The Young Marines is an education and service program reaching 10,000 youths around the nation and overseas. Of its more than 300 units, only one is dedicated to students with special needs.

Founded in 1993, the Kennedy Krieger program serves 24 students at a high school for children who cannot be accommodated in traditional schools. Bob, a 16-year-old sophomore from New Windsor, has autism. Cornell, a 17-year-old junior from Glendale, has an intellectual disability. Other students have cerebral palsy, Down syndrome or brain injuries.

Price-Butler, known affectionately as First Sergeant around the Baltimore school, is not a trained teacher. Yet, 10 or 20 years from now, she is the Kennedy Krieger educator most likely to be getting e-mails and baby pictures from Bob and Cornell and the other Young Marines.

"I wanted to do something with my life," Cornell said, "and I found this."

The Young Marines curriculum emphasizes character and service. Price-Butler teaches about the military and its history, and about such values as obeying one's parents and tucking in one's shirt without being told. The group collects toys for needy children, sends care packages to troops, visits veterans hospitals and marches in parades and color guard ceremonies.

Cornell joined the Young Marines in sixth grade. Price-Butler works with both middle and high school students at Kennedy Krieger, giving the program a rare measure of continuity.

"Cornell had a pretty rough year in eighth grade, so it couldn't have come at a better time," said Sarah Wright, his mother. "He did not like being in the club at first, with the discipline, because it made him accountable. [Price-Butler] was a kind of person who did not take any flak."

At one point, Price-Butler suspended Cornell from the Young Marines for some long-forgotten transgression. Today, Cornell has attained the rank of staff sergeant.

He is quick to note that such promotions do not come easily. "They're not just given to you," he said. "You have to work extra, extra hard to get them."

Price-Butler was born in Macon, Ga., and raised in

Rochester, N.Y. She found her life's path at 14, she said, when she saw a commercial for the military and "fell in love with the uniform."

She enlisted at 17 and trained as a radio operator at the Marine Air Ground Task Force Training Command in Twentynine Palms, Calif. She transferred to the Marine Corps Reserve in 1983, married and had two children. She was activated in 2003 and went to Iraq with a support battalion. For nine months, she crisscrossed northern Iraq, making sure fellow Marines were getting paid and fed and notified of news back home.

Responding to an ad posted at her reserve unit, Price-Butler came to Kennedy Krieger in 2000. She had no experience as an educator, but the job description sounded much like the work she was already doing. "I knew that I loved the Marine Corps, and I like empowering leaders. That's what the first sergeant does. The first sergeant develops leaders."

In Friday's class, she spoke of the importance of the coming holiday.

"What is the purpose of Memorial Day?" Price-Butler asked after her students had been placed at ease and seated.

"Memorial Day is about the people that died in the war," a young man replied.

"The birthplace of Memorial Day is where?" *Waterloo.*

"At first, Memorial Day honored the men who *blanked* in the Civil War?" *Died.*

She crafts lessons with help from other Kennedy Krieger faculty. Serving her students means finding handouts at different reading levels and giving exams both orally and in writing. She teaches military terms in a game modeled on television's "Jeopardy!" and



military drills in an exercise akin to Simon Says.

"A lot of people think she's strict," Bob Nobles said. "But you just have to follow her instructions."

Bob joined the group in the ninth grade. In December, he traveled across the globe with his first sergeant to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the attack on Pearl Harbor.

"One student ate only five things. One didn't sleep," Price-Butler recalled. One got food poisoning before the group had boarded the first plane. But the trip earned her fresh respect from parents.

"First Sergeant took five special-needs students on a plane to Hawaii, God bless her," said Sharon Nobles, Bob's mother. "When she speaks, these kids straighten right up and listen."

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### **37. New Jobs Program Targets Older Vets**

*Two-thirds of the unemployed are over 35*

By Steve Vogel

For Cheryl Blackburn, an Army veteran who lost her job as a leasing consultant in March, the search for new employment has been frustrating.

"I wanted to get back in government, but everybody said you needed a degree," said Blackburn, a D.C. resident who once worked as a security consultant for the State Department. "I had the experience, but I needed the degree."

Blackburn, 51, of Southeast, is one of the first veterans in the country to sign up for a new program offered jointly by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Labor

Department aimed at retraining up to 99,000 older veterans for high-demand jobs.

The program, known as the Veteran Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP), targets unemployed veterans between the ages of 35 and 60. The program is a key part of the VOW to Hire Heroes Act passed by Congress and signed by President Obama late last year.

Blackburn hopes to use the program to earn a degree in finance at the University of the District of Columbia or Northern Virginia Community College.

"This important tool will help those who served our country receive the education and training they need to find meaningful employment in a high-demand field," Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric K. Shinseki said upon the program's May 15 launch.

Much of the focus on reducing veterans' unemployment has been on Iraq-Afghanistan-era service members, who face the highest levels of joblessness. A report released Thursday by Congress's Joint Economic Committee said that unemployment among veterans ages 18 to 24 was more than 30 percent in 2011, nearly double that of non-veterans and significantly higher than that of veterans from other eras. By contrast, the unemployment rate of veterans ages 35 to 44 was 7.2 percent in 2011, and 7.6 percent for those 45 to 54.

Nonetheless, nearly two-thirds of all unemployed veterans are over 35, noted Rep. Jeff Miller (R-Fla.), chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

In March, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the number of unemployed veterans stood at 223,000 for the Vietnam era, 224,000 for

the Cold War era, 144,000 for the Persian Gulf War era and 224,000 for the Iraq and Afghanistan era.

"Too many unemployed veterans, who did not expect to have to begin a second career at this stage of their life, are now faced with the need for new skills to compete in this struggling economy," Miller said in a statement.

Ishmael "Junior" Ortiz, deputy assistant secretary for the Labor Department's Veterans' Employment and Training Service, wrote on the department's blog that while finding good jobs is a challenge for many former service members, "for some older veterans, these challenges are even greater."

VRAP will allow qualified veterans to start education or training after July 1 in a VA-approved program offered by a community college or technical school leading to an associate degree, a non-college degree or a certificate for a high-demand occupation as defined by the Labor Department.

Upon completion of training, the Labor Department is to help the veterans find jobs related to their newly acquired skills. "We are committed to the full and speedy implementation of this program to ensure the success of our veterans in the civilian labor market," Ortiz said.

The program is designed for veterans who are not eligible for other VA education programs, such as the Post-9/11 GI Bill or the Montgomery GI Bill. Information about the program is available at a VA Web site, [benefits.va.gov/vow](http://benefits.va.gov/vow), or by calling VA at 800-827-1000.

"This is a bipartisan effort, and if the president is serious about reducing veteran unemployment, I hope he will use his bully

pulpit to tout this opportunity as a long-term solution to help America's veterans find meaningful employment and financial stability," Miller said.

Julius Ware II, 52, an Army veteran who lost his job last year with a public works department in Maryland, has signed up for the program and hopes to earn a degree in business administration at the National Labor College in Silver Spring.

"It's going to make a huge difference," said Ware, a D.C. resident.

Ware, who served with the 82nd Airborne Division and left the service as a sergeant in 1981, said he feels a responsibility to make good in the program.

"It's Memorial Day, and veterans are in the public eye," Ware said. "In any federal program, the success of the initial cohort has a huge impact on funding for those who follow. So I feel like I have a huge responsibility."

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Christian Science Monitor  
([csmonitor.com](http://csmonitor.com))  
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### **Cover story**

### **38. Veterans' New Fight: Reviving Inner-City America**

*How some veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are helping turn around a drug-infested neighborhood of Baltimore — and themselves.*

By Mary Wiltenburg,  
Correspondent

Baltimore, Maryland--It's a hot Sunday morning in Oliver, a blighted Baltimore neighborhood, and Dave Landymore is filthy. Two decades of basement dust cling to his jeans as the former Marine platoon sergeant hauls boxes of old baby things down the sidewalk to a giant dumpster.

They come from a house on Holbrook Street, known here as

"Hellbrook." Once a feared hub of the city's drug trade, it has been Carolyn Lawson's home as she raised three children and cared for seven grandchildren. Now, though she struggles to walk, she is desperate to stay in her house. But it needs urgent repairs that the city won't make under a weatherization program until her basement is emptied of decades' worth of storage.

Mr. Landymore and a dozen other volunteers working at Mrs. Lawson's this morning are part of a veteran-led effort called Operation Oliver. Since October 2011, the group has been cleaning up trash and helping residents across the largely poor, African-American neighborhood. Along blocks dotted with boarded-up homes, where drug dealers run the corners at night, veterans are applying lessons they learned in Iraq and Afghanistan in an effort to restore the community's sense of pride – and their own sense of purpose.

"This group is my life," says Landymore, who joined the project in September and has built his post-Iraq world around it. "It's something that I'd been looking for."

As the United States ends long occupations in Afghanistan and Iraq, some 200,000 service members each year are making the transition back to civilian life. Coming home from war has never been easy, for soldiers or society, and today's veterans face particular challenges, from the unprecedented number who suffered brain injuries in combat to the unforgiving economy that is waiting for them. But they also have particular strengths: They are an altruistic generation that volunteered to serve, many of whose members worked overseas rebuilding broken communities. Now, they're bringing that spirit home, and

many are searching for ways to express it in their civilian lives.

For some in Baltimore, Operation Oliver is now an outlet for this sense of mission. The project's work has yielded real successes – as well as conflict in a community that is in some ways as foreign to them as those they patrolled overseas. But with time, both sides have learned and grown, and more veterans, including Landymore, have moved to the area and devoted themselves to the project. What they've forged here could become a model for other complex revitalization efforts across the country.

"Unfortunately, the tendency is to thank a veteran for their service, pat them on the butt, and say: 'Go on, now,'" says Landymore. "But we all joined for the same reason; and just because you have your discharge papers doesn't mean the reason goes away, the sense of duty.... So until it becomes a matter of policy to engage veterans in this way, we're just going to do it anyways."

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Operation Oliver began last summer, when an acquaintance introduced two energetic young do-gooders: Earl Johnson, a former Army Ranger who had recently moved to Oliver, and Rich Blake, a former Marine Corps sergeant who was missing the purpose and camaraderie he'd found overseas.

Mr. Blake was discharged in 2003, after more than four years as a combat marine. Civilian life felt like a letdown, he says, and he searched for a way "to feel useful again."

Experts say that's a common complaint from returning veterans. Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks, 2.7 million American service members have become civilians again. It's a huge adjustment, not just for those with traumatic

injuries or memories, but for all who face the question: How do I build a meaningful life back home?

"People feel like they need to matter to something bigger than themselves, bigger than a task and marching orders," says Meredith Kleykamp, a researcher at the University of Maryland in College Park who studies veteran unemployment. "Veterans had that [in the military], and they didn't have to go out and find it – it was given to them."

As they return to civilian life, she says, it falls to them to choose their own missions – often for the first time.

Jobs are hard for veterans to find these days. In April, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reports, 9.2 percent of veterans who had served since 9/11 were unemployed, compared with 7.6 percent of nonveterans. A recent 4,000-member survey by the nonprofit Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America found even higher rates, including 35.7 percent unemployment among 20-to-24-year-old veterans of the two wars.

Many factors contribute, from poor transition training, to the difficulty of translating military experiences and skills into civilian language and jobs, to some employers' nervousness about veterans' stability. New initiatives like the "VOW to Hire Heroes Act" President Obama signed in November, and his proposed Veterans Job Corps, may help.

But beyond the challenge of finding a job is the challenge of finding civilian work, paid or not, that is as compelling as members' service overseas. Nationwide, a few nonprofits – including Team Rubicon, an international disaster-response corps, and The Mission Continues, a volunteer-support organization

– are trying to harness veterans' continuing desire to do mission-driven work. But for now, they're the exception.

As Blake was looking for a way to make an impact back home, he visited his local Veterans of Foreign Wars post. There, he met other young vets who were similarly adrift, and together they founded a nonprofit called The 6th Branch – envisioning a community service organization to join the other five branches of the military.

The group tackled various volunteer projects, trying to settle on a cause, but nothing stuck. Eventually, Blake reenlisted. The 6th Branch seemed ready to disband.

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Meantime, newlyweds Earl and Zenitha Johnson had just bought a home on a quiet, leafy Baltimore street called Eden. They didn't know much about the area, but what they had heard wasn't great: Parts of the gritty HBO drama "The Wire" had been filmed there because of all the vacant buildings and ambient drug dealing.

A century ago, Oliver was known for its stately brick row houses with carved cornices and white marble stoops. Today, a third of these stand vacant, and more are falling to ruin around their inhabitants. Liquor stores outnumber all other kinds of businesses, and the number of residents who remember Oliver as a proud, vibrant community grows smaller every year.

Lawrence Pully, who moved there as a kid in the 1940s, is one of them. "I remember scrubbing those steps," he says. He and his friends got paid for it, sometimes in pennies and nickels, sometimes in empty soda bottles they could exchange at the store.



In those days, Oliver was a working-class African-American community with a thriving business district. Then, in April 1968, riots consumed the city after the death of Martin Luther King Jr. The arson and looting got so bad that National Guard troops marched up Oliver Street to restore calm.

The neighborhood never recovered. Crack cocaine moved in, then heroin. Residents who could, fled, leaving whole blocks abandoned. The "Hamsterdam" episode of "The Wire," in which police try to reduce crime by essentially legalizing the drug trade along certain streets of vacant homes, was shot there..

In 2002, an Oliver family with five children was burned to death in their home after the mother confronted local dealers. Money poured into the area, and a playground and children's center now memorialize the family. More recently, an alliance between a local ministers' group called BUILD and The Reinvestment Fund, a Baltimore nonprofit group that invests in distressed neighborhoods, has been working to build and rehab subsidized housing in the southeast corner of Oliver, near Johns Hopkins Medical Center and a planned biotech park.

Mr. Johnson, who grew up in a Baltimore suburb, had never really spent time in the city before moving there. "So I get to Baltimore as an adult, and I'm like: 'Who dropped the ball here?'"

He started beautifying the couple's little piece of Eden, planting trees and flowers and introducing himself to neighbors. He also met Dave Borinsky, who had invested in rehabbing his house. Mr. Borinsky was starting Come Home Baltimore, a for-profit development firm in the neighborhood, which

was paired with a nonprofit foundation of the same name. The mission of the two organizations is to rehab vacant homes for sale, while helping current residents tap into assistance programs to fix up their own.

He and Johnson hit it off, and Borinsky hired Johnson to lead the foundation. But Johnson's overtures to local leaders, who were wary of outside developers, met with frustration, and he was looking for a new approach.

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When Johnson met Blake, the 6th Branch leader was organizing a service day through another nonprofit, the Pat Tillman Foundation. The impulsive pair clicked immediately and held the cleanup in Oliver. Standing on the back of a pickup truck at the end of a successful day, they committed themselves and their organizations to turning the neighborhood around.

Resident Donald Morton saw the project unfolding through the back window of the Oliver Street home he has shared with his mother for half a century. He went out to help, and became a convert.

"I never seen that many women come down and do that kind of work," he says of the volunteers. "That kind of pumped me up. They were swinging axes and everything."

Sitting on his stoop on a recent evening, Mr. Morton remembers, as a kid, watching Army tanks roll up the street to quell the riots. He also recalls the dark decades that followed, when the place was crawling with drug dealers.

Things are much quieter today, he says: "Now, the most I have to deal with is my mom."

Since the first cleanup Morton helped with last July, nearly 2,000 volunteers – mostly college students from

the Baltimore area and farther afield – have come to help in Oliver. They and veteran leaders have planted more than 100 trees and shrubs, pulled over 65 tons of trash out of lots and alleys, and helped elderly residents empty their homes of more detritus.

Smaller groups of mostly combat veterans also conduct (unarmed) evening patrols through the neighborhood, help police identify drug targets, attend community meetings, report dumpsites and gas leaks to the city, and work with a local nonprofit called the Veteran Artist Program, whose members have been painting murals and developing plans for a playground and community garden in Oliver.

Johnson is out on the streets so much, he has become like an unofficial mayor: Neighbors joke that his wife, Zenitha, is Oliver's first lady. More than once, their marriage has nearly been a casualty of his devotion to the neighborhood.

Though Blake and Johnson often act as spokesmen for Operation Oliver, officially the project has no top-down leadership, no fixed location, and no paid staff. The group survives on a shoestring, thanks to grants, private donations, and community fundraisers.

That appealed to Landymore. When he left active duty, besides taking college classes, he volunteered at the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, at a homeless shelter, and with a high school mentoring project. Nothing came close to the feeling he'd had in Anbar Province in Iraq. Then an acquaintance mentioned Operation Oliver. The idea of using his military training to make an impact at home spoke to him.

"Although I'm an undergraduate student at UMBC" – The University of

Maryland, Baltimore County – "I'm also a platoon sergeant in the Marine Corps, in charge of 45 marines and 12 tactical vehicles.... You've got all these skills," he says. "With both wars coming to a close, it occurred to me there's going to be a lot of former service members back in civilian life, and we better find out what to do with them. Otherwise, we're going to wind up with another generation of Vietnam veterans: underappreciated, underutilized."

He contacted Blake, who invited him to the group's next project, hauling trash and brush out of a vacant lot.

"Right when I showed up, I asked Rich: 'What are my orders?'" Landymore says. "He just said: 'Make this place better.'"

Landymore and his pear-shaped tea mug became a constant, calming presence among the big personalities of Operation Oliver. Within a few months, he was renting a home on Bond Street. In April, when Blake left Baltimore to return to active duty, Landymore took over as executive director of The 6th Branch.

"It's easy to go serve soup one time a week and go home and feel good about yourself," he says. "But if you weren't there [serving], somebody else would. We're here every day. If we weren't here, my street would still be a completely open-air drug market. But it's not."

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This Sunday morning, as grubby volunteers tromp up Lawson's front steps, everyone else outdoors seems to be headed to church. On neighboring blocks, old women in fanciful hats pick their way down crumbling sidewalks. In Oliver, the saying goes, there's a church on every corner. Though the churches are major power

brokers in the neighborhood, members are mostly former residents who revisit the area on Sundays and have been praying for decades that it would turn around.

Members of Operation Oliver didn't come to pray. Initially, they saw the churches as part of what was holding the neighborhood back, by being too passive, and said so.

Marshall Prentice, who has led Oliver's Zion Baptist Church for a quarter century, disagrees. Over the years, his 1,100-member congregation has run a food pantry; paid neighbors' overdue rent and electric bills; provided havens for teens, people living with HIV, and victims of domestic abuse; participated in community health fairs and neighborhood prayer walks; cultivated strong relationships with local police; and lobbied to improve the lives of residents across the city.

"The most stable organism in the community is the church," says Pastor Prentice. "We'll be here when everyone else is closed down."

At first, Operation Oliver circumvented such networks and relationships. The veterans took immediate action, without holding community meetings, developing site plans, or seeking consensus. They saw this as a strength.

"That's what I hate about Baltimore – well, I guess anywhere. They'll create a task force to talk about trash," says Blake. "And the question is: When is anyone going to actually pick up any trash?"

The volunteers did – quickly, and with much media fanfare. This rubbed local leaders the wrong way. Mr. Pully saw their approach as arrogant. Now vice president of the Oliver Community Association, Pully says Operation Oliver leaders hadn't shown enough respect

for neighborhood elders and the struggle they've been engaged in for decades.

"When they're saying: 'You're preventing progress,' well, you're walking on my back," Pully says. "That doesn't sit with me well at all."

Melvin Russell, commander of Baltimore's Eastern District police, puts it more bluntly. He says many community leaders thought the veterans came off as "jerks."

Volunteers see a number of possible sources for this frustration. "I think the reason there's been some pushback is that the rapidness with which we changed so much exposed what they hadn't been doing all these years," says Blake. "If we can come in for five months and remove 70 tons of trash and plant 100 trees, what were you doing for the last 20 years besides having meetings and singing on street corners?"

It's not unusual for the energy that veterans bring to postmilitary work to cause resentment. "Co-workers feel like: 'Hey, man, you're making us look bad,'" says T.L. McCreary, a retired Navy rear admiral and president of Military.com, an online resource for service members.

But Johnson thinks the problem wasn't just Operation Oliver's speed – it was their lack of diplomacy.

"We've stepped on a lot of toes, but we're trying to do better. That's not the way to do business," he says. "But I also think we had to show them first that we meant business."

Over time, the volunteers have come to see Oliver's churches as potential allies, and drug violence and medieval living conditions as their larger, mutual enemies.

In March, a group of Buffalo State University students helped the veterans clean a massive dumpster's

worth of trash from the house of longtime Oliver resident Dave Hollins, an elderly man who lives with his granddaughter, April Cherry, on Lanvale Street. The two had been confined to the top floor of the house by old furniture and clutter, rodent infestation, and rotting floorboards on the first floor. Their kitchen is unusable. A hole in the wall lets in rats and the elements.

Volunteers spent a day clearing debris and animal carcasses out of the living space, though the city still considers the house too badly damaged to attempt repairs. Operation Oliver is trying to scrape together funding to tackle the most urgent needs.

On their walks around the neighborhood, Johnson and Landymore check in on the family. On a recent evening, Ms. Cherry marveled at how much the cleanup had changed their lives. "Sometimes I just play my music upstairs and come downstairs and dance," she says. "[There's] all this space."

As their focus has shifted somewhat, from park and alley cleanups to individual residents and their struggles, Operation Oliver leaders have softened their tone and cultivated closer relationships with Zion Baptist, the Eastern District police, and others.

"Some of the living conditions we've seen here have made us cry," says Johnson. "We've got people living like [they were in] Bosnia here."

He knows one elderly woman with no heat who boils water in winter so the steam will warm her. Another bails sewage from her basement into her yard with a bucket. "We won't have the impact we should have until we get into these houses," he says.

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That's what volunteers are doing at Lawson's this morning: getting her home ready for weatherization so she can live in it safely. When they arrived, she struggled out to her stoop to say a blessing over them. Now, she sits in the living room with her young grandson, overseeing the parade of boxes emerging from the basement. "I'm looking at memories coming up the steps," she says.

Despite the hard years she spent in Oliver, when dealers ruled the park 20 yards from her door and taxi drivers bringing her home demanded payment upfront so they could drop her off and speed away, this is the place Lawson wants to live the rest of her life. She nursed her mother, mother-in-law, and husband through their final days in this house, and she wants to go the way they did – at home.

"I appreciate everything [the volunteers] have done to help me out," she says, " 'cause I know I couldn't have done it by myself."

Lawson was skeptical of the group at first; she had been on waiting lists for city assistance for a year and despaired that anyone was serious about getting things done. But the veterans charmed her.

"I talk to them like I talk to my sons," she says. "All of them are very friendly and helpful, and I can pick up their sense – you know, you can pick up a sense that a person is truly from the heart."

So Operation Oliver's effort to win over hearts and minds continues. "We're a foreign element, and in that way it's the same as it would be in Iraq or Afghanistan," says volunteer Jeremy Johnson, who is contemplating a move to the neighborhood. The important difference, he says, is that "here we have the ability to understand and adapt and bridge



the gap. The people soldiering there [in Afghanistan or Iraq] were never going to stay. Here we can."

As members of Operation Oliver have become more diplomatic – and as their successes and the press they've generated have gotten the attention of the mayor, the police commissioner, and other powerful players across the city – both Oliver residents and leaders are coming to embrace a group that's eager to return the favor.

"I have nothing but praises for them now," says Mr. Russell, the police commander. At a recent meeting, he says, "it was like they are a different creature, and they want to play in the sandbox with everybody else."

Now, other organizations across the country are reading lessons into the group's experience: about volunteerism, about veteran unemployment, about reframing the national dialogue over how service members can contribute.

"It does show what our veterans are capable of outside the workplace – and even inside," says Jason Hansman of the Iraq and Afghanistan Members of America. "For every veteran doing Operation Oliver, there's probably 100 just like them who are unemployed."

Operation Oliver volunteers hope the initiative will be duplicated in other "veteran-sponsored communities" across the nation.

"People have grown afraid of the veteran because they can't separate the man with the machine gun from the man with the mission," says Landymore, nursing his tea. "But look what I'm doing now. It's not something special. It's what people who live in the community should be doing anyway."

"Maybe being a veteran makes me a little more of a leader to be able to accomplish it," he says. "But the message I want people to get is: 'This is a mission for you, not just a mission for us.'"

Norfolk Virginian-Pilot  
(pilotonline.com)  
May 28, 2012

### 39. Historic Rate Of Veterans Seek Disability

By Marilyn Marchione,  
Associated Press

America's newest veterans are filing for disability benefits at a historic rate, claiming to be the most medically and mentally troubled generation of former troops the nation has ever seen.

A staggering 45 percent of the 1.6 million veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are now seeking compensation for injuries they say are service-related. That is more than double the estimate of 21 percent who filed such claims after the Gulf War in the early 1990s, top government officials said.

What's more, these new veterans are claiming eight to nine ailments on average, and the most recent ones over the past year are claiming 11 to 14. Vietnam veterans are currently receiving compensation for fewer than four, on average, and those from World War II and Korea, just two.

It's unclear how much worse off these new veterans are than their predecessors. Many factors are driving the dramatic increase in claims – the weak economy, more troops surviving wounds, and more awareness of problems such as concussions and PTSD.

Government officials and some veterans' advocates say that veterans who might have been able to work with certain disabilities may be more

inclined to seek benefits now because they lost jobs or can't find any. Aggressive outreach and advocacy efforts also have brought more veterans into the system, which must evaluate each claim to see if it is war-related. Payments range from \$127 a month for a 10 percent disability to \$2,769 for a full one.

As the nation commemorates the more than 6,400 troops who died in post-9/11 wars, the problems of those who survived also draw attention. These new veterans are seeking a level of help the government did not anticipate, and no special fund has been set aside to cover it.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is mired in backlogged claims, but "our mission is to take care of whatever the population is," said Allison Hickey, the VA's undersecretary for benefits. "We want them to have what their entitlement is."

The 21 percent who filed claims in previous wars is Hickey's estimate of an average for Operation Desert Storm and Desert Shield. The VA has details only on current disability claims being paid to veterans of each war.

The AP spent three months reviewing records and talking with doctors, government officials and former troops to take stock of the new veterans. They are different in many ways from those who fought before them.

More are from the Reserves and National Guard – 28 percent of those filing disability claims – rather than career military. Reserves and National Guard made up a greater percentage of troops in these wars than they did in previous ones. About 31 percent of Guard/Reserve new veterans have filed claims compared to 56 percent of career military ones.

More of the new veterans are women, accounting for 12 percent of those who have sought care through the VA. Women also served in greater numbers in these wars than in the past. Some female veterans are claiming PTSD due to military sexual trauma – a new challenge from a disability rating standpoint, Hickey said.

The new veterans have different types of injuries than previous veterans did. That's partly because improvised bombs have been the main weapon and because body armor and improved battlefield care allowed many of them to survive wounds that in past wars proved fatal.

"They're being kept alive at unprecedented rates," said Dr. David Cifu, the VA's medical rehabilitation chief. More than 95 percent of troops wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan have survived.

Larry Bailey II is an example. After tripping a rooftop bomb in Afghanistan last June, the 26-year-old Marine remembers flying into the air, then fellow troops attending to him.

"I pretty much knew that my legs were gone. My left hand, from what I remember I still had three fingers on it," although they didn't seem right, Bailey said. "I looked a few times but then they told me to stop looking." Bailey, who is from Zion, Ill., north of Chicago, ended up a triple amputee and expects to get a hand transplant this summer.

He is still transitioning from active duty and is not yet a veteran. Just over half of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans eligible for VA care have used it so far.

Of those who have sought VA care:

\*More than 1,600 of them lost a limb; many others lost fingers or toes.

\*At least 156 are blind, and thousands of others have impaired vision.

\*More than 177,000 have hearing loss, and more than 350,000 report tinnitus - noise or ringing in the ears.

\*Thousands are disfigured, as many as 200 of them so badly that they may need face transplants. One-quarter of battlefield injuries requiring evacuation included wounds to the face or jaw, one study found.

"The numbers are pretty staggering," said Dr. Bohdan Pomahac, a surgeon at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston who has done four face transplants on nonmilitary patients and expects to start doing them soon on veterans.

Others have invisible wounds. More than 400,000 of these new veterans have been treated by the VA for a mental health problem, most commonly, PTSD.

Tens of thousands of veterans suffered traumatic brain injury, or TBI - mostly mild concussions from bomb blasts - and doctors don't know what's in store for them long-term. Cifu, of the VA, said roughly 20 percent of active duty troops suffered concussions, and one-third of them have symptoms lasting beyond a few months.

On a more mundane level, many new veterans have back, shoulder and knee problems, aggravated by carrying heavy packs and wearing the body armor that helped keep them alive. One recent study found that 19 percent required orthopedic surgery consultations and 4 percent needed surgery after returning from combat.

## Veterans Absent From Famous Wall

By Torsten Ove, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

The Vietnam War is a bad and fading memory, but it's still claiming victims.

Jim Brahney, a retired Air Force lieutenant colonel from McCandless, was among them.

He died in 2009 at age 69 from non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, which he and his family believed was caused by his exposure to Agent Orange during his year-long tour as a helicopter rescue pilot.

He will be among a group of 90 Vietnam veterans formally recognized on June 14, Flag Day, at the annual In Memory Day at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

"I think he wouldn't have expected something like this," said his daughter, Mary Roche, 46, of suburban Philadelphia, who nominated him for inclusion. "He knew the reason why he had gotten sick. It's validation from our government to say that his life was cut short due to a decision that they made."

The ceremony, held every year since 2003, pays tribute to Vietnam vets who died as a result of their service but who don't meet Department of Defense guidelines to have their names listed on the memorial wall.

Most of those whose names are on the wall died as the direct result of combat.

But veterans recognized during In Memory Day have died years later from many conditions, such as complications related to post-traumatic stress disorder or exposure to Agent Orange or other herbicides used to defoliate the jungle during the war.

At the ceremony, the names of all the honorees are read,

after which certificates bearing their names are placed at the memorial. The National Park Service then collects the tributes and stores them in a permanent archive.

The honorees also are included in the virtual honor roll maintained by the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, a private group that built the memorial and sponsors In Memory Day.

"The program is all about recognizing service and taking an opportunity to say thank you," said Lee Allen, director of communications. "It's meant to be inclusive -- it's for the family rather than for the fallen."

No one knows how many of the 2.4 million veterans who served in Vietnam have died as the result of something that happened to them in the war.

But proving cause is not something the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund is interested in. Families have only to fill out an online form to nominate a veteran, which includes a death certificate and proof of military service.

In Mr. Brahney's case, his daughter got the idea to honor him last year during a trip to Washington to visit her brother and see the sights, including the wall.

At the hotel pool, she met a young girl, also from Philadelphia, who said her grandfather was being recognized the next day by the In Memory Day program.

"It was happenstance, a coincidence," Ms. Roche said. "But I thought -- was this kind of a sign?"

She took it as such and decided to nominate her father for 2012.

Mr. Brahney flew some 200 missions in South Vietnam in 1966 and 1967 and was likely exposed to Agent Orange. He was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma in

2001 and received disability payments from the Department of Veterans Affairs.

He also tried to join a lawsuit against the makers of the herbicide, but the case was terminated in 2009 when the U.S. Supreme Court refused to review a lower court dismissal.

Throughout his life and his final years, his family said he stayed upbeat and true to his motto, "Life is good," which is inscribed on his tombstone at the National Cemetery of the Alleghenies.

Born in Youngstown, Ohio, in 1939, Mr. Brahney was athletic, confident and smart.

After graduating from Youngstown State University in 1962 with a degree in mechanical engineering, he took a job working on the Apollo space program at North American Aviation in Los Angeles. He had a critical skills deferment from the draft but opted to join the Air Force and become a pilot. He received his wings in 1964 and began training in helicopters in Nevada.

In 1966, he left behind his wife, Carolyn, and his daughter for a tour in Vietnam, where he saved nine lives and earned two Distinguished Flying Crosses, among other honors.

In a self-published and often self-deprecating book, "On Laughter-Silvered Wings," he recounts many of his adventures during the war.

While he talks often of drinking with his buddies, meeting such entertainers as Jonathan Winters and Lana Turner and playing handball, he also tells of harrowing runs into the jungle in his small H-43 chopper.

At first he was in a relatively quiet area, but in his second six months he moved to Binh Thuy, where he and his colleagues were responsible for



rescues in the entire Mekong Delta.

The base was a target for mortar attacks by the Viet Cong, who were also known to ambush rescue helicopters.

During one run to rescue a downed F-100 pilot, Mr. Brahney and his colleague found the man dead in a rice paddy. As the chopper hovered to make a recovery, ground fire erupted.

"Pop! Pop! Pop! Suddenly, it was like the Fourth of July," he wrote. "Red tracers were everywhere, and coming from all directions. Those damned VC had been sitting there waiting for us."

He had armor plating under his seat, he wrote, "but I still found myself tightening my cheeks."

On another run, he picked up a badly wounded Navy SEAL amid intense ground fire and managed to get him to safety in time for doctors to save him.

He was gratified by that, but he was counting the days and even minutes until he could go home. After 200 missions, he calculated that he'd flown a total of 215 hours and 40 minutes in Vietnam.

"I wanted to say those lives saved had made it 'a good war,' but I really couldn't," he wrote. "I guess Benjamin Franklin said it best: 'There never was a good war ... or a bad peace.'"

He had no illusions about his role in Vietnam and certainly did not consider himself a hero. He was mostly angry at having been away from home for a year.

"The only meaningful aspect of the two [Distinguished Flying Crosses] and seven Air Medals was the fact that they were associated with me playing a part in some combat rescues," he wrote. "It was a noble cause, saving lives, but it hardly justified the third year

of married life I had lost, and it would never make up for missing the second year of Mary's life."

After the war, he became a test pilot at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Ohio and also traveled to Canada and Japan to test experimental aircraft. He spent 2,800 hours in the air in 35 different aircraft during his career.

The walls of his den at home in McCandless, where he and Ms. Brahney had lived since 1979, are covered with pictures of the various planes he flew.

Mr. Brahney later became a manager in the F-16 program, director of the Advanced Rescue Helicopter Program and commander of the Air Force ROTC program at the University of Pittsburgh in the early 1980s.

After retirement in 1982 as a lieutenant colonel, he worked for the Society of Automotive Engineers in Warrendale and served as associate editor of Aerospace Engineering magazine. He also taught at the University of Maryland, Youngstown State and Pitt.

He and Ms. Brahney raised Mary and their two sons, Eric and Scott, in McCandless.

All plan on attending the In Memory Day ceremony.

"I think he would have been honored," Carolyn Brahney said.

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Washington Post  
May 28, 2012  
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## **41. Homeless, Not Helpless**

*New Fairfax shelter helps bootstrap female military veterans*

By Annie Gowen

Four years ago, Veronica Witherspoon was stationed in Baghdad, enduring roiling sandstorms and nearly daily

rocket fire as she worked as a Navy petty officer at Camp Victory.

By January, she had left the military, lost her job as a civilian contractor, split with her husband and ended up virtually homeless, bunking with family members. Deeply ashamed of her predicament and desperate for a way out, she ran across a story on a military Web site about a new program for female veterans called Final Salute.

The shelter for female vets opened its doors in a quiet Fairfax County cul-de-sac in November. The group home, the brainchild of an Army captain who was once homeless, is one of a small but growing number of women-only shelters that have opened up across the country to cater to a rising number of women who have wound up on the street after their military service.

In recent years, the Department of Veterans Affairs has made strides in a campaign to end veteran homelessness by 2015. Although the overall number of homeless veterans declined 12 percent between 2010 and 2011, the number of homeless female veterans is increasing, the VA said in a draft report this month. Women are the fastest-growing segment of the homeless veteran population.

"The increase of homeless women veterans is significant, and it does suggest that we have to address this as an emerging issue," said John Driscoll, president and chief executive of the National Coalition for Homeless Veterans.

Officially, homeless female veterans number 3,328, a figure that doubled from 2006 to 2010, according to an estimate from the Government Accountability Office. The GAO says the data are incomplete and that the number

is probably higher. Many of these homeless women are mothers, middle-aged or suffering from a disability.

Last year, the VA served an estimated 14,847 female veterans who were homeless, formerly homeless or at risk of becoming homeless, according to Stacy Vasquez, deputy director of the department's homeless-veterans initiative.

The VA acknowledged in the report that there was an "acute" need to improve services for the growing number of female veterans. They are more likely to be diagnosed with mental health problems and to have suffered sexual trauma during their military service and have a greater risk of homelessness than their male counterparts, the report said.

"We have a demographic shift in the makeup of our fighting forces, and it's starting to appear in homelessness, with more women leaving the military and becoming homeless," said Daniel Bertoni, the GAO's director of disability issues. Traditionally, "a lot of the systems of support have been geared toward men. A lot of these shelters don't support children."

The federal government has poured millions of dollars into its transitional housing and permanent voucher program for low-income people and the disabled since 2008. In addition, the government spent \$60 million last year on preventive help with mortgage or rent payments and other needs.

But more than 60 percent of the transitional housing programs are not suitable for families, Bertoni said. His report found that many women who contacted the VA for help did not get referrals to community programs and that those who were eligible for a voucher could end up waiting months for an available slot.

### 'This is my calling'

Jas Boothe, the Army captain who founded Final Salute, lost her home to Hurricane Katrina in 2005, and a month later she was diagnosed with adenoid cancer. When she asked the VA whether it had any help for single mothers, it had nothing to offer her.

It was like "a slap in the face," she said.

Boothe, 34, ultimately got back on her feet. She remarried and has another baby and a career as a program manager for employment with the National Guard. Once she was reestablished, the first thing she wanted to do was create a refuge for women like herself.

"God put it in my head that I can do something," she said. "I didn't really have the money, but I thought: This is my calling."

She sank \$15,000 of her own money — taking a cash advance on her credit card — into the group home in an ordinary-looking brick Colonial within earshot of Interstate 66 traffic. An American flag flying outside and red and white impatiens and blue angelonia planted in the front yard are the only visual hints to the military veterans living inside.

The program — funded by private donors — gives residents two years to get back on their feet. They must commit to job training and, if working, contribute 20 percent of their income toward food and utilities. The shelter can house up to eight women and children at a time and has a waiting list of 20.

In April, Witherspoon moved in, and she says she enjoys the camaraderie of the three other former soldiers and two children who are her roommates.

They recently cooked pasta and chicken, laughing about the overstuffed refrigerator and

debating who was next up for KP — kitchen patrol — duty. Her roommates teased the diminutive Witherspoon about her sunny personality; her dimpled giggle is a near constant.

"I've got to make the best of a bad situation," Witherspoon, 30, said.

"A bad situation is on the streets," said Caroline Smith, 41, a property manager and resident who was washing dishes.

### Help when it's needed most

Sandra Strickland, 43, said she ended up at the house in November after she split with her husband, lost her job and was facing eviction. She served six years in the Army stateside during the 1991 Gulf War.

"There was a moment when I was like, 'Where am I going to go?'" she said as she prepared spaghetti and salad for her kids, Heaven, 8, and R.J., 6. "I was just like, is this really real? Is this really happening? ... I was seriously considering living in my car."

Her lowest point came when she was about to lose her apartment and was sitting in the parking lot of a Home Depot on the phone with the VA, learning that no housing vouchers were available and realizing that the VA had little to give her but a list of homeless shelters.

"There was such a feeling of hopelessness," she said. "What am I going to do if the VA can't help me?"

Shortly after that, a friend connected her with Boothe, and she moved in. She is working again, as an exhibits coordinator for an aviation association.

"It's been a saving grace," she said, her eyes filling with tears. "I don't even have words. ... It was just like a big burden had been lifted."

Newsweek

June 4, 2012

## 42. Drones: How Obama Learned To Kill

By Daniel Klaidman

The Obama campaign touts a commander in chief who never flinches, but the truth is more complex. In an excerpt from his new book, *Kill or Capture: The War on Terror and the Soul of the Obama Presidency*, Daniel Klaidman reveals:

\*The president's troubled reaction to a botched strike during his first month in office

\*His uneasy acceptance of "signature strikes" in Pakistan, or the targeting of groups of men who bear certain signatures, but whose identities aren't known. Obama didn't like the idea of "kill 'em and sort it out later," says one source

\*The formation of a "special troika on targeted killings" consisting of Obama, vice chairman of the Joint Chief James "Hoss" Cartwright, and counterterrorism aide John Brennan

\*Top State Dept. lawyer Harold Hongju Koh wondering, "How did I go from being a law professor to someone involved in killing?"

\*How top Pentagon lawyer Jeh C. Johnson, would confide to others, "If I were Catholic, I'd have to go to confession."

\*The president's having "no qualms" about the fatal strike on American-born cleric Anwar al-Awlaki

\*Obama's resistance -- and ultimate relenting -- to the use of "signature strikes" on Yemen's al Qaeda branch in spring 2012

*Excerpted from Kill or Capture: The War on Terror and the Soul of the Obama Presidency by Daniel Klaidman. Copyright 2012 by Daniel Klaidman. To be published by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt on June 5, 2012. Used by permission.*

Barack Obama came to the White House with no military background and negligible national-security experience. But he inherited an American killing machine that was very much on the offensive, hunting suspected terrorists from the lawless regions of Pakistan to the militant strongholds of Somalia. Within days of his inauguration he faced life-and-death decisions. One of them went terribly wrong.

Obama had just signed a series of executive orders aimed at rolling back the worst excesses of the Bush administration's war on terror, and he was flush with the possibilities of what could be accomplished in the years ahead. Learning his way around the labyrinthine West Wing, he poked his head into an aide's office. "We just ended torture," he said. "That's a pretty big deal." Now, on the morning of Jan. 23, CIA director Michael Hayden informed the president of a drone missile strike scheduled to take place in the tribal areas of Pakistan, near the Afghan border.

The targets were high-level al Qaeda and Taliban commanders. Hayden, accustomed to briefing the tactically minded George W. Bush, went into granular levels of detail, describing the "geometry" of the operation to the new president. Obama, who preferred his briefings concise, grew impatient and irritated with Hayden. But he held his tongue, and raised no objections.

Tribesmen a world away, in the tiny village of Karez Kot, later heard a low, dull buzzing sound from the sky. At about 8:30 in the evening local time, a Hellfire missile from a remotely operated drone slammed into a compound "of interest," in CIA parlance, obliterating a roomful of people.



It turned out they were the wrong people. As the CIA's pilotless aircraft lingered high above Karez Kot, relaying live images of the fallout to its operators, it soon became clear that something had gone terribly awry. Instead of hitting the CIA's intended target, a Taliban hideout, the missile had struck the compound of a prominent tribal elder and members of a pro-government peace committee. The strike killed the elder and four members of his family, including two of his children.

Obama was understandably disturbed. How could this have happened? The president had vowed to change America's message to the Muslim world, and to forge a "new partnership based on mutual respect and mutual interest." Yet here he was, during his first week in the White House, presiding over the accidental killing of innocent Muslims. As Obama briskly walked into the Situation Room the following day, his advisers could feel the tension rise. "You could tell from his body language that he was not a happy man," recalled one participant.

Obama settled into his high-backed, black-leather chair. Hayden was seated at the other end of the table. The conversation quickly devolved into a tense back-and-forth over the CIA's vetting procedures for drone attacks. The president was learning for the first time about a controversial practice known as "signature strikes," the targeting of groups of men who bear certain signatures, or defining characteristics associated with terrorist activity, but whose identities aren't known. They differed from "personality" or "high-value individual" strikes, in which a terrorist leader is positively identified before the missile is launched.

Sometimes called "crowd killing," signature strikes are deeply unpopular in Pakistan. Obama struggled to understand the concept. Steve Kappes, the CIA's deputy director, offered a blunt explanation. "Mr. President, we can see that there are a lot of military-age males down there, men associated with terrorist activity, but we don't always know who they are." Obama reacted sharply. "That's not good enough for me," he said. But he was still listening. Hayden forcefully defended the signature approach. You could take out a lot more bad guys when you targeted groups instead of individuals, he said. And there was another benefit: the more afraid militants were to congregate, the harder it would be for them to plot, plan, or train for attacks against America and its interests.

Obama remained unsettled. "The president's view was 'OK, but what assurances do I have that there aren't women and children there?'" according to a source familiar with his thinking. "'How do I know that this is working? Who makes these decisions? Where do they make them, and where's my opportunity to intervene?'"

In the end, Obama relented -- for the time being. The White House did tighten up some procedures: the CIA director would no longer be allowed to delegate the decision to carry out a drone strike down the chain. Only the director would have that authority, or his deputy if he was not available. And the White House reserved the right to pull back the CIA's signature authority in the future. According to one of his advisers, Obama remained uneasy. "He would squirm," recalled the source. "He didn't like the idea of 'kill 'em and sort it out later.'"

Still, Obama's willingness to back the drone program represented an early inflection point in his war on terror. Over time, the attacks grew -- far beyond anything that had been envisioned by the Bush administration. When Obama accepted the Nobel Peace Prize in December 2009, he had authorized more drone strikes than George W. Bush had approved during his entire presidency. By his third year in office, Obama had approved the killings of twice as many suspected terrorists as had ever been imprisoned in Guantánamo Bay. "We're killing these sons of bitches faster than they can grow them," the head of the CIA's counterterrorism division boasted to *The Washington Post* in 2011.

The president had come a long way in a short time. Schooled as a constitutional lawyer, he had had to adjust quickly to the hardest part of the job: deciding whom to kill, when to kill them, and when it makes sense to put Americans in harm's way. His instincts tilted toward justice and protecting the innocent, but he also knew that war is a messy business no matter how carefully it is conducted. He saw the drones as a particularly useful tool in a global conflict, but he was also mindful of the possibility of blowback.

In this overheated election season, Obama's campaign is painting a portrait of a steely commander who pursues the enemy without flinching. But the truth is more complex, and in many ways, more reassuring. The president is not a robotic killing machine. The choices he faces are brutally difficult, and he has struggled with them -- sometimes turning them over in his mind again and again. The people around him have also battled and disagreed.

They've invoked the safety of America on the one hand and the righteousness of what America stands for on the other.

Obama's discomfort with being "jammed" into broad signature-style attacks extended to the military, which was conducting its own counterterror campaigns. Unlike the CIA, when the military engaged in kill missions outside of conventional battlefields -- in places like Yemen or Somalia -- it needed presidential approval for each individual attack. And the military was more prone to broaden its targets.

In March 2009, most of the top generals were itching to take the war deep into Somalia. This desperately poor, chaotic country was home to Al-Shabab, then a loose affiliate of al Qaeda. The military saw Somalia as a time bomb, and wanted to act before it was too late.

At a Situation Room meeting, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Adm. Mike Mullen, briefed the president and his national security advisers on a "kinetic opportunity" in southern Somalia, Al-Shabab's stronghold. There was intelligence that a high-level operative associated with the group would be attending a "graduation ceremony" at an Al-Shabab training area. But the military couldn't pinpoint his precise location at any given time. So why not just take the whole camp out? The Pentagon had even prepared a "strike package" that could devastate an entire series of training areas. Obama was skeptical, but listened without revealing his doubts. At the end of Mullen's presentation, Obama said, "OK, let's go around the table."

In effect Obama was inviting dissent with Admiral Mullen. None of the principals

raised objections. But then Obama pointed to one of the uniformed men sitting just behind Mullen, against the wall: James "Hoss" Cartwright, the four-star Marine general and vice chairman of the Joint Chiefs. Obama knew Cartwright, and valued his candor. "Mr. President, generally the wars we've been prosecuting have had these rules," Cartwright said in a low-key, Midwestern manner. An enemy "did something to us, we went in and did something back -- and then we had a moral obligation to put back together whatever we broke. In these places where they have not attacked us, we are looking for a person, not a country."

Cartwright was now beginning to veer off from Mullen, his superior officer. Then he laid it on the line: "If there is a person in the camp who is a clear threat to the United States we should go after him. But carpet bombing a country is a really bad precedent." Some of the other military men began to shift in their chairs. "I ask you to consider: where are we taking this activity? Because the logical next thing after carpet bombing is that we go there and open up a new front."

Obama seized on Cartwright's words to lay down his own marker. "That's where I am," he said. He told his assembled advisers that he was committed to getting bad guys -- terrorists who posed a clear and demonstrable threat to Americans -- but that he wanted "options" that were precise. The signature strike against Al-Shabab was a no go.

Cartwright, on the other hand, was on an upward trajectory within the corridors of the White House. What would emerge in early 2009 was an unusual alliance that would serve to guide Obama

through the shadow wars: Cartwright would join Obama's top counterterrorism aide, John Brennan, in advising the president about terrorist targets, the three forming a kind of special troika on targeted killings.

By this time, Brennan had already established himself as an imposing figure in the White House. Massively built, with closely cropped hair, a ruddy complexion, and deep-set eyes that could appear menacing at times, "Mr. Brennan," as he was referred to deferentially by junior White House staffers, was seen as "the real thing," a bona fide CIA terrorist hunter who had been on the trail of Osama bin Laden for a decade. "He is like a John Wayne character," David Axelrod said. "I sleep better knowing that he is not sleeping."

In the coming months and years, Brennan and Cartwright would find themselves pulling the president out of black-tie dinners or tracking him down on a secure phone to discuss a proposed strike. Obama could be known to muster a little gallows humor when Cartwright or Brennan showed up at the Oval Office unannounced. "Uh-oh, this can't be good," he would say, arching an eyebrow. One of Brennan's least favorite duties was pulling Obama away from family time with his wife and daughters for these grim calls.

The three men were making life-and-death decisions, picking targets, rejecting or accepting names put forward by the military, feeling their way through a new kind of war -- Obama's war. But such decisions took their toll. In quiet conversations with his advisers, the president would sometimes later reflect on whether they knew with certainty that the people they were targeting

posed a genuine and specific threat to American interests.

Similar angst and debate was coursing through the administration as a whole. Every targeted killing, in fact, had to be lawyered -- either by the CIA's attorneys, in the case of agency operations, or by other lawyers when the military was involved. If any two men typified the assertion of law in the terror wars, it was Harold Hongju Koh and Jeh C. Johnson. As the top lawyers at the State Department and the Pentagon, respectively, they exercised considerable influence over counterterrorism operations. But their ideological differences -- Koh a liberal idealist who had served as the Clinton administration's top human-rights official, and Johnson a pragmatic centrist and former prosecutor -- colored their legal interpretations. Koh could be brusque and tactless with his colleagues, though he would just as easily break into boyish giggles when something amused him. Johnson, a former partner in a white-shoe Manhattan law firm, was restrained in manner, and a deft inside operator.

For most of Obama's first term, the two men fought a pitched battle over legal authorities in the war on al Qaeda. Like Johnson, Koh had no problem going after AQ's most senior members. But things got murkier when the military wanted to kill or capture members of other jihadist groups. Johnson took a more hawkish position, arguing that the United States could pursue AQ members or "co-belligerents" more expansively. The two men battled each other openly in meetings and by circulating rival secret memos.

Despite their differences, both men were grappling with the same reality: their advice

could ensure death for strangers who lived thousands of miles away -- or spare them. It was an especially unlikely turn for Koh, a former dean of Yale Law School. At Yale he had memorized the names and faces of his students, bright-eyed idealists who wanted to use the law to improve the world. Now he studied highly classified PowerPoint slides that detailed the intelligence against individual terrorist targets. (The military dryly called them "baseball cards.") "How did I go from being a law professor to someone involved in killing?" he wondered.

At the Pentagon even Johnson felt stressed by the institutional impulse to always do more, not less. Like Koh, he wondered whether he could withstand the heavy pressure exerted by the military to expand operations. After approving his first targeted killings one evening, he watched the digital images of the strike in real time -- "Kill TV," the military calls the live battlefield feed. Johnson could see the shadowy images of militants running drills in a training camp in Yemen. Then suddenly there was a bright flash. The figures that had been moving across the screen were gone. Johnson returned to his Georgetown home around midnight that evening, drained and exhausted. Later there were reports from human-rights groups that dozens of women and children had been killed in the attacks, reports that a military source involved in the operation termed "persuasive." Johnson would confide to others, "If I were Catholic, I'd have to go to confession."

In early 2010, on a secure conference call with Obama's top counterterrorism advisers, Johnson stunned many of his colleagues when he nixed the targeted killings of members



of Al-Shabab. The decision came just as the military was ramping up its operations in Somalia. Pentagon officers left the meeting without saying a word to Johnson. It was a lonely moment for an ambitious lawyer who was used to getting along with his uniformed colleagues. But he did have one supporter: Koh told Johnson this was his "finest moment."

The amity didn't last, however. The military kept up its pressure on Johnson, and mounted a fierce campaign to persuade him to change his position on Al-Shabab. Officers brought him intelligence and "threat streams" about terrorist activities, and told him "bad things" would happen if they couldn't act first. Johnson understood the political risks. There would be an uproar if Al-Shabab launched a successful attack against the United States and it later turned out that Obama administration lawyers had declared the group off limits. Finally, some months after Al-Shabab militants bombed a soccer stadium in Uganda, killing 74 people, he changed tack.

The Koh-Johnson rivalry was reignited during a secure call with the White House in the fall of 2010. The military wanted to hit three top Al-Shabab leaders. The two lawyers agreed on a pair of the targets, but Koh differed on the case of Sheikh Mukhtar Robow. He had studied the intelligence and saw credible evidence that Robow represented a less extreme faction of Al-Shabab that was opposed to attacking America. While Johnson was fine with targeting Robow, Koh forcefully insisted that the "killing would be unlawful." Robow was removed from the targeting list. But the pressure to expand the list rarely lets up. After Al-Shabab's top leader swore his organization's

allegiance to al Qaeda earlier this year, Obama officials renewed their earlier debate. Robow's life again hangs in the balance.

One targeted killing that inspired little angst was the raid on Osama bin Laden in May 2011. Rather, its success got everyone itching to intensify the fight. Brimming with confidence, the generals believed they could deliver a "knock-out blow" to al Qaeda and its most dangerous affiliate, al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) in Yemen. The military began talking about "running the table" in Yemen, while the CIA began pushing to expand its signature strikes both there and in Somalia. It was the same approach Admiral Mullen and some top generals had backed in the first weeks of Obama's administration but which the president had rejected. Obama at that time had wanted to stay "AQ-focused," as he put it, and not unnecessarily widen the conflict.

But in May 2011, the military proposed killing 11 AQAP operatives at once, by far the largest request since it stepped up operations in Yemen. The Arab Spring's turmoil had spread to the country, and al Qaeda was moving quickly to take advantage of the chaos. Gen. James Mattis, who heads U.S. Central Command, warned darkly of an emerging new terror hub in the Horn of Africa. Obama and a few of his senior advisers, however, were wary of getting dragged into an internal conflict -- or fueling a backlash -- by targeting people who were not focused on striking the United States. Obama and his aides reduced the target list to four people, all of whom were eliminated.

The pressure didn't abate, however. Brennan came to

believe that the commander in chief needed to make an unequivocal statement -- to brush back the people calling for more and larger attacks. The chance came in mid-June, during a regularly scheduled "Terror Tuesday" briefing. At one point during the discussion, one of the president's military advisers made a reference to the ongoing "campaign" in Yemen. Obama abruptly cut him off. There's no "campaign" in Yemen, he said sharply: "We're not in Yemen to get involved in some domestic conflict. We're going to continue to stay focused on threats to the homeland -- that's where the real priority is."

In Barack Obama's mind, Anwar al-Awlaki was threat No. 1. The Yemen-based leader of AQAP had grown up in the United States, spoke fluent American-accented English, and had a charisma similar to that of Osama bin Laden: soft eyes, a mastery of language, and a sickening capacity for terror. Obama told his advisers that Awlaki was a higher priority than even Ayman al-Zawahiri, who had succeeded bin Laden as al Qaeda's top commander. "Awlaki had things on the stove that were ready to boil over," one of Obama's national-security advisers observed. "Zawahiri was still looking for ingredients in the cupboard."

What worried President Obama most was Awlaki's ingenuity in developing murderous schemes that could evade America's best defenses. Already he had launched the Christmas Day plot, in which a Nigerian operative had nearly brought down a packed airliner by trying to set off explosives hidden in his underwear. Then, in October 2010, AQAP had managed to put improvised bombs -- ink toner cartridges filled with explosive material

-- on cargo planes headed to the United States. (They were intercepted as a result of a tip from Saudi intelligence.) During the summer of 2011 Obama was regularly updated on a particularly diabolical plan that AQAP's master bomb builder, Ibrahim Hassan Tali al-Asiri, was devising. The intelligence indicated that he was close to being able to surgically implant bombs in people's bodies. The wiring was cleverly designed to circumvent airport security, including full-body scanners. AQAP's terror doctors had already successfully experimented with dogs and other animals.

The president made sure he got updates on Awlaki at every Terror Tuesday briefing. "I want Awlaki," he said at one. "Don't let up on him." Hoss Cartwright even thought Obama's rhetoric was starting to sound like that of George W. Bush, whom Cartwright had also briefed on many occasions. "Do you have everything you need to get this guy?" Obama would ask.

But that sense of fierce determination was a product of long experience and didn't come easily. By the time United States intelligence agents got Awlaki in their sights, Obama had adjusted and readjusted his views on targeted killings several times. Usually he tried to measure the possible benefits of a specific killing or killings against the possible downsides, including the slaying of innocents and getting the United States more deeply embroiled in civil conflicts. The Awlaki case was in a special category, however: By almost anyone's definition, he was a threat to the homeland, but he was also an American citizen, born in New Mexico.

The capture of a Somali operative who worked closely with Awlaki produced key

intelligence, including how he traveled, the configuration of his convoys, his modes of communication, and the elaborate security measures he and his entourage took. Finally, in the spring and summer of last year, U.S. and Yemeni intelligence started to draw a bead on him. A tip from a Yemeni source and a fatal lapse in operational security by the cleric eventually did him in.

The standing orders from Obama had always been to avoid collateral damage at almost any cost. In many instances, Cartwright would not even take a proposed operation to the president if there was a reasonable chance civilians would be killed. But as the Americans were closing in on Awlaki, Obama let it be known that he didn't want his options preemptively foreclosed. If there was a clear shot at the terrorist leader, even one that risked civilian deaths, he wanted to be advised of it. "Bring it to me and let me decide in the reality of the moment rather than in the abstract," he said, according to one confidant.

In September, U.S. intelligence tracked Awlaki to a specific house in Al Jawf province, where he stayed for two weeks -- often surrounded by children. On the morning of Sept. 30, however, Awlaki and several of his companions left the safe house and walked about 700 yards to their parked cars. As they were getting into the vehicles, they were blown apart by two Hellfire missiles.

Within less than six months, Obama had taken out America's two top enemies, delivering crippling blows to al Qaeda's morale and its ability to conduct fresh attacks. And yet perhaps no other action upset liberals and civil libertarians more than the killing of Anwar al-Awlaki. What Obama

considered a necessary and lawful act of war, one that was vital to protecting the lives of Americans, his critics saw as a summary execution of an American citizen without trial -- on the basis of secret evidence. Even Bush had not gone that far. One of the president's top advisers says he was unmoved, however. Despite all of the hand-wringing by critics, Obama had "no qualms."

And the shadow wars continued. Throughout 2011, Obama's basic strategy held: he approved missions that were surgical, often lethal, and narrowly tailored to fit clearly defined U.S. interests. But even as Awlaki and others were taken out, Yemen fell further into chaos, and AQAP gained more and more territory -- even threatening the strategic port city of Aden. It looked like the military's dire warnings were becoming a reality.

By 2012 Obama was getting regular updates on a Saudi double agent who'd managed to penetrate AQAP. He had volunteered to be a suicide operative for al-Asiri, AQAP's master bomb maker, and instead delivered the latest underwear-style explosive device to his handlers. By then the military and CIA were pushing again for signature-style strikes, but they'd given them a new name: terrorist-attack-disruption strikes, or TADS. And this time, after resisting for the first three years of his presidency, Obama gave his approval.

The White House was worried that Yemeni forces were collapsing under the brutal AQAP assault. The more territory AQAP controlled, the more training camps they could set up, and the easier it would be to plot and plan attacks against the United States and

its interests. Obama concluded that he had no choice but to defend the Yemeni Army against a common enemy. "They are decapitating Yemeni soldiers and crucifying them," one senior administration official said in justifying the American escalation. "These are murderous thugs, and we are not going to stand idly by and allow these massacres to take place."

In the spring of 2012, the United States carried out more drone attacks in Yemen than in the previous nine years combined -- dating all the way back to when the CIA conducted its first such operation.

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Pg. 17

### **43. The V.A.'s Shameful Betrayal**

By Mike Scotti

Miami Beach--THE Department of Veterans Affairs, already under enormous strain from the aging of the Vietnam generation, the end of the Iraq war and the continuing return of combat troops from Afghanistan, announced in April that it would increase its mental health staff by about 10 percent. But too many veterans waging a lonely and emotional struggle to resume a normal life continue to find the agency a source of disappointment rather than healing.

The new hiring is intended to address the infuriating delay veterans face in getting appointments. The V.A. says it tries to complete full mental health evaluations within 14 days of an initial screening. But a review by the department's inspector general found that schedulers were entering misleading information into their computer

system. They were recording the next available appointment date as the patient's desired appointment date. As a result, a veteran who might have had to wait weeks for an appointment would appear in the computer system as having been seen "without a wait." That allowed the agency to claim that the two-week target was being reached in 95 percent of cases, when the real rate was 49 percent. The rest waited an average of 50 days.

As a veteran of both Iraq and Afghanistan, I found that news maddening. While the schedulers played games with the numbers, veterans were dealing with mental wounds so serious that getting proper attention at the right time might have made the difference between life and death. Even worse was that the V.A. had failed twice before to change; the inspector general found similar problems in 2005 and in 2007. This suggests a systematic misrepresentation of data and an unwillingness to stop it.

Unfortunately, the problem goes even deeper. There are potentially hundreds of thousands of veterans who are struggling with post-combat mental health issues who never ask the V.A. for help. Some, hamstrung by fear of stigma, are too proud or too ashamed to ask for help. Others don't ask because they've heard too many stories from peers who have received poor care or been ignored.

I have close friends who could no longer drive because of their lingering fears of roadside bombs. Others had gone to the V.A. because they had suicidal thoughts, only to receive a preliminary screening, a pat on the back, a prescription for antidepressants--and a follow-up appointment for several months later.



I've had my own struggle: in 2001 I was part of the initial force of Marines who landed in Afghanistan, and in 2003 took part in the heavy fighting of the first wave of the invasion of Iraq. Since coming home, I've had my mind hijacked by visions of the corpses of children, their eyes blackened, at the side of the road. I recall carrying the coffins of fallen brothers. I remember losing friends who probably knew exactly what was happening to them, as they bled out on the side of a dusty road in Iraq.

And I've felt the shame of having suicidal feelings. Like many others, I chose to hide them. Yet, even in the darkest days of my own post-traumatic stress, when I was considering choosing between making my suicide look like an accident or taking a swan dive off some beautiful bridge, I never considered going to the V.A. for help.

My image of the V.A., formed while I was on active duty, was of an ineffective, uncaring institution. Tales circulated among my fellow Marines of its institutional indifference, and those impressions were confirmed when I left Iraq for home. At Camp Pendleton, Calif., a woman with a cold, unfeeling manner assembled us for a PowerPoint presentation and pointed us to brochures--nothing more, no welcoming sign of warmth or empathy for the jumble of emotions we were feeling. Her remoteness spoke volumes to me of what I might expect at home.

To regain veterans' trust, the V.A. must change its organization and culture, not just hire more people. First, its leadership must be held accountable for employees' behavior, and anyone caught entering misleading data should be fired. The agency must reach

out, with public awareness campaigns and with warmth, to veterans who may be suffering in silence. It must help reduce the social stigma that attaches to the mental health issues the veterans face.

Dedicated V.A. personnel run a suicide-prevention hot line, but it is only a temporary salve for emergencies. One impressive and highly effective alternative to the V.A.'s traditional treatment process is the Wounded Warrior Project's Combat Stress Recovery Program, which emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships, goal-setting and outdoor, rehabilitative retreats and seeks to avoid the stigma associated with traditional treatment.

What this generation of veterans needs from the V.A. is a recognition that when the color of life has faded to gray, you need to talk to someone about it today, not weeks or months from now. We need America to acknowledge what war does to the young men and women who fight it and to share the message that dragged me out of the darkness: It's O.K. if you're not O.K.

*Mike Scotti, a former Marine, is the author of "The Blue Cascade: A Memoir of Life After War."*

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#### **44. How To House Homeless Vets**

*Three years into President Obama's administration, the Los Angeles area has the highest reported number of homeless veterans in the nation. It's time to do something.*

By Bobby Shriver

"Nobody who serves, nobody who fights for this country should have to fight for a job or a roof over their

heads when they come back home," President Obama said as he kicked off his 2012 campaign. And he pointed to his administration's work for veterans. That claim may work elsewhere, but not in L.A., Mr. President.

Every time the president's helicopter lands on the Veterans Affairs grounds in West Los Angeles, he is setting down at the center of his policy failure. Three years into his administration, the Los Angeles area has the highest reported number of homeless vets in the nation. There are empty buildings, 100 feet from where his chopper lands, on that VA campus that can and should be used for veterans' care.

Here are the horrible facts:

According to the latest count by the Los Angeles Homeless Services Authority, the number of homeless individuals in Los Angeles County dropped by 3% between 2009 and 2011. The numbers declined for all groups except one: veterans. There were 9,000 homeless veterans here in 2011, a 24% increase over 2009. And the number of chronically homeless veterans — individuals who are homeless because of severe mental disabilities — increased by more than 100%, from 1,243 to 2,520.

And more are coming. California's Department of Veterans Affairs estimated in 2009 that 28,000 vets would return from Iraq and Afghanistan per year during this administration.

What should we conclude from these facts? At a minimum, the administration's programs are not, in fact, helping the most vulnerable homeless veterans. At worst, the administration may have decided that the Los Angeles problem is too difficult;

that there are easier "wins" elsewhere.

This is a long-term problem. Local leaders have been advocating for change for almost eight years on this issue. I wrote letters to federal elected officials, traveled to Washington to meet them, invited them to meet in Los Angeles and more. Our efforts could not produce one new bed for chronically homeless soldiers on the nearly 400-acre VA property in West L.A. Not one. This despite the fact that private donors gave this land to the United States for veterans' care.

A group of prominent lawyers got tired of waiting. In June 2011, Ron Olson, professor Gary Blasi of UCLA, professor Laurence Tribe of Harvard, the firm Arnold and Porter and the American Civil Liberties Union sued the Department of Veterans Affairs for its failure to provide adequate housing and mental health services for homeless vets in Los Angeles. Incredibly, Obama's Justice Department argued in U.S. District Court in Los Angeles that the VA has no obligation to provide veterans such housing and services — services to which they are entitled by law.

Who are the plaintiffs? One is a war hero with numerous ribbons for his service in Iraq and Afghanistan. He has yet to receive treatment for his severe post-traumatic stress syndrome because he lacks stable, permanent housing. He fends for himself, sleeping in alleys and on sidewalks all over L.A.

Another of the plaintiffs, who also served in Iraq and was decorated for his service, went on a rampage and destroyed his parents' living room. Why? Because the VA has no stable living quarters where he could

receive the support his mental condition demands.

Today, large portions of the VA campus in Westwood sit unused with empty buildings, some of which were originally constructed for veterans with mental disabilities. Our federal leaders have been studying and assessing these empty buildings for more than 20 years.

In the meantime, the VA leases parts of this property for use by UCLA's baseball team, a dog park, a nine-hole public golf course, an exclusive private school's athletic facilities, a rental car agency and other for-profit businesses.

The president cannot continue to use his administration's efforts for veterans as campaign applause lines. He instead must insist that the VA once and for all ensure that homeless veterans with severe disabilities — in Los Angeles and across the nation — have access to stable housing linked with appropriate supportive services. Study after study has proved that this approach is not only effective, it also costs the VA far less than the consequences of not taking care of homeless and mentally ill vets.

This is Obama's rhetoric: "This country will care for our veterans and serve our veterans as well as they've served us." Fine words. But the time for words has passed. It's time for action.

*Bobby Shriver, the co-founder of ONE.org and (RED), is a member of the Santa Monica City Council.*

Newsweek  
June 4, 2012

## 45. Michael Ware On The Things War Makes You See

*As thousands of veterans return, one reporter faces the abyss—and survives.*

I should be dead. I wish I was.

Those eight words were not easy to write. It's even harder now reading them back. Seeing them there, sullen and sad and monosyllabic in their black and white.

For the longest time I wished I was dead. I wished one of my multitude of near-misses wasn't. Later there then came a time -- when I'd first stopped living in war and first found Brooklyn -- a time when I consciously, achingly desired death. Craved it. Longed so hard and bitterly for it that it became some taut tripwire strung within me where no one could see. But then, perhaps, thinking back, decoding it anew, maybe the wish was not to be dead? Not entirely? Not when I drill down into it. Maybe my wish rather was for all the pain to simply end?

Yes, that's starting to seem more like it. Maybe it wasn't death I wanted so much as it was oblivion.

I won't tell you how close I did or did not come in those angry days, after what feels now like an unspeakable decade of reporting wars; wars from Lebanon to Georgia, to Pakistan and Afghanistan; all mere accompaniments to six or seven years in Iraq. But I will tell you of when, on a day I cannot distinctly remember, that I came to know I wouldn't do it. That no matter what, no matter how badly I pined for it, I would nonetheless continue. Even if that meant being sentenced to a slow, quiet torment for the term of my natural life. That was the day I finally accepted it was a choice no longer mine to make.

I know one day my now-young son will read this, hopefully when he himself is a man. I pray not sooner. It's for him, and only for him, that I resisted. Once I realized

even a deadbeat father, should I become one, is still better than the specter of a dead dad, especially at his own hand.

The decision, however, was far from palliative. I've since had thoughts, remembrances of that urge, despite knowing the execution of them is off the table. Because it doesn't alter the immutable sense that my race is run. That I'm done. That all the rest, now, is busy work.

To this day my mind still reels with war's usual kaleidoscope: dead kids splayed out, often in bits; screaming mates; crimson tides from al Qaeda suicide bombings creeping across asphalt. I still see ... things.

Other things I cannot remember, even when told of them, but I know they haunt my sleep; I tore my left shoulder right out of its socket during a dream one Friday night; awakened by the hellish sound of someone screaming before realizing it was me. So, yes, I still see things.

Mired in a falsehood of self-medication, I applied blizzards of booze and drugs to buy me time. To get me from one dawn to another sleep. To give me the time to reconcile my decision to live. All stealing for me just one more day, one more day. Though in a perverted way it helped save me, it didn't immunize me against the price for it all.

For now, I'm deprived of the right to see the boy I'm still here for, though he lives but blocks away and drives twice daily to school past my apartment.

I feel chewed and spat out by my past employers. In the field it was only a colleague -- a mate and true brother in arms, with me everywhere -- who helped me at all. And then, in New York, two other friends, both cameramen, discreetly found the doctor I

went on to see in secret for almost two years. His bills came out of my pocket, no recompense from those who paid me for my wars. From them came only rebuke and lectures. Somehow I was in a blind spot of sorts in their mirror of what was going on. After, when I'd quit, my health care evaporated, my insurance checks halted. I don't blame my superiors for their blundering, though the sense welling within me that I'd been gravely wronged persists.

But all that's OK. I'm adapting, surviving, and, in time, I'll overcome. Just as we all have to out There. There, where our friends die. Where I won the lottery by making it through, though I'll never forgive myself for my fortune.

A soldier's lot once back is often with The Damned. For some it's part of the service offered as young men, and so it has always been. Return passage. Homecoming. All too often they're brittle deceits woven from straw so easily blown away by no more than the coming home itself. By war's nature it's an alien horror understood only by the few. Nothing will change that. Ever. Rendering a year's tour, commonly more, deposits of service and good will in faraway accounts forever frozen, the contents never to be truly repatriated.

But so it goes. We just have to suck it up. As we did the blood and sweat and sand. As we did on patrol, or over watch. As we did on cordons-and-knocks, on sweeps, in hides, in gun pits, in turrets, and on chopper doors. As we did killing or capturing or merely waving to children through Humvee windows.

Because of all of those things and more, our peace times are not necessarily so. But I wish it less now than I did. To



be dead, that is. Time's passage let me discover that the desire diminishes, that it mellows even as it rages, and that, possibly, it eventually quiets. I know it's been my silent brooding companion; familiar, intimate. But I told the doctors. I even confided in my parents, now elderly, and they have watched their son grow older than them right before their eyes.

I'm here to tell you none of us has any choice. Because living is there to be done and it's we who must do it. It must become our new mission. Because when our generation was called it was we who answered. And our Fallen cannot be left behind. It is we who must remember them.

So, if but one of you reads this, sees this, stumbles over it and you give me just one more day as a result, then this humiliation will have been worth it. Please allow me just to say to you, with no particular expectation at all:

DON'T.

*Michael Ware, a native of Australia, spent many years as a foreign correspondent for Time and CNN.*

TheDailyBeast.com  
May 27, 2012

## **46. Al Qaeda's 'Final Trap' In Yemen: Costly Demise Planned For U.S.**

*This week's huge attack in Sana reflects the Arabian affiliate's escalating fight to control the weakened state--and entice the U.S. for an ambitious, deadly endgame.*

By Bruce Riedel

Al Qaeda's attack on Yemen's capital, Sana, this week is a graphic demonstration that its franchise in Arabia is getting more dangerous, benefiting from the weakness of the Yemeni state. The U.S. is putting pressure on the jihadi

network like never before, but al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP) remains determined to strike us at home to drag us ever deeper into another quagmire in the Middle East.

The suicide bombing on Monday in Sana was the deadliest attack AQAP has ever carried out. It comes as government forces are trying to recover lost territory in southern Yemen that al Qaeda has seized since the Arab Spring came to Yemen a year ago. AQAP using a cover name, Ansar al Sharia, has set up seven so-called emirates in southern Yemen in the last year where it can recruit, train, and prepare its fighters and suicide bombers to strike at home and abroad. AQAP even controls some neighborhoods in Aden, the south's largest city and port. President Obama is rightly trying to put the Arabian Humpty Dumpty back together again in Yemen so Yemeni forces will be able to disrupt, dismantle, and destroy AQAP. It's an ambitious strategy.

Central to any chance of success for America in Yemen is close cooperation with Saudi Arabia, the rich big brother next door that most Yemenis resent. Any hope of rebuilding a stable central government will require massive amounts of Saudi aid--and this week the Saudis pledged \$3.2 billion in new assistance. The joint U.S.-Saudi intelligence operation that foiled al Qaeda's latest plan to blow up an airliner en route to America was a significant success in the now-12-year-old battle with al Qaeda in Yemen. AQAP also announced the May 6 death (by drone attack) of the airline-bomb plot's operational mastermind, Shaykh Fahd al Quso al Awlaqi, one of the brains behind the 2000 attack on the USS *Cole* in Aden and the successor to the New Mexico-born Anwar al Awlaqi, who was

also killed in a drone attack last year.

These successes should not obscure the fact that AQAP remains determined to carry out attacks in the United States. Three times in three years--Christmas 2009, October 2010, and now May 2012--AQAP has tried to blow up aircraft in America's skies. Because the bomb maker Ibrahim al Asiri, who produces these weapons, remains alive and has trained a cadre of understudies in his workshops, we can assume they will try again. AQAP brags that it has already hurt America more than once. AQAP claims al Anwar Awlaki inspired the Fort Hood attack in 2009.

AQAP has articulated an ambitious strategy. During the preparations for the trial of the Christmas 2009 bomber, Umar Farouk Abdulmuttalab, I prepared testimony to explain AQAP's strategy to the jury. AQAP had laid it out in the video they released after his capture titled "America and the Final Trap." Al Qaeda says it hopes that a successful mass-casualty attack on an American city from the air will provoke the U.S. to send troops to attack its bases in Yemen. AQAP wants to drag America into what it calls another "bleeding war" like Afghanistan and Iraq to sap American resources and will. Yemen, AQAP argues, will be the "final trap" that defeats America--much as the war in Afghanistan in the 1980s defeated the Soviet Union. AQAP notes that Yemen's tough terrain and even tougher tribes have defeated foreign armies from ancient Persia to the U.K. in the 1960s.

If it can't provoke America into the "final trap," AQAP hopes its attacks will force the U.S. and its allies to devote more and more resources to countering its threat with expensive security measures.

AQAP announced that the bombs it sent to blow up over Chicago ("Obama's city") in 2010 cost only \$4,200 to make; countermeasures to detect them have cost billions to disburse at airports around the world. This is the strategy of a "thousand cuts" that it hopes will break America.

All this may be nothing more than the fantasies of fanatics. AQAP also hopes Israel will attack Iran to plunge the Middle East into a massive regional war that it can exploit and it hopes to someday overthrow the House of Saud to create a jihadist emirate in the Arabian Peninsula that will redistribute wealth from the ruling families of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Kuwait, and the UAE to the poor of the region, especially in Yemen. All of this is far beyond AQAP's throw weight. But it can continue to try. In eulogizing al Quso this week, the group promised America "the war between us is not over."

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China Daily  
May 28, 2012  
Pg. 9

## **47. Present Policy Is Producing No Results**

By Ted Galen Carpenter

US leaders have painted themselves into a corner regarding policy toward the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. For more than

two decades, Washington's strategy has been to offer Pyongyang a stark choice: give up its nuclear program or face ever-greater isolation from the international community. US President Barack Obama was especially blunt about presenting that alternative to the DPRK leaders during his early weeks in office.

That approach clearly has not worked. Indeed, the Obama administration has created the risk of the worst possible outcome: a DPRK that is a nuclear power, but which lacks meaningful international economic ties, and has no formal diplomatic or economic relations with the US. This is the blueprint for even more dangerous tensions on the Korean Peninsula and throughout East Asia than we face currently.

A new, radically different approach is needed. Instead of continuing the futile strategy of isolating the DPRK, Washington should adopt a comprehensive strategy to normalize relations with Pyongyang. And China has a crucial role to play as the primary facilitator in that process.

The US will need to offer a number of conciliatory measures, as the most important step is to change the atmosphere of unrelenting hostility between the two countries. The DPRK leaders undoubtedly fear that Washington will use its vast military power to intimidate Pyongyang or even engage in forcible regime change, as it did with Saddam Hussein. To reduce tensions, the Obama administration should offer to sign a non-aggression pact with the DPRK. US leaders should also propose a peace treaty formally ending the Korean War.

This is where China's assistance would be extremely

valuable. Since there is a pervasive lack of trust between the US and DPRK governments, it is predictable that the Kim government might react to such a constructive proposal with skepticism, fearing a trap. Beijing can help overcome that problem.

However, the US should be realistic about Beijing's influence on Pyongyang. US opinion leaders tend to overstate China's influence on the DPRK. A few years ago, New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman asserted that the Chinese government could end the Korean Peninsula nuclear crisis with a simple phone call to Pyongyang. That attitude, which is fairly typical in the US foreign policy community, is absurd. Beijing does not, and cannot, dictate to the DPRK government.

But to the extent that the DPRK leaders trust anyone outside their own country, China enjoys by far the greatest degree of trust. The Chinese government can use that influence to induce Pyongyang not to spurn an olive branch from Washington.

In addition to offering a non-aggression pledge and a peace treaty formally ending the Korean War, the Obama administration should propose ending the diplomatic chill on the peninsula. During the Cold War, Washington repeatedly proposed "cross recognition" of the two Korean governments. In other words, Moscow and Beijing would recognize Seoul, and Washington would recognize Pyongyang. That step was considered a prelude to the two Koreas establishing diplomatic relations with each other. The suggested pattern was similar to the thaw in relations that occurred regarding the two Germanys.

Once the Cold War ended, Beijing and Moscow

did establish diplomatic and extensive economic relations with the Republic of Korea. But Washington reneged on its promise regarding the DPRK. That decision needs to be reversed. The Obama administration should agree to establish formal diplomatic relations with the DPRK, including the setting up of embassies and consulates in both countries.

Finally, Washington needs to commit to rescinding most of the current US economic sanctions on Pyongyang and to support the repeal of UN resolutions authorizing international economic sanctions. Some of those actions can be implemented by executive order. Others will require congressional approval, which is admittedly uncertain. But it is imperative for the Obama administration to do what it can through executive orders, and to go on record as favoring the normalization of economic relations.

Of course, Washington will want some concessions from Pyongyang in exchange for these proffered benefits. The most important goal would be with regard to the nuclear issue.

Realism is crucial regarding this point. The notion that Pyongyang will abandon all nuclear ambitions was always overly optimistic. Yet that has been a key premise of the Six-Party Talks. Given that the DPRK probably has processed enough plutonium over the past decade to build several nuclear weapons, and has an active uranium-enrichment program, such a goal is now completely detached from reality.

Washington should instead focus on getting the DPRK to stop short of actually deploying an arsenal. That status of "one screwdriver turn away" from being a full-fledged nuclear-weapons power is hardly ideal,

but it's probably the best US leaders can expect from the DPRK, even in exchange for a new, normalized relationship between the two countries.

A second concession the Obama administration should seek is a redeployment of the DPRK military units away from the demilitarized zone on the border with the Republic of Korea. The ROK government and people regard the current deployment as deeply threatening to the country's main population center, the Seoul metropolitan area. In a new environment of normalized relations, Pyongyang would have no legitimate justification for continuing its forward deployment of forces.

Again, China can play an important, constructive diplomatic role regarding that issue. Chinese officials need to convey to their DPRK counterparts that the redeployment is a necessary and appropriate concession, both on its own terms and to make certain that hawks in the US do not have a rallying cry to defeat the proposed normalization of relations between Washington and Pyongyang.

The Obama administration would be taking some considerable policy and political risks in offering a new relationship to the DPRK. US hawks will inevitably argue that the US will be making major concessions while getting very little in return. But it is evident that the current policy has not worked in the past, is not working now, and has little prospect of working in the future. Given that sobering reality, it is time to try something new.

And, if Pyongyang reacted favorably, the outcome would be one of greatly reduced tensions on the Korean Peninsula, one of the most dangerous flashpoints in the



world. That would be a great benefit to both Koreas, China, the US, and the entire East Asian region.

The bottom line is that Washington needs to adopt a bold alternative to the current strategy. When a policy has been in place for decades and is producing no results, it is sheer folly to advocate persisting with it.

*The author is a senior fellow at the Cato Institute.*

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Weekly Standard

June 4, 2012

Pg. 16

## **48. A Defense Posture We Can Afford**

*Strategy should drive procurement.*

By Stuart Koehl

Strategist Edward Luttwak noted that the United States does not have a strategy, it has a procurement system. It takes so long to develop a new weapon, the strategic rationale has often vanished before it is fielded. Because so much time, money, and reputation are invested in the system, it cannot be canceled, so it is shoehorned into the new strategic situation, whatever that might be. Our strategy debates are driven from the bottom up, by budgetary and procurement issues, rather than top-down, with grand strategy determining theater strategy driving operational methods determining force structure, tactics, and, ultimately the acquisition of new weapons.

Given the military's outstanding array of weapons, it's clear that our helter-skelter, bottom-up approach has generally served us well, albeit at a greatly inflated cost. It's also clear that it is no longer affordable. With large budget cuts looming, the debate over military strategy cannot degenerate into another #salami slicing exercise,# with

each armed service (and its congressional supporters) attempting to protect its share of the budget--its #key programs,# in particular. This approach leads to buying #all the defense we can afford,# instead of the defense we need.

What would our procurement decisions look like if instead we conducted a rigorous strategic analysis, and allowed the results to flow downward into force structure, operational method, and tactics? A cursory assessment of the threats we face over the next two decades reveals two salient facts. First, only one #peer competitor# is likely to emerge to challenge the United States in high-intensity regional conflict--China. Second, the vast majority of threats we face are going to be low-intensity conflicts similar to those we fought in Iraq and Afghanistan. Because of U.S. preeminence in conventional warfare, only China has both the economic wherewithal and the political will to challenge us at this level; other potential adversaries have chosen to employ asymmetrical responses (such as insurgency and terrorism). The United States must be prepared for two very different kinds of war, with different operational, tactical, and technical requirements.

The Obama administration has recognized at least part of this problem with its #pivot on the Pacific#: China now looms large in the consciousness of all three armed services, but in the process hard lessons learned about #small wars# are in danger of being lost through the change in focus and the reemergence of military parochialism. Maintaining U.S. preeminence across the spectrum of conflict, from counterinsurgency and counterterrorism, all the way up to high-intensity regional

war, won't be easy. An exclusive focus on either end of this spectrum could leave us vulnerable on the other, while attempts to split the difference (as with the present budget) will leave us weakened at both ends.

What we need is a restructuring of the military to bring our force structures and capabilities into line with the full range of threats we face. If this is done, it may be possible to craft a robust defense posture at or even slightly below current defense baseline budget levels (about \$550 billion). The following proposal is necessarily simplistic, but provides a general outline of that posture.

Consider China. The main pillar of U.S. strategy must be deterring or defeating Chinese aggression. Geography has placed China in a strategic cul-de-sac: It cannot conquer or intimidate the resource-rich areas it covets by overland attack; it can only reach them by sea and air. Conversely, the United States is unable to project and sustain a large ground force on the Asian mainland. Thus, any future conflict with China would be fought on the sea and in the air. China recognizes this. The bulk of Beijing's force modernization has focused on naval and air forces, in pursuit of an #access denial# strategy to keep the United States at bay until China achieves its strategic objectives. China is also developing a nuclear missile force directed not so much at the U.S. mainland as at China's regional neighbors, in order to deter them from either assisting U.S. policies or opposing Chinese ones.

To counter China, U.S. air and naval forces need serious reinforcements. At just 285 major warships, Washington would be hardpressed to maintain naval supremacy in the

Western Pacific while meeting its necessary commitments elsewhere (e.g., in the Persian Gulf, the Indian Ocean, and the Mediterranean), because, at any given time, only one third of all ships are deployed on station. Moreover, most of our ships were built during the Reagan-Bush era and are now reaching the end of their useful lives. Old ships have not been replaced at parity, so the fleet is shrinking at the very time it needs to expand.

But naval shipbuilding programs are in disarray. The Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) and DDG-1000 (a new class of destroyer) are over budget and behind schedule, and are not well matched to the Chinese threat. It would be wiser to continue production of the current DDG-51 class of guided-missile destroyer, while investing in service life extensions for Ticonderoga-class AEGIS cruisers. Plans to reduce the number of aircraft carriers are particularly shortsighted in light of China's plans to create its own carrier battle groups. In addition, carrier-based aircraft are rapidly aging, while the F-35C Joint Strike Fighter will not enter service (in very small numbers) until 2015.

China has also invested heavily in fourth and fifth generation fighter aircraft, which are equal or superior to all existing U.S. aircraft except the F-22 Raptor, production of which ended with 187 built. The F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, intended to replace most of our existing Navy and Air Force fighters, is behind schedule and over budget. Initially intended as a low-cost complement to the F-22, the JSF now costs as much or more than the F-22, but is less capable. It might be prudent to reopen F-22 production and develop both a carrier and strike variant to replace the F/A-18 and F-15E; technology from the

F-35 could be integrated into new Raptors.

Now consider low-intensity conflict. Air and naval forces can play only a supporting role here; the main requirement is lots of high-quality light infantry. A small portion of the Air Force and Navy budgets could be devoted to fairly simple unmanned aircraft such as the Predator and light frigates and patrol craft, which are more suitable for counterinsurgency or counter-piracy missions and cost a fraction of manned fighters or the LCS. The burden of low-intensity conflict will thus fall on the Army, but the Army is not properly configured for what will be its primary mission. To rectify the situation, the following steps should be taken.

First, transfer most armored/mechanized units to the reserve components, retaining only enough to hedge against limited armored threats in Korea and the Middle East. Reconfigure the active forces as light and medium infantry units, which generate far more infantrymen than heavy units, allowing the Army to field more light infantry within its personnel limits. Light forces also have a smaller logistic footprint, which will allow the conversion of support personnel to infantrymen. Moreover, converting the reserves into a heavy force will make them a true #strategic reserve, mobilized only for emergencies of limited duration, and not as a substitute for active forces in long-term operations.

Second, reorient Army procurement to meet its mission. Low-intensity conflict does not need much in the way of tanks, infantry fighting vehicles, or artillery. The M1 Abrams, the M2/3 Bradley, and the M109 are sufficient to meet foreseeable threats, and

with upgrades can continue to serve for decades. That means the Army has no pressing need for its Ground Combat Vehicle program or new artillery. It does need the Joint Light Tactical Vehicle as a replacement for the Humvee, as well as a guided mortar projectile, tactical unmanned aerial vehicles, and better radios--but all of these are relatively cheap.

To further enhance the Army's combat power, we should reverse the recent policy of the Obama administration, and maximize the use of contractors for noncombat functions. Every job that does not require a man in uniform pulling a trigger can be performed by a fully competent civilian. The manpower released from administrative chores can be converted into infantry.

Finally, a word on strategic nuclear forces and missile defense. To date, China has not attempted to match the United States in long-range nuclear missiles, because the cost of matching the U.S. arsenal is prohibitive. If the number of U.S. nuclear warheads drops substantially, though, China could be tempted to seek nuclear parity. Maintaining nuclear forces at current levels would prevent this, as would the development of a more robust national missile defense system. Deployment of effective theater missile defenses in Japan, South Korea, and aboard U.S. naval vessels would serve to protect our forces from surprise attack, as well as preclude China from decoupling our Asian allies. Again, though, both nuclear forces and missile defense are relatively cheap.

*Stuart Koehl is a research fellow at the Johns Hopkins Center for Transatlantic Relations and an independent defense analyst who has worked*

*for the Department of Defense, the intelligence community, and the aerospace-defense industry.*

Boston Globe

May 28, 2012

Pg. 10

## **49. Soldiers Deserve More Scrutiny Of Effects Of Brain Traumas**

Memorial Day is not simply about the past and honoring those who died. The wounds of war are carried by every person who has served. Two recent announcements mark an important shift in how the government identifies, treats, and prevents brain injuries sustained in war. A recent study by Boston University researchers about the dangers of combat concussions, coupled with the Army's almost simultaneous decision to review all diagnoses involving post-traumatic stress disorder since 2001, should prompt an overhaul in the military's treatment of brain injuries.

The researchers, Lee Goldstein and Ann McKee, have compiled conclusive evidence that brain injuries caused by improvised explosive devices such as those used in Iraq and Afghanistan have similar long-term effects to those caused by blows received during football or boxing. This is significant because it suggests that soldiers who have been exposed to such explosions may develop long-term neurological diseases. The depression or other psychological issues suffered by many returning soldiers may have less to do with their adjustments to civilian life and more to do with physical disorders, much like those suffered by football players years after they retire. These findings should also assist the military in its development of equipment that

would better protect soldiers' heads, while still giving them the flexibility to fight.

As if on cue, the Army now seems well aware of its responsibility to keep probing the injuries soldiers have sustained, and to do everything possible to get them proper treatment. For many years, that commitment has been lacking. Army leaders are now launching an independent review of how they evaluate PTSD and whether too many soldiers were misdiagnosed as healthy based on faulty science or a concern over rising medical costs.

Both efforts are important, and Boston University's continuing commitment to brain-injury studies is an example about how research in Massachusetts continues to enhance medical understanding. It will help provide soldiers with more detailed evaluations and the treatment they need. However late this help comes, the soldiers deserve it. It is their Memorial Day, too.

Army Times

June 4, 2012

Pg. 4

## **50. Give Heroes Their Due When They've Earned It**

From its inception in 1861 through the Vietnam War, the Medal of Honor was awarded in wartime at a rate of 2.3 to 2.9 per 100,000 troops on active duty. But since 9/11, that rate is down to just one Medal of Honor for every 100,000 troops.

Pentagon officials insist there has been no change in medal criteria; they credit the decline to modern counterinsurgency warfare and the advent of new sensing technology and precision weapons that restrict opportunities for troops to



engage in direct combat with the enemy.

But while there are elements of truth to that statement, it's too easy an answer. There are, in fact, far fewer support troops in theater today than in prior wars — raising the odds that those in theater will encounter the enemy.

And while it's also true that technology has changed the nature of combat, that notion is not new; every era ushers in new technologies that push combat farther away. Despite that fact, troops still find themselves face to face with the enemy even now.

Conspicuous bravery is the one battlefield constant. Every generation has its heroes who risk their lives to kill the enemy and save their comrades. This generation is no different.

Even accounting for changes in warfare, there is no shortage of stories of remarkable bravery and heroism in the face of grave danger. The shortage, rather, is in the courage to nominate troops for the very highest awards.

Deciding which valor award is merited in a given case will always be a judgment call, subject to second-guessing and review.

That's as it should be.

But it's telling that the services have awarded just 10 Medals of Honor since 9/11, and considered little more than a dozen. It's telling that it took until 2010 for a living service member to receive the nation's highest valor award.

This week's Military Times Special Report highlights 10 heroes of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan whose battlefield bravery matches that of men who earned a Medal of Honor. In time, perhaps, their awards will be upgraded.

But as military historian and valor award expert Doug Sterner says, why wait? Why make our modern heroes and their families wait years for their nation to honor their remarkable sacrifice?

More than anything else, this injustice can be traced to a well-meaning directive that simply set the wrong tone at the start of the wars. It urged field commanders to be cautious about nominations in order "to preserve the integrity of the military awards program." It is now clear that this had a chilling effect, driving field commanders to aim too low, nominating troops for Bronze Stars when they might have merited Silver Stars, and Silver Stars when a service cross or Medal of Honor was in order.

Rescinding that directive is step one. Step two is ensuring that field-grade leaders know it's OK to aim high, and that having a nomination downgraded at the battalion, brigade or division level won't hurt later. Higher-echelon commands can help by returning some nominations to be reconsidered for higher awards, especially for troops who died or were severely wounded while trying to save others.

This is a leadership issue that must be tackled from the top.

For too long, the Pentagon has relied on facile excuses for a paucity of top valor awards. Let us honor those whose bravery stands apart today — while the memory of their conspicuous gallantry is still fresh in the minds of those who witnessed their heroic acts.

New York Times

May 28, 2012

Pg. 16

## 51. Cleaner Energy

Last week, President Obama visited a plant in

Iowa that builds wind turbine blades to promote his campaign for green jobs and renewable energy--and to hammer the Republicans for not helping the cause. It was the right venue. Iowa is a leader in wind power, which provides about 20 percent of the state's total electricity, as well as the thousands of jobs that go with it.

Renewable energy is faring well across the country, thanks partly to aggressive state governments and timely--but now imperiled--subsidies. Clean energy sources would do even better if the Republicans would end their hostility to any form of energy other than fossil fuels. Here's some of the good news:

**THE STATES** Twenty-nine states have now adopted renewable energy standards requiring utilities to produce a percentage of their power from non-fossil-fuel sources. Iowa's target is 30 percent by 2020; the state is two-thirds of the way there now because of wind power.

In 2011, there were 20 states producing more than 5 percent of their power from non-hydroelectric renewable sources, up from only five states in 2001. Bipartisan efforts by state leaders have helped. As governor, George W. Bush signed the renewable standard in Texas, which now gets more than 5 percent of its juice from wind.

**PUBLIC LANDS** In 2005, Congress directed the Interior Department to approve enough wind, solar and other renewable energy projects on federal lands to heat, cool and light five million homes. For years, not much happened, with the Bush administration fixated on oil and gas exploration. But in the last two years, Interior Secretary Ken Salazar has approved 29 large-scale solar, wind and geothermal projects.

Most are in the planning or construction stage. Mr. Salazar has flipped the switch on only one, a small solar project south of Las Vegas.

Even more important, Interior has held extensive talks with the states, big utilities and the environmental community and has drawn up an admirable blueprint for development in carefully chosen solar "zones" in six Western states, where projects can proceed with minimal impact on wildlife.

**THE MILITARY** The Defense Department, historically an incubator of energy technologies, has made efforts to "green" the military, allocating nearly \$1.4 billion this fiscal year for energy efficiency, solar and wind power on military bases and development of advanced biofuels. The hope is to reduce the military's fuel bills while curbing dependence on oil from unstable countries.

There's also bad news, mostly emanating from Congress. When a range of important subsidies expire this year and next, federal support for renewables will plummet from \$44 billion in 2009 to \$11 billion in 2014.

Some of the Republican opposition to federal support reflects budgetary concerns, some an unwillingness to do anything that could challenge the dominance of fossil fuels. Some if it is inexplicable. When Ray Mabus, the Navy secretary, tried to explain the Pentagon's embrace of alternative fuels to the House Armed Services Committee, Randy Forbes, a Virginia Republican, snapped, "You're not the secretary of energy; you're the secretary of the Navy." And just last week the Senate Armed Services Committee blocked the Navy from building a biofuels plant, unless expressly authorized by Congress.

If the Republicans care about reducing dependency on foreign oil, this is not the way to do it.

At War (NYTimes.com)  
May 27, 2012

## 52. Honoring The Exchange Of Life For Life

By Alex Horton

The face never comes into view in my dreams, but I know it's him. The twisted mouth is agape, molded in an eternal gasp of shock. The lower half of his body is gone, and there's a black hole where his guts should have been. When Chevy was blown from the Stryker hatch, he took flight for an incalculable measure of time before landing on the slat armor of his vehicle. His uniform was blown off, which never happens in the movies. But he was whole, as complete and pure as the day he was born, I'm told. I never got the chance to see for myself before he disappeared into a body bag. The continuing ambush prevented that.

Memorial Day comes early and often for the men in my infantry battalion. During the unit's second tour in Iraq in 2006 and 2007, we lost 21 men from three companies and attachments. We lost 17 in the span of four months during the Battle of Baquba.

Each year, from March to June, the calendar bleeds with somber anniversaries. The ghosts of a six-man squad huddle around May 6. They lived together, trained together, and when they were attacked during a late-night mission, they died together. We mourned them weeks before Memorial Day arrived, when folks back home looked forward to a long weekend and cookouts.

Remembrance can be an exhaustive process, spread throughout the spring and

marked with individual days of reflection. The closer the calendar gets to Chevy's day, the more introspective and isolated I become. Pictures and memories from the platoon flood Facebook, and phone calls crisscross the country. For the first few anniversaries, we traded memories and wept together. But now that it's been five years, the topic of death and war has partly eroded. These days we talk about having kids, or being old and out of place at college. We have new stories to tell. We've partitioned off the painful ones.

Just like in combat, where heavy gear pulverizes knees and grinds down backs, carrying the burden of recollection cannot be sustained. At some point you have to let go. Memories of the fallen are knotted with the consequences of chance: Why did I live when a father died? Why was I given the chance over someone else? The search for answers cripples many veterans who have forgotten what the dead have truly given us: A chance to fulfill a life they willingly gave up.

Memorial Day for those of us who have fought is not simply a broad recognition of the sacrifices rendered by the dead, but an understanding of the exchange of life for life. Chevy's gift to us wasn't so much his skill or his grit. It was an endowment of time, at first measured in the seconds after his Stryker was toppled to its side. He absorbed the beginning of an ambush that could have killed more men. Those seconds he bought us stretched into minutes and hours, transformed into days, weeks. They built years. His gift was a nanosecond exerted under thousands of pounds of pressure that crippled steel and broke his body, but the effects stretch into the infinite. For the men of our platoon, every new

life created, every new career, graduation, marriage, divorce, every discovery flows along the detonation cord tied to the stack of anti-tank mines that exploded under Cpl. Brian L. Chevalier, Chevy to us.

Sometimes I have another dream, but this one is of my former team leader, Jesse, who was killed while I was on leave. I'm riding in a school bus on the highway in what looks like California. Everyone has their backs to me, and I look out the window to see another bus going the other way. Jesse's hanging out the window, and he's waving, with his big goofy grin. I don't know what the wave means, though I know he's happy to see me. But I can't go with him. Not where he's going. Not yet, anyway.

*Alex Horton is a public affairs specialist at the Department of Veterans Affairs, where he writes for the department's blog, Vantage Point. He served for 15 months as an infantryman in Iraq with the Second Infantry Division.*

New York Daily News  
May 27, 2012  
Pg. 32

## 53. They Fought Like Hell -- So He Could Fight Like Hell For His Country

*A Memorial Day tribute to a heroic World War I soldier and his unit*

By Arthur Browne

The hand-to-hand combat that took place in a World War I sentry's outpost on May 15, 1918, is the stuff of awe-inspiring valor.

Two American soldiers, 5-foot-4-inch Henry Johnson and fellow teenager Needham Roberts, were isolated near a bridge over the Aisne River in northeastern France, their job to guard against stealth attacks.

Peering into the blackness after 2:30 in the morning, Roberts heard a sound. He scurried along a trench to Johnson and they returned noiselessly to Roberts' place. When they heard the click again, they fired an illuminating rocket and shouted an alert.

A raiding party opened fire and hurled hand grenades. Roberts and Johnson were wounded and knocked down. Semi-prone and propped against a door of the dugout, Roberts threw grenades. Johnson got to his feet. A German emerged from the darkness. Johnson fired three times, taking the man down but emptying his magazine. A second German rushed forward with a pistol. Johnson cracked the man's skull with the butt of his rifle.

Two enemy fighters were dragging Roberts off. Johnson leaped to help but fell under gunfire. He struggled to his feet, unsheathed a bolo knife, and plunged the 8-inch blade into the skull of a German who had Roberts by the shoulders. He then turned the knife on Robert's second captor.

The attacker who had fallen under the blow of Johnson's rifle butt fired a Luger. Wounded again, Johnson disemboweled the man with the bolo. As reinforcements arrived, he threw grenades at the retreating Germans. Then he slumped, wounded in both legs and both feet.

Superior officers followed the path of Johnson's fleeing adversaries.

"We trailed the course with the greatest of ease, by pools of blood, blood-soaked handkerchiefs and first aid bandages and blood-smeared logs, where the routed party had rested," one captain recorded, adding "We found a terrible mass of flesh and blood"



along with enough abandoned equipment to indicate the raiding party had included as many as 24 men.

Roberts recuperated well. Johnson lost most of the bones in one foot and doctors inserted a steel tube where a shin had been. Every walking step was a struggle--yet American commanders awarded neither man as much as a Purple Heart.

Johnson's discharge papers stated that he had been severely wounded--yet the Army rated him as having a 0% disability, thus disqualifying him for benefits.

When he died 11 years later at the age of 32, Johnson was a destitute alcoholic. He was buried at Arlington National Cemetery, where for more than seven decades he lay without the recognition due a man who was acclaimed--for a fleeting moment--as one of the war's great heroes.

There was a reason why Henry Johnson was cast into oblivion. He gave his all to country and got less than nothing in return because he was black.

It was not until 1996 that the U.S. military posthumously awarded Johnson the Purple Heart. Six more years passed before the Army bestowed the Distinguished Service Cross, America's second highest decoration.

Amply justified, the DSC was nonetheless a disappointment to advocates, including Sen. Chuck Schumer, who had petitioned for the ultimate accolade of the Medal of Honor. The secretary of the Army had approved the MOH for Johnson in 2001 but the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff overruled the decision.

No reason was given for the reversal. Professional officers who evaluated Johnson's case may have concluded that his heroism fell short of

the supreme standards of the MOH--or they may have been dissatisfied with the historical documentation that accompanied the application. Regardless, Johnson's advocates soldiered on.

With the help of researchers ranging from a college professor to a Regis High School student, Schumer's staff has presented the military with a voluminous application for reconsideration. Crucially, the materials include official accounts written soon after the battle, including by Black Jack Pershing, America's commanding World War I general.

The MOH reviewers will focus, of course, on Johnson's actions in the trench. They seem deserving, but there is more to the story than what happened there. Because the full record shows that Johnson, a railroad station porter from Albany, joined a regiment that was forged on the streets of Harlem and that had to fight like hell for permission to fight like hell for America.

The battle begins in 1909, when three remarkable black men gather at the bar of Doyle's Saloon on the corner of Lenox Ave. and 136th St.

J. Frank Wheaton had been the first African-American to graduate from the University of Minnesota Law School. Bert Williams was a musical comedy star. J.C. Thomas was black New York's leading funeral director. Along with the proprietor, Doyle, each put \$100 on the bar to start a civil rights organization called the Equity Congress. Among its first goals was creation of a black New York National Guard regiment.

On one track, the Equity Congress got an assemblyman to introduce authorizing legislation; on another, the group named Charles Fillmore,

a rare example of an African-American who had commanded black troops, to lead an unofficial volunteer unit.

By Lincoln's Birthday 1912, Fillmore had large enough ranks to parade from Columbus Circle to the Great Emancipator's monument in Union Square as a way to demonstrate that New York's African-Americans were eager to join the military.

Nothing came of the display.

For two years, the Legislature remained adamantly opposed to forming a black regiment. Then, in 1914, lawmakers enacted the authorizing bill.

Again, nothing came of it, this time because the governor withheld an order to activate the regiment in accord with the prevailing belief that blacks neither merited the honor of military service nor could be trusted to bear arms.

Pressing on after World War I erupted in Europe, the Equity Congress sought the advice of Nelson Miles, a general who had served in the Civil, Indian and Spanish-American Wars. He told what The New York Times called "a large assemblage of Harlem negroes" that they "might be better off if there were a recognized nation of colored people which they could call their own" in Africa.

As the U.S. moved inexorably toward war, fate intervened in the person of a white man who enjoyed a place at the upper reaches of American society.

William Hayward, a Nebraskan, served with distinction in the Spanish-American War and appeared on the cover of the Saturday Evening Post as the rock-jawed image of the ideal soldier.

After his service, Hayward moved to New York for a career

that took him from practicing law to serving as counsel to Gov. Charles Whitman. With war approaching and military command becoming a credential for social advancement, Hayward saw opportunity in leading the black regiment that was waiting for gubernatorial authorization.

He asked Whitman to name him colonel of the unit, and, on June 16, 1916, Whitman issued the order with one condition: that Hayward bar blacks from the ranks of superior officers.

Within six weeks, New York's 15th Regiment had more than 500 recruits. But the state provided little money or equipment. Hayward raised funds among whites and leased a vacant cigar store on the corner of 131st St. and Seventh Ave. to serve as a headquarters. Training came late and in small doses.

Enlistees marched in ragged uniforms, if they had uniforms, and with broomsticks in the absence of rifles. One newspaper stated that onlookers laughed at "these darkies playing soldiers."

By the time President Woodrow Wilson led America into the war, the regimental roster included men of every walk of life, from poet to criminal, from farmer to Negro League baseball star. Henry Johnson came down from Albany, where he had also worked in a coal yard.

Orders came down dispatching a storied unit composed largely of Irish-Americans, including the Fighting 69th, to a training camp at Spartanburg, S.C., last stop before France.

The city scheduled a parade to send the contingent off as part of a Rainbow Division melding troops from 26 states. Hayward asked for the 15th to march in recognition that they, too, were about to join the fight.

Permission was denied. Black was not a color of the rainbow, he was told.

Hayward broke the news to his men with a vow that "we will have a parade when we come home that will be the greatest parade ... that New York has ever seen."

While most black troops were limited to working stateside as laborers, Hayward successfully pressured the War Department to deploy the 15th to Spartanburg. The mayor there told the New York Times:

"I am sorry to learn that the fifteenth Regiment has been ordered here, for, with their northern ideas about racial equality, they will probably expect to be treated like white men. I can say right here they will not be treated as anything except Negroes."

That was the case. Whites ordered a Harvard-educated member of the 15th off a trolley, threw another soldier into a gutter and kicked a third in a hotel lobby.

The regiment finally landed in France as 1918 was beginning. Assigned to lay railroad tracks and build docks, the men pressed Hayward for a transfer into combat.

Hayward appealed to Black Jack Pershing without success because white Americans refused to serve beside blacks. Then a desperate French army offered to take the troops to the front under its command. With Pershing's approval, the 15th became the first American regiment to serve beneath a foreign flag. The French dubbed the men *les enfants perdu*, the forgotten orphans.

Redesignated as the 369th Infantry, the regiment plunged into the horrors of trench warfare--and Johnson routed 24 Germans to save his life and that of Roberts.

The morning after, three New York correspondents

visited the regiment. Martin Green of the Evening World, Lincoln Eyre of the New York World, and Irvin S. Cobb, of the Saturday Evening Post, sent home the story of "The Battle of Henry Johnson."

Eyre's account read in part, "Our own 'cullud folks'--negro infantrymen mainly from the State and City of New York--have met the Germans and worsted them."

The French awarded Johnson the Croix de Guerre avec Palme, its highest military honor. At war's end, he shipped home with a regiment now renowned as the "Hellfighters of Harlem."

The unit had spent 191 days at the front, longer than any other company. The men had never surrendered a trench or a foot of ground, and had never lost a man to capture. Hundreds had given their lives. And New York threw the regiment a tumultuous welcome-home parade equal to the one Hayward had promised.

Unable to march, Henry Johnson rode holding a bouquet in a convertible limousine.

Then he faded from memory, his deeds unsung.

Because he was black.

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Chicago Tribune

May 27, 2012

Pg. 2

## **54. Empty WWII Grave Holds A Story That Now Has Ending**

By John Kass

There are many graves at St. Casimir Cemetery on the Far South Side of Chicago, and one belongs to Emil Wasilewski.

Emil's coffin is there, but Emil isn't in the ground.

The empty casket was buried after his family learned that Lt. Emil T. Wasilewski, a decorated bombardier, was killed in action in Germany in 1944. Emil's body wasn't

recovered, but his father, a Polish immigrant, wanted a place to grieve. Emil's nephew, Wally Wade, of Lake Forest, explained it this way:

"He bought three graves. One for himself, one for his wife and one for his son. He put a headstone and, I've come to find out, he put a casket in the ground also."

A World War II-era photograph shows a young man, handsome, optimistic, in his uniform. There is another photo embedded in the gravestone.

On May 7, 1944, just a few months before he was killed, there was a story in the Chicago Tribune under the headline "With America's Fighters."

"Emil T. Wasilewski, 5629 S. Laflin St., recently was graduated from Deming Army Air Field, N.M., as a lieutenant and was awarded silver bombardier wings after completing an 18-week course in high altitude precision bombing. Before entering the A.A.F., Lt. Wasilewski attended Lindblom High School."

Wally says his grandfather buried the coffin "for closure, maybe memory."

"Every Memorial Day he'd hang a 4-by-8-foot flag off his front porch. And we always went to the cemetery on Memorial Day. ... But that's about all he really said about it, you know. Those were people coming out of the Depression too. They just did what they had to do," Wally said.

Then in the winter of 2010-2011, Wally said he got a strange phone call. The voice on the other end said he was from the United States Army.

"Just out of the blue, I'm just sitting here and I get a call from some guy at Fort Knox. 'We think we found your uncle.' I say, 'Yeah, right.' Random phone call. Out of the blue. ... I thought the next

question was that the guy was going to hit me up for 100 bucks, you know what I mean?"

Wally blew it off, but his brother Don Wade, a financial planner who lives in Downers Grove, got a similar call. The Army sent Don a DNA kit. He wiped the swab under his tongue and along the inside of his cheek, and mailed it back.

"There was still a part of me that was thinking, 'I hope this isn't a scam,'" Don said. "After I did it, I just put it out of my mind."

In the fall of 2011, Don got another call. The DNA was a match.

"It's one of those things that I'm always going to 'grief' my chucklehead brother for, for the rest of his life: Why can't you be more trusting? We're here because of my cheek," Don said, laughing.

According to Army documents, Wasilewski was aboard a B-17G Flying Fortress on a bombing run to take out German oil refineries on Sept. 13, 1944. The aircraft was shot down by enemy fire and crashed. Only one man survived.

The other eight, including Wasilewski, were killed and buried near the town of Neustadt. For years the area in East Germany was closed to American forces by the Soviets.

In 1991, a German digging in the area found the dog tags of one of the crew members. German law prohibited more searching on the site, according to Army documents, and it wasn't until 2007 that American POW/MIA experts investigated what was believed to be a mass burial site.

A few years ago, 117 bone and tooth samples were submitted to the Armed Forces DNA Identification Laboratory.

And the remains of Lt. Emil T. Wasilewski were among them, positively identified with



the help of DNA from a nephew he never knew.

John Sikes, of Joliet, is a great nephew of Emil's. He's kept Emil's Purple Heart, the flag that was draped over the empty coffin, the death letter from President Franklin Roosevelt, Emil's cigarette lighter and an old letter sent to the family from Sgt. George F. Clark, the only survivor of the crash:

"...The pilot then ordered us to jump. I can't say for sure, but I imagine we were between one and two thousand feet when we were told to jump. I jumped and soon after my chute opened ... I heard the plane crash. I looked down and saw it burning."

The remains of Emil Wasilewski are scheduled to be laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery on June 26. If more remains are uncovered, relatives said, they will likely be cremated and sprinkled over the grave at St. Casimir's.

The summer before the Army called the family, Wally Wade had visited Arlington.

"Heaven," he said. "It was absolutely spectacular. ... You walk in and you see all those cemetery markers standing up straight. They position the gravestones in such a manner they are reminiscent of a Roman legion ready for battle. ... Beautiful rolling land."

The Wade brothers, Sikes and many other relatives plan to make the trip to Arlington for Uncle Emil's burial.

Their story reminds us this isn't just a weekend for American barbecue.

It is the weekend for American graves, and for American memory.

By Denis Hamill

Remember these two men this Memorial Day.

They were born during World War II and grew up in Woodside, Queens, where they were in the same kindergarten class at Public School 76. They would later both serve in Vietnam, the war that defined their generation.

Robert Emmett O'Malley was badly wounded saving the lives of fellow Marines and came home alive.

Thomas Patrick Noonan also saved the lives of fellow Marines but was killed on the battlefield.

Both were awarded the Medal of Honor.

That two buddies from the same grade school, born five months apart in 1943, would receive the highest commendation for valor in the land is astounding.

But O'Malley and Noonan came from a special place called Woodside that erected a Vietnam Memorial in 1988 bearing the names of 27 young men from Zip Code 11377 who made the ultimate sacrifice in Vietnam. That, according to local Councilman Jimmy Van Bramer, is more than from any other postal code in the nation.

"It was that kind of neighborhood," says Lorraine Diehl, who remembers when O'Malley received his medal in 1966. "I was five years younger than him, so I looked up to Bobby like he was a superstar. That a neighborhood guy, from your block, your parish, your school, your candy store on Laurel Hill Ave., won the Medal of Honor was like the whole neighborhood just hit the lottery."

But O'Malley carried more than a medal around his neck. He carried a rucksack of horrific memories. These days, O'Malley lives on a farm in Texas and, like most real

heroes, doesn't tell war stories and refuses to speak to the press.

"Jimmy's a very private guy," says Jim Seaman, a Marine veteran of Desert Storm who knows O'Malley from the VFW Posts of Queens. "He doesn't talk much about Vietnam. Listen, his medal does all the talking."

Indeed.

According to his official citation, on Aug. 18, 1965, Cpl. O'Malley served as squad leader in Company I, Third Battalion, Third Marines, Third Marine Division near An Cu'ong against a "strongly entrenched enemy" and "with complete disregard for his personal safety," he raced across an open rice paddy with his rifle and jumped into a trench where many Viet Cong were firing upon his men.

O'Malley personally killed eight of them.

Then reloaded.

He "fired with telling effect" on more hostiles and personally evacuated several wounded Marines to whirling helicopters.

Instead of boarding himself, O'Malley returned to the thick of battle, evacuating more Marines. Although wounded three times "and facing imminent death from a fanatic and determined enemy," O'Malley wouldn't board a helicopter and continued to fire upon the enemy until the last wounded U.S. Marine was evacuated.

"Only then, with his last mission accomplished, did he permit himself to be removed from the battlefield."

O'Malley was the first living Marine of the Vietnam War to win the Medal of Honor.

Back home, one of his proudest pals was Tommy Noonan. After O'Malley joined the Marines at 18, Noonan tried the seminary, dropped out and earned a bachelor's degree in

physical education at Hunter College.

"Noonan was built like a gorilla," says Tommy Maher, a Korean War jarhead from Queens. "And the story goes that after O'Malley got the Medal of Honor, Noonan was at a neighborhood party and said, 'I better join up before this war ends because if they gave O'Malley one of those medals they oughtta give me two.'"

President Richard Nixon gave him one, posthumously.

His citation tells us that on Feb. 5, 1969, Lance Cpl. Noonan served as a fire team leader with Company G, Second Battalion, Ninth Marines, Third Marine Division in Quang Tri Province when they "came under heavy fire" from a well-concealed enemy unit as they descended a treacherous, muddy hill.

Four Marines were wounded and marooned under continuous enemy fire. Noonan scrambled from safety toward the wounded leathernecks, diving behind some rocks. Then "he dashed across the hazardous terrain and commenced dragging the most seriously wounded man away from the fire-swept area." Although "knocked to the ground by an enemy round," Noonan resumed dragging the man toward safety. "He was, however, mortally wounded before he could reach his destination."

Noonan is buried in Calvary Cemetery in his beloved Queens, where a Veterans Administration clinic bears his name. So does his childhood playground in Woodside. Councilman Van Bramer says the park is undergoing a \$600,000 refurbishing, with a fitting memorial to the fallen local hero.

"Looking at that picture of those two sweet innocent kids

in kindergarten who would both receive Medals of Honor sends shivers of pride and sadness up your spine," says Jerry Olt, commander of the Catholic War Veterans in Woodside.

So let's not forget Tommy Noonan and Bobby O'Malley on this Memorial Day.

Boston Globe  
May 28, 2012

## 56. The Patriotism Of Sacrifice

*A wise society asks this of everyone, not just the poor and the brave*

By Roland Merullo

If Memorial Day is about anything, it's about sacrifice. Originally conceived as a day on which to remember Americans who died in battle, the holiday memorializes those who risked every individual hope and joy for the sake of the greater good.

But in modern American society this sacrificial impulse has gone the way of the typewriter. If we look for the roots of this new selfishness - which often masquerades under the misapplied label "freedom" - we might find ourselves at the moment in 1973 when the draft was abolished. Isn't the all-volunteer military another masquerade, a way of shifting a burden from the haves to the have-nots? We've come to accept this as fair, when, in fact, it's part and parcel of a larger inequity.

It is true, of course, that, in every branch of the service, one can find well-educated and well-off young people who volunteered for military duty. Some come from families with a long proud history of military service, and some just feel a patriotic urge to serve their country in uniform. They know they may be called upon to risk life or limb, but they are moved by a sense of duty,

an understanding of the true meaning of freedom and the role America has played in defending it, and a conscience that recognizes the value, not just of the individual pursuit of happiness but of common responsibility.

But those people are the shining exceptions. How many Marine recruiting billboards do you see in the fancy suburbs? Given a choice between enlisting in the service or embarking on a path that includes college, an advanced degree, and a safe, rich life of dinner parties and summer houses, most young men and women of the investment class - some of our best and brightest - choose the latter. And who can fault them? The fault lies not with them but with a society that has lost its sense of fairness.

You can see the same lopsided morality at work in the arguments over health care and taxes. You have a small number of millionaires who understand their communal responsibility and want the laws changed to make their tax burden fairer. And then you have a chorus of loud voices shouting about freedom and success and the misbegotten notion that more money in their investment accounts will actually benefit the masses. We have the young and healthy who want no part of a national health care system that, as it does in so many other advanced countries, recognizes and supports the idea of collective obligation. Fine, if some other family sends their kids to war. Fine, if the gap between rich and poor widens, as long as I'm on the right side of it. Fine, if some guy we don't know loses his house because of the expenses of cancer treatment. That's freedom.

Ironically enough, many of the same people who extol the excellence of the American

military (often in the most sentimental terms) also contend that the government cannot do anything well and should be shrunk down to nothing and kept out of our lives. They put a hand on their chest and gaze up at the flag during the national anthem, as if it is a red, white, and blue excuse for selfishness.

During World War II, my mother set aside a promising physical therapy career to enlist in the Army and work with amputees at Walter Reed, men who'd lost their youth in the Pacific Theater. It's important for us to spend a day recognizing sacrifices like that - hers, the men who lost arms and legs, and the men and women who've given their lives or good health in more recent wars.

And it's fine that young people don't have to put on a uniform if they don't want to. But they should have to do something, some form of brief national service that benefits someone other than themselves. A just, wise, decent society asks sacrifice of everyone, not just the poor and brave. On Memorial Day, amid the parades and wreath-laying, the speeches and cemetery visits, we might think about sacrifice, and how easy it is to ask it of everyone but ourselves.

*Roland Merullo's essay, "What a Father Leaves," honoring his father, will be released as an e-book and audio book in June.*

Washington Post  
May 28, 2012  
Pg. 18

## 57. Memorial Day

*Remembering the casualties: those who died and those who bore scars seen and unseen.*

THE POST published an article last week about a John Huston movie you probably haven't seen, although it was made more than 65 years ago and its director is among the

legendary names of Hollywood. It's a documentary that deals with the treatment of American service members suffering from what used to be called "shell shock" and is now generally known as post-traumatic stress disorder.

As Steve Vogel told it in The Post, the story of how the film was commissioned by the Army late in World War II, and then withheld from wide distribution for many years, is a tale of murky motivations, bureaucratic obfuscation and sometimes heavy-handed censorship (military police even confiscated a copy of the film that was to be shown at a New York art house). Huston thought it was all an effort to protect the "'warrior' myth." Perhaps; the fog of war often extends far beyond the battlefield. In any event, the film, "Let There Be Light," has just been made available in a restored version with a much-improved soundtrack and can now be seen for what it is: not a tribute to film-making or freedom of expression but a memorial.

"These are the casualties of the spirit, the troubled in mind, men who are damaged emotionally," says the narrator (the director's father, Walter Huston), men who "in the fulfillment of their duties as soldiers were forced beyond the limits of human endurance."

Some no doubt recovered fully, others not at all. The truth is, as we are being reminded every day by this century's conflicts, that the mental anguish of war can be as murderous as flying steel and high explosives. Its victims are personally memorialized in faces on film long after they are gone (as most of them are by now). Not just the faces in this film — somber, confused, hopeful or hardened — but the bearded, helmeted unshaven



faces staring vacantly past the camera into some far distance. How many of them made it all the way back?

Memorial Day was, in its beginnings, a popular observance that developed spontaneously after the Civil War, when families began the custom of decorating the graves of their Union and Confederate dead on one particular day or another in springtime. These were people who could have had no illusions about the glories of war or the greatness of any Cause — not after approximately 620,000 dead and who knows how many more physically maimed, disabled or “casualties of the spirit.”

Memorial Day was not then, and is not today, about victories won, national glory or the greatness of the armed forces. It is essentially the fulfillment of a personal obligation to remember — to say of someone we knew, or loved or whose name we read on a plaque or whose troubled face we see in a long-ago documentary film: You lost all, or nearly all, before your time had come, but you shall not be forgotten.

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New York Times  
May 28, 2012  
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## 58. This Memorial Day

There was a time, not so long ago, when Memorial Day, and the knowledge that school would soon be ending, was the dock from which we looked out upon the sea of summer. From Memorial Day, to a child of the right age, September looked like some undiscoverable Indies, lying far beyond the visible horizon.

And Memorial Day itself? It was the last and most solemn solemnity before the beautiful expanse of summer, a day when graves were being gardened everywhere and you could see

from the flags among them who had died as veterans.

Perhaps summer was never as blissfully empty as it seems in memory. It certainly isn't now when we're in the clutches of adulthood. Even so, the Fourth of July doesn't seem to be lying in wait just around the next corner, and let us not speak of Labor Day. Better to enjoy the slowness of Memorial Morning and Memorial Afternoon and Memorial Evening, the fireflies rising like very slow fireworks into the darkness of the trees.

It has always seemed fitting to mark the purpose of this holiday--honoring those who have died in our country's service--at the exuberant end of May. The outburst of spring is just slowing into summer's cadence, and yet you can still smell and feel the biological crescendo all around you.

Whether it consoles the people who are gardening those graves is for them to say. And these years, after a decade of two wars, there are many lost lives to mourn. But nature is doing all it can to comfort. Life, it seems to be saying, continues on from summer to summer. There are memories and sadness, but also a verdancy that makes us celebrate what we have.

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Miami Herald  
May 28, 2012

## 59. 'A Free And Undivided Republic' *Memorial Day honors the sacrifice of our soldiers who died securing the peace*

Memorial Day honors our war dead, military veterans who paid the ultimate price to secure our nation's freedom.

It officially began 144 years ago, with a proclamation on May 5, 1868, just three years after the Civil War had ended. Maj. Gen. John A. Logan, who headed a group of Union

army veterans, declared May 30 “Decoration Day.” It was a day to decorate the graves of the soldiers who were killed during the Civil War.

There were other days set aside a year or two earlier for the same purpose throughout the land, but it was Gen. Logan's declaration that sparked the tradition of a ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery. Today about 5,000--the same number as in 1868--participate in the Washington commemoration.

In 1971, Congress declared the day a national holiday, and officially moved the commemoration to the last Monday in May.

Over the years the holiday has morphed into a long weekend to take a short vacation, have fun at the beach, or go out shopping and look for sales.

Yet thousands of our nation's families today will be mourning their sons and daughters killed in the past decade in Afghanistan or Iraq, or the fallen fathers and mothers in Vietnam or all those who died in other military operations in modern times. In all, according to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, 1.1 million American servicemen and women have died in this nation's wars.

We must not forget them.

Gen. Logan's order to his men in 1868 rings true today:

“We should guard their graves with sacred vigilance. . . . Let pleasant paths invite the coming and going of reverent visitors and fond mourners. Let no neglect, no ravages of time, testify to the present or to the coming generations that we have forgotten as a people the cost of a free and undivided republic.”

Achieving an undivided republic becomes ever harder in these hyper-partisan times.

All Americans of good will have the opportunity today to set aside gripes about their government and misgivings about their political leadership and for a brief moment stand behind an undivided republic.

Spend one minute this Monday on prayer, meditation or silence at 3 p.m. local time, as encouraged by the National Moment of Remembrance. One minute to remember and honor those brave souls who sacrificed themselves for our nation's security.

One minute. Then go back to shopping or sunbathing, or simply enjoying family and friends.

For notwithstanding the political cracks in the national soul, the United States remains a beacon for all those in search of a “free and undivided republic”--thanks to the bravery and ultimate sacrifice of 1.1 million Americans throughout our history.

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New York Times  
May 28, 2012  
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## 60. Corrections

An obituary on Friday about Wesley A. Brown, the first black graduate of the United States Naval Academy, referred incorrectly to Mr. Brown and other students at the academy. They are called midshipmen, not cadets. (Students at the United States Military Academy at West Point are cadets.)

**Editor's Note:** The obituary referred to by Paul Vitello appeared in the *Current News Early Bird*, May 25, 2012.