



VETERANS FOR PEACE  
HUMBOLDT BAY  
CHAPTER 56

# THE FOGHORN

FEBRUARY  
2012

*“Cutting Through the Fog of War”*

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## Jim Crow in 2012?

### Why The Occupy Movement Should Join Forces With the Voter Rights Movement

*By Rob Hepburn*

When I was a child in southern New Jersey, I went swimming in the local lake; one side was for whites. It was nicely maintained. The other side was for blacks. It had stumps. I was a teenager in the early 60's and there were still Jim Crow laws in the thirteen ex-slave owning states of the South.

These laws were first named “The Black Codes” but quickly became known as “Jim Crow” after a character in a popular minstrel show in which whites put on “black face” and made fun of African Americans. Under the banner of “States Rights” these laws took away the civil and human rights of certain groups of people.

One of the most infamous laws was the “Poll Tax” which was a compulsory cash fee required in order to vote. Another was a “Literacy Test” in which African Americans were required to know obscure facts of U.S. history in order to vote. The “Federal Voting Rights Act” of 1965 overturned all those laws.

Now some forty-seven years later these laws are back in different forms but with the same effects, to disenfranchise African Americans and other minorities. This time however, these new “Voter ID Laws” will disenfranchise even more groups of people: racial minorities, young people, poor people, disabled people and very old people.

Now it is not thirteen states but thirty-four states that have such laws pending or already passed by their state legislatures. Virtually all of these states are governed by Republicans, many of whom were elected in the 2010 elections. All the groups targeted by these “new” laws tend to vote Democratic.

The rationale given for all these new voter ID laws is to prevent voter fraud. However, according to the independent Brennan Justice Center, polling place voter impersonation fraud is exceedingly rare and that is the only kind of fraud these new voter ID laws address.

All these new laws require that a voter have an official state issued photo ID to vote. Nationwide 11% of U.S. citizens do not have such an ID. The vast majority of these citizens are again, racial minorities, young people, disabled people, and very old people. Interestingly, the states with the most harsh new voter ID laws also have the highest minority percentages without the new required ID.

For example, according to State of Wisconsin statistics, more than half of their African American residents and more than half of their Latino residents do not have the required ID, while conversely only 17% of white residents don't have the required ID. The states of Texas, Tennessee, Mississippi, and South Carolina have similar high percentages within these minority populations as opposed to the white population.

Another group targeted by these laws are college students. The states of Wisconsin and Tennessee no longer accept student photo IDs. The state of Texas now does not accept student voter ID for voting, but does accept “Concealed Weapon Permits” for voting.

One reason so many people don't have these state photo ID is because they can be very expensive to obtain. On top of the cost of the ID itself, which can go up to nearly \$25.00 to obtain such an ID, eligible voters often have to prove supplemental records such as birth certificates to obtain an ID, which can cost upwards of \$200.00 to obtain. Ironically seventeen of these new thirty-four states require

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photo ID to obtain a birth certificate. This is the new "Poll Tax" in America.

Moreover, besides this effective new Poll Tax, these laws limit the time of early voting, ending same day registration and make it difficult for groups to register new voters, none of which has anything to do with preventing voter fraud. If this was not enough, in these same states Post Offices and DMV offices have been closed down in minority and low-income communities making it necessary for minority and poor people to travel long distances to get the required photo ID.

According to the "Brennan Justice Center", more than five million voters could be disenfranchised by rules already put in place ahead of the 2012 elections, a number larger than the margin of victory in two of the last three presidential elections.

The fundamental premise of the Occupy 99% Movement is that we need more economic and political democracy in this country. However, it is the 35% of our country's people in minorities who have a disproportionately suffered from our corporate driven, top-down economy.

According to the Center for Responsible Lending, African Americans and Latino families are three times more likely to have their homes foreclosed on than white middle class Americans.

According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, while the official unemployment rate for white people is 7.5%, the rate for African Americans is 15.8%, Latino Americans 12% and Native Americans 20%. The 2010 U.S. Census Report gives the poverty rate for white Americans as 9.9%, but for African Americans, Latino Americans, and Native Americans it average is 27%.

This is all in the context of the "Legal Fiction" that corporations are people with all the rights of real people, but with all the money to make them "Super Beings." This is also in the context of the 2010 Supreme Court decision that ruled under the First Amendment corporations can spend unlimited amounts of money to influence our elections.

In a democracy the right to vote is its most fundamental right. Political democracy and economic democracy are like twins sharing one heart, separated from each other they both die. The only antidote to the poison of money power in our democracy is the people power of the vote!

Voting rights for everyone was a big part of what Dr. Martin Luther King lived and died for. Shortly before he was assassinated he organized the first "Occupy Movement" in this country, The Poor Peoples March on Washington.

This is why I believe the Occupy 99% Movement should stand

together with the Voting Rights Movement in this country, and with one thundering voice say "NO, DEMOCRACY IS NOT FOR SALE!" Democracy is of, by, and for all people We need to take back our country from the auction block of the corporations. To do this we need everyone's vote! Let's come together and break up this new Jim Crow! "El Pueblo Unido Jamas Sera Vencido! The People United Will Never Be Defeated!"

## 75 Years, the First Occupy ...a note from Michael Moore

By Michael Moore

On December 30th, in 1936 -- 75 years ago -- hundreds of workers at the General Motors factories in Flint, Michigan, took over the facilities and occupied them for 44 days. My uncle was one of them.

The workers couldn't take the abuse from the corporation any longer. Their working conditions, the slave wages, no vacation, no health care, no overtime -- it was do as you're told or get tossed onto the curb.

So on the day before New Year's Eve, emboldened by the recent re-election of Franklin Roosevelt, they sat down on the job and refused to leave.

They began their Occupation in the dead of winter. GM cut off the heat and water to the buildings. The police tried to raid the factories several times, to no avail. Even the National Guard was called in.

But the workers held their ground, and after 44 days, the corporation gave in and recognized the UAW as the representative of the workers. It was a monumental historical moment as no other major company had ever been brought to its knees by their employees. Workers were given a raise to a dollar an hour -- and successful strikes and occupations spread like wildfire across the country. Finally, the working class would be able to do things like own their own homes, send their children to college, have time off and see a doctor without having to worry about paying. In Flint, Michigan, on this day in 1936, the middle class was born.

But 75 years later, the owners and elites have regained all power and control. I can think of no better way for us to honor the original Occupiers than by all of us participating in the Occupy Wall Street movement in whatever form that takes in each of our towns. We need direct action all winter long if we are to prevail. You can start your own Occupy group in your neighborhood or school or with just your friends. Speak out against economic injustice at every chance you get. Stop the bank from evicting the family down the block. Move your checking and credit card to a community bank or credit union. Place a sign in your yard -- and

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get your neighbors to do it also -- that says, "WE ARE THE 99%." Do something, anything, but don't remain silent. Not now. This is the moment. It won't come again.

75 years ago in Flint, Michigan, the people said they'd had enough and occupied the factories until they won. What is stopping us now? The rich have one plan: bleed everyone dry. Can anyone, in good conscience, be a bystander to this?

My uncle wasn't, and because of what he and others did, I got to grow up without having to worry about a roof over my heads or medical bills or a decent life. And all that was provided by my dad who built spark plugs on a GM assembly line.

Let's each of us double our efforts to raise a ruckus, Occupy Everywhere, and get creative as we throw a major nonviolent wrench into this system of Greed. Let's make the politicians running for office in 2012 quake in their boots if they refuse to tax the rich, regulate Wall Street and do whatever we the people tell them to do.

Happy 75th!

Yours,

Michael Moore  
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## How Many U.S. Soldiers Were Wounded in Iraq? Guess Again

By Dan Froomkin

Reports about the end of the war in Iraq routinely describe the toll on the U.S. military the way the Pentagon does: 4,487 dead, and 32,226 wounded.

The death count is accurate. But the wounded figure wildly understates the number of American servicemembers who have come back from Iraq less than whole.

The true number of military personnel injured over the course of our nine-year-long fiasco in Iraq is in the hundreds of thousands -- maybe even more than half a million -- if you take into account all the men and women who returned from their deployments with traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress, depression, hearing loss, breathing disorders, diseases, and other long-term health problems.

We don't have anything close to an exact number, however, because nobody's been keeping track.

The much-cited Defense Department figure comes from its tally of "wounded in action" -- a narrowly-tailored category that only includes casualties during combat operations who have "incurred

an injury due to an external agent or cause." That generally means they needed immediate medical treatment after having been shot or blown up. Explicitly excluded from that category are "injuries or death due to the elements, self-inflicted wounds, combat fatigue" -- along with cumulative psychological and physiological strain or many of the other wounds, maladies and losses that are most common among Iraq veterans.

The "wounded in action" category is relatively consistent, historically, so it's still useful as a point of comparison to previous wars. But there is no central repository of data regarding these other, sometimes grievous, harms. We just have a few data points here and there that indicate the magnitude.

Consider, for instance:

The Pentagon's Defense and Veterans Brain Injury Center reports having diagnosed 229,106 cases of mild to severe traumatic brain injury from 2000 to the third quarter of 2011, including both Iraq and Afghan vets.

A 2008 study of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans by researchers at the RAND Corporation found that 14 percent screened positive for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and 14 percent for major depression, with 19 percent reporting a probable traumatic brain injury during deployment. (The researchers found that major depression is "highly associated with combat exposure and should be considered as being along the spectrum of post-deployment mental health consequences.") Applying those proportions to the 1.5 million veterans of Iraq, an estimated 200,000 of them would be expected to suffer from PTSD or major depression, with 285,000 of them having experienced a probable traumatic brain injury.

A 2008 study published in the New England Journal of Medicine found that 15 percent of soldiers reported an injury during deployment that involved loss of consciousness or altered mental status, and 17 percent of soldiers reported other injuries. (Using

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Next VFP56 meeting will be held  
on Thursday, February 2nd at  
7:00 PM.  
Meeting will be held in the  
Commons Room at 550 Union  
Street in Arcata.  
Veterans and non-veterans are  
more than welcome to come and  
help us dialogue about what we to-  
gether can do to bring about peace  
in this complex world.



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that ratio would suggest that 480,000 Iraq vets were injured one way or the other.) More than 40 percent of soldiers who lost of consciousness met the criteria for post-traumatic stress disorder.

Altogether, the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America group estimates that nearly 1 in 3 people deployed in those wars suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, or traumatic brain injury. That would mean 500,000 of the 1.5 million deployed to Iraq.

The single most common service-connected disability is actually hearing loss. A 2005 Department of Veterans Affairs research paper found that one third of soldiers who had recently returned from deployments in Afghanistan and Iraq were referred to audiologists for hearing evaluations due to exposure to acute acoustic blasts, and 72 percent of them were identified as having hearing loss. Richard Salvi, head of the University of Buffalo's Center for Hearing and Deafness announced recently that "as many as 50 percent of combat soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan who come back have tinnitus" because of the intense noise soldiers must withstand.

The Department of Veterans Affairs' list of potential deployment health conditions includes chronic fatigue syndrome, depression, fibromyalgia, hearing difficulties, hepatitis A, B and C, leishmaniasis (also known as the "Baghdad boil"), malaria, memory loss, migraines, sleep disorders and tuberculosis.

The VA's web page on hazardous exposures warns that "combat Veterans may have been exposed to a wide variety of environmental hazards during their service in Afghanistan or Iraq. These hazardous exposures may cause long-term health problems." The hazards include exposure to open-air burn pits, infectious diseases, depleted uranium, toxic shrapnel, cold and heat injuries and chemical agent resistant paint. The VA provides no estimates of exposure or damage, however.

A 2010 Congressional Research Service report, presenting what it called "difficult-to-find statistics regarding U.S. military casualties" offers one indication of how the "wounded in action" category undercounts real casualties. It found that for every soldier wounded in action and medically evacuated from Iraq, more than four more were medically evacuated for other reasons.

The Armed Forces Health Surveillance Center's most recent monthly report found that the proportion of returned deployers who, around 3 months after their return, rated their health as "fair" or "poor" was 10 to 13 percent. More than 20 percent said their health was worse than before they were deployed; a similar number had "exposure concerns" and more than 27 percent reported depression symptoms.

A March 2010 report from the Institute of Medicine concluded

that many wounds suffered in Iraq and Afghanistan will persist over veterans' lifetimes, and some impacts of military service may not be felt until decades later.

There are surely many other data points out there. But a comprehensive tally escapes us. In the meantime, the figure for "wounded" constantly cited by politicians and the media does not come close to reflecting the real cost to the servicemembers who went to fight in George W. Bush's war of adventure and will never be the same again.

We owe it to them to make a full accounting of their sacrifice -- and then never forget it.

*Dan Froomkin is the deputy editor of the Nieman Watchdog Project. He is also Senior Washington Correspondent for the Huffington Post.*

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## WHEN IS ENOUGH ENOUGH!!

*By Jim Sorter*

Well, well, well! We have shown our colors once again in Afghanistan! Does it kind of feel strange that during anytime in our grunt training, reading the *Uniform Code of Military Justice*, not once did I run across the section that said once you have an enemy down you are allowed to stand over his body and urinate on it! Not once did any of my training officers and noncoms ever advise this type of behavior

Once again I am incensed about the behavior of these rogue soldiers who are giving the whole United States a black eye with their abhorrent behaviors. Where is the leadership that keeps these young psychopaths in line for the benefit of all?

We say, "Bring our troops home." Frankly, I am afraid of these young sickos coming home and trying to utilize these tactics on the civilian population of this country while blaming it on PTSD. I foresee a scary future for us all if this is the mentality of those men and women who are being released back into our society.

I have a great idea! Why not take the perpetrators of these heinous crimes, relieve them of their weapons and place them in the heart of enemy territory and see how long their bravado would last. I guarantee their boots would be filled with excrement long before they made it back to the safety of their comrades.

Seriously, these five rogue marines, including their videographer should be subjected to the harshest punishment the military can give. They should be stripped of rank, given a general court marshal and be summarily kicked out of the service with a Dishonorable Discharge, with no benefits because of the heinous act they committed on an already defeated enemy.

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We daily see Bradley Manning in the news because of his alleged Wikileaks exposures. Some tout him as a hero trying to expose the behaviors that he saw which were wrong. He is facing life in military prison for following his conscience. Well, the behavior of these sick degenerates who perpetrated the act described in the first paragraph deserve no easy discipline since they brought about world condemnation of the American troops.

I believe too many of these young, impressionable minds are not given the right messages about dealing with the enemy. They are left to improvise. Well their improvisation scares the hell out of me and I will not cry for them to return to the states until some serious psychiatric and human rights training bring about a more civil and humane attitude toward their fellow man. They knew full well what they were doing and reveled in the fact that they were just desecrating another "raghead" in a country filled with men and women who would love to get them alone in a dark alley.

These aforementioned troops deserve the punishment necessary to wipe the smirks off their faces, and set standards for those following them. Their actions discredit not only themselves, but the whole military service, our government and certainly us.

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## KABUL, AFGHANISTAN HOSTILITIES

By Peter Byrne

***KABUL, Afghanistan — American and other coalition forces here are being killed in increasing numbers by the very Afghan soldiers they fight alongside and train, in attacks motivated by deep-seated animosity between the supposedly allied forces, according to American and Afghan officers and a classified coalition report.***

A casualty of a 2009 attack in which an Afghan police officer shot and killed five British soldiers in Helmand Province.

A decade into the war in Afghanistan, the report makes clear that these killings have become the most visible symptom of a far deeper ailment plaguing the war effort: the contempt each side holds for the other, never mind the Taliban. The ill will and mistrust run deep among civilians and militaries on both sides, raising questions about what future role the United States and its allies can expect to play in Afghanistan.

Underscoring the danger, a gunman in an Afghan Army uniform killed four French service members and wounded several others on Friday, according to an Afghan police official in Kapisa Province in eastern Afghanistan, prompting the French president to suspend his country's operations here.

The violence, and the failure by coalition commanders to address it, casts a harsh spotlight on the shortcomings of American

efforts to build a functional Afghan Army, a pillar of the Obama administration's strategy for extricating the United States from the war in Afghanistan, said the officers and experts who helped shape the strategy.

The problems risk leaving the United States and its allies dependent on an Afghan force that is permeated by anti-Western sentiment and incapable of combating the Taliban and other militants when NATO's combat mission ends in 2014, they said.

One instance of the general level of antipathy in the war exploded into uncomfortable view last week when video emerged of American Marines urinating on dead Taliban fighters. Although American commanders quickly took action and condemned the act, chat-room and Facebook posts by Marines and their supporters were full of praise for the desecration.

But the most troubling fallout has been the mounting number of Westerners killed by their Afghan allies, events that have been routinely dismissed by American and NATO officials as isolated episodes that are the work of disturbed individual soldiers or Taliban infiltrators, and not indicative of a larger pattern. The unusually blunt report, which was prepared for a subordinate American command in eastern Afghanistan, takes a decidedly different view. The Wall Street Journal reported on details of the investigation last year. A copy was obtained by The New York Times.

"Lethal altercations are clearly not rare or isolated; they reflect a rapidly growing systemic homicide threat (a magnitude of which may be unprecedented between 'allies' in modern military history)," it said. Official NATO pronouncements to the contrary "seem disingenuous, if not profoundly intellectually dishonest," said the report, and it played down the role of Taliban infiltrators in the killings.

The coalition refused to comment on the classified report. But "incidents in the recent past where Afghan soldiers have wounded or killed I.S.A.F. members are isolated cases and are not occurring on a routine basis," said Lt. Col. Jimmie E. Cummings Jr. of the Army, a spokesman for the American-led International Security Assistance Force. "We train and are partnered with Afghan personnel every day and we are not seeing any issues or concerns with our relationships."

The numbers appear to tell a different story. Although NATO does not release a complete tally of its forces' deaths at the hands of Afghan soldiers and the police, the classified report and coalition news releases indicate that Afghan forces have attacked American and allied service members nearly three dozen times since 2007.

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Two members of the French Foreign Legion and one American soldier were killed in separate episodes in the past month, according to statements by NATO. The classified report found that between May 2007 and May 2011, when it was completed, at least 58 Western service members were killed in 26 separate attacks by Afghan soldiers and the police nationwide. Most of those attacks have occurred since October 2009. This toll represented 6 percent of all hostile coalition deaths during that period, the report said.

“The sense of hatred is growing rapidly,” said an Afghan Army colonel. He described his troops as “thieves, liars and drug addicts,” but also said that the Americans were “rude, arrogant bullies who use foul language.”

Senior commanders largely manage to keep their feelings in check, said the officer, who asked not to be named so he could speak openly. But the officer said, “I am afraid it will turn into a major problem in the near future in the lower ranks of both armies.”

There have been successes, especially among the elite Afghan commandos and coalition Special Operations forces, most of whom have undergone in-depth cultural training and speak at least some Dari and Pashto, the two main languages spoken in Afghanistan. But, as highlighted by the classified report, familiarity in most cases appears to have mainly bred contempt — and that, in turn, has undercut the benefits of pairing up the forces.

The problem has also featured in classified reports tracking progress in the war effort, most of which are far more negative than the public declarations of progress, said an American officer, who asked not to be identified because he was discussing secret information.

“If you get two 18-year-olds from two different cultures and put them in New York, you get a gang fight,” said Anthony H. Cordesman, a defense expert at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington who has advised the American military on its Afghan strategy.

“What you have here are two very different cultures with different values,” he said in a telephone interview. “They treat each other with contempt.”

The United States soldier was killed this month when an Afghan soldier opened fire on Americans playing volleyball at a base in the southern province of Zabul. The assailant was quickly gunned down. The deadliest single incident came last April when an Afghan Air Force colonel, Ahmed Gul, killed eight unsuspecting American officers and a contractor with shots to the head inside their headquarters.

He then killed himself after writing “God in your name” and “God

is one” in blood on the walls of the base, according to an Air Force investigation of the incident released this week.

In a 436-page report, the Air Force investigators said the initial coalition explanation for the attack — stress brought on by financial problems — was only a small part of Colonel Gul’s motivation. His primary motive was hatred of the United States, and he planned the attack to kill as many Americans as possible, the investigators said.

There have been no reported instances of Americans’ killing Afghan soldiers, although a rogue group of United States soldiers killed three Afghan civilians for sport in 2010. Yet there is ample evidence of American disregard for Afghans. After the urination video circulated, a number of those who had served in Afghanistan took to Facebook and other Web sites to cheer on their compatriots, describing Afghans of all stripes in harsh terms.

Many messages were posted on public forums, others in private message strings. One private exchange was provided to The Times by a participant in the conversation; the names of those posting matched those on record as having served in the Marine Corps. In that conversation, a former Marine said he thought the video was “pretty awesome.” Another said he hoped it would happen more often.

The 70-page coalition report, titled “A Crisis of Trust and Cultural Incompatibility,” — which was originally distributed as an unclassified document and later changed to classified — goes far beyond anecdotes. It was conducted by a behavioral scientist who surveyed 613 Afghan soldiers and police officers, 215 American soldiers and 30 Afghan interpreters who worked for the Americans.

While the report focused on three areas of eastern Afghanistan, many of the Afghan soldiers interviewed had served elsewhere in Afghanistan and the author believed that they constituted a sample representative of the entire country.

“There are pervasive feelings of animosity and distrust A.N.S.F. personnel have towards U.S. forces,” the report said, using military’s abbreviation for Afghan security forces. The list of Afghan complaints against the Americans ran the gamut from the killing of civilians to urinating in public and cursing.

“U.S. soldiers don’t listen, they are too arrogant,” said one of the Afghan soldiers surveyed, according to the report. “They get upset due to their casualties, so they take it out on civilians during their searches,” said another.

The Americans were equally as scathing. “U.S. soldiers’ perceptions of A.N.A. members were extremely negative across

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categories,” the report found, using the initials for the Afghan National Army. Those categories included “trustworthiness on patrol,” “honesty and integrity,” and “drug abuse.” The Americans also voiced suspicions about the Afghans being in league with the Taliban, a problem well documented among the Afghan police.

“They are stoned all the time; some even while on patrol with us,” one soldier was quoted as saying. Another said, “They are pretty much gutless in combat; we do most of the fighting.”

*By Peter Byrnel/Press Association, via Associated Press*

## Sexual Assaults on Female Soldiers: Don't Ask, Don't Tell

*By Nancy Gibbs*

What does it tell us that female soldiers deployed overseas stop drinking water after 7 p.m. to reduce the odds of being raped if they have to use the bathroom at night? Or that a soldier who was assaulted when she went out for a cigarette was afraid to report it for fear she would be demoted — for having gone out without her weapon? Or that, as Representative Jane Harman puts it, “a female soldier in Iraq is more likely to be raped by a fellow soldier than killed by enemy fire.”

The fight over “Don't ask, don't tell” made headlines this winter as an issue of justice and history and the social evolution of our military institutions. We've heard much less about another set of hearings in the House Armed Services Committee. Maybe that's because too many commanders still don't ask, and too many victims still won't tell, about the levels of violence endured by women in uniform.

The Pentagon's latest figures show that nearly 3,000 women were sexually assaulted in fiscal year 2008, up 9% from the year before; among women serving in Iraq and Afghanistan, the number rose 25%. When you look at the entire universe of female veterans, close to a third say they were victims of rape or assault while they were serving — twice the rate in the civilian population.

The problem is even worse than that. The Pentagon estimates that 80% to 90% of sexual assaults go unreported, and it's no wonder. Anonymity is all but impossible; a Government Accountability Office report concluded that most victims stay silent because of “the belief that nothing would be done; fear of ostracism, harassment, or ridicule; and concern that peers would gossip.” More than half feared they would be labeled troublemakers. A civilian who is raped can get confidential, or “privileged,” advice from her doctors, lawyers, victim advocates; the only privilege in the military applies to chaplains. A civilian who knows her assailant has a much better chance of avoiding him than does a soldier at a remote base, where filing charges can be a career killer — not for the assailant but the

victim. Women worry that they will be removed from their units for their own “protection” and talk about not wanting to undermine their missions or the cohesion of their units. And then some just do the math: only 8% of cases that are investigated end in prosecution, compared with 40% for civilians arrested for sex crimes. Astonishingly, about 80% of those convicted are honorably discharged nonetheless.

The sense of betrayal runs deep in victims who joined the military to be part of a loyal team pursuing a larger cause; experts liken the trauma to incest and the particular damage done when assault is inflicted by a member of the military “family.” Women are often denied claims for posttraumatic stress caused by the assault if they did not bring charges at the time. There are not nearly enough mental-health professionals in the system to help them. Female vets are four times more likely to be homeless than male vets are, according to the Service Women's Action Network, and of those, 40% report being victims of sexual assault.

Experts offer many theories for the causes: that military culture is intrinsically violent and hypermasculine, that the military is slow to identify potential risks among raw young recruits, that too many commanders would rather look the other way than acknowledge a breakdown in their units, that it has simply not been made a high enough priority. “A lot of my male colleagues believe that the only thing a general needs to worry about is whether he can win a war,” says Congresswoman Loretta Sanchez of the Armed Services Committee. “People are not taking this seriously. Commanding officers in the field are not understanding how important this is.”

But there are some signs that both Congress and the Pentagon are getting serious about this problem. It is now possible for victims to seek medical treatment without having to report the crime to police or their chain of command. More field hospitals have trained nurse practitioners to treat the victims; more bases have rape kits. “More than ever,” Sanchez says, “I believe that our leadership at the very top is beginning to realize that they need to be proactive.”

According to a report by the Defense Task Force on Sexual Assault in the Military Services, the progress made so far remains “evident, but uneven.” The failure to provide a basic guarantee of safety to women, who now represent 15% of the armed forces, is not just a moral issue, or a morale issue. What does it say if the military can't or won't protect the people we ask to protect us?





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Chapter 56**

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# LET US HEAR FROM YOU!

If you would like to submit an article, opinion, comment or response to anything you have read which might interest the members of VFP-56, please e-mail it to [turtldncer@aol.com](mailto:turtldncer@aol.com), in word format, or mail to Jim Sorter at 1762 Buttermilk Lane, Arcata, CA 95521. Submissions will be included on a first come basis until the newsletter is full. Late arriving submissions will be archived for future issues.

*Acupuncture treatments will continue, and will be offered by JEFF HALOFF at 6:00 p.m. prior to the monthly meetings. Ernie Behm and John Mulloy will have the room set up for him. It's possible to bring in some young vets. We can let these folks know that they are welcome to stay for the meetings. Let us show them our mission is one of peace, that we treat each other with loving kindness.*

*Jeff Haloff is a licensed acupuncturist and co-founder of Humboldt Veterans Acupuncture Project (HVAP). HVAP provides free "by donation" acupuncture to veterans and their families. Call Jeff at 707-268-8007 with any questions you may have prior to the meeting on Thursday.*

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