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TUESDAY, OCTOBER 19, 2004

Reservists Who Refused Orders: The Truth Starts To Come Out

by Michael in New York on 10/19/2004 05:40:00 PM

The **true story** about those reservists who refused a direct order is starting to come out. Obeying orders is essential to a working military -- it ain't a democracy out there and every mission is potentially a suicide mission -- but the situation these soldiers apparently faced is a farce straight out of Joseph Heller's "Catch 22" or one of your bleaker episodes of "M*A*S*H."

It comes from the NYT and is based on www.hackworth.com -- a web site run by a retired Army colonel that works to channel criticism about commanders.

In short, the 13th Corps Support Command -- led by Brig. Gen. James E. Chambers -- apparently has terrible morale and has been singled out by grunts for repeated criticism.

The soldiers involved in this mission had made complaints up the chain of command for months about the dangerously poor quality of their trucks and equipment. Then they were sent on a mission to deliver jet fuel that lasted four to five days. The trucks -- due for repairs -- broke down and ultimately the fuel was rejected because it was contaminated with diesel fuel.

The troops returned late Oct. 12 and were roused at 4 a.m. the next morning and were ordered to deliver the same useless fuel to another location much farther north than the last stop.

Imagine: being ordered to risk your lives on an utterly pointless mission of delivering tainted jet fuel that would be no use to anyone and ordered to do it with equipment and trucks that were dangerously in disrepair. They went up the chain of command and even got a civilian to confirm the fuel was tainted and useless but they were ordered out anyway.

Would you go on a life-threatening mission as a pointless exercise in military inefficiency and stupidity?



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