

My name is Leif Christopher Hamre and I am currently deployed in Iraq. June 24th I was given a document to fill out prior to a mandatory vaccination for Anthrax. The choice I faced was either to take the shot or face military punishment; I was given a 24 hour ultimatum. After doing many hours of research I collected my thoughts and decided to refuse the shot (I tried to be unbiased in the research for my own peace of mind). I concluded that this vaccine was dangerous and should probably still be in a lab right now for further testing. I strongly encourage those who are faced with this decision to look at the facts for themselves. The tactics they have used to coerce me into taking the shot are unregulated, unscrupulous and downright un-American. My punishment as of two weeks ago and for an undetermined amount of time is a sleep depriving 18 hour workday seven days a week and a demotion. They have tried to turn my platoon against me in various ways(which is not totally unsuccessful). Along with the more common tactics like intimidation and threats (including the possibility of a forceful inoculation). I can only imagine what will come as I continue with this, the result of asking questions today about a quality control issue with their storing equipment got me more than a few dirty looks and even an under-the-rug threat to my safety. I believe as an American soldier you are expected to follow orders and put yourself in harms way but unnecessary safety risks should not be part of the accepted risks one is asked to face. We are being forced to accept chemicals into our already weary bodies that have caused the suffering of thousands of individuals; of course those people are easily dismissed by the government because they took a "safe" drug. One thing bothers me though; I am an American citizen too, with rights I thought we were fighting to protect. I have given two years of dedicated service to the Army, with a clean record and a willingness to sacrifice for my country and fellow soldiers. I am looking forward to much more punishment and probably a discharge from the Army. I just don't think any of this seems right, moreover I have found our medical facilities are in violation of the Army's own implementation program. The following is not to help me but hopefully will encourage discipline when it comes to accountability on behalf of our military leaders when it comes to the safety of our soldiers. My main grievance is in regards to quality control of the AVA (Anthrax Vaccine Adsorbed); the rules are clearly stated in the logistics section of the official document for implementation and regulation of this vaccine released on behalf of the Surgeon General. In section 4.C.2. it reads "Local medical logistics supporting elements must have sufficient refrigeration capacity to preserve vaccine integrity, Including temperature alarms and back-up power capacity" This seems to me a clear statement with no room for interpretation. I checked downstairs in the aid-station where they store AVA and asked one of the higher ranking medics (who will remain un-named) about this issue. There is back-up power (power problems are notorious here) but there are no temperature alarms. He said they check the temperature but not how often or by whom. It was stored in a commercial-type refrigerator at the temperature of 36 degrees Fahrenheit, when I asked him what the storage temperature for AVA is he said he "believed" it was 36-40 degrees. Actually is 35.6-46.4 degrees (which is stated in the same brief as 2-8 degrees Celsius). Shouldn't at least the leadership know what the proper storage temperature is, if not everyone who works with and around it? Not to mention the fact that it was .4 degrees

away from dipping below the recommended temperature. I read him section 4.C.2. clearly and asked him if he was going to continue with vaccinations, he said yes. Getting shot down in a dismissive way I decided to go up the ladder and see the brigade surgeon of the most prevalent brigade on the base (who will also remain un-named) I spoke with him about the issue and after nearly an hour of him searching for a loophole to this rule he could find no such document, the only real guidelines on the subject he could find was the very document I presented to him. He gave up on that and started to make some calls, he was desperately seeking an answer he could not find. He could only tell me he thinks there is a new document in the works that will permit them to not follow the previous guidelines. Essentially lowering quality control standards on an already questionably stable vaccine. I asked him if he planned on doing anything about my complaint, once again I was treated like an ignorant child who wants something he just can't have. He did not plan on doing anything; he also confessed there were no efforts to procure said temperature alarms. He could not show me any documentation allowing anyone to ignore the current rules. When I asked him if the vaccinations would continue he said yes. They are clearly ignoring safety rules in favor of expediency and thriftiness. I have brought this to their attention and nothing has been done and it will continue that way. The Army is a close-knit group and they don't like whistle-blowers. However, an officer did help out a little bit, he was Captain Joyce, actually a pretty nice guy, and he brought it up to his superiors and is now implementing a somewhat more stringent method to monitor the temperature of the vaccine in his aid station, although he maintains the idea that since we are in Iraq the standards don't really matter, I don't believe they see a real problem with this. Some things need to be addressed quickly and all the red tape can delay needed action, in which it would be admissible to bypass those guidelines. I do not feel that this is the situation and more likely a case of "what do you think we can get away with?" when was the last time you heard of an American soldier being infected with anthrax? Well, in case you think you may have missed something, it has never happened, while pain and suffering are happening right now as a result of this program. This whole situation just seems wrong to me, it seems to reflect a growing problem in our government of Orwellian proportions, what rights do we have as American soldiers, American citizens, or even just human beings? It feels like our government has slowly moved away from the foundation that gave freedom to a people and made a beautiful document called the constitution, can we really forget the men who fought and died for a new way of life, the men who conceived what I think is the most influential contribution to political theory in history. The framers of the constitution believed that a country controlled by the people could only survive if the people themselves were decent and good. It makes me angry sometimes. I am refusing this shot not because of the lack of safety for those who do take it (what I found may only be the tip of the iceberg) or just to get out of taking it myself, I refuse it because I believe it should be refused. People who initially deny the shot usually give in eventually, I can see why, 18 hour days and alienation from my platoon makes it tempting to just give in, they don't make it easy on you. I still feel that something that is right and true should be defended no matter how unpopular it is. I know if other people could go through this, as it is hard to explain in

words, they would be angry too. Our job is hard, the things many soldiers have to deal with is trying, not only are we assaulted with mortars, rockets, roadside bombs and gunfire. We must also accept potentially dangerous chemicals into our bodies. But they don't give us armored vehicles and ballistic vests for it; instead we have to trust the impeccable record of government when it comes to exposing soldiers to harmful substances and denying any responsibility for the outcome. The Army of course said it is safe but why wouldn't they? They admit to the minimum amount of adverse reactions as is deemed acceptable to legally and forcibly inoculate soldiers. I wondered why this was being pushed so hard so I decided to look at the source. I don't find it hard to believe that money has something to do with it. Is it cynical to think that the C.E.O. of Bioport Co. Faud El-Hibri and his business partner former Admiral William J. Crowe Jr. and their exclusive government contract doesn't elude to a conflict of interest? Look into it yourself; the unending path of influential connections is fit for a hard working investigative journalist, not a U.S. soldier who has problems putting pictures on my space. Something is really going wrong here and I humbly ask for anyone's help in addressing the issue. I challenge everyone who reads this to think about what you believe America is and also to step in my shoes, now more than ever I am living in a different world. Is it worth the punishment or will this really change anything? I don't know for sure, but one thing is true, it is right and it is worth fighting for, like so many things that are, it is also not easy.

Sincerely,
Leif Christopher Hamre

Please forward this to anyone and everyone