

April 18, 2012

The Honorable Leon Panetta
 Secretary of Defense
 1000 Defense Pentagon, Room 3E880
 Washington, DC 20301-1000

Via: U.S. Postal Mail
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Dear Secretary Panetta,

I am writing to you on behalf of People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) and our more than 3 million members and supporters—as well as current and former armed forces medical personnel and civilian physicians who have co-signed this letter—to share disturbing new information about the abuse of animals in military training exercises. **We ask that you take swift and decisive action to end this cruel and irrelevant practice.**

This morning, PETA released undercover video (viewable at PETA.org/Trauma) of a recent military "live tissue training" course that was offered to members of the U.S. Coast Guard in Virginia Beach, Va., by military contractor Tier 1 Group.

In the sickening footage, instructors are seen breaking and cutting off live goats' limbs with tree trimmers, stabbing the animals and pulling out their internal organs. Some of the goats moaned loudly and kicked their legs during the mutilations. Veterinarians who viewed this video confirm these are signs that the goats were not adequately anesthetized and may have been feeling pain. According to the whistleblower, later in the day goats were shot in the face with pistols and were hacked apart with an ax while still alive.

Even before the release of this video, the Department of Defense has come under scrutiny from PETA and others for this cruelty and defended the practice by claiming these courses are the closest soldiers get to battlefield conditions before being deployed. But in truth—even beyond the fact that goats are absurd stand-ins for injured human soldiers—nothing about the training session depicted in this video even gives the illusion of a battlefield casualty situation.

Course participants are wearing street clothes, rather than their uniforms and fatigues or any of the equipment that they'd likely be carrying when trying to treat a fallen comrade. There is no sense of urgency as the laidback instructors and participants stand around idly and make small talk under the tents while the animals are cut apart and while their wounds are being tended to. The shocking video even shows a callous course instructor from Tier 1 Group who cheerfully

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whistles while dismembering goats as well as members of the Coast Guard who joke about writing a song about mutilating the animals.

As many as 10,000 animals each year are subjected to these inhumane, inferior, and contrived exercises by the military and its contractors even though state-of-the-art simulation-based training methods that better prepare soldiers and medics to treat their fallen comrades are available and already used—instead of animals—at military facilities across the country and around the world.

The Navy Trauma Training Center, the Air Force Center for Sustainment of Trauma and Readiness Skills, and the Army's Rascon School of Combat Medicine have confirmed that they use only non-animal methods for training medical personnel. The latter has even stated that "[t]raining on [simulators] is more realistic to providing care for a person than training on animals."

Instead of crude animal laboratories, these facilities employ training tools like high-tech, human-like simulators that can breathe, bleed, respond to medications, and even "die." Unlike the use of animals, these methods enable medical providers to perform real lifesaving procedures—such as hemorrhage control and airway management—on accurate human anatomy and physiology and to repeat procedures until they are skilled and confident.

Indeed, numerous studies by military and civilian researchers have repeatedly pointed out the many drawbacks of animal use and show that personnel trained on simulators are more proficient at treating traumatic injuries than their peers who were trained on animals. In a candid e-mail to colleagues in 2009 that PETA obtained through FOIA, a deputy surgeon with U.S. Army Europe acknowledged that "there still is no evidence that [live tissue training on animals] saves lives."

The use of non-animal methods for military medical training is also the overwhelmingly preferred standard among our NATO allies. A recent survey conducted by PETA found that 22 of 28 NATO member countries do not use any animals for military medical training. German officials have even repeatedly blocked attempts by the U.S. Army to use animals in trauma training in Germany after determining that these exercises would violate the law because superior alternatives to animal laboratories are available and already in use by the German Armed Forces.

The NATO Centre of Excellence for Military Medicine, which leads courses in treating battlefield injuries, has also confirmed that it "does not use animals, alive or dead, or animal models for any training or course or is involved in any partner course doing so. Where needed for specific training appropriate human patient simulators are used."

Even Tier 1 Group's primary trauma training program—Tactical Combat Casualty Care (TCCC)—is currently taught to military personnel both with and without the animal laboratory component, further making clear that animals are not needed to meet the military's training objectives.

Secretary Panetta, we are confident that you will find this video footage alarming and appreciate that this training course is a far cry from the realities of the battlefield conditions in which the

brave men and women of our military are required to operate. There are better ways to train military personnel than dismembering animals, and Department of Defense Instruction 3216.01 actually requires that these "methods other than animal use" be used for medical training purposes when available.

We respectfully urge you to take immediate steps to completely replace the use of animals in the military's trauma training programs with superior non-animal methods that are available. You may contact me at ShalinG@peta.org or 757-962-8325. Thank you for your consideration of this important issue, and we look forward to your swift response.

Sincerely yours,

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in black ink. The signature appears to read "Shalin G. Gala".

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