

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing today as a whistleblower to inform you of some serious animal rights violations at the US Military's Joint Special Operations Medical Training Center/Special Warfare Medical Group. As a former student, I have witnessed, and been forced to do nothing about, these abuses during Live Tissue Training.

The JSOMTC/SWVG purchases upwards of 3000 goats a year, at approximately \$400 USD a head. These goats are used for live tissue training, meaning that they are deliberately injured in order to provide realistic training to students. The goats are purchased through civilian contractors in Virginia, herded, dozens at a time, into tiny trailers, and transported without food, water, or space to lay down, to the JSOMTC in Fort Bragg, NC. On arrival, the goats are packed into small corrals, and "inprocessed" by school students awaiting training. These students, with no training or education, are forced to wrangle each frightened goat, inject them with several syringes worth of antibiotics, weigh, and take a set of vital signs. These students have no prior training in needle placement, medication and dose verification, or shot administration. They just follow the example of the over-worked civilian staffers. Handfuls of needles and syringes are passed around, and each goat gets an injection in the neck tissue.

During the hectic storm of inprocessing, sharps go missing, doses get wasted if the goat moves during drug push, needles enter the vasculature and cause bleeding, and extreme pain is caused to the animals during these sessions. When asked about it, one civilian member was quoted as saying "They're only goats, and they'll be dead in a few days anyway." This attitude is very common among both the civilian and military staff in charge of the animal services and shoot chambers.

After inprocessing, the goats are housed in small, indoor pens, with no fresh air or sunlight. They are cramped, often dozens of animals in the same pen, fed twice a day, and often left with no room to lie down. The pen floor is simply an open grate, to let feces and urine pass through to a "catch room" below. The grates are washed down twice a day with pressure hoses while the goats are still in the pen, soaking the goats, causing panic and, occasionally, injury to the animals. Their waste, meanwhile, simply accumulates in an underground concrete box, which drains into a single, easily clogged outlet. The ventilation units force a lot of air movement through the catch room, at a much higher pressure than the upstairs fans can deliver, causing a constant flow of humid, feces-laden air to circulate through the goat pens. This causes respiratory distress and occasionally pulmonary disease in the goats, as well as the students who get put on pen wash detail.

When the time finally comes around for the goats to be used for training, another troop of barely-trained students comes by the pens to wrangle their assigned goats. They grab individual caprines, stab them with sedatives, and wait for them to pass out, with the more conscious animals trampling the sedated goats in their panic, causing more injuries. After the goats are more-or-less unconscious, the students are made to grab or drag by whatever horns or limbs

are available, and haul the animals off to the shear room, where the fur is shaved off to provide a more “human” type feel during wounding and treatment. They are then dragged back to the pens until wounding time comes. As they wait, the animals, freshly shorn, and often still wet from the pen spraydown, reach borderline hypothermia. “Doesn’t matter, they’re about to get put under and die anyway,” was the comment by one staffer when a student pointed out that the goats appeared to be in extreme discomfort from the cold.

When their number finally comes up for wounding, the goats are put through the same process of sedation again, with doses often coming up short or not being fully delivered in the right locations for effective anesthetic or sedation. These mistakes are brushed over by the staff and military cadre. As long as the caprines aren’t actively thrashing about, and the documentation shows that the appropriate dose was delivered, nothing else matters. The caprines get dragged off to the wounding areas in preparation for training, able to feel pain or no.

The wounding area is by far the most egregious abuse and violation of animal rights during this whole process. The documentation and powerpoint presentations that are brought out to show VIPs and observer personnel show a very methodical and humane practice of full sedation, careful wounding, and respectful treatment of the caprines throughout the whole process. In practice, and when there are no VIP or command tours happening, the animals are severely mistreated, being dragged, kicked, shot, blown up, hacked to pieces, or simply stabbed with scalpels in key places. There are certain injury sets which have been vetted by an external body as being acceptable, but the implementation is totally up to the individual providing the wound. For instance, an individual instructor was given a wound set for his particular animal, involving an abdominal evisceration and a minor wound on the leg. After completing the cut on the leg with a rusty scalpel, the instructor decided that he wanted a more graphic injury to the abdomen. So, after performing the incision and pulling some parts of bowel out of the goats abdomen with an ungloved hand, he taped an artillery simulator grenade to the abdomen, “Just for fun”. A rusty, blood-covered axe is used for traumatic limb amputation, and two instructors were seen comparing how far they could get the hoof to fly away from the patient model. For facial lacerations, one instructor makes a habit of stepping on the goats lower jaw as he hacks away at the upper, just to ensure that the semi-conscious patients don’t move. When a student pointed out that the patient legs were drawing up in pain, or the patient was moving its head, the instructor just replied that the patient was going to bleed out anyway, and that the student should be focused on not ****ing up his training run. This is just a very small sample of the abuses seen by one individual during one course and a refresher course at JSOMTC. The amount of disrespect and pain caused to the goats is just astounding. When there are no observers present, that is.

When VIP tours or observer groups come through, all the unprofessionalism is gone. The extra goats are dealt with swiftly, leaving just a few happy goats munching away at their ample food in their spotless, uncrowded pens. The barn staff perform a careful and methodical takedown of the patients, using proper aseptic technique, with meticulously calculated sedatives

to ensure that the caprines are entirely sedated and feel nothing. The wounding is equally careful, with precisely placed injuries, constant checking on patient sedation, and total professional demeanor. The folding lawn chairs are gone, the cadre stand close watch over aseptic technique, ensuring total respect and care is taken to treat the animals appropriately, through wounding and into the incinerator after the clinics are over. And as soon as the tour leaves, though, everything goes right back to the way it was before, with rampant abuse of the caprines and total disregard for their pain level.

I have done my research, attempted to report violations of animal rights using the chain of command, and even contacted the senior officers in command of the program. All complaints, from myself and others, have been swept under the rug, and nothing has changed. I have been shown pages and pages of documentation and manuals, all providing a very humane and well-structured program, with thorough oversight. In reality, however, the actual treatment of the caprine patient models is total abuse.

Thousands of goats are systematically put through extreme discomfort and pain, mistreated, and brutally killed at JSOMTC/SWMG every year, all in the name of training, while dozens of computer-equipped, state-of-the-art human mannequins sit collecting dust in a warehouse just next door. The Live Tissue Training program needlessly wastes thousands of lives, when technology has reached a point where it is rendered all but obsolete. As someone who has been through the program and seen these abuses first hand, I urge you strongly to do your research, contact your representatives, bring attention to these abuses, and put an end to this program.

Signed: A Concerned Whistle Blower