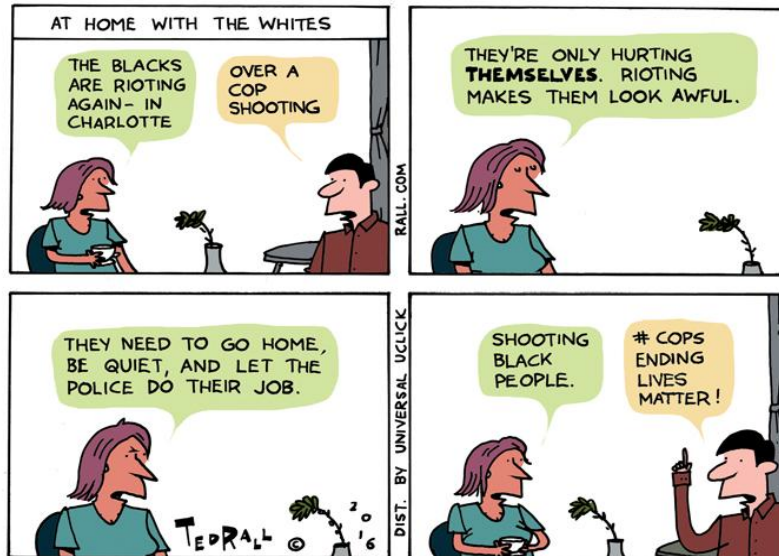


Military Resistance 14J5



Punish American Sailor Who Refused To Salute During The National Anthem?

“She Has Served Her Family, Friends, Fellow Midshipmen And The Nation With Class And Dignity”

“I Feel Like A Hypocrite Singing About The ‘Land Of The Free’ When I Know That Only Applies To Some Americans”

“This Is No Reason To Possibly Have Her Jailed, Dishonorably Discharged, Security Clearance Revoked And Her Uniform Taken Away”



Janaye Ervin: www.mintpressnews.com

September 29 By Amy B Wang, Washington Post

The U.S. Navy says it is investigating a sailor who did not salute as the national anthem played during a flag-raising ceremony at Pearl Harbor this month.

On Sept. 19, Petty Officer Intelligence Specialist 2nd Class Janaye Ervin, a reservist on active duty within U.S. Pacific Fleet, reportedly refused to salute during “morning colors,” a daily 8 a.m. raising of the flag, a Navy spokesman said.

It will be up to Ervin’s commander to decide whether the sailor faces any punishment, U.S. Pacific Fleet spokesman Lt. Clint Ramsden told The Washington Post on Wednesday.

Ervin enlisted in the Navy in July 2009 but has been a reservist since 2010. She is assigned to the Navy Operations Support Center at North Island, Calif., as an intelligence specialist, but was in Hawaii for about two weeks for a training exercise, Ramsden said.

To his knowledge, Ramsden said, it was the first time a sailor in the Pacific Fleet had refused to salute during the national anthem.

The Navy protocol handbook states that a sailor in uniform must salute when the national anthem is played, from the first note of the anthem until the last. Sailors are supposed to face the flag or, if the flag is not displayed, the source of the music.

Ramsden would not comment on what kind of disciplinary action Ervin could face, if any.

“It’s currently under review, and once that review is complete, then we’ll have a clear picture of what occurred and if any punitive action will occur,” he said.

Calls to the Operations Support Center were not answered Wednesday, and Ervin did not respond to an interview request sent to her Facebook account.

But a week earlier, she wrote about her actions on Facebook and said they were rooted in ideological reasons, according to Military.com. (On Wednesday, the post was not publicly visible.)

“I have been proudly serving in the US Navy Reserve Force since November 2008,” she wrote, according to Military.com.

“I have pledged to support and defend the Constitution of the United States and to spread freedom and democracy around the world. I will never waver from that pledge. I feel like a hypocrite singing about the ‘land of the free’ when I know that only applies to some Americans. I will gladly stand again, when ALL AMERICANS are afforded the same freedom.”

Her protest echoed that of San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who has repeatedly knelt down during the national anthem to call attention to what he sees as widespread discrimination against people of color in the United States.

“Ervin’s Protest Is At Least The Second Time In The Past Month That An American Sailor Has Protested The National Anthem”

Ervin’s protest is at least the second time in the past month that an American sailor has protested the national anthem.

In late August, an unidentified sailor filmed herself refusing to stand for “morning colors,” according to Military.com.

The Navy confirmed to Military.com that it was aware of the August video and that the sailor was expected to be allowed to continue training at her assigned Naval Air Technical Training Center in Pensacola, Fla.

Late Tuesday, Ervin shared a 1966 photo on Facebook that showed Martin Luther King Jr. falling after someone in an angry mob hit him with a rock in Chicago.

“They’re always telling us to be peaceful like Dr. King,” read the text that accompanied the photo. “This is how they treated Dr. King, when he marched ‘peacefully’ advocating ‘non-violence.’ “

Ervin also shared a Change.org petition titled “Keep Black Soldiers Out of Jail For Choosing not to Stand for National Anthem.”

The petition, started by a Raeford, N.C., man named Brandon Akins, detailed Ervin's situation and stated that she was finishing up a master's degree in medical science in the hope of becoming a doctor.

"She has served her family, friends, fellow midshipmen and the nation with class and dignity," Akins wrote. "A couple of days ago, she made the clear choice in full uniform to not stand while the Star Spangled Banner played."

The consequences of Ervin's actions were immediate, Akins said in the petition:

"After this, her security clearance was taken away, (she was)] talked to like trash from military personnel and civilians, received threats from many people, and is in danger of going to jail.

"Now, we are standing with her during this time (and) needs your help if possible to not allow her go to jail and receiving a dishonorable discharge. Intervene, if you will.

"The Navy has also taken her equipment that she needs to do the job that she has done for all of this time.

"(Ervin) admits she loves her country and will fight for it at all cost. However, she states that "her patriotism should not be defined by her refusing to stand for the national anthem as the land she is fighting for is discriminatory towards people that look like her." She is a black woman who has to constantly (witness) what minorities deal with while she is in uniform.

"We fully understand that military law is different than civil law. But this is no reason to possibly have her jailed, dishonorably discharged, security clearance revoked and her uniform taken away so she can not serve her country.

"We are doing everything in our power to help this young lady (and) will gladly appreciate an immediate intervention of what stands against her currently. Do not allow her to be punished by jail time and a dishonorable discharge for what she truly believes in."

Akins could not be reached for comment.

The petition is directed toward 27 people or agencies, including the Department of Defense, President Obama, Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump, Oprah Winfrey and a handful of media outlets. As of Thursday morning, the petition had 352 supporters.

The response to Ervin's actions has been polarized.

On Tuesday, a Facebook group called "Hold Janaye Ervin Accountable" popped up, saying that Ervin brought "a great discredit to the U.S. Navy and the United States" when she "willingly failed to rendered required customs and courtesies" to the flag.

Dozens of people have left irate comments on Ervin's own Facebook page, some laced with obscenities and the n-word.

“Dishonorable discharge is all you deserve now from this country,” one person wrote before calling her a string of profane words and going on to disparage her as “another uneducated black person.”

Others supported Ervin or were more measured in their criticism.

“Freedom of speech is every American’s right. That includes protesting,” another person commented. “However, I took that oath twice and wore the same rank as Ms. Ervin. I feel it is her ‘duty’ to stand during the anthem, only because of the oath she swore. If she can no longer honor that, she should ask for a hardship discharge.”

MORE:

**Another Sailor Faces Discipline
After Flag Protest:
“Filmed Herself Refusing To Stand
For Morning Colors Now Facing
Administrative Action” In Florida;
“Today I Actually Did Something,
And It Was Small But Significant For
Me,’ She Said. ‘Until This Country
Shows They’ve Got My Back As A
Black Woman’”
“I Think Colin Had A Really Good Point
When He Said We Had Bodies In The
Streets”**

Sep 07, 2016 by Hope Hodge Seck, Military.com

A sailor who filmed herself refusing to stand for morning colors is now facing administrative action, Military.com has learned.

Lt. Cmdr. Kate Meadows, a spokeswoman for Naval Education and Training Command, said actions were ongoing regarding the sailor, but declined to specify what they were.

The sailor, who has not been publicly identified, is assigned to Naval Air Technical Training Center in Pensacola, Florida, Meadows confirmed, and is expected to be allowed to continue training.

The command became aware of the filmed protest Aug. 31, Meadows said.

At issue is an eight-and-a-half minute video posted to Facebook in which the sailor sat through morning colors in protest of the now-defunct third stanza of the National Anthem, which she described as racist.

The video has been widely shared and was viewed more than 13,000 times after being re-posted to a military humor page, US Army Military Police WTF Moments.

The sailor referred to San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick, who made headlines in August when he opted to take a knee for the anthem, saying he was not going to “show pride in a flag for a country that oppresses black people and people of color.”

“(The stanza) basically says land of the free, home of the brave, except for hirelings and slaves and I just can’t support anything like that,” the sailor said.

“I think Colin had a really good point when he said we had bodies in the streets.”

In the video, the sailor, who is dressed in civilian workout clothing near a Pensacola barracks building, expresses anxiety that other Marines or sailors will notice her filmed protest and confront her about it.

Military regulations require troops to stop in place, stand and salute during the brief ceremony.

“My heart is racing. This is not an easy thing,” she said.

While the anthem is played, the sailor sits on a picnic bench with a raised fist, a symbol of solidarity in the Black Power movement. When the anthem concludes, she expresses relief and pride in her protest.

“Today I actually did something, and it was small but significant for me,” she said. “Until this country shows they’ve got my back as a black woman ... I can’t, and I won’t and I won’t be forced to (stand).”

While Kaepernick’s flag protest was provocative, the sailor’s is also against military regulations.

Navy rules state that troops must stand and face the flag when the National Anthem is played. Troops in uniform must salute, while troops not in uniform must stand at attention and place the right hand over the heart. These rules mean that her behavior could fall afoul of Article 92 of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, failure to obey a lawful general order or regulation.

Meadows said she didn’t know whether the Navy planned to publicly address the recent protest.

“We are always doing training to make sure that sailors know the pros and cons of using social media, and they must always observe appropriate conduct, and they’re always subject to the UCMJ at all times,” she said. “We’ll make sure that’s reiterated to our sailors. Anything you post on social media can go viral.”

POLICE WAR REPORTS

NYPD Used Undercover Police To Spy On Black Lives Matter Protesters: “Transit Police Tracked Activists’ Locations And Shared Images Of Some Activists”

30 September 16 By George Joseph, Guardian UK

Legal papers filed by the New York police department reveal that the department sent its own undercover officers to protests led by Black Lives Matter after the death of Eric Garner.

The NYPD documents also show that it collected multimedia records about the protests.

The NYPD disclosed its undercover operations in response to a group of New York attorneys requesting records under the state freedom of information law.

The department has thus far declined to provide the records requested.

But its descriptions in August court filings of the records it is refusing to release provide new details about its monitoring of protests at Grand Central Station:

- The first set contains “multimedia records” relating to the petitioners’ request for “pictures, videos, audio recordings, data, and metadata” collected or received by the NYPD at the Grand Central Station protests, which Black Lives Matter groups are still leading, according to the NYPD response.

- The second “consists entirely of communications between and among NYPD undercover officers and their handlers”, pertaining to the protests. According to a 22 August NYPD Memorandum of Law, these undercover communications “consist primarily of immediate impressions concerning ongoing events”.

- The third “consists of a single record, which is a communication from an NYPD officer working in an undercover capacity and his base”, pertaining to the protests, the response indicates.

The revelations come from the same records request that led to the Intercept’s release of documents last summer showing that MTA and Metro-North transit police had regularly spied on Black Lives Matter protesters in and around Grand Central, deploying plainclothes officers to monitor demonstrations, track their movements, and share photos of activists.

Though some NYPD officials appeared to be linked to the monitoring, those documents did not confirm whether the NYPD itself was leading its own surveillance operation targeting activists.

The attorneys litigating for the records say the NYPD’s newly revealed operations are potential constitutional violations, especially since released MTA and Metro-North police observations of these protests frequently stated that the gatherings were “peaceful” and “orderly”.

“The fear and disarming effect caused by undercovers being assigned to what were and continue to be extraordinarily peaceful protests is disturbing,” said MJ Williams, one of the attorneys involved in the records request. “To the extent that it would influence individuals not to participate and get individuals to censor what they say because of a fear of undercovers – that’s a basis for a first amendment violation.”

She added: “As someone who was present at the protests, it’s disturbing to know the NYPD may have a file on me, ready to be used or to prevent me from getting a job simply because I’ve been active in some political capacity. That’s potentially a fourth amendment violation for unlawful seizure, but on the other hand, we’ve seen law enforcement agencies have all sorts of justifications for data collection for public safety that the courts have allowed.”

In response to the Freedom of Information Law request, John Donohue, the second highest ranking uniformed officer in the NYPD’s intelligence bureau, argued in an affidavit that the NYPD could not release the records because public understanding of the undercover operations could help “would-be criminals” learn “the circumstances in which the NYPD does not, or cannot, deploy undercover officers”.

The release of the “multimedia” records of the protests, Donohue said, also could reveal “the kinds of optical technology NYPD uses, both in its undercover and general surveillance operations” and “any areas NYPD does not have under surveillance, thereby exposing gaps in coverage”.

The MTA and Metro-North disclosures from last summer revealed that transit police tracked activists’ locations and shared images of some activists, like Jose La Salle, an organizer with the New York police watchdog group Copwatch Patrol Unit, and Alex Seel, a movement photographer.

If similar multimedia images are being held by the NYPD, they could be a violation of the NYPD’s protest monitoring rules, known as the Handschu guidelines, which

are supposed to prevent the department from deploying undercovers or collecting images of protesters solely to keep tabs on their political activity.

Martin Stolar, an attorney who helped bring about the Handschu guidelines in 1971, said it isn't clear if the NYPD violated the guidelines since we do not know if the monitoring is part of an authorized ongoing investigation. In an email to the Guardian, Stolar explained, the NYPD is "unlikely to tell you, or anyone, whether an investigation is ongoing or not and authorized or not".

The NYPD did not respond to a request for comment.

In recent years the NYPD has been criticized for alleged spying on political and ethnic groups without substantial evidence of criminal activity. New York City's independent police monitor released a report in August, concluding that between 2010 and 2015 the department routinely violated legal requirements in its monitoring of Muslim communities, failing to explain its use of undercovers and informants and extending investigations without evidence of criminal activity.

In recent weeks, Black Lives Matter activists in New York have pointed to apparent sightings of undercover NYPD officers at protests and claim that the surveillance is ongoing.

"This is still happening, we still have undercovers at our protests weekly," said Armie Jeffreys, an organizer with NYC Shut It Down and Millions March. "But we're still out here. They can try if they want to, but it's not gonna stop us."

MILITARY NEWS

**Navy Nurse Who Refused To
Force-Feed Guantanamo
Prisoners Allowed To Return To
His Regular Duties:
"Was Facing Expulsion From The
Navy"
"The Nurse Was Initially Threatened With
A Court-Martial"**

Sept. 2, 2016 by Derek Gilna published in Prison Legal News September, 2016, page 24; Sources: www.miamiherald.com, www.cnn.com, www.huffingtonpost.com, Associated Press, www.closeguantanamo.org

An unnamed Navy nurse at the U.S. military prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba that houses alleged terrorist detainees, who was facing expulsion from the Navy for his refusal to participate in force-feeding prisoners, has been allowed to return to his regular duties.

The hunger-striking detainees at Guantanamo, imprisoned without formal charges for years, began refusing meals in March 2013 to protest their indefinite confinement and the conditions under which they were being held.

In response, they were forcibly removed from their cells, strapped into a restraint chair and had a nasogastric tube inserted down their noses to force liquid supplements into their stomachs several times a day.

Sometimes the tube was lubricated, sometimes it was not; the process was painful and humiliating. Although one of the detainees, Abu Wa'el Dhiab, who used a wheelchair, offered to submit to the force-feedings, he was still subjected to forcible cell extractions.

The issue involving the Navy nurse became public following a lawsuit filed by Dhiab, who had been confined at Guantanamo since August 2002. According to one of his attorneys, Cori Crider, the nurse – a Navy lieutenant who has never been identified – “initially ... did carry out his orders [to] participate in the tube feedings.

But when he came, as soon as he saw what was happening, he started talking to the (prisoners).”

Quoting her client's conversation with the nurse, Crider said, “Before we came here, we were told a different story. The story we were told was completely the opposite of what I saw.’

Once he saw with his own eyes that what he was told was contrary to what was actually taking place here, he decided he could not do it anymore.”

As a result of his refusal to continue participating in the force-feedings, the Navy nurse was initially threatened with a court-martial.

He was later told that he would face a hearing before a Board of Inquiry to determine whether he should be allowed to remain in the Navy, and was at risk of having his security clearance revoked.

His commander, Captain Maureen Pennington, stated, “I can tell you right now that, after reviewing the investigation that was conducted, in Guantanamo, I recommended that the officer be required to show cause for retention in the Navy.”

However, the nurse was informed on April 22, 2015 that a board hearing would not be necessary. He was eventually cleared to return to full duty almost a year later in April 2016, according to his attorney, Ronald Meister.

“This nurse showed incredible courage – to see the basic humanity of the prisoners and to recognize that force-feeding is wrong is a historic stand,” said Crider. “It meant a great deal to my client and the other cleared detainees who are hunger striking.” Her client, Dhiab, who was held at Guantanamo despite being cleared for release in 2009, said more than 40 detainees had been force-fed over the past several years.

“It’s a health care provider’s ethical obligation to make independent judgment on what is in the best interest of a patient, not the prison system,” observed Dr. Vincent Iacopino, the medical director for Physicians for Human Rights.

Crider and other attorneys represented Dhiab in a federal lawsuit filed in Washington, D.C. challenging the force-feeding policy at Guantanamo. U.S. District Court Judge Gladys Kessler reluctantly permitted the force-feeding to continue in November 2014, but strongly urged the government to use other methods while noting the Pentagon’s “refusal to compromise.”

She also ordered the government to release video recordings of Dhiab being force-fed after a group of news agencies intervened in the case, including USA Today, the Associated Press, the Washington Post, Reuters America and the New York Times.

The government has appealed the order to release the videos, and the appeal remains pending. See: Dhiab v. Bush, U.S.D.C. (D. DC), Case No. 1:05-cv-01457-GK. Meanwhile, Dhaib was released from Guantanamo and transferred to Uruguay in December 2014. He had been held by U.S. military authorities for over 12 years without charges.

Several detainees at Guantanamo reportedly remained on hunger strike as of May 2016, though for the past several years military officials have refused to disclose the number of protesting prisoners who refuse to eat. Sixty-one detainees are still housed at the Guantanamo prison, following the transfer of 15 detainees to the United Arab Emirates in mid-August 2016.

Force-feeding has been criticized by the American Medical Association as a violation of core medical ethics, and the Navy nurse’s refusal to force-feed prisoners at Guantanamo was backed by the American Nurses Association.

It remains to be seen whether there will be any further investigation into the force-feeding of Guantanamo detainees, and into the actions of other military personnel who have carried out that questionable practice.

Typically, when accused of wrongdoing, members of the military claim they were “just following orders.” That excuse didn’t work during the Nuremberg Trials, though, and it equally should not apply at Guantanamo.

Military Resistance In PDF Format?

If you prefer PDF to Word format, email: contact@militaryproject.org

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS



“At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation’s ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke.

“For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder.

“We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

**The oppressed are allowed once every few years to decide which particular representatives of the oppressing class are to represent and repress them.
-- Karl Marx quoted by V. Lenin in State And Revolution; 1917**

Shut It Down

From: Dennis Serdel
To: Military Resistance Newsletter
Sent: October 11, 2013

Subject: Shut It Down

Written by Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th
Brigade; United Auto Workers GM Retiree

Shut It Down

**There are many men at the VA door
that is locked
finger nail scratches & blood
runs down the door
& all of them want to kill themselves
and need help
until a shadow opens the door
& gives each man a loaded pistol
and tells them to go away
as the bloody door closes.
Marie, a Military Wife takes her 3 children
to the Commissary on base
where food & supplies are cheap
only to find it is closed
while her husband is fighting overseas
in a war for some reason
that she doesn't understand
what for & talk is the next payment
could be late or not there at all
so he is fighting for nothing.
WWII Soldiers fly to DC to see
their Memorial that is closed
Democrats & Republicans rush together
to cut the ribbon saying Closed
shaking hands of War while back
at Congress they then work as
Repubcrats to cut VA Disability payments
Social Security that they fought for
as the Demopubs stab the Veterans
in their backs with an icepick
with government cold hands
so they die too and used as Yes men
for other Wars dead or alive
Now the government fire Soldiers
& gut the GI Bill, if you want a house
go build it yourself
or live in a rundown apartment
working for Walmart
then try to go to College
with an old car that needs tires
& guzzles gasoline.
All Veterans are a hassle**

why can't they just fight & go away.
Now they backlog some PTSD
so they are given powerful scripts
so at best they will OD & go away
The US Empire Kills more X-Soldier
Veterans & Soldiers than the Taliban
or foreign enemy.
Bob rips off the bumper sticker on
his truck that says "I am a Proud Father
of a Son in the Army." His son
was just killed in Afghanistan,
The American Dream for the Soldiers
is no more because it is
an American Holocaust
that the Soldiers need to shut down.

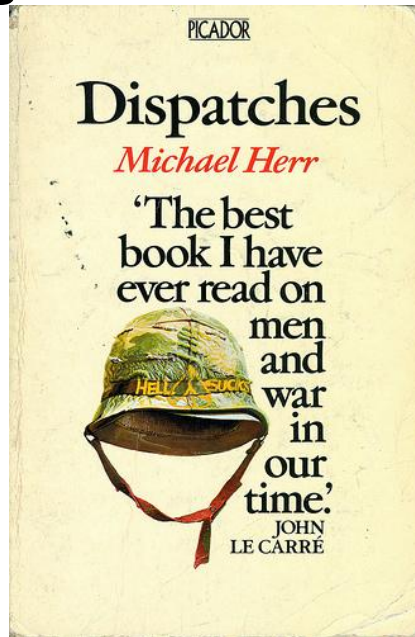
Shock Poetry written by Dennis Serdel for Military Resistance

YOUR INVITATION:

Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2472 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025 or email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

[THEN AND NOW]
**“What They Understood And Their
Leaders Refused To Acknowledge
Was That Battles And ‘Victories’
Didn’t Add Up To Anything”**
**“The Number Of Communist Dead
Meant Nothing, Changed Nothing”**
**“There Is A Point Of View That Says That
The United States Got Involved In The**

Vietnam War Simply Because We Thought It Would Be Easy”



[Farm4.static.flickr.com]

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Project, who sent this in.]

While a colonel in Saigon was declaring that the enemy “no longer maintains in our view capability to mount, execute or sustain a serious offensive action,” out in the countryside soldiers were looking around uneasily, saying, “Charlie’s up to something. Slick, slick, that fucker’s so slick. Watch!”

By Wendy Smith, The American Scholar [Excerpts]

Michael Herr’s brilliant, bitter, and loving book was hailed as a masterpiece when it was published in 1977, and the critical consensus has held steady ever since.

Somehow, a young journalist whose previous experience consisted mostly of travel pieces and film criticism managed to transform himself into a wild new kind of war correspondent capable of comprehending a disturbing new kind of war.

“Herr is the only writer I’ve read who has written in the mad-pop-poetic/bureaucratically camouflaged language in which Vietnam has lived,” wrote playwright and Vietnam draftee David Rabe.

It created enough of a sensation to prompt me to shell out \$8.95 for the hardcover, a lot of money for a college undergraduate in 1978. That was less than three years after North Vietnamese troops had marched into Saigon, during the odd political lull between Richard Nixon’s resignation and Ronald Reagan’s election.

I read Dispatches then through particularly rose-colored glasses, confident that we had learned the lessons of Vietnam and Watergate. In the ensuing 29 years, my awe at Herr's achievement has never lessened, but each of the three times I've re-read it, I've found new things.

The book hasn't changed, of course, but I have.

“Herr's Contempt For The Authorities Who Had Dumped American Troops Into Combat, His Matter-Of-Fact Depiction Of That Combat As Senseless, Dehumanizing, And Futile, Seemed Like Givens”

ON FIRST READING, the images Dispatches implanted in my mind were unquestionably harrowing: the corpse-strewn streets of ruined Hue, Vietnam's imperial city; the spooky vistas of Khe Sanh, where the Marines endured near-perpetual fire from ghostly North Vietnamese divisions invisible in the jungle. But those blasted landscapes painted in swaggering rock 'n' roll brushstrokes were as remote from my own experiences as the implacable rituals of guilt and expiation in Greek drama — indeed, I naively thought the book offered overdue catharsis for the Vietnam tragedy and expressed a new national consensus about it.

Herr's contempt for the authorities who had dumped American troops into combat, his matter-of-fact depiction of that combat as senseless, dehumanizing, and futile, seemed like givens.

Didn't everyone feel that way by 1978?

My liberal, urban friends certainly did, and few voices anywhere were being raised in defense of a military and political strategy whose ultimate fruits (helicopters evacuating the last Marines from the roof of the U.S. Embassy in Saigon while desperate, abandoned Vietnamese civilians swarmed the grounds below) were a painful recent memory.

What impressed me most forcefully about Dispatches was the window it opened on the surreal texture of ordinary soldier's lives.

Liberated from deadlines by his freeform assignment from Esquire magazine, Herr spent much of his time hanging around with grunts like the exhausted kid who replied to the standard question, “How long you been in-country?” by half-lifting his head and saying, very slowly, “all fuckin' day,” or the soldier detailed on reconnaissance patrol who told the reporter that the pills he took by the fistful “cooled things out just right” and that “he could see that old jungle at night like he was looking at it through a starlight scope.”

Unlike his colleagues working for mainstream media, Herr was under no obligation to solicit and report the military command's unwaveringly optimistic statements; instead, he listened to “grungy men in the jungle who talked bloody murder and killed people all the time,” men who despised sugar-coated official platitudes about what they were doing there as much as the most committed antiwar activist did.

Dispatches made it clear, I assumed, that hating the war didn't mean hating those stuck with fighting it.

The virtually unanimous praise lavished on this searing text, the general conviction that it was a definitive portrait of the American experience in Vietnam, suggested that Vietnam was behind us now.

How young I was, and how much I missed.

I still didn't get it in 1982, when I stood weeping in front of Maya Lin's memorial lined with the names of Americans killed or missing in Vietnam from 1959 to 1975. Looking at the flowers and the handwritten notes placed along its black granite wall, testament to the anguish we still felt over the loss of so many lives, I couldn't understand the veterans who angrily viewed the unconventional memorial as a "black gash of shame," one more example of the way their service had been stigmatized.

I didn't realize it then, but Vietnam was on its way to becoming the war we weren't allowed to win.

During the 1980s, I heard that revolting phrase uttered with increasing frequency by people who sought to erase our national trauma, not by acknowledging the mistaken analysis that entangled us in Vietnam and the stubbornness that kept us there, but by shoehorning it into a conventional saga of courage and sacrifice in an honorable cause betrayed by the weak and the disloyal.

Every scathing word in Dispatches belied this pat scenario.

"Whatever Else, I'd Loved It There,"

WHEN I PICKED UP Herr's book again in the late '80s, however, I became uncomfortably aware that it also belied my blithe collegiate certainties. The first time through, I had breezed right over Herr's description of the questions people asked him upon his return as "political, square, innocent . . . I'd practically forgotten the language." I didn't even remember the troubling passage in which his pal Tim Page, solicited by a publisher to write a book that would "take the glamour out of war," erupted with glee: "The very idea! Ohhh, what a laugh! Take the bloody glamour out of bloody war!"

Herr and his fellow misfits among the press corps, dope-smoking longhairs though they might have been, not so secretly saw themselves as belonging to the time-honored, movienourished image of the swashbuckling war correspondent. They hailed helicopters like taxis, hitching rides into places like Dak To and the Ia Drang Valley, where they risked their lives to observe the nightmare reality buried underneath words like body count and pacification.

Then they grabbed the next chopper out, heading back to Saigon to print their photos and write it all down. There was glamour in war, and they got to experience the buzz of combat from a uniquely privileged position.

"Whatever else, I'd loved it there," Herr admitted.

Soldiers felt that way too, William Broyles Jr. acknowledged in “Why Men Love War,” a 1984 essay in *Esquire*, which I read not long before I tackled *Dispatches* for the second time.

Broyles probed war’s “great and seductive beauty,” the enduring comradeship created among men who trusted each other with their lives, the knowledge that in battle you touched the fundamentals of human existence.

A Vietnam vet, he didn’t scant the uglier aspects: the sense of power inherent in killing, the covert joy when someone else got wasted instead of you, the unpalatable fact that being surrounded by death was, in some weird ways, a turn-on.

His polished, articulate prose was light years removed from the pop-apocalyptic urgency with which Herr tried to capture the particular nature of Vietnam. And yet both conveyed a message I hadn’t been able to hear in 1978.

For those who were there, the Vietnam War, like every war, was horrible and wonderful, the greatest experience of their lives as well as the worst thing that ever happened to them.

There was an important political discussion to be had about Vietnam, but there was another level on which politics was beside the point.

Dispatches was more than simply a great book about Vietnam, I began to understand.

I spend a lot of my professional time interviewing authors, and over the years I heard several of them refer to Herr’s work with a reverence that bordered on awe.

Dispatches was “one of the greatest memoirs of all time,” remarked Mary Karr, no slouch in that department herself. “It intimidated the pants off me,” confessed novelist Bob Shacochis, who, when I talked with him, had recently completed a nonfiction portrait of American soldiers in Haiti. “I can’t imagine writing a better book than *Dispatches*; it’s a blast of genius.”

The blasts of Herr’s rage, scorn, and agonized tenderness have been disturbing my peace for nearly three decades now; few works in any genre have haunted me the way *Dispatches* has.

“I Realized That The Only Corpse I Couldn’t Bear To Look At Would Be The One Whose Face I Would Never Have To See”

IN 1999, IT REENTERED my life in the oddest way, forcing itself anew on my attention when I least expected it. I’d had a baby at age 39 and sank happily into the swamp of my son’s all-consuming demands and my equally consuming love for him. The domestic world was my kingdom; war was one of those absurd male pastimes that had no relevance to me. (I know this is ridiculous: remember, I was a new mother.)

One day, reading a book about helicopters to my vehicle-obsessed four-year-old, I came across a photograph of a Huey landing under fire somewhere in South Vietnam. The next thing I knew, *Dispatches* was back in my hands.

It was placed there by my recollection of Herr's amazing description of the Vietnam chopper: "the sexiest thing going; saver-destroyer, provider-waster, right hand-left hand, nimble, fluent, canny and human; hot steel, grease, jungle-saturated canvas webbing, sweat cooling and warming up again, cassette rock and roll in one ear and door-gun fire in the other, fuel, heat, vitality and death, death itself, hardly an intruder."

Rereading that fabulous effusion, I remembered Mary Karr's appreciative appraisal: "Just at the level of sentences, it's never boring." The third time around, I was swept away by the sheer magnificence of Herr's prose as much as by what he had to say. Of course, the two were inextricably connected, and *Dispatches* had something new to say to me in my 40s.

The book was a personal testament, I belatedly grasped.

Herr wasn't just showing me what the war did to other people; he was examining what it did to him. He was terrified, naturally — take a look at his defoliating depiction of being under fire:

That passage took me through Vietnam to the eternal terrain of stark, animal fear.

At its existential heart, *Dispatches* was about what happened to someone living for months on end with that kind of fear, about what the omnipresence of death did to your soul.

Herr summed it up for himself in a single bleak sentence. Walking through the streets of Hue during the Tet Offensive, past hundreds of bodies decomposing in the cold rain, he wrote, "I realized that the only corpse I couldn't bear to look at would be the one whose face I would never have to see."

The grunts' moments of individual reckoning were blunter. "All that's just a load, man," said one young soldier, dismissing the domino theory and other official rationales. "We're here to kill gooks. Period."

Being a mother, I flinched at the thought of my son growing up to say something like that. Being a journalist, I flinched again at Herr's sardonic addendum: "(That) wasn't at all true of me. I was there to watch."

I'd never covered a war or grilled a duplicitous politician, but anyone who writes nonfiction is familiar with the queasily mixed emotions inherent in using other people's experiences as your raw material. Herr dissected that complex, fraught relationship in a situation where the stakes were mortally high.

He thought of himself as the grunts' brother, sharing their miseries and dangers in the field. On the surface, they seemed to agree. They gave him their helmets and flak jackets, found him mattresses to sleep on, threw blankets over him when he was cold. "You're all right man," they said, "you got balls."

But then would come “that bad, bad moment . . . the look that made you look away,” or the comment of a rifleman watching a jeepload of correspondents drive off: “Those fucking guys, I hope they die.”

Then the distance was clear.

“They weren’t judging me, they weren’t reproaching me, they didn’t even mind me, not in any personal way,” Herr wrote. “They only hated me, hated me the way you’d hate any hopeless fool who would put himself through this thing when he had choices.”

He was not their brother, and he came to a conclusion many reporters prefer not to draw: “You were as responsible for everything you saw as you were for everything you did.”

There was only one way to honor that responsibility, and the grunts told him what it was.

“They would ask you with an emotion whose intensity would shock you to please tell it, because they really did have the feeling that it wasn’t being told for them, that they were going through all this and that somehow no one back in the World knew about it.”

Herr told as many of their stories as he could cram into a narrative burning with his fierce belief that “conventional journalism could no more reveal this war than conventional firepower could win it.”

He told the story of a freaked-out Marine, throwing away fatigues soaked with the blood of “some guy he didn’t even know (who) had been blown away right next to him, all over him.”

There was no way to wash them clean, the soldier said, near tears: “You could take and scrub them fatigues for a million years, and it would never happen.”

He told the story of a battalion in the midst of the Tet Offensive’s worst days, afflicted with despair so terrible that men from Graves Registration going through the personal effects of dead soldiers sometimes found letters from home “delivered days before and still unopened.”

All wars produce horror stories, but in most wars before Vietnam reporters were constrained from telling them, by censorship, of course, but also by their sense that there was a greater goal that at least partly justified the horrors.

Herr cared very little about the big picture — and who could blame him, when one month Khe Sanh fit into the big picture as “the Western Anchor of our Defense” and the next it was “a worthless piece of ground”?

He cared more about what he could learn from the Special Forces captain who said, “I went out and killed one VC and liberated a prisoner. Next day the major called me in and told me that I’d killed fourteen VC and liberated six prisoners. You want to see the medal?”

“What They Understood And Their Leaders Refused To Acknowledge Was That Battles And “Victories” Didn’t Add Up To Anything”

THE HUMAN TRUTHS of Dispatches were also political truths,

I could see when I angrily reopened it on the eve of the 2006 midterm elections.

Because Vietnam was an unpopular war that we lost, it was possible for Herr to say things about the essential nature of combat that it had been unacceptable to say about, for example, World War II. (The U.S. Army was so upset by John Huston’s Signal Corps documentary about veterans suffering from what we would now call post-traumatic stress disorder that it suppressed the film for more than 30 years.)

Herr took full advantage of that freedom.

He took very seriously his commitment to tell the grunts’ stories, but he made no pretense of telling them from the grunts’ point of view, and he told stories they undoubtedly wished he’d kept to himself.

He wasn’t “embedded,” the cynical tactic invented by the Bush administration to enmesh reporters in a conflict they were supposed to be covering impartially. “I crossed the line from observer to participant,” said Time correspondent Michael Weisskopf, who lost his right hand when he picked up a live grenade tossed into the Humvee carrying him and four soldiers on patrol in Baghdad. “It became very difficult to objectively assess the role of U.S. soldiers who were housing, feeding, befriending and protecting me. After three weeks in a platoon, I came dangerously close to adopting the mindset and mission of a soldier.”

Herr never fell into that trap.

His affection for the grunts didn’t prevent him from seeing what Vietnam had done to some of them. “They were killers,” he wrote of the soldiers hunkered down at Khe Sanh. “Of course they were; what would anyone expect them to be?”

With the appalling photographs from Abu Ghraib still vivid in my memory, I found my fourth journey through Dispatches halted time after time by grim glimpses of the atrocities committed in Vietnam.

Herr heard stories about “the man in the Highlands who was ‘building his own gook,’ parts were the least of his troubles”; about the door gunner, asked how he could shoot women and children, who replied, “It’s easy, you just don’t lead ‘em so much.”

He saw a photo of a Marine “pissing into the locked-open mouth of a decomposing North Vietnamese soldier”; albums with pictures of smiling soldiers holding up severed heads or necklaces of ears. “There were hundreds of those albums in Vietnam, thousands,” he noted wearily. The inevitable snapshot of a dead Viet Cong woman stripped naked was inevitably accompanied by “that same tired remark you heard every time . . . ‘No more boom-boom for that mamma-san.’”

Herr was sickened by what he saw and heard, but he didn't judge the grunts. He knew what they were up against.

The North Vietnamese and the Viet Cong were not good guys; he observed without surprise that they were supplied by the Soviets and the Chinese, that they were responsible for plenty of atrocities themselves.

What unnerved American soldiers about their enemy — and drove the brass purely crazy — was that he wasn't playing by their rules.

Over and over, Herr described major battles with massive casualties on both sides that didn't so much end as stop when the North Vietnamese picked up most of their dead and vanished into the jungle.

Command proclaimed them victories, but it was hard to feel victorious at the top of Dak To's Hill 875, which hundreds of Americans had died to take, where there were exactly four Vietnamese bodies.

"Of course more died, hundreds more," Herr wrote, "but the corpses kicked and counted and photographed and buried numbered four. . . . Spooky. Everything up there was spooky . . . you were there in a place where you didn't belong."

The grunts knew it, and they didn't make their commanders' mistake of underestimating their opponents.

While a colonel in Saigon was declaring that the enemy "no longer maintains in our view capability to mount, execute or sustain a serious offensive action," out in the countryside soldiers were looking around uneasily, saying, "Charlie's up to something. Slick, slick, that fucker's so slick. Watch!"

What they understood and their leaders refused to acknowledge was that battles and "victories" didn't add up to anything.

"They killed a lot of Communists, but that was all they did," Herr wrote of the campaign in the Vietnamese highlands.

"The number of Communist dead meant nothing, changed nothing."

Iraq is not Vietnam. The desert is not the jungle.

"It's Beyond Politics, But We Ignore, And Have Ignored, Its Political Lessons At Our Peril"

The Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army, infuriatingly hard to pin down though they were, were miracles of coherence compared to the rat's nest of sectarian death squads and fundamentalist splinter groups accountable to who knows who that toss IEDs at American jeeps in the streets of Baghdad and Mosul.

What is shockingly, shamefully similar is the arrogance, criminal blindness, and willful obfuscation that ensnared America in both places.

In 2006, no other sentence in *Dispatches* distressed me more than an almost casual aside in the midst of Herr's exegesis of "the bloody, maddening uncanniness" of Vietnam's terrain.

"There is a point of view," he wrote, "that says that the United States got involved in the Vietnam War, commitments and interests aside, simply because we thought it would be easy."

Like all great books, *Dispatches* is inexhaustible. I have learned from it, changed with it, made mistakes about it. It was never the document of national reconciliation I once thought it was.

It was and is the timeless portrait of war's bedrock realities — fear, death, murder, madness — that I was finally ready to confront in my 30s.

It's also a revelation of the beauty that unfolds in extreme circumstances, the clarity of vision possible when everything extraneous has fallen away. It's a brazen display of unbridled romanticism and extravagant prose.

It's a chastening exploration of our complicity in what we see from a safe distance.

It's beyond politics, but we ignore, and have ignored, its political lessons at our peril.

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CLASS WAR REPORTS

**Raid Using Military Equipment
Ends Native Prayer Against
Dakota Pipeline:
21 People Arrested During A Peaceful
Service;**

North Dakota Authorities Deploy Shotguns, Assault Rifles, Military Vehicles



North Dakota Police broke up a peaceful prayer at the site of the Dakota Access Pipeline protests using military equipment. (photo: Rob Wilson Photography)

29 September 16 By teleSUR

North Dakota police with military-style equipment surrounded Native Americans gathered in prayer against the construction of the Dakota Access pipeline on Wednesday, disrupting their plan to cross sacred and treaty-protected land in protest of a project they fear will destroy their livelihood.

“ND authorities deploy armed personnel with shotguns and assault rifles, military vehicles, and aerial spray on peaceful Water Protectors gathered in prayer,” wrote the Sacred Stone Camp, in a Facebook post.

Officers with military-style armored vehicles and shotguns threatened the protesters, who call themselves “water protectors” for defending the Missouri River from imminent pollution, reported Unicorn Riot. Up to 21 were arrested, the channel reported.

Witnesses filmed the crackdown but said their access their Facebook was blocked. One participant, Thomas H. Joseph II, posted a chilling video narrating the mobilization and his getaway. Helicopters are heard as he says that tear gas is being dropped, and an officer loads his gun as protesters, some on horseback, chant, “We have no guns.”

In the video, Joseph said that “one guy’s about ready to blast us” but later added that no shots were fired.

“We gathered in prayer un-armed, prayed, sang songs, and attempted to leave,” he later wrote in a Facebook post. “No threats, No vandalism, No violence was taken on our part.”

Police and private security personnel have been more aggressively cracking down on actions against the pipeline since the governor declared a state of emergency.

The state is currently investigating an incident in which contracted private security firm Frost Kennels unleashed dogs during a nonviolent direct action, ending with six bitten, including a pregnant woman and a child, according to organizers at the action.

Alternative media outlet Unicorn Riot previously accused Facebook of censoring its livestream of police repression, saying they received a popup security alert when they tried to post the video.

“We will not let them stop our mission to amplify the voices of people who might otherwise go unheard, and broadcast the stories that might otherwise go untold,” they told RT.

The pipeline, expected to transport over half a million barrels of oil a day through four states, has united over 300 tribes in resistance. Several lawsuits are pending against the company, which has retaliated with restraining orders. The White House halted construction on federal land, which makes up three percent of the pipeline’s path, but has not issued any other statement against the pipeline—motivating Facebook users to demand a response after Wednesday’s crackdown.

DANGER: CAPITALISTS AT WORK

**Panic, Anxiety Spark Rush To
Build Luxury Bunkers For L.A.’S**

Superrich:

**“Everyone I’ve Talked To Thinks
We Are Doomed, No Matter Who Is
Elected”**

**“For These Multibillionaires, A Few
Million Is Nothing”**

**“Sales At The Most Upscale End Of The
Market To Actors, Pro Athletes And**

Politicians, Have Increased 700% This Year”



\$8.35 million, 6,000-square-foot bunker from Texas company Rising S Bunkers includes a decked-out game room.



The largest swimming pool that Rising S has built measures 40 feet.

9/28/2016 by Ingrid Schmidt, The Hollywood Reporter

Oscar winners, sports stars and Bill Gates are building lavish bunkers — with amenities ranging from a swimming pool to a bowling alley — as global anxiety fuels sales and owners “could be the next Adam and Eve.”

Given the increased frequency of terrorist bombings and mass shootings and an underlying sense of havoc fed by divisive election politics, it’s no surprise that home security is going over the top and hitting luxurious new heights.

Or, rather, new lows, as the average depth of a new breed of safe haven that occupies thousands of square feet is 10 feet under or more.

Those who can afford to pull out all the stops for so-called self-preservation are doing so — in a fashion that goes way beyond the submerged corrugated metal units adopted by reality show “preppers” — to prepare for anything from nuclear bombings to drastic climate-change events.



Rising S garages with 15 vehicles, including Rolls-Royces, muscle cars and armored personnel carriers (one client has three).

Gary Lynch, GM at Rising S Bunkers, a Texas-based company that specializes in underground bunkers and services scores of Los Angeles residences, says that sales at the most upscale end of the market — mainly to actors, pro athletes and politicians (who require signed NDAs) — have increased 700 percent this year compared with 2015, and overall sales have risen 150 percent.

“Any time there is a turbulent political landscape, we see a spike in our sales. Given this election is as turbulent as it is, we are gearing up for an even bigger spike,” says marketing director Brad Roberson of sales of bunkers that start at \$39,000 and can run \$8.35 million or more (FYI, a 12-stall horse shelter is \$98,500).

Adds Mike Peters, owner of Utah-based Ultimate Bunker, which builds high-end versions in California, Texas and Minnesota: “People are going for luxury (to) live underground because they see the future is going to be rough. Everyone I’ve talked to thinks we are doomed, no matter who is elected.”

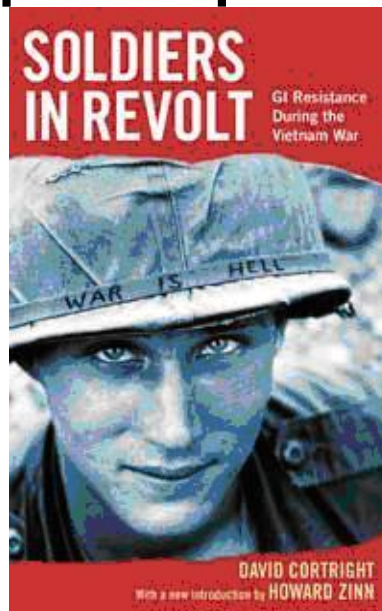
Robert Vicino, founder of Del Mar, Calif.-based Vivos, which constructs upscale community bunkers in Indiana (he believes coastal flooding scenarios preclude bunkers being safely built west of the Rockies), says, “Bill Gates has huge shelters under every one of his homes, in Rancho Santa Fe and Washington.

“His head of security visited with us a couple years ago, and for these multibillionaires, a few million is nothing. It’s really just the newest form of insurance.”

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



FREE TO ACTIVE DUTY: A Vietnam Veteran Describes The Strategy And Tactics Used By Troops To Stop An Imperial War



SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT

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