

**GI SPECIAL 3D11:**

***Veterans' Day Special:***  
**Iraq Vets Front And  
Center!**



Photo: Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace

**Betrayal:**  
**Publicity Hogs In Charge Refused  
To Let Iraq Vets Take The Lead  
9.24 In Washington:  
They Still Don't Get It**

With the majority of Americans turning against the war, a leaner, tighter, more direct series of speakers (with labor groups, military relatives and dissident soldiers and Marines leading the way -- why wasn't someone from Iraq Veterans Against The War invited to speak?) would've been electrifying.

## **“This Is Not The First Time I Have Experienced This In The Peace Movement”**

**From: Mike Hastie**  
**To: GI Special**  
**Sent: October 11, 2005**  
**Subject: Passing Of The Baton**

To G.I. Special:

I was at the march in Washington, D.C. on September 24, 2005, and the two days that followed.

I was also disappointed that veterans did not have a stronger voice in what happened during that historic gathering.

As a veteran, this is not the first time I have experienced this in the peace movement.

As far as I am concerned, the most powerful and threatening voice in America against the war in Iraq, are the Iraq veterans who know this war to be a lie.

There is no other anti-war group in America, that has this kind of power.

As a Vietnam veteran, it is time to pass the baton, and that baton is the microphone.

I met numerous Iraq Veterans in Washington, D.C. over that weekend, and without exception, everyone of them can hold their own.

They are as bright and articulate as any veteran I have ever met, and that includes Korean and WWII veterans. They are the next generation of Veterans, who will blow the whistle on the U.S. Government.

The more they speak, the stronger they will become, and the end result will be that more Iraq Veterans will come out of the woodwork to join them. They know the war in Iraq like the back of their hands.

And, the only thing they need is a microphone in their hands.

The truth they hold in their hearts, will be the truth that steps forward to bear witness.

As a Vietnam veteran, my job will be to help them find a venue to speak. I would love to introduce them to the audience, and then it is time for me to sit down. The rest will be history.

Mike Hastie  
Vietnam Veteran  
October 11, 2005

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## **“Quit Going After Self Serving Photo Ops Or Media Statements, And Put These Remarkable Young Vets Out Into The Forefront”**

As the mother of a young Iraq Vet, I know the living hell these troops endure both during and after their deployments.

The IVAW members are their only voice they have, while still in service, their best chance of stopping this war, possibly saving their lives as well as the lives of their buddies, by making the American public aware of the truth of what really goes on in their names over there.

From: Alycia A. Barr  
To: GI Special  
Sent: October 11, 2005 7:42 AM  
Subject: Re: GI Special 3C79 - "Veterans Disrespected..."

**FINALLY...someone who had the courage to come forth and address an issue that has been a bone of contention with me since meeting several of the brave young men who ultimately became founding members of Iraq Veterans Against the War.**

**This is a subject I have repeatedly broached within my own organization, Military Families Speak Out, for well over a year with no visible results. It angered me to the point of actually stepping back from my participation as a member of MFSO and the anti-war movement as a whole.**

**As the mother of a young Iraq Vet, I know the living hell these troops endure both during and after their deployments.**

The IVAW members are their only voice they have, while still in service, their best chance of stopping this war, possibly saving their lives as well as the lives of their buddies, by making the American public aware of the truth of what really goes on in their names over there.

Thank God for Mr. Glazer!!!!

Maybe now others in organizations such as MFSO, GSFP and VFP will sit up, pay attention, remember that it was the actions of the soldiers themselves that finally put an end to the Vietnam war, quit going after self serving photo ops or media statements, and put these remarkable young Vets out into the forefront of the news, where they should have been all along.

Isn't that what anyone who professes to want to stop this war would do?

Our mission as peacekeepers shouldn't be selfish agendas, using bargaining chips, like the McCain amendment to pacify those concerned about following the Army Regs on Interrogations, instead of demanding investigations into the actions our soldiers have had to take, under orders, that produced the torture of other human beings.

We condemn our loved ones in uniform to a life of torment that, in some cases, have already lead to their death by their own hand, as well as the deaths of others back here at home.

Let's refocus, regroup, and do it right to BRING THEM HOME NOW!

In Peace and Humanity,  
Alycia A. Barr

[This is the article the writer above refers to:]

***Veterans Disrespected At The  
9/14 D.C. Rally:  
“Why Were There No VETERANS  
From The Current Iraq War Or The  
Earlier Desert Storm As Featured  
Speakers?”***

3 Oct 2005 From: Gene Glazer, Veterans For Peace; vfp-chaptercontacts

The sponsors of the giant protest rally and March of Sept. 24 did an outstanding job. We can imagine the problems and obstacles that had to be overcome to pull off this event.

**However, we are compelled to submit what we believe is a constructive, but major suggestion, for future anti war demonstrations.**

We welcomed the opportunity to see and listen to Cindy Sheehan and other mothers/wives whose loved ones are in Iraq or who were wounded or killed in pursuit of George Bush's "noble cause". They deserved, more than anyone, the opportunity to address the rally and the nation.

But following them, what better informed individuals should be designated as featured (not 15 second sound bites) speakers, other than VETERANS??

**VETERANS are an essential and unique part of the anti war movement.**

**Why then, were there no VETERANS from the current Iraq war or the earlier Desert Storm designated as featured speakers? In addition to these groups – Veterans for Peace, Vietnam Veterans Against the War, Korean veterans and just plain VETERANS were in D.C. that day.**

**Mike Hoffman (IVAW), Michael Mc Phearson (Desert Storm), Dave Cline (VFP) and Stan Goff (VVAW) are all knowledgeable, articulate speakers.**

**At the largest anti war protests in 2 years – the voice of Veterans should have been heard.**

Peace and solidarity

Gene Glazer - -WWII [geneandalice@comcast.net](mailto:geneandalice@comcast.net)

Joseph Attamante –Vietnam [joseph\\_attamante@att.net](mailto:joseph_attamante@att.net)

Members, Veterans for Peace (for identification only –The opinions are our own)

#### **COMMENT: T**

**If you and I and a lot of other people can understand why it was so important to have the Iraq vets front and center, so can the people who claim leadership. And by the way, they have no problem using the Veterans to lead the march, as long as they shut up, act like obedient window dressing, and stay the fuck off the speakers platform.**

**These people are shameless opportunists. This is supposed to be about ending a war, and death, and maiming, and not their egos and political agendas.**

**By refusing to present the best, most honest, most qualified and powerful critics of the Iraq war, the very troops forced to fight in it, they prolong the war, and strengthen the Imperial politicians.**

**By keeping the Iraq veterans in the back of the bus, they serve Bush and the Empire.**

Time to call them out.

The more people who do so, the sooner this bullshit stops.



[www.ivaw.net](http://www.ivaw.net)

**Iraq War Veterans  
Presence in D.C.  
Unreported:  
What Americans Could Have  
Heard, But Weren't Allowed To  
Hear:  
UFPJ & ANSWER Organizers  
Refused To Bring The Iraq Vets  
Front And Center:  
They Made Sure The Words Below  
Were Never Heard From The  
Speakers Platform**

["Iraq War Veterans Presence in D.C. Unreported"? Considering how they were pushed aside by the organizers, hardly a big surprise. In fact, the organizers bear the responsibility for failing to bring the Iraq vets front and center and the press

merely followed their lead. The veterans words, below, are infinitely more powerful than the raving yowling blizzard of empty bullshit puked out by the self appointed "political leaders" of the movement against the war who controlled the speakers platform for their own purposes. *For what the organizers did not allow the Iraq vets to say, see the boxed quotes below.*]

September 26, 2005 by Eric Herter, Common Dreams

**The New York Times (Sept. 25, 2005) and much of the other news coverage of Saturday's anti-war demonstration in Washington, D.C. failed to note the presence of a particularly knowledgeable group of protestors - recently-returned veterans of the war in Iraq.**

**Gathered behind a wide banner reading "Iraq Veterans Against the War," approximately fifty men and women in desert camouflage uniforms or IVAW T-shirts spoke with a handful of reporters before moving out to take their place in the miles-long march through the city streets and past the White House. Short-haired, neat and polite, they answered questions with a seriousness and conviction born of their first-hand experiences with the war.**

Elizabeth Spradlin, an attractive Colorado Springs native with straight neck-length brown hair, spoke with quiet intensity of her year in Iraq. It began in March, 2003, when she was part of the invasion force moving from Kuwait to Baghdad.

"Going into that country, immediately they were welcoming, wanting us there. And over the course of three months we basically caused so much trouble in the area we were in. We didn't have interpreters. We were not helping them re-build their country. We were just driving around with our vehicles with guns, not communicating with them in any way, just basically occupying their space, their country. And they kept on coming to us asking us to help them re-build and -- based on my personal experience -- we weren't doing anything to help them."

Spradlin enlisted in the Colorado national guard as a medic, but in 2003, that changed.

**"I was command-directed to go over to Iraq as an MP. So I was basically unqualified at what I was doing. I was a gunner, and I sat in a little turret and patrolled around Iraqi cities - causing problems, basically. Running children over."**

**She paused, blinking.**

**"It was terrible."**

Chad Soloman, a husky young man with close-cropped reddish hair and goatee, served in Iraq as mechanic with the Ohio national guard. He smiled as he spoke, but his eyes were serious.

**"We tried to survive. That was basically our objective. I saw nothing that could be said to be beneficial to the Iraqi people. When I tried to speak with Iraqi people, they did not at all see that we were there to help them. Certainly plenty of Iraqis**

**spoke with mortars and with rifles, so obviously they were not content with our being there."**

Tim Goodrich, a tall clean-cut Air Force veteran who's spoken at several previous IVAW demonstrations, was an electronics technician on E-3 AWACS surveillance aircraft. He spoke of the heavy bombing that, in effect, started the Iraq war months before the March, 2003, invasion.

**"My involvement in the Iraq war was the bombing of Iraq - the intensified bombing in the fall of 2002. While Bush kept saying we were going to try diplomacy, in fact we were over there bombing the heck out of them. So I saw the lie, right from the start."**

Other members of Iraq Veterans Against the War expressed their skepticism about the administration's explanations for the war. One uniformed young man with a southern accent said he'd been a military driver trucking supplies from Kuwait to many destinations in Iraq.

**"We went in there for weapons of mass destruction. There are no weapons of mass destruction - I think that's perfectly clear. So we have no reason to be there. Plain and simple."**

**In addition to the Iraq Veterans Against the War, a number of active-duty troops attended Saturday's demonstration in uniform, and told the press of their opposition to the war in Iraq.**

A tough-looking regular Army sergeant in camouflage fatigues preferred not to give his name because he was still in the service, but said he was just back from eight months in Baghdad.

**"I don't know what we're fighting for over there. It's not a good cause. They don't appreciate us when we're there. They look at us as enemies, not as friends. So it's kind of hard when you're trying to help the enemies, and not the friends."**

**He shook his head with a sad smile.**

Chad Soloman, the Ohio national guardsman in IVAW, probably spoke for many of the Iraq veterans at the demonstration:

**"It's a war based on greed and selfishness and ignorance and incompetence, and I just see no reason why we should be continuing it. So we're here to show that not all veterans are supportive of the war, that some of us feel it's wrong, and that we need to take a stand against it."**

***THIS IS NOT A SATIRE:***



# **UPFJ CROSSES THE LINE INTO PREPOSTEROUS FARCE: CALLS FOR DEMONSTRATIONS AT FORD DEALERSHIPS**

[For the Veterans Day holiday weekend, do not, above all, go anywhere near any soldiers, reserve, or National Guard members in your home town or city and talk to them about the war. Oh no, the way to oppose the war is to go demonstrate at a Ford dealership. This is not, repeat, not a satire. It may be a sign of terminal lunacy, but it is not satire.]

November 11, 2005 By Elizabeth Schulte, Socialist Worker [Excerpt]

**“TELL FORD to Get Serious About Breaking Its Oil Addiction” is the call issued by the antiwar coalition United for Peace and Justice for national protests at Ford dealerships on November 12.**

***If the U.S. breaks its dependency on oil, the argument goes, the war on Iraq would be ended.***

“Ford’s frontline brand recognition gives it more power to drive the market in the right direction and the responsibility to do so,” argues the JumpstartFord.com Web site sponsored by the Ruckus Society, Rainforest Action Network and Global Exchange.

It’s a fact that big SUVs are gas guzzlers and big polluters. According to Suv.org, an SUV that gets 14 miles per gallon, like a Lincoln Navigator, will emit over 100 tons of carbon dioxide--the main source of greenhouse gases contributing to global warming--over its lifetime, twice the amount of more fuel-efficient cars. And this isn’t to mention the nasty habit of SUVs to roll over and kill the people who ride in them.

**But the question is this: Is decreasing dependence on oil the key to ending the war on Iraq?**

**Our power is in our ability to come together collectively--to protest the war in Iraq and to place the blame where it belongs, on the U.S. government’s pursuit of oil and empire at the expense of everything else.**

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**As Far As UPFJ Is Concerned, Troops  
Turning Against The War Are Not Worth  
Mentioning**

Bizarre, but hardly a surprise: The new four page October 25 UFPJ letter asking you to send in money to them lists six different UFPJ projects as reasons to make a "generous donation."

Guess what.

There is not one word about reaching out to anti-war troops.

The silence is damning.

As far as UFPJ is concerned, the increasing numbers of troops turning against the war are not worth one word in a four page letter talking about what the UFPJ considers important.

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## **“Step Away From The Limelight” And Let The Iraq Vets Take The Lead**

The voices of the Iraq Veterans is far louder, more powerful, informative and compelling than any number of military family members. What a shame MFSO, as a whole, has not realized that fact yet.

It wasn't the protestors that stopped the Vietnam war, no matter what they said, or how loud they said it...it was the soldiers...remember?

Step away from the limelight, and allow those who have been there the chance to do what NO other org. can...STOP THE WAR AND BRING THEM HOME NOW!!!!

From: Alycia A. Barr  
To: GI Special  
Sent: October 24, 2005

*Just thought you might like to read this message that was sent out this morning.*

*It might not have been written if it wasn't made clear in their message [at the end of this letter] how "powerful" our voices are, and, once again, forget to even acknowledge those of our Iraq Veterans.*

*In Peace and Humanity,*

*Alycia A. Barr*

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**From: Alycia A. Barr**

**To: Military Families Speak Out**

Sent: Monday, October 24, 2005 2:50 AM

Subject: Re: Commemorating the Upcoming Horrific Milestone

Dear Nancy and Charley,

**The voices of the Iraq Veterans is far louder, more powerful, informative and compelling than any number of military family members. What a shame MFSO, as a whole, has not realized that fact yet.**

**This is one military mom who recognized that a long time ago. We will have an Iraq Vet as the focal point of our 2000th soldier memorial in Harrisburg, Pa., come hell or high water.**

**It's one thing for Bush to get away with ignoring a dead soldier's grieving mother, it's a whole other ball game for an Iraq combat Vet to confront Bush publicly, and ask for the answers to his or her questions.**

**How long do you think Americans would allow Bush to "put off" one our own troops, who had engaged in the horrors that this war, Mr. Bush initiated, has resulted in? A subject Bush has NO expertise in, and the average citizen has very limited knowledge of.**

Who do you think Americans would listen to?

Who do you think Americans would support?

Who do you think Americans would find more believable, based on experience alone?

**It wasn't the protestors that stopped the Vietnam war, no matter what they said, or how loud they said it...it was the soldiers...remember?**

**Step away from the limelight, and allow those who have been there the chance to do what NO other org. can...STOP THE WAR AND BRING THEM HOME NOW!!!!**

**Or do you want to continue to "protest" this war for the next 10 or 20 years, and lose a lot more than 2000 lives?**

In Peace and Humanity,  
Alycia A. Barr

**[This is the message Alycia Barr is responding to:]**

*Dear Military Families,*

*If you are still looking to connect with an activity or event in your area to commemorate the 2,000th troop death, and honor all of the fallen by calling for an end to the war in*

*Iraq, check the website <http://www.afsc.org/2000/> to see if there is already an event in your area, or to help initiate one.*

***The voice of military families opposing this war is more powerful than ever in helping this country understand the true human cost of this war, and the urgency by which it must end.***

*Thank you for all you are doing to honor our troops, bring them home now and take care of them when they get here.*

*In Peace and Solidarity,  
Nancy Lessin and Charley Richardson  
for Military Families Speak Out  
[www.mfso.org](http://www.mfso.org)  
[www.bringthemhomenow.org](http://www.bringthemhomenow.org)*

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## **The Reply To Alycia Barr; “This Is Not An “Either/Or”**

Dear Alycia,

This is not an "either/or"; we believe that ALL of our voices -- military families, Gold Star families, Iraq War Veterans and Veterans of other eras -- are incredibly powerful. As you know, MFSO, GSFP, IVAW, VFP, and VVAW work in an alliance. We are working on pulling together a very powerful contingent for the Veterans Day Parade in New York City for November 11th - and VFP is putting together a "speak-out" to be held there the next day.

MFSO messages go out now to 2,600 military families across the country. Some of these families have at home returned Iraq War Veterans -- some of them members of IVAW. More and more those MFSO members speak together with their loved one from IVAW at events in their communities.

IVAW as an organization makes its own choice about which activities it wants to get involved in and how it wants to do that. What MFSO sends out goes to some of those people helping to coordinate IVAW activities -- and -- if this in an event that they don't already know about -- they can decide if this is something IVAW organizationally wants to be involved in (and if so, how they want to communicate with their members and, in this case, with organizations like AFSC.)

Alycia, we think the voices of families whose loved ones are in Iraq right now, for whom every second this war continues can turn them into a Gold Star family, are extremely powerful and help people to see the urgency by which this war must end. Gold Star families help people see that human cost of the war. And Iraq War Veterans show the ground truth and horror of this war in a way no one else can. Again, this is not "either/or". All of our voices are important, and we hope to continue to build these voices

in the larger movement to end the war. Frankly, we have been more concerned about the promotion of "silent vigils" across the country. There has been far too much silence. We hope that on the occasion of this next horrific milestone of the 2000th troop death, the voices of military families and Veterans are heard far and wide across the country.

In Peace and Solidarity,  
Nancy Lessin and Charley Richardson  
for Military Families Speak Out  
[www.mfso.org](http://www.mfso.org)  
[www.bringthemhomenow.org](http://www.bringthemhomenow.org)

**The Reply To Lessin & Richardson:**

**“It Will Be The Soldiers  
Themselves Who Will Stop This  
War”**

The large majority of soldiers I've personally spoken to KNOW it will be the soldiers themselves who will stop this war but not if they don't know how many of them feel the same way! I went into utter shock as not a single IVAW took the mic at the Sept. 24th D.C. rally.

From: (Alycia A. Barr)  
To: MFSSO  
Subject: Re: Commemorating the Upcoming Horrific Milestone  
Date: Tue, 25 Oct 2005 11:19:36 +0000

Dear Nancy and Charley,

***I beg to differ. This is an "either/or" situation. Has the war ended?***

**Your explanations for MFSSO's overall neglect of using our most valuable asset, the IVAW may have been far more creditable if I hadn't witnessed someone literally upstage an Iraq Vet in our "Bring Them Home Now Tour" rally while MFSSO members and the rest of the coordinators stood by and did nothing but panic.**

Ultimately I was forced to the mic after watching 3 or more people shake their heads and leave. I put my hand on his shoulder re-announced his name and org. then asked the crowd to "give him a hand for all his efforts." The applause was deafening!

**Not for his speaking contribution but that someone had finally found a way to get him off the stage leaving the IVAW rep. much less time for his message. Please don't try to convince me there are no individual egos in play here.**

Two years ago the anti-war movement here did not know who or what MFSO was. My persistence changed that.

For the last year and a half they gave me blank stares when IVAW was spoken of in my presentations and conversations. Sometimes asking "you mean there are US soldiers back from Iraq that are against the war?"

**Without the presence of even one IVAW in this area, a well deserved recognition of whom and what they stood for was laid out by me. This was not done just within the context of vigils or protests but by speaking to every young man in uniform I ran across introducing myself not as an MFSO member but the mother of an Iraq combat Vet who after serving realized the soldiers were being lied to across the board.**

**Then recommending they contact the IVAW for a more personal take.**

**From Pine Gove to Carlisle people now know the IVAW is our best and possibly our last hope of stopping this war.**

**That is until the "Crawford dream team" came to the forefront of national media attention with only a sprinkling of coverage for IVAW.**

**People across America and here were smitten by Cindy and after the 4th or 5th week of the press's constant reports of her courageous battle against Bush no one bothered to ask where the Iraq Vets were anymore.**

**My beef is not with Cindy's actions but the fact that every photo shoot, public speech or media interview could and should have been an opportunity for an IVAW member to step forward and be heard.**

**Instead Snips and clips appeared about them while all across the U.S. "Cindy" was talked about and spoken of on a 1st name basis. The names of Mike Hoffman, Tim Goodrich, and Hart Vigas garnered such responses like "Huh? Who are they?"**

**Sue N. was the only brave soul I ever heard publicly trying to change that, but you find nothing wrong with that?**

**I went into utter shock as not a single IVAW took the mic at the Sept. 24th D.C. rally.**

The efforts you spoke of by VFP, GSFP, and MFSO, while noble and I agree are a necessary component, are all watching the death toll in Iraq climb almost daily.

Not one US Senator has come to the floor in a speech or legislation that included the words "Bring them home now." Which by the way is said to be the biggest difference between the ending of the Vietnam War and this one?

**What does that say for all our efforts in lobbying Washington? It speaks volumes to those of us who's loved ones are on a redeployment list.**

**The large majority of soldiers I've personally spoken to KNOW it will be the soldiers themselves who will stop this war but not if they don't know how many of them feel the same way!**

**If laying the blame at IAW's feet by saying it "makes its own choice.." works for you as a justification for your role then maybe you shouldn't take so much credit for organizing them in the media. PR advice they may have gotten from you evidentially isn't producing a lot of positive results for them or getting them front page attention.**

Nancy and Charley, if you choose to find my views just criticism then at least allow it to be constructive.

**You don't receive reports on my actions, photos of events I've organized, drafts of my speeches or anything drawing attention to what I've done or accomplished in these last few years.**

**It's not because they haven't made a difference, it's because they were done to clear the way for the voices of the soldiers who were there, who know and can tell the truth about the atrocities they've been forced to commit under order by this war's implementation and this administration's bogus policies that have killed hundreds of thousands of innocent people.**

The sad fact is, not MFSO or any other org has that ability or standing experience to get that message across to the general public who can then loosen the flag from around their necks and REALLY support the troops by forcing the administration to bring them home, knowing they'll be honored and respected by the public because they know who they are and how they feel.

**You can go on putting excuses on paper as to why IAW's presence isn't known and felt in every household across America as it should be, or you can put your message mission on hold make changes within your org.'s policies and put the Vets of this war first. That choice is yours.**

**As for me with or without MFSO I will continue struggling to educate the ignorant MINORITY of families who still believe the willing sacrifice of their children to this war is American's cause for "God and country" via the wisdom and experience of those who know different...the soldiers who were there.**

By the way make no mistake. I am fully aware of the role every org. has to play to prevent this war's continuance. I've been a participant in that effort since before this war started in many of them.

**However when the only voices capable of putting an end to this madness are not being heard far and wide, loud and clear something needs to change.**

SOMETHING IS WRONG! Without change you just keep getting the same results!

Some people within these organizations have known that for quite awhile. My hope is that we will find a way to make that change happen sooner than later.

**I'll say to you what I said in Rep. Holden's office months ago after hearing a very prominent anti-war figure say that he knew "it was imperative for the US to find a way to save face before a withdrawal of troops could happen." My immediate response was "I'm not here to save face. I'm here to save lives."**

You can apply that sentiment to this issue with a few small alterations.

I'm not here for personal recognition nor to play politics.

**My job...my life's purpose is to prevent my child or anyone else's US or Iraqi from losing their life in an action that is as meaningless as this war.**

**I am not foolish or arrogant enough to believe that my actions alone will accomplish this. As a matter of fact I believe any effort on my part will be rendered totally useless without the central focus being Iraq Veterans who are against the war speaking out and becoming household names.**

Do not feel obligated to respond to this. We now have a pretty clear knowledge of what each other's positions are.

I leave you with understanding, hope for the future and all...

In Peace and Humanity,  
Alycia A. Barr

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## **What To Do Now? Organize Something Worth Organizing**

**"One way or another, the activists and soldiers will work together to stop this war." Alycia A. Barr, mother of Iraq combat veteran, 10.30.05**

**Comment: T**

**Reprinted from: 9.24.05 GI SPECIAL 3C62**

***Question:***

The question is, why did it take 9 months after the November election to call two (competing!) anti-war demonstrations in Washington, D.C.? Why did it take months for UFPJ and ANSWER to quit the nonsense and decide to have one demonstration 9.24?



And how many more troops will die before the anti-war movement is rebuilt to the point where it can achieve its goal: bringing them home now?

**Reply: T**

Maybe the place to start is to take a look under the surface.

Americans are turning against the war, more every day. In the most recent polls, 52% are for bringing troops home now.

That's good news.

As was true during Vietnam, the lower you go on the income ladder, the more widespread the opposition to the war. The wealthy are least opposed, of course, since they benefit most from the Empire, and their kids are safe at home, preparing to manage the family fortunes.

The pressure has built up so much that even some of the politicians in DC are making squeaking noises about the war, as the heat from below starts singeing their butts.

Mild squeaking noises to be sure. The Congressional critics aren't calling for bringing all the troops home **now**. They know who pays their campaign contributions, and its not Joe and Jane Nine-To-Five. It's the big corporate donors who benefit from the Empire.

There's no personal pressure either: their kids are safe at home too, preparing to manage the huge sums of money most Senators and Representatives pocket from campaign contributions during their very profitable Washington careers.

So they play it safe, critical of the war but not *too* critical. After all, their careers are at stake, and what are more dead U.S. troops and more dead Iraqis in the balance against their Congressional careers?

To sum up:

**The Good News:**

There are more and more people turning against the war, and more and more people wanting the troops to come home now.

The anti-war movement, meaning the movement of people moving from support of the war to opposition to the war, has never been healthier or more powerful.

**Most importantly, it is spreading in the armed services as well. Where it really counts.**

To talk about "rebuilding the anti-war movement" is a denial of this powerful reality, as if the only dimension worth paying attending to is what happens among the squabbling opportunists on top of the movement.

## **The Bad News:**

The politicians edging towards opposition to the war will be followers at best, mostly careerists who will betray you in a heartbeat. They are loyal to their class and their contributors.

The biggest two operations focused on the war, UFPJ and Answer, are competing for followers and funding.

And you're right.

It's a betrayal of every U.S. troop and every Iraqi who dies in this miserable, dishonorable U.S. war for oil and Empire that they waited for months to do the right thing and have one, united action against the war 9.24 in Washington.

That's why neither members of the armed services, nor working class Americans, can rely on them for leadership. They're too opportunistic and tactically dim to provide leadership that can be trusted.

## **Lesson Learned**

It isn't the movement of ever increasing numbers of people into opposition to the war that's the problem. No "rebuilding" needed there, thank you very much.

It's the people running the store that just don't get it.

**What's the weakest link in the Empire?**

**The people in the armed forces.**

**As civilian Americans turn against the war, they also turn against the war, and often express the fiercest opposition, having their lives at stake.**

**Who does the leadership of the anti-war organizations devote the least effort to organizing?**

**The people in the armed forces.**

**With a very few honorable exceptions, the leaderships of the divided, competing, irresponsible anti-war organizations are, so far, irrelevant to getting that work done, off in another world.**

**They mouth abstract phrases about their concern for the troops, and turn their backs on them in real life. When was the last time you heard any of the peace movement big shots offer to go down to a local Guard or Reserve meeting and try to meet some anti-war troops?**

“Who, us?” “We have more important things to do.” “Gee, I’d love to do that, but I’m busy next week a) rebuilding the anti-war movement; b) giving a speech; c) building a left alternative; d) getting ready for an interview on IndyMedia” or whatever other pathetic self-referential excuse comes in handy.

There is no gain, however, in pissing and moaning about their callous indifference.

**How fortunate that members of the armed forces, veterans, military family members and responsible civilians have the skills, experience, intelligence, common sense, and commitment to put something together that works and could actually stop the war: organizing to give aid and comfort to members of the armed forces, reserves and Guard who are turning against the war.**

Now there’s something worth building.

Why wait?



Photo: Ward Reilly, Veterans For Peace

## IRAQ WAR REPORTS

# One U.S. Soldier Died, Another Wounded By Al Azamiya Car Bomb

10 November 2005 FOCUS News Agency

**One U.S. soldier died and another was injured in an attack with a car bomb in the region of Al Azamiya, located north from capital Baghdad, the Iraqi news agency INA announced, citing military sources.**

According to the information the attack was aimed at U.S. military patrol in the region. The explosion occurred on a main street, the agency noted.

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## **Soldier Remembered As A Medic Who Cared**

Oct. 31, 2005 By ARMANDO VILLAFRANCA, Houston Chronicle

Sgt. Michael T. Robertson, known as "Doc Rob" by fellow soldiers, died Oct. 25 of injuries suffered in Samarra, Iraq, while serving in the war. He was 28.

Robertson died at Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio from injuries suffered Oct. 17 after a bomb exploded near his Bradley Fighting Vehicle, the Department of Defense said Friday.

He was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 15th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, Fort Benning, Ga.

Robertson was born Sept. 29, 1977, in Houston and entered the military shortly after graduating from Lamar High School in 1996.

His aunt Alma Newsom said her nephew was serving his second tour in Iraq and had served in Bosnia.

While overseas, she said, Robertson, who was known as Tremain by family and friends, wrote his family frequently.

She said her nephew was quiet and contemplative as a young man.

"The first impression he made on people was that he was very, very quiet. He was a thinker. He always seemed to be older than his age," she said. "People kinda looked up to him. They always came to him for advice."

She said his decision to become a medic reflected his desire to help others. "Tremain took his duties as a medic very seriously and was passionate about maintaining and upgrading his skills so he could give those he assisted on the field of battle the best chance of survival," she said.

She said soldiers who knew her nephew said he was highly regarded and known to go out on patrols to ensure no one would be left without medical attention if needed.

Last December, he married Tanya, who was then also a medic. They had a son, Xavier, a few months ago.

Survivors include his wife and son; his mother, Barbara Booker; his father, Michael Robertson; a grandfather, Simmie Newsom; and grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. William Robertson. He also had several half- and stepbrothers and stepsisters.

Services were Monday at Williams Temple Church of God in Christ with Serenity Mortuary in charge of arrangements. Burial was at Houston National Cemetery.

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**LETHAL ENVIRONMENT:  
NO HONORABLE MISSION:  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



A U.S. Marine in Haditha, Iraq, on Oct. 6, 2005. (AP Photo/Antonio Castaneda)

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## **Missouri Man Among Three Dead**

Nov. 05, 2005 Associated Press

MAYSVILLE, Mo. - A Missouri man was among three soldiers killed in Iraq when a bomb exploded near their Humvee, military officials said Friday.

Spc. Joshua J. Munger, 22, of Maysville, was fatally injured Wednesday in Latafiyah, 25 miles south of Baghdad.

Munger joined the Army in June 2002, arriving at Fort Campbell, Ky., at the start of this year. He already had completed an overseas tour with the 82nd Airborne Division.

He is survived by his wife, Alysha B. Munger, and an 11-month-old son, Colton.

J.T. Plowman, a lifelong friend, last saw Munger in September when the soldier came back to northwest Missouri to see his parents and friends before going overseas.

"He'd just re-enlisted for two years, but we talked about going out west to Wyoming or Montana and buying some land to start farming and raising cattle when he got out," Plowman said.

An expert rifleman, Munger, Plowman and another friend shot clay pigeons during the visit. "He didn't miss many," Plowman said.

Plowman said he met Munger in school. Munger was a member of the wrestling team at the Maysville R-I High School but graduated from Central High School in St. Joseph after his family moved during his senior year.

"We liked a lot of the same things - fishing, riding horses, cars, and chasing girls while we were in high school," Plowman said. "But he was the active one who kept himself in top shape."

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## TROOP NEWS

# “And After That, I Was An Extreme, I Guess, Sort Of Anti-War Marine”

**But after a while it became sort of a form of entertainment for a lot of marines to sporadically kick some of these detainees for entertainment purposes. And I started to realize I think then that there are things go on in the military aren't quite as noble as our government tries to portray. We did that for 4 months. There wasn't a day I was there there wasn't some sort of prisoner beating festivity going on.**

November 9th, 2005 David Airhart speaking at the 2005 Midwest Socialism Conference  
November 5, 2005 - University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL Via Traprockpeace.org.

*Transcript prepared by Charles Jenks, who writes: Please compare the transcript to the audio before quoting.*

[http://www.traprockpeace.org/audio/david\\_airhart\\_05nov05\\_64k.mp3](http://www.traprockpeace.org/audio/david_airhart_05nov05_64k.mp3)

First of all I want to thank everyone for their support; that means a lot to me. The more support the better.

**What I'd like to talk about are things that are occurring in the military that are sort of unknown by the majority of the American public, mostly because the media deprives them of this information.**

**I spent 4 months in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba and 6 months in Iraq and 7 months in Afghanistan, so I have a pretty well rounded perspective of everything that's going on in this war on terror.**

When I was in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba my unit's job was to transport the detainee's coming from Afghanistan to Cuba. We'd transport them on a school bus where we removed all of the seats and all the prisoners would be shoved in there like sardines.

**We were encouraged to kick them in different sensitive areas like their ribs and parts of their legs if they made the slightest movement like maybe a movement of their finger or they took too deep of a breath.** We were encouraged to use severe physical punishment to prevent them from moving.

**But after a while it became sort of a form of entertainment for a lot of marines to sporadically kick some of these detainees for entertainment purposes. And I started to realize I think then that there are things go on in the military aren't quite as noble as our government tries to portray. We did that for 4 months. There wasn't a day I was there there wasn't some sort of prisoner beating festivity going on.**

**From there I went to Iraq.**

I guess I really wasn't ready for what was in store for me and my unit in Iraq. My unit - I was in the First Battalion, Second Marine Regiment, Charley Company. We were the unit that went in during the whole Jessica Lynch thing in An Nasiriyah.

While we were there, we were supposedly fighting Iraqi rebels and Iraqi military personnel, but I can't really remember ever seeing any actual Iraqi soldier that we were fighting during the supposed firefight.

**What I do remember, we were mostly being shot at by our own close air support and helicopters. 95% killed by friendly fire and I'd say 98% of the casualties I saw weren't fighters of any kind - they were civilian, women, children and people who had nothing to do with the fighting. They were just innocent bystanders.**

When I realized how over the top it was, was after An Nasiriyah.

We were supposed to set up a perimeter around the city. We were out of sand bags. We didn't have enough sand bags to protect our holes from small arms fire and things like that.

Conveniently, there was a flour truck driver riding a truck down the highway that was full of canvas flour bags. And sand bags are made out of canvas, so this was perfect for sand bags.

**We were ordered to open fire on this man - just say, a working family man, and to use his flour bags as sand bags. A lot of guys in my platoon opened fire and the man was killed. And the individuals who didn't open fire on this man were ordered to remove his body from the truck and throw it off in a ditch on the side of the road and throw some dirt on top of it.**

**And after that, I was an extreme, I guess, sort of anti-war marine (applause).**

After An Nasiriyah, we spent most of our time doing vehicle check points where you just stop random civilian drivers and search their vehicles for weapons and things like that. Oftentimes if it was a very confusing situation and the drivers of the vehicles would not understand what we were saying when we told them to stop.

And when they wouldn't stop, we were ordered to open fire on these individuals. That happened on a daily basis. And never once out of all these occasions were there any weapons in these individual's cars.

Usually it was full of family, a husband and a wife and children and they would all be killed. This happened on a daily basis. This was pretty hard to deal with after a while.

**And people just started to shut down. Maybe part of them wanted to pretend that they killed some innocent little girl for some sort of good cause. But we all know that's not true.**

After Iraq I thought "well great, now I'm done and I can just be a jackass in the Marine Corps until I get out.

But unfortunately for me I was sent to another unit that was deploying to Afghanistan. My last 7 months in the Marine Corps was spent in Afghanistan. Mostly what we did there was just guard prisoners and operate on individuals who stepped on landmines that are all over Afghanistan. It's one of the most heavily land-mined countries in the world.

And then after that I got out of the military after 4 long miserable years.

I came to Kent State. One of the most significant reasons I decided to go to Kent State was because it has such a rich history of being a strong antiwar school. And I thought "well, I need to go somewhere that's an extreme opposite of the military. I ran into Pat Gallagher of the ISO and I told him I had been to Iraq.

He told me to "come to one of our meetings and there's people who would like to hear what you have to say." So after that I got comforted, I would guess would be a good thing to say, by the ISO because until then I didn't really feel anyone supported the antiwar movement. It seemed like most people I ran into were for the war and thanked for me serving, and yada yada yada...

**Recently, I think it was a week and a half ago, the military were on Kent State trying to pervert my happy place (audience laughter), and take away happy people at Kent State and send them to Iraq to die and kill for reasons that don't make any sense.**

**Out of maybe anger and sort of disgust with the military, that the administration allows the military on our campus, and allows Kent State to be used as a supplier for fresh bodies to be sent over to Iraq - I climbed up the wall and I posted an antiwar slogan on the wall.**



And I was then chased down by several of the recruiters and one of them grabbed my shirt. That's the "Hands Off Dave." (campaign) (audience laughter)

And now I'm in a lot of trouble with the university.

**I might be expelled from school for good. I guess I just don't understand the logic behind this fiasco it's created with the administration.**

**I don't think maybe they realize what's really going on in Iraq. I don't know if they think it's just something on TV.**

**But, you know, it's not.**

**I hope that the administration will see that it's them that are endangering the students, and I was simply trying to do all I can do to get them removed from campus and keep our campus safe and un-perversed by the military.**

**So, again, thanks again for all your support. I need it.**

**MORE:**

**11.11.05 By Elizabeth Wrigley-Field, Campus Antiwar Network, Socialist Worker**

**The Ohio police and the Kent State University administration couldn't have picked a clearer way to show where they stand.**

**A student, and veteran of this war, engages in "disorderly conduct" with a peaceful antiwar protest.**

**The military recruiter who then assaulted him, and the right-winger who verbally assaulted and spit at Kent State students holding antiwar signs, receive no punishment. Presumably they were very "orderly" in their assaults on Airhart and on free speech.**

## **Iraq Veterans Against The War Needs Help**

**No group of women and men has more credibility with the public in its opposition to the war than the people who participated in it, and who are now speaking out against it.**

November 10, 2005 By Stanley Goff

*This is an appeal from Stan Goff on behalf of Iraq Veterans Against the War.*

I am asking you to go to [www.ivaw.net](http://www.ivaw.net), to click on "Donate Online", and to become a "recurring" supporter, by providing an automatic monthly deduction transferred to IVAW of as much as you can afford -- \$10, \$100, \$500... as much as you can afford.

**No group of women and men has more credibility with the public in its opposition to the war than the people who participated in it, and who are now speaking out against it.**

IVAW's membership includes hundreds of highly-motivated, talented young people, who have shown a special character. They are now students, workers, musicians, philosophers, geographers, playwrights, public speakers, writers, film-makers, and several have spent time in prison for their beliefs. People like Camilo Mejia, Stephen Funk, Kevin Benderman, Charlie Anderson, Mike Hoffman, Kelly Dougherty, Pablo Paredes, Tim Goodrich, Pat Resta, Jimmy Massey, Jose Vasquez, Ivan Medina, Tina Garnanez, Alex Ryabov, Garret Reppenhagen, and many others. These are the people whose voices are amplified by contributions to IVAW.

IVAW has never had a lot, but after the expenses incurred to support Cindy Sheehan, the Crawford to DC Bus Tour, and the September 24 antiwar demonstration, there is not enough money in the bank right now to even make payroll for the part-time staff that keeps the organization afloat.

The organization needs around \$10,000 a month cash flow to support its recent expansion in membership and the next year's organizational development and objectives. Those objectives include organizer training for members, chapter concentration to develop local self-sustaining nuclei, Katrina survivor self-determination support work, and counter-recruitment initiatives. These are the IVAW priorities for the next year, in addition to the primary mission -- to stop the war against Iraq.

IVAW is the only organization of its kind, with its membership drawn from armed services veterans who were on duty after September 11, 2001, the day of the event upon which the Bush administration built its so-called Global War on Terror.

**IVAW could seek a lot of foundation money if it were to change one thing in its mission statement, and that is the demand for immediate and unilateral withdrawal of all American forces from Iraq.**

**Calls for indefinite plans of "phased" withdrawal are much more popular with foundations who are reluctant to endanger quietly favored elected officials who have been less than sterling on the war by confronting them with their complicity in letting the Bush administration have its way.**

**IVAW could change that mission and have access to more money. But it will not.**

**IVAW will not take money that has these kinds of unstated strings attached.**

**So it needs the support of independent antiwar activists who share IVAW's core beliefs that the occupation must leave as a moral imperative and that the Iraqis will be better off without the occupation -- that the occupation itself is the catalyst for most of the violence there, including attacks by Iraqis against other Iraqis.**

The way this movement becomes independent and stays independent is through the support of people who share its core mission and values.

Please, please help us build a sustaining financial floor under this extremely important organization. They need to be focused on their work, not on finances.

Thanks so much for your support of my work, and for whatever you can commit to IVAW.

Yours very sincerely,

Stan Goff  
<http://stangoff.com>

**OCCUPATION ISN'T LIBERATION  
BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

## New York Veterans And Military Families:

# ***SPEAK OUT!***

*Support The Troops!*

*Bring Them Home Now!*

*Then Treat Them Right!*

**TOMORROW NOV. 12**

**2:30-6:30PM**

1199 Hospital Workers Union  
9th Floor Break Room  
330 West 42nd Street, NYC

**VETERANS AND MILITARY FAMILIES SPEAK OUT  
ABOUT THE WAR AND TREATMENT OF VETERANS**

Speakers from Iraq Veterans Against the War, Veterans For Peace, Black Veterans For Social Justice, Military Families Speak Out, and Gold Star Families For Peace and others • OPEN MIKE

Vets, families and friends welcome.

**For more  
information call  
212-726-0557**

**VETERANS FOR PEACE** [www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org)  
**IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR** [www.ivaw.net](http://www.ivaw.net)  
**MILITARY FAMILIES SPEAK OUT** [www.mfso.org](http://www.mfso.org)  
**VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR** [www.vvaw.org](http://www.vvaw.org)  
**GOLD STAR FAMILIES FOR PEACE** [www.gsfp.org](http://www.gsfp.org)  
**BRING THEM HOME NOW** [www.bringthemhomenow.org](http://www.bringthemhomenow.org)

**MORE:**

# **BRING THEM HOME NOW!**

## **“We Are Veterans And Military Families Who Are Opposed To The Continuing Occupation Of Iraq”**

New York Veterans Day Parade Statement

**This parade is held each year to recognize and honor veterans for their service. While we march up Fifth Avenue today, we are painfully aware of the fact that our servicemen and women are again killing and dying in a foreign war. By now it is clear that the justifications given by the White House in 2003 for the invasion of Iraq were falsehoods and deceptions.**

In the two and a half years since, more than 2000 US soldiers have been killed along with tens of thousands of Iraqi citizens. Thousands more have come home suffering from physical wounds and mental trauma. How many will get sick from exposure to depleted uranium and other military toxins remains unknown.

While our tax dollars are poured into a deepening quagmire (already over \$218 billion), funds are denied for vital social needs. The government's recent failure to adequately respond to the devastation caused by Hurricane Katrina is a glaring example. National Guard units needed at home are sent overseas instead. Although many returning veterans are in need of healthcare, the VA has proposed closing its Manhattan and other veteran's hospitals.

**We are Veterans and Military Families who are opposed to the continuing occupation of Iraq. We do not believe that more blood should be spilled to maintain and justify politicians' lies.**

We say that REAL support for the troops means Bring Them Home Now and Treat Them Right When They Come Back!

That is what we are marching for.

**Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward this E-MAIL along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on a base in the USA, this is extra important for your service friend, too often cut off from access to encouraging news of growing resistance to the war, at home and inside the armed services. Send requests to address up top.**

***Happy Veterans Day From Washington:***

# Vets To Be Kicked Out Of Joint Congressional Hearing

11/10/2005 U.S. Newswire

**A proposal to end the long-standing practice of veterans groups addressing a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees is an insult to all who have fought, sacrificed and died to defend the Constitution, according to the Disabled American Veterans (DAV).'**

And in a strongly worded letter to House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Steve Buyer (R-Ind.), the DAV has urged him to continue the joint hearings as an invaluable tool in formulating public policy toward America's veterans.

**Chairman Buyer recently announced that veterans service organizations will no longer have the opportunity to present testimony before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees.**

**"The tradition of legislative presentations by veterans service organizations dates back to at least the 1950s. And the timing of this announcement -- just before Veterans Day -- could not have been worse," said DAV National Commander Paul W. Jackson.**

For several decades now, these joint hearings have been held each year to allow the elected leaders of veterans groups to discuss their organization's legislative agenda and foremost concerns with the lawmakers who have jurisdiction over federal veterans programs.

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