

## GI SPECIAL 4B19:



# Elitists In Action: UFPJ Kicks Gays [And Veterans] To The Curb Again

[Note well. In addition to this writer's complaint, not one organization of veterans against the war was considered worthy of listing. See the list below.

[This is the same bullshit that happened with the 9.24.05 mass demonstration in Washington DC, when representatives of veterans' organizations were excluded from the speakers' platform. Oh, I'm wrong. One or two Iraq vets did get a minute towards the end of the day.

[And a UFPJ leadership type recently had the nerve to claim that David Cline of Veterans For Peace was a "featured" speaker at the 9.24 rally, after an activist complained about too few Iraq vets speaking at that one. *"I also know that Dave Cline of Veterans for Peace, and a board member of IVAW, was a featured speaker."* Bullshit. Cline got to speak at an indoors meeting hours after the rally

was over. And he is not a "board member of IVAW," which illustrates perfectly how little the writer knows, or cares, about veterans.

[Reprinted after the lead article are articles from the Veterans Day 2005 GI Special that remind all concerned of the stupidity so ably demonstrated at the rally in Washington DC 9.24.05.

[Will it be repeated in the actions against the war Spring 2006?

[Time will tell. T]

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**At least it will save some transportation costs, by not including an open national Gay/Lesbian group in the call! You are unashamedly open about whom you want at your event, and whom is in control of it! But at least we are in good company, since you also did not include a national disabled group, native peoples, or even a national Latino/Latina group: all seeming unworthy for you to outreach to!**

From: John Obrien (by way of Tom Condit)  
Sent: February 07, 2006  
**Subject: Re: Major Mobilization Set for April 29<sup>th</sup>; of those invited and NOT invited!**

Thanks for not including a Gay/Lesbian group among the initial national groups calling for April 29th protests. Jerry Falwell and Walter Fauntroy are proud of you! This is very sad in the year 2006 to see this.

You refuse to understand how offensive this is, and your refusal to have a Gay/Lesbian UFPJ task force just adds to this, or is this still another "oversight"?

**At least it will save some transportation costs, by not including an open national Gay/Lesbian group in the call! You are unashamedly open about whom you want at your event, and whom is in control of it! But at least we are in good company, since you also did not include a national disabled group, native peoples, or even a national Latino/Latina group - all seeming unworthy for you to outreach to!**

Maybe GLBT folks, who have pride an identity, can find another venue to attend, since they are still not wanted in this setting. At least your discrimination and insensitivity extends towards others, such as the groups listed above, so GLBT groups can feel better and not so isolated, in being not included as a caller for this action.

**Of course, the Bush Empire folks are also happy that you keep this limited to the "usual suspects", because if you tried to get some of the real main line national groups, such as the Mayors National Conference, Business Executives for Peace, MoveOn, or other antiwar groups such as ANSWER, TONC, The World Cant Wait: well this could present a real problem for the Bush folks, in having a large united movement, but thanks for keeping it among the folks you know and care for, and not so large, as it could have been!**

With sadness,

John O'Brien, member of Out Against the War/ Los Angeles\*

\*listed for identification purposes only - this group has yet to take a position on this, but you can bet they will also not be happy!

## **ACTION ALERT \* UNITED FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE**

Dear Friends

We are pleased to announce the kick-off for the organizing of what promises to be a major national mobilization on Saturday, April 29th. Today, each of the initiating groups (see list below) is announcing this mobilization. Our organizations have agreed to work together on this project for several reasons:

The April 29th mobilization will highlight our call for an immediate end to the war on Iraq. We are also raising several other critical issues that are directly connected to one another.

It is time for our constituencies to work more closely: connecting the issues we work on by bringing diverse communities into a common project.

It is important for our movements to help set the agenda for the Congressional elections later in the year. Our unified action in the streets is a vital part of that process. Please share the April 29th call widely, and please use the links at the end of the call to endorse this timely mobilization and to sign up for email updates.

April 29th Initiating Organizations:

**United for Peace and Justice**  
**Rainbow/PUSH Coalition**  
**National Organization for Women**  
**Friends of the Earth**  
**U.S. Labor Against the War**  
**Climate Crisis Coalition**  
**Peoples' Hurricane Relief Fund**

**MORE:**

**“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 9/24 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

Joseph Attamante: Vietnam; 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)

**MORE:**

# **Iraq War Veterans Presence in D.C. Unreported:**

# What Americans Could Have Heard, But Weren't Allowed To Hear: UFPJ & ANSWER 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."

**MORE:**

## **“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!!!!!!

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*

\*\*\*\*\*

**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)*

**MORE:**

***Fast Forward To February 2006:*  
**Sgt. Says “The Opinion  
Expressed By The  
Cartoon Is Shared By  
Many Servicemen And  
Women”****

Letters To The Editor  
Army Times  
Feb. 20, 2006

**As an American soldier, I know that one of the rights that I am sworn to defend is the freedom of speech.**

**But now I see that the Joint Chiefs want to go on record against this, by protesting an editorial cartoon (“Cartoon rankles Joint Chiefs,” Frontlines, Feb. 13)**

**Not only that, but the opinion expressed by the cartoon is shared by many servicemen and women.**

***If the government is going to use propaganda to gain support for the war, then it needs to go both ways.***

We all need to have thick skin in these trying times, as well as an open mind.

Staff Sgt. Stephen Rogers  
Fort Jackson, S.C.



**MORE:**

## **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 are 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

**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.**

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

## **U.S. Armoured Vehicle Towed After A Roadside Bomb Attack**



**A U.S. armoured vehicle is towed after a roadside bomb attack in Baghdad February 18, 2006. A U.S. soldier was killed on Saturday when his vehicle was struck by a roadside bomb in eastern Baghdad, the U.S. military said.**  
REUTERS/Thaier al-Sudani

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## **Fort Campbell Soldier Dies**

2/15/2006 NewsChannel 5

Corporal Andrew Kemple, 23, was killed Sunday by small arms fire in Tikrit. Kemple was from Cambridge, Minn.

He was a decorated member of the 101st Airborne. A memorial service will be held for him in Iraq. The Department of Defense says Corporal Andrew J. Kemple of the 101st Airborne Division died in Iraq on Sunday when his Humvee was attacked by small arms fire.

Kemple enlisted in 2003 and arrived at Fort Campbell in May 2004.

He was assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 187th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team.

He is survived by his mother, father and sister.



**There have been 123 soldiers from Fort Campbell killed in Iraq, including eight since the beginning of February.**

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## **Roadside Bomb Kills Young Marine Recently Arrived In Iraq**

February 14, 2006 John Koopman, San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writer

**Javier Chavez Jr. turned 19 on New Year's Eve. He was just married and a very new, young Marine with less than a year in the Corps when he lost his life in Iraq.**

Pfc. Chavez died Thursday when he was hit by a roadside bomb.

Little was known Monday about how Chavez died. The press release from the Marines simply said he was an infantryman and that he "died from wounds received as a result of an improvised explosive device while conducting combat operations near Fallujah, Iraq."

Chavez was born in Visalia (Tulare County), but moved to the small town of Cutler when he was 5 years old. His parents divorced and Chavez lived with his father, stepmother and brothers and sisters until high school. He lived for three years during high school with his mother, Maria Leon, according to his stepmother, Veronica Chavez.

"We called him 'Javi,' " Veronica Chavez said. "He was a smart and thoughtful little boy, very respectful, very nice. He had a lot of friends."

Chavez joined the Marines on April 11, and graduated from boot camp in June. He went to infantry school and then joined the 3rd Battalion, 5th Marine Regiment, which is part of the 1st Marine Division based at Camp Pendleton (San Diego County).

His stepmother said Chavez had arrived in Iraq only recently, around the first week of January.

Just before shipping out, Veronica Chavez said, he married his girlfriend, Janie Gonzalez, in a civil ceremony. They planned to have a big church wedding after he got back from Iraq.

"His wife told me he was scared to tell his mom where he was going," she said. "He wanted to tell her he was going to Japan instead. He had to tell his father, though, and he asked him how he felt about it. Javi said, 'I'm scared but I'm going to come back.' "

Chavez's father said his son wasn't afraid of dying in Iraq.

"He was more worried about losing his arms or his legs," Chavez said in Spanish. "I think that worried him a lot more."

Chavez played soccer and took karate when he was younger, his father said. He went to Orosi Union High School in the Cutler area.

Veronica Chavez couldn't say why Chavez decided to join the Marines, as opposed to any other branch of the service. It was just something he felt compelled to do, she said.

He went to basic training a shy, skinny kid and came back much more mature physically and emotionally. "You could see it just in the way he talked to adults," she said. "He had much more confidence."

Veronica Chavez said her stepson was mature beyond his age, and a little shy, especially around adults. When his sister, Olga, was having problems dealing with their parents' separation, Chavez would comfort her, Veronica Chavez said.

"He would tell her, 'It's OK, we're gonna go see mom soon,' " she said. "He'd say, 'I'm with you all the time.'"

"Olga is taking this very hard," she said.

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## **IMPOSSIBLE MISSION FUTILE EXERCISE BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW!**



Marines with 2nd platoon, Lima Co., 3/25 preparing to enter in the Iraqi western city of Karabilah during Operation Spear. (AFP/HO-USMC/Ken Melton)

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## **Rocket Attack On U.S. Base At Fallujah: Casualties Not Announced**

Feb. 19 (Xinhuanet)

**Insurgents pounded a U.S. military base in eastern Fallujah late last night, witnesses told Xinhua.**

**"Five rockets landed on the U.S. base at about 11:00 p.m. on Saturday," witnesses said.**

Explosions rocked the area as sirens wailed inside the base, but it was not known whether there were any casualties among U.S. soldiers.

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# **Almost 1,000 Vehicles Lost In Combat: “Nearly All Of These Losses Were Caused By Improvised Explosive Devices”**

**Aircraft and vehicle battle losses were heavier in 2005 than 2004; in particular, more Humvees were lost to IEDs, Army sources said.**

February 20, 2006 By Greg Grant, Special to the Army Times [Excerpts]

Combat and the grinding pace of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan are fast wearing down the Army's aircraft and vehicles.

The Army is asking for \$9 billion to “reset” its war-depleted stocks this year, the vast bulk to replace and repair tanks, helicopters and vehicles, Army Secretary Francis Harvey said in a Feb. 7 interview.

That money will come from the regular 2007 budget and from emergency wartime supplementals.

**Since the Iraq insurgency heated up in fall 2003, the Army's combat losses include about 20 M1 Abrams tanks, 50 Bradley fighting vehicles, 20 Stryker wheeled combat vehicles, 20 M113 armored personnel carriers and 250 Humvees, service sources said.**

**The number of vehicles lost in battle comes to nearly 1,000, when heavy and medium trucks and trailers, mine clearing vehicles and Fox wheeled reconnaissance vehicles are added.**

***Nearly all of these losses were caused by improvised explosive devices.***

**Aircraft losses also have been heavy since fighting began in Afghanistan in 2001. The Army has lost 85 helicopters there and in Iraq, including 27 Apaches, 21 Black Hawks, 14 CH-47s and 23 Kiowas.**

Hostile fire downed 17 of those; the rest, destroyed in accidents in the war zone, are also defined as combat losses, Army officials said Feb. 1. (For comparison, 41 helicopters were destroyed in non-combat mishaps over the same period.)

**The Army counts these 85 aircraft and nearly 1,000 vehicles as “total losses,” blasted beyond repair.**

**“They have to basically burn down to the ground for us to declare them a total loss,” said Gary Motsek, Army Materiel Command’s deputy for support operations.**

The replacement bill for total-loss equipment is expected to climb.

**Aircraft and vehicle battle losses were heavier in 2005 than 2004; in particular, more Humvees were lost to IEDs, Army sources said.**

The losses have forced the Army to order 19 extra Stryker wheeled vehicles as replacements, Harvey said.

**To replace tracked vehicles that are no longer in production, such as the M1 Abrams, Bradleys and M113s, the Army pulls vehicles out of mothballs and upgrades their equipment to the latest standards.**

Many more vehicles and aircraft have been damaged enough to knock them temporarily out of service. These are fixed up at AMC’s repair shops or by private contractors, then returned to service.

And far more are simply being worn out by a punishing pace of operations that is about five times the peacetime load.

In 2005, AMC and its contractors repaired and overhauled 230 M1 Abrams tanks; this year, that number will top 700. Bradleys will go from 318 last year to more than 600; M113s from 219 to 614; Humvees from 5,000 to almost 9,000; and aircraft from 44 to 85.

“Those are the dogs, the ones that really require major overhaul and repair,” Motsek said.

The Army has ordered 16 new Apaches and five new Black Hawks as replacements through emergency supplemental appropriations from Congress.

**But the Army has been unable to replace the 27 Kiowas that have been destroyed, because the Kiowa production line is no longer open.**

**In addition, there are thousands of small arms, radios and generators that require major repair and overhaul. The repair backlog includes almost every major equipment item, from .50-caliber machine guns to hundreds of thousands of pads for tank tracks.**

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## TROOP NEWS

**THIS IS HOW BUSH BRINGS THE TROOPS HOME:  
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



Burial ceremony for Ruel Garcia, a Filipino-American U.S. army chief warrant officer, in his hometown in Obando town, Bulacan province, north of Manila February 7, 2006. Garcia, 34, a pilot, died along with his co-pilot in a crash after their Apache helicopter gunship was shot down by a surface-to-air missile on the morning of January 16 in Taji, Iraq. REUTERS/Romeo Ranoco

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## IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

**Assorted Resistance Action**



**Iraqi policemen help a wounded policeman shortly after their vehicle were hit by a roadside bomb in Baghdad February 18, 2006. Three policemen were wounded in the attack, witnesses said. REUTERS/Ceerwan Aziz**

19 February 2006 RFE/RL, Inc & By SAMEER N. YACOUB, AP & Reuters & (Xinhuanet)

**A police general and two of his guards were killed in a roadside bombing 20 miles southwest of Kirkuk today.**

Khalaf was the chief of the operations center for the police in Kirkuk, headquarters of Iraq's northern oil-producing center.

**In Al-Fallujah, west of Baghdad, a roadside bomb injured two police officers.**

**Guerrillas ambushed a convoy of trucks carrying construction material Sunday to U.S. military north of Baghdad, killing four Iraqi drivers, police said.**

The ambush occurred near Nibaie, about 35 miles north of the capital, police Lt. Khalid al-Obaidi said. The area has been the scene of several ambushes and roadside bombings in the last few days.

**Four Iraqis were wounded when a bomber detonated his explosive vest at the Planning Ministry, police said.**

**Four Iraqi policemen were wounded on Sunday when a roadside bomb detonated near their vehicle on patrol in the northern town of Toz Khormato, a source from the Iraqi-US liaison office in Tikrit told Xinhua.**

"A roadside bomb went off Sunday morning in the town of Tozkhormato, some 90 km east of Tikrit, near a police patrol, wounding four policemen, including one with serious wounds," the source from the Joint Coordination Center said on condition of anonymity.

In a separate incident, unknown armed men killed Saba Hamid Hussein, who works in a U.S. military base in Yathrib town, some 90 km north of Baghdad, the source said.

**IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE  
END THE OCCUPATION**

## FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

# A Short Walk Through My Thoughts

**he has his war that makes him his gold and who needs anything more when you own people not just things.**

January 27, 2006 Sgt Zachary Scott-Singley, [misoldierthoughts.blogspot.com/](http://misoldierthoughts.blogspot.com/)

Sometimes I write and try to make a masterpiece on my first try. Other times it comes to me in time. Today I will just begin and see where my mind takes me. I can't say that I have ever made a masterpiece however, but there is always a first time.

My life has been made up of so much having to do with the military these last 5 (almost 6) years. I grow weary thinking about it. For instance there is the story of the mortar.

While I worked night shift my friend who served in the navy worked days. He was going out to watch the night sky one night a few months back when a mortar hit at what used to be his feet and legs.

Someone who had been a paramedic before joining the army was able to get there where he was within minutes and he put 2 tourniquets on him, one on each leg above the knee. That was what stopped him from bleeding to death in the crater that the mortar made. He flew out of Iraq that same day and currently is learning how to walk with his new legs. He was but a few years older than me.

I don't know why I chose this story to write about but my thoughts often turn to my friends who weren't as fortunate as me. Mayhap I have forgotten the face of my father but I think not.

**Things go slower here on the peaceful side but don't ever let that fool you, for like a river through a valley the politicians are constantly wearing away our rights through the patriot act and other such things.**

**Just look at how they deny death benefits for those soldiers who had to purchase their own body armor due to shortages.**

It amazes me each day that our friend Dick C. has gotten away with so much and that we continue to allow him to get away with so much more.

**Wars line his pockets well and take it from me when I say that you can almost see he has found Midas' touch for here he has his war that makes him his gold and who needs anything more when you own people not just things.**

I speak not from first hand knowledge but from what I have seen and what I believe.

**Some may think this is a place where you find no biases but to those I say you are fools.**

**What, my friends, is more biased than my own eyes and opinions?**

**I can think of nothing.**

**So to that I say take this cup and drink from it but know that which you drink is but my knowledge and opinion and nothing more. To those of you who respect it and drink deep I say thank you and to those who but taste and spit out that which touches your tongue I also say thanks.**

**You are kind to have come at all to see what this soldier has to say.**

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## **“At Some Point We Have To Take Seriously The Idea Of Putting A Very Large Wrench Into The Gears Of This War Machine”**

From: Ron Jacobs  
To: GI Special  
Sent: February 16, 2006

*On Wednesday, February 15, 2006, a group of war resisters began a 34 day liquids only fast in Washington, DC. The fast is sponsored by the Voices for Creative Nonviolence (VCNV): a nonviolent action group made up of regular citizens who are fed up with the direction of the US government, especially as regards its foreign policy. The name VCNV has given the campaign that this fast is part of is the Winter of Our Discontent.*

*One of the fast participants is a man named Mike Ferner.*

*I first heard of Mike when he traveled to Iraq in the winter of 2003 just before the US/UK invasion in March of that year.*



*Mike is a Vietnam vet who served as a Navy Corpsman and then received an honorable discharge from the service as a conscientious objector. He is also a union organizer, member of Veterans for Peace, and served on the Toledo, Ohio city council. His book on his trips to Iraq (he went there again in 2004) is titled Inside the Red Zone: A Veteran For Peace Reports from Iraq, and is due out in August, 2006. I have maintained a rather loose email contact with Mike over the past several months and, when I heard he was participating in this fast, decided to ask him a couple questions. The email "conversation" follows.*

\*\*\*\*\*

Ron:

Hi Mike, I heard that you were participating in the 34 day fast to protest the war in Iraq and thought I would check in with you. What made you decide to participate? Furthermore, since the administration is unlikely to be affected, whose conscience do you hope to stir with this action?

Mike:

I decided to participate because I needed to do something more to up the ante against the war. If you go to this page and watch the video featuring Jackson Browne singing "Lives in the Balance," you'll get as good an idea as I can give you why we need to do more for peace. There ARE lives in the balance and we in this country are all complicit in the suffering our government is causing.

I agree with you that our fast/vigil/sit-ins won't affect the criminals waging the war.

We certainly want to call people's attention to the crimes they are committing, but we know we won't change their behavior by our small presence in Washington over the next month.

What will change their behavior (and hopefully impeach and imprison them) however, is if every person in the U.S. who opposes this war will stop and think for a moment about what they can do to up the ante. Those are the people whose hearts we need to reach. We can all do more, every one of us, no matter what our job or station in life.

**And if every person mad as hell that this war continues will think about what more they can do for peace it will indeed make a difference...and more than just "make a difference" in some abstract way. It will throw a wrench into the gears of the war machine and grind it to a halt. This we can do, if every person of good conscience decides they have to do more than they thought they could do.**

Ron:

You have a book scheduled to be published in late summer 2006. What is it about and when did you write it?

Mike:

We just settled on a title, Inside the Red Zone: A Veteran For Peace Reports from Iraq. It's about my trips to Iraq and the people I met. People in the peace movement, Iraqis, G.I.'s, and journalists. My first trip was just prior to the U.S. invasion when I went with Voices in the Wilderness for a month. The second trip was in early 2004 for two months

when I went specifically to report and write. I wasn't thinking at the time of writing a book, actually, but the more I worked at the stories, the more I realized I had experienced something that needed to be told.

Ron:

From your involvement in Voices for Creative Nonviolence, it seems apparent that you believe in the power of nonviolent direct action as practiced and preached by Martin Luther King, Jr. What experiences in your life led you to this commitment?

**Mike:**

**First off, I don't consider myself a pacifist...yet, anyway. Even though I'm learning more about Gandhi and King and nonviolent principles and I'm getting closer to being a pacifist the older I get, I can still see why people will resort to violence if they're oppressed long enough.**

**What has lead me to a life of activism was, initially, being a hospital corpsman during the Viet Nam war and taking care of the young men who came back in pieces from that conflict. Few things will turn you against war quicker than that kind of work. Then, through life I realized that the Viet Nam war wasn't the only injustice, simply the first one I had experienced directly. I got involved in the environmental movement and the labor movement over the years. So social change has been the constant theme in my life since getting out of the Navy.**

Ron:

What do you think lies ahead for the people of Iraq?

**Mike:**

**While the U.S. continues to occupy it, nothing but violence and suffering. I believe that every political institution created in Iraq since the invasion will be seen as tainted by the invader, and as such, stands a good chance of being torn down once we are finally gone.**

That is not a pleasant picture to imagine, but it will happen whenever we leave. And until then, the violence and suffering will continue because our presence is fueling the resistance. Withdraw that fuel and the fire will subside. Who knows what will follow, but whatever it is, it will happen when (not if) we leave. Then, the peace movement's mettle in the U.S. will be put to the test to see if we can force our government to make amends for what we've done to the extent that is possible.

Ron:

How about the people of Iran?

**Mike:**

Our government leaders will seal the case for their insanity diagnosis if they take military action against Iran. If they do so, however, it won't be anything like the Iraq war. Iran has got military capabilities far in excess of Iraq's. They have missile systems that will inflict terrible damage and casualties to U.S. ships and ground forces in the region. Beyond that, of course, violent reprisals will become the order of the day and we will have succeeded in making the world considerably more unbalanced and frightening.

Ron:

The people of the US?

**Mike:**

**That's a good question, isn't it? Do we think that except for the relatively small number of military casualties coming back from Iraq we will be unaffected?**

**I'm sure that's what our "leaders" would like to promote, but that's not the reality.**

Every G.I. that's been killed, and every one of the tens of thousands who've been wounded, physically and mentally, has a family; has a city or town they're from; had hopes and dreams and skills they would have shared fully with their communities and society. Instead, we will bear the financial and emotional costs of dealing with the families of those men and women and everyone their pain has touched, radiating out in ever-larger circles, for the rest of their lives. Say nothing of the opportunities lost, the health care these billions could have provided, the civil liberties we have lost, etc. etc. Just the direct costs, financial and emotional, from this war will be felt for generations. And as a people we will be much less safe when it is finally over. Look at what other countries thought of the U.S. right after September 11, 2001, and what they think of us now. We are making a dangerous world for our children and grandchildren.

Ron:

Despite my better judgment, I occasionally get incredibly frustrated with the failure of the antiwar movement to end this damn war. In fact, sometimes I feel like going the route of the Weather Underground. I know I am not alone in this. Indeed, I would imagine that you feel this way sometimes. What do you do to convince yourself to continue the struggle?

Mike:

It is most definitely frustrating, without a doubt. Is violence the answer? I can understand what drives oppressed people to it, but I still think it can never really be the answer.

Ron:

Last fall before the big antiwar march on Washington you wrote an article calling on people to sit-in around the White House a la the Chinese occupation of Tianamen Square. Do you still think this is a good strategy?

**Mike:**

**Actually, my suggestion was that when we were hundreds of thousands strong we sit down then, not two days later in a staged sit-in at the White House, which is what happened. Bless every one of those 400+ people who got arrested there (I was arrested earlier that morning at the Pentagon with 40 others), but at some point we have to take seriously the idea of putting a very large wrench into the gears of this war machine, make the nation simply ungovernable in every way we can. We have to do more.**

Ron:

Back to the fast, will there be a way for people to keep in touch with this campaign and publish its progress on their email lists and in their local organizations?

Mike:

Check out the Voices for Creative Nonviolence website for updates. MORE IMPORTANTLY, organize a fast, or a vigil, or better yet, a sit-in at your local congressional offices, and let us know what you're doing so we can fan the flames of protest.

Ron:

As a vet, do you have any special message for women and men who are currently in the service (or considering joining)?

**Mike:**

**If you're thinking of joining, don't. It ain't worth it. And I don't just mean you might get killed or wounded. The military is not what we should be using as a tool to protect the holdings of the empire, and that's its basic role no matter what the enlistment commercials say. If you're already in and have come to believe what we're doing is wrong, call the G.I. Hotline 800-394-9544 and find out what you can do to get out.**

Ron:

Thanks for your time. I'll keep in touch.

*(Interviewer's note: The title of this article is a paraphrase of a sentence that I lifted from Martin Luther King Jr.'s April 4, 1967 speech against the US war in Vietnam.)*

**What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to [thomasfbarton@earthlink.net](mailto:thomasfbarton@earthlink.net). Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential.**

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