

GI SPECIAL 4C17:



IF YOU EVER WANTED TO END A WAR...

SIR! NO SIR!

THE SUPPRESSED STORY OF THE GI MOVEMENT
TO END THE WAR IN VIETNAM

WINNER
BEST DOCUMENTARY
HAMPTONS INT'L FILM FESTIVAL

WINNER
AUDIENCE AWARD BEST DOCUMENTARY
LOS ANGELES FILM FESTIVAL

NOMINEE
BEST DOCUMENTARY
INDEPENDENT SPIRIT AWARD

A FILM BY DAVID ZEIGER

PRODUCED BY EVANGELINE GRIEGO AND AARON ZARROW
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER PETER BRODERICK • CO-PRODUCER LOUISE ROSEN
ASSOCIATE PRODUCERS WILLIAM SHORT AND MICHAEL SLATE • EDITED BY MAY RIGLER AND LINDSAY MOFFORD
ASSOCIATE EDITOR DUC NGUYEN • SOUND DESIGN BY TUCKER • CAMERA MAY RIGLER AND DAVID ZEIGER
ORIGINAL MUSIC BY BUDDY JUDGE

PRODUCED, DIRECTED AND WRITTEN BY DAVID ZEIGER

WWW.SIRNOSIR.COM • WWW.BALCONYFILM.COM

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Sir! No Sir! In Theaters: “Today The Suppressed Story Of The GI Resistance To The Vietnam War Is More Urgent And Relevant Than Ever”

**From: David Zeiger
Sent: March 14, 2006
Subject: Sir! No Sir! In Theaters**

Dear friends of "Sir! No Sir!"

I am very happy to announce that this Spring, "Sir! No Sir!" will be opening in theaters nationwide!

As of today, March 14, the initial theatrical openings will be:

April 7	San Francisco	The Red Vic Movie House
April 19	New York	IFC Center
April 28	Denver	Starz Film Center
April 28	Madison, WI	Orpheum Theater
May 5	Los Angeles	Laemmle Monica, Laemmle Pasadena
May 12	Atlanta	Landmark Midtown 8
May 12 or 19	Washington DC	Landmark E Street

There will be more to announce in the weeks ahead.

To keep up with new theatrical openings, go to the "Sir! No Sir!" web site, <http://www.sirnosir.com>, or the web site for our distributor Balcony Releasing, <http://www.balconyfilm.com>.

On April 6 at 7 pm, there will be a special preview screening at the Grand Lake Theater in Oakland.

The screening will benefit the Iraq Veterans Against the War and will feature filmmaker David Zeiger, veterans from the film, and speakers from the current resistance inside the military.

This event is being presented in partnership with Global Exchange, Courage to Resist, Not Your Soldier, Leave My Child Alone, Not in Our Name, Ruckus Society, Art in Action, Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, and Veterans for Peace .

On April 17 there will be two Sneak Preview screenings, 7:45 and 9:55. at the IFC Center in New York.

Jane Fonda, David Zeiger, and veterans from the film will be in attendance for a Q&A between the screenings.

For information about these two events, contact Celia Alario, celia@riseup.net.

THE THEATRICAL TRAILER IS NOW AVAILABLE ON THE "SIR! NO SIR!" WEB SITE:

The direct link for the trailer on Cable or DSL is

http://www.sirnosir.com/site_sections/theatrical_trailer_hires.html

The direct link for the trailer on Modem is

http://www.sirnosir.com/site_sections/theatrical_trailer_lores.html

PLEASE HELP US SPREAD THIS EXCITING TRAILER EVERYWHERE ON THE INTERNET THROUGH YOUR EMAIL LISTS, BLOGS, AND WEB SITES.

You can also download the beautiful new film poster at

http://www.sirnosir.com/the_film/lg_poster.html

I'd like to take this opportunity to again thank all of you who have helped in the struggle to get "Sir! No Sir!" into the world.

It has been a long road, and today the suppressed story of the GI resistance to the Vietnam War is more urgent and relevant than ever.

With your continuing support, we can make 2006 the Year of "Sir! No Sir!"

Sincerely,
David Zeiger

"Sir! No Sir!" combines exceptional artistry and insightful analysis with great story telling. This is no facile agitprop piece, but a careful dissection of a growing military rebellion that permanently altered American society, but has largely been forgotten. International Documentary Magazine

Nominated for the Independent Spirit Award for Best Documentary

Audience Award Best Documentary--Los Angeles Film Festival

Jury Award Best Documentary--Hamptons International Film Festival

Jury Award Best Film on War and Peace--Vermont International Film Festival

Nominated for a Gotham Award and International Documentary Association Award

**www.sirnosir.com
Displaced Films
3421 Fernwood Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90039
323-906-9249
323-913-0683 fax
www.displacedfilms.com**

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Honolulu, Wisconsin Marines Killed



Kristen K. Marino
Nicholas R. Anderson

March 15, 2006 By Rod Ohira and Curtis Lum, Honolulu Advertiser Staff Writers

A Honolulu man who joined the Marines in September 2004 and expected to come home from combat in Iraq next month was killed Sunday, the military said yesterday.

Also, a Kane'ohe Bay Marine from Wisconsin was killed Monday in Afghanistan, the military said. His mother said he had wanted a military career since childhood.

With those two deaths, 64 Marines and sailors with Hawai'i-based units or Hawai'i ties have been killed in Iraq or Afghanistan since the start of the Iraq war in March 2003.

Lance Cpl. Kristen K. (Figueroa) Marino, 20, was born and raised on O'ahu. He was killed during combat operations in Al Anbar province in Iraq, the Department of Defense said. He was a rifleman assigned to the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marine Regiment, 1st Marine Division, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Twentynine Palms, Calif.

Lance Cpl. Nicholas R. Anderson, 21, of Sauk City, Wis., was killed in a nonhostile vehicle accident while on patrol in Afghanistan. The incident is under investigation, the Department of Defense said. Anderson joined the Marines in January 2005 and was assigned to B Company, 1st Battalion, 3rd Marine Regiment at Kane'ohe.

He was deployed to Afghanistan in January.

Figueroa's stepfather, Alfred Marino, said he and his wife, Sandi, were having coffee at 8:30 a.m. Monday when they heard someone knocking on the door at their Kalihi home.

When he opened the door and saw uniformed Marines outside, Alfred Marino asked, "Is he wounded?"

"They said, 'Can we come in and sit down?' and I knew," a tearful Marino said yesterday.

Marino said his relationship with his stepson began 16 years ago. A Vietnam veteran himself, Marino called his stepson "a hero."

"He was a young man with his whole life in front of him," Marino said. "When he got out of the Marines, he wanted to be a fireman and take care of his mother."

Figueroa had his last name legally changed to Marino two months ago, his stepfather said.

Kristen (Figueroa) Marino, a graduate of the Hawai'i National Guard Youth Challenge Academy, joined the Marine Corps in September 2004 and was sent to Iraq last September. His service awards include the National Defense Service Medal, Sea Service Deployment Ribbon, and War on Terrorism Service Medal.

"Me and my wife are very proud of our son," Alfred Marino said. "He believed in what he was fighting for, what he was doing. He wanted to be a Marine, and we feel it's an honor to die serving your country."

On Mother's Day, Sandi Marino received a gift of flowers and a diamond necklace from (Figueroa) Marino, the youngest of her four children.

"He called two weeks ago," Alfred Marino said, "to tell us he was coming home next month. We was all so happy. I was planning to make him his favorite fried rice and Spam."

Beside his parents, (Figueroa) Marino is survived by sister Tasha Wallace; brothers Anthony Figueroa of San Francisco and Hokulani Figueroa.

A service with military honors will be held here on a date to be announced, the family said.

Anderson's mother, Barbara Anderson, said yesterday that she was still in shock after learning that her son had been killed. She said from her home in Sauk City that she last talked with her son on Friday.

"He was supposed to call me on Sunday, but he never did because he was out on maneuvers," Anderson said. "I'm just a blank. I'm just in shock."

Anderson said her son seemed to be headed for a career in the military since he was a child. He would always dress himself in camouflage and play with toy guns, she said.

In high school, Nick Anderson joined the Army Reserve, but enlisted in the Marine Corps after graduating.

"I'm not sure why he changed his mind. He never really said," Barbara Anderson said. "He just said he wanted to be a Marine. He wanted to be the best."

Nick Anderson was able to visit his family in Wisconsin in September and during Christmas. By then, he already knew that he was headed for Afghanistan, his mother said.

"He really never talked about it too much," Barbara Anderson said. "Of course I didn't want him to go, but that's what he wanted to do. "I said, 'Are you sure?' and he said, 'Yes, this is what I want to do.' "

Nick Anderson kept in touch with the family via e-mail and by phone. He was very close to his older sister, Jessica, and had drawings by her two children covering a wall in his quarters in Afghanistan, Barbara Anderson said.

"Most of the time, he was pretty positive. Once in a while, he was pretty disappointed. I think he was just homesick," she said.

"I just wish he was home. I'm going to miss him terrible."

Nick Anderson also is survived by his father, James.

TROOP NEWS

“I Felt I Needed To Surround Myself With Fellow Vets Who

Also Felt That Bush Lied Just To Start This Immoral War”

I felt that I was supposed to be fighting for freedom, but when I came home, all the American people's freedoms were taken away, due to the Patriot Act and illegal NSA spying.

March 17, 2006 Michael Harmon, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Socialist Worker

MY NAME is Mike Harmon, and I enlisted in the army in May 2002, partly because of 9/11 and partly because at the time, I had no real direction in life. I was lied to by recruiters right off the bat when I was told that I was going to be a health care specialist. That later turned out to be a combat medic.

Shortly after I joined, there were rumors about war, and sure enough, on Martin Luther King Day 2003, we had a special formation where the colonel told us that we were going to war.

I didn't feel like this war was warranted since the Iraqis had nothing to do with 9/11. But we got to Kuwait in April 2003 as part of the initial invasion, and it was an eye-opening experience.

Two weeks into the war, we were told to put our protective gear and chemical mask away.

Now I'm not a military intelligence officer or a CIA agent, but I know we were supposed to be there to rid this country of weapons of mass destruction.

So being a New Yorker with a smart mouth, I asked the major who told us to put our gear away, "Sir, with all due respect, I thought we were here for weapons of mass destruction." He replied, "Do what you're told, son, and shut your mouth." From that point on, I knew this war was just a fabrication by Bush's regime, and that it was definitely unjust.

The event that really turned me was when one of my good friends died because of an insurgent deciding to pose as a hospital worker and drop a grenade on him and two other soldiers in my company.

At that point, I wanted this war to end immediately, but I had to cope, because I was the first line of medical defense for 350 soldiers. That was hard on me mentally, and you could tell the other soldiers were feeling the same way, especially since we were being strung along about how long the deployment was going to be.

What the media, of course, doesn't show you is the dead and injured kids, and that will be burned in my memory forever. When soldiers in their mid 20s and early 30s are crying for their wives and mothers because they don't want to die, that's something that takes a tremendous toll.

When I came home, I had a lot of trouble adjusting back to civilian life, and I didn't know what was wrong with me. I went to the troop clinic, and they diagnosed me with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, which also affected about 60 percent of soldiers I deployed with.

The clinic decided to throw pills like Paxil at me, which made me feel even worse, and suicidal at times. I started to cope my own way with alcohol, and I hit the bottle real hard. It got to the point where I couldn't take it any more, and I got out.

When I came home to New York, I fell deeper in the dark hole. I tried to go to the local VA. They told me they were backed up in claims, and what I was feeling was normal.

That's when I joined Iraq Veterans Against the War, because I felt I needed to surround myself with fellow vets who had similar problems, and who also felt that Bush lied just to start this immoral war.

I felt that I was supposed to be fighting for freedom, but when I came home, all the American people's freedoms were taken away, due to the Patriot Act and illegal NSA spying.

There was one time when I came home from Iraq from mid-term leave, and airport security made me step aside so they could wave the wand around me, and I was in full uniform.

I couldn't believe it.

Here I am fighting and risking my life in Iraq so that we could keep freedom from supposed terrorist threats, and I felt like the enemy.

Bush has shredded the Constitution and killed over 2,200 good soldiers along the way, and that's not even counting how many were injured.

Now if we all stick together for this cause, we will prevail.

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.

Putting A Face To The Words Of Soldiers In Iraq War



Margo Lee Sherman in her one-woman show, "What Do I Know About War?" (Daniel Vojtisek)

[Thanks to Alan S., who sent this in.]

She has drawn her material from G.I. Special, an online digest of news and letters from active-duty soldiers, from Tod Ensign's 2004 book "America's Military Today," from The New York Times and from her own interviews.

March 14, 2006 By MIRIAM HORN, The New York Times Company

The slight woman with the graying ponytail and soft pouches beneath her eyes begins deliberately, each word precisely enunciated, each date exactly recalled.

"Capt. Terrance Wright, a Fort Bragg officer recently back from Iraq, seemed to hiccup almost constantly for weeks before he died,' his family says." In the space of a breath, a thing begun lightly has turned grave, confusing and sad.

In this one-woman show, "What Do I Know About War?," Margo Lee Sherman has assembled 40 minutes of fragmented stories from accounts by American soldiers who have served in Iraq.

She has drawn her material from G.I. Special, an online digest of news and letters from active-duty soldiers, from Tod Ensign's 2004 book "America's Military Today," from The New York Times and from her own interviews.

Captain Wright's story comes from The State, a Columbia, S.C., newspaper. On March 27, 2005, his aunt Karen told the newspaper of conversations with her nephew over several days, during which "he hiccupped constantly, but didn't complain about anything."

In Ms. Sherman's affectless recitation, following the officer's tale to its lonely, mysterious end, those hiccups become every variant of human helplessness, from the kind we all know to the kind we can't possibly conceive.

At its best, the experience of this brief evening in the black basement of Theater for the New City is like eavesdropping on a small, sorrowful town.

Most affecting are the stories that play out at some length, like the abrupt intrusion of mortal danger into the bright innocence of 19-year-old Pfc. Rachel K. Bosveld. Ms. Sherman gives Rachel's words a sweet, teenage bounce. "Right now I'm soaking my feet. Feels soooo good. And I got to drive a tank! I was tooth from ear to ear."

Ms. Sherman enacts combat action, like the near-entrapment of Rachel's unit in a burning armored vehicle, with the big noises and gestures of small boys at play, underscoring the surreal dislocation of these young soldiers. And then the last missive: "Eighteen days until my birthday. Well bye for now. I miss you. I love you. Rachel."

Known for her performances of Beckett's "Not I" and "Footfalls," Ms. Sherman can be brilliant with the small gesture. But several of these characters fail to come fully to life. Though Staff Sgt. José Vazquez of Puerto Rico talks at length about his 13 years as a soldier and his revelation after Abu Ghraib; "I didn't see myself as the guy in the foreign uniform; I saw myself as the person being tortured;" his character remains strangely impersonal. Altogether the play feels like a work in progress, needing substantial development to make these voices fully heard.

"What Do I Know About War?" runs through March 26 at the Theater for the New City, 155 First Avenue, at Ninth Street, East Village; (212) 254-1109.

Seattle Candidate For Immediate Withdrawal

March 17, 2006 By JESSE HAGOPIAN, Socialist Worker

AARON DIXON, a community activist for over 40 years and former head of the Seattle Black Panther Party, announced his plan to run for the U.S. Senate from Washington.

Dozens of supporters and news media packed the conference room at the Cannon House Assisted Living Residence in the Central District of Seattle to see Dixon launch his campaign. Running as the Green Party's candidate, he will be challenging incumbent Maria Cantwell, a Democrat elected by a razor-thin margin six years ago.

Speaking in front of a screen displaying the numbers of dead Iraqis and U.S. soldiers, and that constantly updated the financial cost of the war in Iraq, Dixon said, "Not only has Ms. Cantwell continued to support the war in Iraq, but she also has sided with John Ashcroft in using fear to rush through the so-called Patriot Act. And she recently voted for its renewal for four more years.

"I am running to bring the troops and the military equipment home now, and to use the billions of dollars in the war chest to rebuild America."

Referring to the recent polls indicating that a majority of Americans oppose the war in Iraq, Aaron vowed to his supporters, "We will organize a grassroots movement throughout this state that will serve notice to all politicians that the will of the people must be recognized, or you will be voted out of office."

Dixon's bid for the Senate is only the latest act in a lifetime of struggle for justice. By age 21, Aaron had marched with Martin Luther King Jr., founded the original Black Student Unions at Garfield High School and the University of Washington, and formed the first chapter of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee in Seattle.

In 1968, during a visit to Seattle, Black Panther Party Chair Bobby Seale appointed Aaron Dixon to head the party's Seattle chapter, the first chapter outside of California.

As a member of the Panthers, Dixon helped found and implement five breakfast programs for low-income children, the first food bank in Seattle, the first free health care clinic (what is today known as the Carolyn Downs Clinic); he was also behind bringing the first Black Studies program to the University of Washington. Dixon moved to Oakland for some time, where he built the local chapter of the Panthers, worked on Bobby Seale's campaign for mayor, and served as Elaine Brown and Huey P. Newton's bodyguard.

Since the demise of the Panthers, Dixon has worked with youth in gang and drug rehabilitation. Currently, he is the executive director of Central House, a nonprofit Seattle organization that serves youth in a variety of ways, including providing transitional housing, and teaching leadership skills and media literacy.

Dixon's campaign for Senate is certain to receive local attention, since the race between Cantwell and Republican challenger Mike McGavick is expected to be close. But Dixon is already attracting the support of important Seattle community leaders.

Former Seattle School Board member, current PTSA president and local counter-recruitment icon Amy Hagopian announced her support for Dixon.

"As an elected Democratic Party precinct committee officer, I am endorsing Aaron Dixon for Senate," Hagopian said. "I wish Maria Cantwell was an antiwar candidate, but she's not. We need an antiwar candidate. I think she's a better Senator than her Republican opponent will ever be, but voting for war is an immoral act, and I can't do it. It's a violation of my beliefs, my status as a mother, and my profession as a public health worker."

As with Ralph Nader and Peter Camejo's 2004 presidential campaign, the mainstream media are repeating the mantra that Dixon is a "spoiler" by taking votes from Cantwell.

But as Dixon's wife and campaign press liaison Farah Nousheen pointed out, "What the spoiler argument is really saying is that if you are against the war, you can't have a candidate. If you are against the tax breaks for the rich, you can't have a candidate. If you are against the Patriot Act, you can't have a candidate. We won't let them silence us: we have a candidate now."

Other community leaders agree that Dixon isn't a "spoiler"--and is, in fact, a voice for justice in a two-party system that has shut off debate about the war in Iraq and continues to do the bidding of corporations.

Speaking at Dixon's press conference, Dustin Washington, program director of the American Friends Service Committee's Cross-Cultural Youth Leadership Development and Action Program, brought the crowd to its feet when he declared, "The majority of the Democratic Party and Republican Party have proven themselves unfit to govern...Based on Cantwell's record of supporting war, it is clear that it is time for a change...It's time to send Maria Cantwell back into the private sector, and it's time to elect Aaron Dixon as our next United States senator."

NOT GOOD: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW



U.S. soldiers in the area after a car bomb exploded near the green zone, in Baghdad, March 13, 2006. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

Counter Recruitment Helped By Silly Pentagon Spies:

“Credible Threat” T-Shirts And A Gay Kiss-In

March 15, 2006 Joe Garofoli, San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writer [Excerpts]

Turning up on a Pentagon surveillance list has become a badge of honor for members of a student anti-war organization at UC Santa Cruz, and made them a national face of the peace movement.

"We're not paranoid about it, and in a way, it's given us an opportunity to talk about the war to different people, to tell people that it was not OK to invade Iraq," said Kai Sawyer, 23, a member of Students Against War and a teaching assistant in the psychology department. "Berkeley may have the reputation for having a lot of anti-war activists, but I feel like Santa Cruz has had a lot more going on."

Students Against War brought the attention of both the left and the Pentagon to the hilly, redwood-studded campus through counter-recruiting, a tactic of directly taking on military recruiting that has become the leading edge of the anti-war movement.

Marches are still a staple of the movement, and there will be an 11 a.m. rally Saturday in San Francisco's Civic Center and others elsewhere nationally to mark the third anniversary of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Members of Students Against War will be at the San Francisco rally wearing T-shirts reading, "Credible Threat," a parody of Pentagon spymasters' assessment of the group's activities.

Counter-recruiting can take the form of demanding that a high school ask parents' permission before letting military recruiters contact their children.

Or it can be a "queer kiss-in" in front of military recruiters, something UC Santa Cruz activists did at a campus job fair in October to protest the military's ban on openly gay service members.

Armed Forces Uniforms Made In Sweatshops

3.15.06 Washington Post

U.S. military uniforms are being made by workers who are poorly paid and lack health insurance coverage, according to the garment workers union that represents them.

Things are looking great in Iraq. Call now, and you can subscribe to the fake news financed by the Bush Administration.



Editors of Hunky Dory Press

Imad Khadduri, Free Iraq March 15, 2006

V.A. Harassing And Tormenting Disabled Veterans, As Usual

3/14/06 firebase-news

Why are we Veterans having to put up with the VA losing our wheelchairs, mishandling our appeals, lying about our appeals, and in this case, being threatened with loss of benefits?

March 11, 2006
Lewis Randall Garvin Petal,
To whom it may concern:

I received a letter on March 8, 2006 from the VA in Jackson, Mississippi dated March 2, 2006, signed by Laraine L. Borden, Veterans Service Center Manager, stating: "VA is required to periodically re-evaluate certain disabilities. We have requested a physical examination of your service-connected disability(ies) so that we may review the severity of the condition(s) to ensure that you are properly evaluated."

I called the VA at 1-800-827-1000 on March 8, 2006.

First I was told that every veteran has to do this! Then when I explained that I was Permanent & Total she said that I was not!

I found the letter stating Permanent & Total and sent it to Congressman Gene Taylor March 9, 2006.

Called VA again on March 9, 2006 to have recorded that I found letter and that the first call response to me was wrong:

Was told that there was a computer glitch that sent out those letters.

She did not describe the letter that I held but said that I should just ignore it.

How can we Veterans just ignore a letter from the VA who in many cases is the only source of income and health care that says: "If you do not report for this required examination, it could result in the reduction or discontinuance of any VA compensation benefits that you may be receiving."?

Why are we Veterans having to put up with the VA losing our wheelchairs, mishandling our appeals, lying about our appeals, and in this case, being threatened with loss of benefits?

We are not supposed to get upset??

Lewis Randall Garvin,
Proud 100% Permanent and Totally,
Service Connected Disabled,
Vietnam Era Veteran

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Assorted Resistance Action: Bomb Hits Iraqi Army Chief's Convoy, Three Wounded

March 16 (Reuters) & AlJazeera

A roadside bomb hit a convoy of cars used by the chief of staff of the Iraqi armed forces south of Kirkuk on Thursday, but General Babakir Zebari was not present, police said.

The attack in the town of Taza 10 km (6 miles) south of the northern oil city of Kirkuk wounded three bodyguards, said Colonel Sarhat Qadir of the Kirkuk police.

A Defence Ministry spokesman said Zebari was not in Iraq at present. The attack was the latest in a series on high ranking Iraqi army and government ministers.

A translator working for the U.S. military and his son were killed and four members of his family wounded when militant fighters attacked their house in Baiji 180 km (112 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

**“I Read In The Paper That A Lot Of
Troops Are Complaining About
The War, And Want To Come
Home”**

**“They Are The Troops, But It
Almost Sounds Like They're Not
Supporting The Troops!”**

March 13, 2006 The Onion, Issue 42•11

I support the troops from the bottom of my heart. But my question is, do they know that? What if I'm somehow sending them the wrong message?

The other day I lost the magnetic yellow ribbon from my car, and I didn't even notice until my neighbor pointed it out. Just think: It could have fallen off days or even weeks before! And there I was: driving up and down all over town just as happy as you please, all but announcing, "Jane Merrick doesn't support our troops!"

I went to the gas station to buy another magnet right away, but they were sold out. So here I am without one. And the way everybody is around here, they'll talk. What if this gets back to the troops somehow?

Or take the other night when my husband and I were watching Leno. He cracked this wiseacre one-liner about the president, and it just busted Ted and me up.

Then suddenly, we both trailed off and stared at each other in ominous silence. I'll admit the joke seemed harmless enough, but just imagine those poor soldiers, covered with the arid dust and sand of a foreign land, huddling for cover, engaging in pitched small-arms firefights with enemy insurgents on a daily basis.

What would they think if they saw me sprawled out on the living-room sofa set, eating pretzels, cackling with irreverence at the expense of their commander in chief?

If I unwittingly sent a message to the troops that hurt their feelings, I am truly sorry.

I would never knowingly make them feel that nobody back here in the homeland believed in them or thought they weren't incredibly special, which they are. I don't want to accidentally lower our troops' self-esteem, especially in a time of crisis like this. Maybe after the war is over, that may be the time to raise questions about our leaders and laugh at the TV hosts, but certainly not now.

Right now, we have to think about the troops. And, even more important, the messages we may or may not be sending them.

What would the troops think about our yard? And I don't mean just about our flag. When I don't bag our leaves, am I basically saying, "To heck with you, troops"?

Are the troops aware of all the remodeling I've been doing in the basement rec room? If so, what message are they getting from that?

I read in the paper that a lot of the troops are complaining about the war, and want to come home. They're putting their lives on the line. It's my duty to support them, but I get confused.

What message am I sending the troops if I read articles like that?

For that matter, what kind of a message are those troops sending themselves?

They are the troops, but it almost sounds like they're not supporting the troops!

I'm sorry. I didn't mean that last statement to sound anti-troops.

If the troops knew what I was thinking, what would they say?

"First she has it one way, then she changes it all around"? Maybe they're saying, "Who does this lady think she is? She doesn't know what she wants! Our morale is sapped! We're losing our will to fight!" America would be defeated by Iraq, and terrorists would rule over us.

Oh gosh, no! I just want to clear up any possible misunderstandings over previous mixed messages I might have sent the troops.

I support them, and I implore them to provide me with any feedback they may have on how I might be adversely affecting their daily lives.

The Aging Effects Of War: “I Have Evolved Into An Anti-War Critic Because I Actually Know What War Is”

By Miles Woolle, Lew Rockwell.Com

One of the lasting images I have from my war experience is seeing the returning troops as the new replacements prepared to give up our seats on the commercial airplanes that had deposited us into Vietnam.

The newcomers were sent to an area to wait for processing. It was easy to see the origin of the term, "Greenie," or "Green" when referring to young, inexperienced soldiers. The uniforms of the incoming soldiers were brand new and obviously green in color. The new soldiers' boots were still black and scuff-free. The newbie's clothing revealed the truth. They had not seen a thing yet.

The returning soldiers stood on the opposite side of the holding area ready to leave the country. They were going back to what I would soon learn was "The World."

They were going home in the same airplanes we had just emptied. The exchange was a quick, efficient process.

The replacements filed out of the plane, received a good luck wish from the stewardess and in a few short minutes the departing troops were on board. I suppose the private airline industry had a keen interest in getting their birds out of Vietnam as quickly as possible. The Braniff World airliner that had safely deposited my group of replacements was back in the skies in very short order.

In my brief encounter with the group we were replacing I noticed that the uniforms of the soldiers leaving the war were all faded. Some were faded so badly the green appeared more brown than green. Their boots were worn out. The upper portions of their boots had turned color from the original olive drab to a faded brown. The lower portions of their boots were faded to a brownish, worn leather color far from the black ones I was sporting.

But the greatest payment of wear and tear showed on the soldiers themselves.

Practically every man was tanned from the sun. Many had sun-bleached hair. Many sported sun-lightened moustaches. Every one of the returnees was thin.

However, the attribute I recall most vividly was the look in the soldiers' eyes. They all had the eyes of old men. In their eyes I could see a message that told me they had experienced something that had changed them.

In real age, I was twenty at the time and most of the men I was looking at were twenty-one. In due course, I discovered that the term "real" has no place in war. I was looking at men who had one year of war experience on me yet they looked as if they were twenty years my senior.

I was a child standing on the children's side of the room facing a group of old men. I soon looked forward to the day when I would be in the faded uniform, with the faded boots, sporting a sun-bleached moustache facing my replacement with that look of an experienced man. This became the dream of a lot of the soldiers who served with me.

The dream was not to be old, but to make it to the day when one of those airliners would take us back home. To be able to just get out of there alive became our individual as well as our collective goal.

I tried not to dwell on the somewhat eerie recollection of seeing the "old" men leaving the war zone. I attributed much of their appearance to being physically active and spending their days in the Southeast Asian sun. I assumed that after a year of hiking in the jungle and living on military chow I would have that look myself.

I was wrong.

Eating the cruddy food and wearing the uniforms in the sun and mud had little to do with developing that weathered look. It was living with the constant close proximity to death that put the years on. I discovered that living with the deaths of fellow soldiers, the deaths we caused of the enemy, the deaths of the civilians (collateral damage), and routinely facing my own near death hastened the progression along my life's timeline.

From a timeline standpoint I was moving from my birth, far from my youth. I soon became no longer young because of my closeness to death. I was getting old. The only comfort (if you can call it that) I could take from the experience was that everyone around me was going through the same process.

I guess it took about two months of constant combat missions to transform me from a greenie to a somewhat experienced soldier. I recall the arrival of some replacements into our unit and I remember the feeling of accomplishment I had over the new guys. My uniforms were no longer green, my boots were showing lots of wear, and my scrawny body was a deep bronze. I was far from "short" (the expression for being close to finishing a tour) but at least I was shorter than the newbies. I was soon giving them advice on how to survive.

As fate would have it, my war tour almost ended in a body bag. After nine months of recon missions I was "dusted off" (slang for leaving on a medical evacuation) and I did not realize my dream of facing a room full of green replacements. I spent nearly a full year in military and VA hospitals before re-entering civilian life. My war-induced aging process probably picked up the pace even after I left the war.

My purpose in sharing this account is to establish an understanding of what today's combat soldiers/war veterans are going through.

I fear that America still has not learned the lessons of war.

I suspect that too many in this nation's population have grown numb to the accounts of American deaths in Iraq and Afghanistan.

I talk to my peers and my loved ones about this subject today and most give me a respectful listen but I think they wish I would spare them the details and just shut up.

Some have told me that although they share my views they only feel frustrated and powerless to change anything. A current-events discussion is verboten and only serves to turn their stomachs.

Many have turned off the national news and for them, the message is not allowed in their home. For many, the out of sight, out of mind approach is their way of handling the truth

Thanks to the miracles of quick medical treatment, there are thousands of veterans just like me who will never get their war experience out of their sight or out of their minds.

We were not issued a remote control capable of turning it off. Furthermore, the damage is not limited to the physically wounded soldiers. Many war veterans return to civilian life without a scratch, yet bear the deepest internal and invisible scars.

It has permanently changed and shaped the war veterans' civilian lives as well as the lives of our spouses and of our children. This is a fraction of the legacy of war. It is a component that I doubt many civilians can understand or appreciate.

I have evolved into an anti-war critic because I actually know what war is.

I absolutely support self-defense but insist that we are truly defending our country.

I stand as a critic of the Iraq war because I believe it has been proven we had no business invading that country.

It was sold as a preemptive strike on an enemy country but the salesmen were liars. The public was blatantly lied to in the effort to get support for a military action.

The invasion was poorly planned and the occupation is under-manned. And the administration has not made public an exit strategy. There seems to be no specific goal that America can achieve that will allow us to declare victory and mark the end of this nightmare. The longer this action continues the more war vets we are creating who will have aged ahead of their years. Be it by choice or by circumstance, it is a cost of war that many do not think of.

A former student of mine stopped by to pay a visit shortly after the initial invasion of Iraq. He had joined the Army and had served in the Third Infantry Division,

which was the division responsible for essentially plowing through the country in the push to overpower the Iraqi military.

I was a bit uncomfortable because I had never been in this situation.

I have had former students come back after they became parents, after they became successfully employed and some just for a visit; but this was my first returning combat veteran.

Before he even spoke, I knew he had aged. I also knew what had caused his premature aging.

I knew better than to ask the stupid questions that many have asked me: "Did you see any action?" "Did you see anybody get hurt or killed?" Or my personal favorite: "Did you kill anybody?"

The two of us just looked at each other with an understanding that communicated volumes of information.

It was a nonverbal conversation that said all that was needed.

I was probably the only person he knew who could have understood his situation. And although I am sure I provided him a safe outlet had he needed to vent, we both said all that was necessary without uttering words.

When he graduated from school he was probably about eighteen. In the two-year interim, when I saw him following his Iraq war experience, he had become almost as old as his fifty-something teacher.

March 16, 2006

Miles Woolley is a disabled Vietnam veteran living in Miami, Florida. He served with the 9th Infantry Division in The Mekong Delta in a Ranger unit doing reconnaissance 1968–69 where he received a gunshot wound to the head leaving one side severely paralyzed. He is a father of four grown children and grandfather of seven, including a set of triplets.

Got That Right

March 15, 2006 Remi Kanazi, Countercurrents.org

If the Bush administration interviewed my father, a 59 year old, Christian Republican Arab doctor living in the US, they would have realized, "Arabs don't like to be occupied." Arabs, be it Sunni, Shia, Coptic, Orthodox or Maronite, don't want to be invaded by a Western force capable of bombing Baghdad to oblivion.



A girl stands near the broken door of her house after a raid by U.S. soldiers, in Baghdad, March 14, 2006. U.S. soldiers late Monday night broke doors and window and arrested one person, police said. (AP Photo/Khalid Mohammed)

[Fair is fair. Let's bring 150,000 Iraqis over here to the USA. They can kill people at checkpoints, bust into their houses with force and violence, overthrow the government, put a new one in office they like better and call it "sovereign," and "detain" anybody who doesn't like it in some prison without any charges being filed against them, or any trial.]

[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country. What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]

"In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit," said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay's Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday's raid. "Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead."

In Fallujah, The Great Iraqi Troop Training Fiasco Rolls On: “It's A Good Day,” Motley Said Wednesday Evening: “Nobody Died”

March 16, 2006 John Koopman, San Francisco Chronicle Staff Writer [Excerpts]

Fallujah, Iraq:

If you want to know how much longer U.S. troops need to remain in Iraq, talk to the X.O.

X.O. is short for executive officer, the No. 2 man in the 2nd Battalion of the 1st Division of Iraq's new military forces.

"Five to seven years," he said in English over cigarettes and sugary tea. "No less. In five to seven years, Iraqi army is OK."

The X.O. doesn't want his name used. In Iraq today, that can get you killed. Insurgents consider the Iraqi army to be a tool of the American military. They'll kill Iraqi soldiers, sometimes torturing them first.

The United States is pinning its hopes on units like the 2nd Battalion. If the Iraqi army and police forces can take control of the country from the insurgents, American troops can gradually go home.

As the patrol was nearing an end, around noon, someone tossed a hand grenade from somewhere, reportedly over the wall from a girls' school, which is next to the city marketplace. The bomb, which looked like a German-style World War II "potato masher" with a cylindrical head and stick body, landed in the street among the jundi but did not explode.

The soldiers took cover, and the Marines converged on the area. They called the Explosive Ordnance Disposal Unit and waited.

Meantime, an Iraqi police unit showed up. They said a teacher from the school had called to complain about the Iraqi soldiers.

A conversation between police and soldiers escalated into a shouting match. Police took up defensive positions and drew their weapons. It was a standoff for several tense moments until the American bomb squad showed up, driving their armored humvees right into the middle of the potential melee.

At that point, the two sides drew back, and the soldiers prepared to leave.

As the Iraqi soldiers and Marine advisers got into their vehicles, the bomb squad prepared to blow the grenade in place. A concussive blast rocked store windows as the explosives went off.

Later that night, a couple of Iraqis fired shots at the Army compound and yelled that there would be vengeance for what had happened at the school. The incident also prompted inquiries by both the Iraqi command and the Marines.

It's a good day," Motley said Wednesday evening. "Nobody died."

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

What Bush Has To Say About “Attacking From A Safe Distance”

[Thanks to Don Bacon, The Smedley Butler Society, who sent this in.]

March 13, 2006 By Steven Donald Smith, American Forces Press Service

Terrorists in Iraq resort to using improvised explosive devices because they lack the ability to engage in conventional military operations, President Bush said here today.

"After the terrorists were defeated in battles in Fallujah and Tal Afar, they saw they could not confront Iraqi or American forces in pitched battles and survive, and so they turned to IEDs, *a weapon that allows them to attack from a safe distance without having to face our forces in battle,*" Bush said during a speech at George Washington University's Foundation for the Defense of Democracies.

MORE:

What The Bush Regime Practices About “Attacking From A Safe Distance”

Informationclearinghouse.info/article3462.htm [Excerpt]

The use of cluster bombs is only allowed when it is used against military targets.

When these clusters are dropped in a area where there is many civilians, it is a war crime.

These bombs split in a multitude of little bombs who are dispersed on a large area. About 15% of this mini bombs doesn't explode transforming them in mine's.

The first victims of that are the children's because it seems to be a toy and they take them in hands or they walk on it.

This cause very serious injuries in the faces, the foots and backs. Many children have to be amputated or die after such wounds.



Iraq: Cluster Bombs

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Send to thomasfbarton@earthlink.net. Name, I.D., address withheld unless publication requested. Replies confidential.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces. Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces. If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org/> And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.net)

Bush Calls U.S. Occupation A “Violent Minority”

The president said the upheaval in the country is being perpetrated by a violent minority. March 14, 2006 Nedra Pickler, Associated Press



The traitor Bush illustrates the size of his “violent minority” that is causing “upheavals” in Iraq Feb. 15, 2006, at Wendy’s International Inc. in Dublin, Ohio. Although sampling a number of the Wendy’s products, he declined an invitation by a number of Iraq combat veterans to eat shit and die. (AP Photo/Kiichiro Sato)

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS

**“We’re Here And We’re Not
Leaving”**

300,000 March For Immigrant Rights: “Bush, My Mexican Son Died in Iraq”

March 17, 2006 By Lee Sustar, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]. Nicole Colson contributed to this report.

AS MANY as 300,000 people took to the streets of Chicago March 10 to demonstrate for immigrant rights.

The protest, one of the biggest in the city's history, began as a grassroots initiative of activists fed up with the failure of mainstream politicians to challenge anti-immigrant legislation and other attacks.

The sheer size of the protest displayed the centrality of immigrant labor to the U.S. economy, including what the Pew Hispanic Trust estimates at 10 to 12 million undocumented workers in the U.S.

In Chicago, immigrant groups reflecting the city's diversity turned all turned out--Polish, Irish, South Asian, Arab and more. But the overwhelming majority were Mexican American, a reflection of the immigration into the Chicago area over the last 20 years.

“I am completely opposed to this law--it would harm millions of people,” said Juan, who emigrated from Guanajuato, Mexico. “This demonstration is magnificent. The Latin Americans, the Central Americans, the Mexicans, Hispanics are all together here.”

The comparison to the civil rights movement may have seemed far-fetched to some before the Chicago rally--but not afterward. The march was a milestone in the struggle for immigrant rights in the U.S. and the efforts of activists across the country in recent years to create a new movement.

Veterans of antiwar and labor protests were shocked at the size of the turnout. As the closing rally began in Federal Plaza downtown, demonstrators were still lined up to join the march from a West Side park nearly three miles away.

The streets in between were jammed with delegations from community groups, schools, labor unions and the staffs of entire small businesses, often with their employers' blessing. “I'm losing \$2,000 today for this,” a construction foreman good-naturedly grumbled as he stood with his work crew, all of them Mexican American.

Middle-aged working-class men, young mothers pushing baby carriages, teens, retirees--every generation was represented, as the unseasonably warm day helped maximize turnout.

Many came at the urging of others who couldn't make it. "My mother wanted us to come by, because she had to work," said Anna López, a student at Harold Washington College in downtown Chicago.

López's mother arrived from San Luis Potosi, Mexico, at age 21, and gave birth 16 hours later to Anna's oldest brother. "She made sure we were awake this morning," López said.

Countless protesters added their own messages to those of the march, with homemade signs including, "Don't bite the hand that feeds," "Bush, My Mexican Son Died in Iraq," "¡No somos criminales! (we are not criminals)," and "Who's the immigrant here, pilgrim?"

More than a few signs targeted the man behind the anti-immigrant HR 4437: "Sensenbrenner: Where were your ancestors from?" and "Sensenbrenner: Mendigo Racista (miserable racist)."

The march was overwhelmingly working class in composition.

"No immigrant justice march like this has happened in Illinois history since some 80,000 immigrants marched down State Street demanding an eight-hour workday in 1886," wrote Josh Hoyt, executive director of the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights.

Overwhelmed by the endless surge of marchers into downtown Chicago's Loop, city officials called an end to the rally at 3 p.m., two hours earlier than the previously announced ending time.

Two hours later, tens of thousands of marchers who had only just reached the protest site were still in the streets, chanting, "El pueblo, unido, jamás será vencido"--the people united will never be defeated.

The tail end of protests is when Chicago cops typically flex their muscles to show who's boss--as was the case with mass arrests at the protests at the beginning of the Iraq war three years ago.

Not this time. Nervous officers, watched closely by the department's top brass, avoided confrontation, pulling back a contingent of mounted police that briefly blocked a group of young people who wanted to keep marching.

Who was in charge? "We all are," a young man said after successfully negotiating with police to keep his self-organized contingent on the street.

To deflect the anti-immigrant backlash, many Democratic politicians and immigrant rights groups--such as the Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights--have signed onto a "compromise" proposed by Sens. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Ted Kennedy (D-Mass.).

Their bill would let undocumented workers apply for citizenship after a four-year waiting period, and allow an initial 400,000 guest workers a possible path to citizenship after six years, with the caps on the number of such people to be reset each year.

Yet McCain-Kennedy would force workers to leave the U.S. if they become unemployed for more than 45 days, giving employers final say over who stays and who goes--a perfect way to undermine workers' efforts to organize. McCain-Kennedy would also fund the greater "border security," rewarding the right's racist campaign.

While it was the Sensenbrenner bill that sparked the protest, organizers of the march--including the community organization Centro Sin Fronteras (People Without Borders)--maintained their demands for amnesty for undocumented workers and making Illinois a sanctuary for immigrants.

Those demands--not the politicians' posturing--reflected the mood of the protest.

"We need to fight for opportunities for our children," said one man who moved to the U.S. 14 years ago and raised four sons of his own. "This is a fight for our rights."

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