

**GI SPECIAL 5A31:**

**“The Mission Was  
Supposed To Go Down  
At 1 PM”**

**“We Basically Came To  
A Consensus That We  
Weren’t Going To Go”**

**“People Are Pissed Off In The  
Ranks”**

**“The Day After Bush Proposed  
The Surge I Got An E-Mail From  
Them Saying How They Were Just  
Cussing Out The President”**

They keep a lot of news about combat refusals or resistance internal, so people don't hear about it. Because they know if word got out, this kind of behavior will spread like wildfire within the ranks.

[Thanks to Katherine GY, The Military Project, who sent this in.]

January 26, 2007 By Eric Ruder, Socialist Worker



Chanan Suarez-Diaz, Iraq combat veteran and member of Iraq Veterans Against the War by Lori Hurlebaus, Courage to Resist Jan 27th, 2007, SF Bay Area Independent Media Center. Chanan is a former Navy hospital corpsman awarded the Purple Heart. He is now chapter president of Iraq Veterans Against the War Seattle.

\*\*\*\*\*

**CHANAN SUAREZ DÍAZ was a Navy corpsman who was deployed to Iraq in September 2005. He returned to the U.S. after being wounded in February 2006, and was sent to Southeast Asia.**

**Upon coming back to the U.S., he became active in the antiwar movement, joining Iraq Veterans Against the War in Seattle. He was honored with a Purple Heart and Navy Commendation Medal with Valor.**

Chanan spoke to Socialist Worker's ERIC RUDER about how his experiences in Iraq transformed his views--about himself and the role of the U.S. in the world.

\*\*\*\*\*

*WHAT DID you think of the war before you left for Iraq?*

I DIDN'T agree with the war, but I went because I was a Navy corpsman, which is a medic. So my motivation was to go and help as much as possible to save people's lives if something went wrong.

I was attached to eight Marines, and often, our mission was to carry out sweeps, where we would bust down doors and search people's houses. Because I look Arab and knew some Arabic at the time, Iraqis that we came in contact with were more comfortable speaking with me. So I would usually sit and watch over the residents of the houses, while the other guys searched.

**As I sat, I would ask them questions -- like what do they feel about the U.S. being there? And pretty much everyone said that they were initially for the U.S. being**

**there to overthrow Saddam, but they now wanted the U.S. out--and that ever since we've been there, their lives have become worse.**

I came from a very politicized platoon. We were very politically conscious, because we would have these constant debates of left versus right, so even the guys in the middle became more political and informed.

On my mother's side, we have a Jewish ancestor, so before I came to Iraq, I was a Zionist. But when I was in Iraq, I learned in talking with Iraqis that they didn't hate Jewish people, they hated the state of Israel. It really opened up my eyes to the suffering of Arabs, because I used to be very racist toward Arabic people. So throughout my stay there, I was questioning a lot of my prior views about the world.

Late one night, I was sitting in one of the homes we were sweeping, and I started talking to an Iraqi medical student who lived there. I asked him what he thought of the war, and he said that the U.S. is here for the oil.

That was the first time I ever made the oil connection--he explained how the U.S. wanted to control the oil, make money and control Iraq. That completely blew my mind at the time. We lost 10 guys in my company, and seeing all of that and a lot of innocent people dead, it just clicked.

Earlier on, I had had conversations with Marines who took part in the initial invasion, and they told me how their orders were to protect the oil fields and the Ministry of Oil. But when I was talking to this med student, it all just came together.

There we were, occupying his house, and yet he had this completely civil, deeply human conversation with me that explained all this. He sat down, and I sat down, and I had my weapon with me, and yet he just talked very calmly and gave me examples to show why he thought this.

When one of my Marines came and I explained to him that this med student thinks that we're here because of the oil, and I think he's probably right, this Marine replied, "That's such a radical leftist view."

And from there on, I held on to that. In my recollection, I don't remember reading the mainstream press talk about the oil motivations of the war, but I learned it there. This Marine was liberal on certain social issues, but when it came to Iraq, he was still caught up with the whole 9/11 thing, and the idea that we were liberating the Iraqi people.

Our whole squad would have political arguments like this every day. Basically, I was the left spokesman, and there was this other guy who was the extreme right wing. He was an evangelical Christian from Arkansas. He and I would debate about Iraq, and then everyone else would chime in. Sometimes, it would get to the point where everyone got mad, because it became really heated.

I would talk about the state of the occupation. I would ask: How are we making these people's lives better? I would tell the guys how regular Iraqis were telling me that their lives were way better under Saddam Hussein.

The first month we were there, hardly anybody walked down the streets--kids weren't going to school, people didn't go to the marketplace, regular life routines didn't happen because people were so scared of being killed, either by the mujahadeen or the U.S. So we would debate about the role of Sunni and Shia people in Iraq. At that time, the big political question was what the Shia cleric Ayatollah Ali al-Sistani was up to.

We were there right before the election in January, when the focus was on "bringing democracy" to the Iraqis and the inked purple fingers and so on. In Ramadi where we were, we had the lowest voter turnout in all of Iraq. Luckily, nothing significant happened that day, although we all thought this would be the day of jihad.

Some people thought that Sistani was good because he calmed people down and would get people to work more with the government. But at the time, my analysis was very limited. I didn't fully understand the U.S. divide-and-conquer strategy.

Now, looking back and understanding how the U.S. pits different groups against each other, I remember how we worked with Kurdish commandos, who hated the Sunnis.

I remember doing ops at night, and the commandos would come with us. They were the only ones allowed to go into mosques. For U.S. soldiers, mosques were a no-go zone. You didn't shoot at a mosque unless you got a contact from a mosque. But the Kurdish forces were allowed to go in, and they didn't have any mercy. They were ruthless. This fit the whole U.S. divide-and-conquer strategy.

### ***CAN YOU talk about the time you and your squad refused a mission?***

OUR COMPANY had already taken a bunch of casualties. We had already lost about eight people. And November was the worst month. We lost an average of a Marine a week. Then four snipers got killed on the same night.

My platoon was unique since its inception. It was completely an enlisted platoon. Usually, platoons are headed by an officer, and then a senior enlisted, and it goes down to the lowest-ranking person. But in my platoon, the person in the officer position was my gunnery sergeant.

Our first CO was killed by a suicide bomber.

And then we had a new CO who wanted us to go on a death mission.

I was a part of the Second Battalion, Fifth Marines, which is the most decorated battalion in the Marine Corps, and it's an infantry battalion.

**We relieved the Second Battalion, Fourth Marines, and they wanted us to do the same death mission that one of its squads--which is eight Marines, plus a Navy corpsman, for a total of nine--did.**

The squad was completely wiped out.

They got ambushed in a bad part of Ramadi, and all of them were killed--their bodies were stripped and left on the street.

They wanted us to do the same thing--to go on the same route, but have backup at some distance. They wanted us to draw the fire, call in the backup and then wipe them out.

We were tasked to do this because the other platoons were headed by officers, and since we had our officer position held by an enlisted man, he was outranked, so it became our job.

**I was outspoken about what I thought from the start.**

**I straight out told everyone that I don't feel good about this mission, I don't like it, I don't want to go.**

**And this spread within the platoon. Everyone was huddled in groups, debating -- should we do this, should we not. I kept on pushing and said that we should tell them we're not going to go.**

**Finally, the mission was supposed to go down at 1 p.m., and it was 12:45, and we weren't even geared up because everyone was still debating. We basically came to a consensus that we weren't going to go. The platoon sergeant saw what was going on, and he left and spoke to the gunny, and then the gunny spoke to the CO.**

**At this point, we were all scared. We didn't know what was going to happen, but we knew we didn't want to go. It was a revolt--we were refusing to go, and that can mean big trouble.**

**The gunny came back just five minutes before we were supposed to head out, and still no one has their gear. And he tells us that the CO has changed his mind, and we're going to do another mission at an Army base.**

**Everyone was so relieved. If the gunny came and said you need to get your shit together because we're going to do this, we weren't going to go, but it never came to that.**

*WHAT HAPPENED in the incident where you were injured?*

I WAS with a weapons company, and we drove Humvees with weapons on top. We were out early morning, and we were doing sweeps and searches in a particular area of the city. We stayed in one house for five or six hours, and the house had five or six families living in it.

I spoke to one family, a really lovely family. They spoke some English, and I spoke in my broken Arabic. And an Iraqi woman was asking me for some basic medicine they didn't have -- over-the-counter stuff like Tylenol and throat lozenges.

She was telling me about her 3-year-old boy, and she showed me his arm. He had IV punctures because he was suffering from leukemia. She told me that they couldn't finish his course of treatment because they didn't have the necessary medical supplies, and that he was going to die. That really hit home. And she had an older son who was

about nine, and he suffered from some other illness. I gave him my watch because he was obsessed with it.

There was another platoon in the area that day, and I had a lot of issues with that platoon. To put it bluntly, they were just murderers. Two Marines in their platoon had been killed, and they just went crazy. They were notorious. Everyone knew they killed a lot of innocent people because they would brag about it.

They were in a souk, an Iraqi marketplace, they got engaged while they were doing some patrols, and they just opened up on the whole marketplace. It was midday, people were trying to do their shopping.

We reacted to that incident--we were their support. We left the houses and hauled ass to meet them at the souk, and I remember holding position in the souk for a little bit, and seeing shattered glass everywhere on the street, and bloodstains everywhere, and I remember a guy who was lying on the sidewalk.

A lot of innocent people died that day. They said that the mujahadeen were in a cemetery next to the souk, and so we got in our vehicles and got right outside the cemetery. I was in the third vehicle, and we're all geared up with Kevlar.

We're there less than 10 minutes, and then I hear a shoosh sound, and there's a huge explosion. I fell forward, the whole vehicle lifted up in the air, there's dust and debris everywhere.

Luckily, everyone was fine. I asked everyone if they were okay, and they said yes. And then I felt something trickle down my back. And this is two weeks before we're supposed to leave Ramadi, and we hadn't any serious casualties for a while. I reached back, and my hand was drenched in blood, and the pain hit me, and I started yelling, "I'm fucking hit."

All my Marines got out and pulled me out, and a big firefight started. I had trained my Marines how to do some basic medical treatment in case I wasn't there, or was wounded, and they were able to help me and control the bleeding.

An RPG had blown out the back tire and the back of the vehicle, and the metal came in and penetrated my armor and went into my back. I'm lucky to still be able to walk.

They medivacced me to a huge Army base in Ramadi called Junction City, and then I was airlifted to Baghdad, where I had my first surgery. Then they flew me to Landstuhl, Germany, and then back to the States for my final surgery in San Diego.

In a matter of 10 minutes, my whole world changed. I was completely cut off from my Marines, who I'd been with for six months.

I wasn't able to speak to my mother until after my surgery in Germany. She still hasn't recuperated, because the Army called her in the middle of the night to tell her that I got shot, and that my condition was unknown. My mom thought I was dead until I called her three days later from Germany.

*GIVEN YOUR experiences from two years ago about the debates within your squad and the mini-revolt, what do you think is going on now among U.S. soldiers?*

WHEN I went to Iraq, I thought I was the only one who was against the war. I felt isolated, given my opinions.

But when I recuperated and finished my last year in the Navy, I went on my final deployment on a ship to Okinawa, and did a tour of southeast Asia, and I saw that there was more dissent than there was with the guys who went to Ramadi with me.

I remember talking to guys before we went on the last deployment who were still pro-Bush, and right after the deployment, a lot of the same guys were completely against Bush, and they didn't agree with the war.

But they didn't know what they could do, other than listen to what they were being told. They didn't have any examples of encouragement, other than what I told them.

**People are pissed off in the ranks. I have two friends who are stationed in western Iraq, and they've been there over seven months.**

**The day after Bush proposed the surge of 21,500 additional troops, I got an e-mail from them saying how they were just cussing out the president.**

**Their tour has been extended three months beyond what it was supposed to be.**

**The longer this war gets, the more people are going to rebel within the military, and there will be more people deserting, going AWOL and filing for conscientious objector status.**

At the beginning, people thought the war was for freedom, but as time goes by, they realize it's not about that. The soldiers and Marines are going over there with one idea--to come back home. They want to bring themselves and their buddies back alive.

We don't hear about this kind of stuff in the mainstream media, though.

**Whenever journalists go to Iraq to interview people, the command handpicks the Marines to speak to, and they tell them this is what you can talk about, and this is what you can't talk about.**

**They censor any information a journalist gets, and they have officers sitting in on the interview just in case somebody tells the truth.**

**If someone does that, they usually cut off whoever's speaking, and that person will probably get in trouble.**

**So they keep a lot of news about combat refusals or resistance internal, so people don't hear about it.**

**Because they know if word got out, this kind of behavior will spread like wildfire within the ranks.**



[Photo by Jeff Paterson, Courage to Resist: jeff [at] paterson.net]

**Do you have a friend or relative in the service? Forward GI Special 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 email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657**

## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **13th Sc(E) Soldier Killed In An Nasiriah Accident**

1/30/2007 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS  
RELEASE 07-01-03CA

LSA Anaconda, Iraq– A 13th Sustainment Command (Expeditionary) Soldier was killed in an accident when a M-1114 HMMWV rolled over northwest of An Nasiriah Jan 29.

---



# Marine Killed In Anbar

1/30/2007 HEADQUARTERS UNITED STATES CENTRAL COMMAND NEWS  
RELEASE 07-01-03C

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – One Marine assigned to Multi-National Forces-West died Monday from wounds sustained due to enemy action while operating in Al Anbar Province.

---

## Local Fallen Hero

1/24/2007 Bay City Television

A San Diego family is in mourning after their loved one is killed in Iraq.

Army Specialist Jeffrey Bisson was killed on Saturday while on patrol in Iraq.

Bisson was a paratrooper with the Army's 4th Airborne Brigade combat team. He died when the Humvee he was riding in ran over a roadside bomb.

I'm very proud of him for serving our country, said his mother, Laurie Bisson.

Bisson was born in Chula Vista and grew up in the Vista community. His father says his son was very active as an Eagle scout. It was this path and a love for sky-diving that led Bisson to a career with the United States Army as a Paratrooper.

He enjoyed what he did and pursued to his fullest amount what he did and he didn't hold back, said Rick Bisson.

Jeffrey Bisson was stationed at Fort Richardson, Alaska where he met his wife Rebecca. The two were just married in April. Just four months later Bisson left for Iraq where he made the ultimate sacrifice.

While her husband is gone, Rebecca says he will always live on in spirit.

He's with me in my heart," Rebecca believes, "and he'll be in heaven when I get there.

Bisson also leaves behind a three and a half year old son from a previous relationship, Andrew, who lives in Oceanside with his mother.

The family plans to have a memorial service for Bisson, though the date has not yet been selected.

Rebecca Bisson will go back to the couples home in Alaska, however she says she will eventually move to San Diego to be closer to her husbands gravesite.

---

# **“American Ground Troops, And Not Just Air Support As Reported Sunday, Were Mobilized To Help The Iraqi Soldiers”**

## **“The Iraqis Initially Sent A Battalion But They Were Quickly Overwhelmed”**

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in.]

January 30, 2007 By MARC SANTORA, The New York Times

BAGHDAD, Jan. 29:

**Iraqi forces were surprised and nearly overwhelmed by the ferocity of an obscure renegade militia in a weekend battle near the holy city of Najaf and needed far more help from American forces than previously disclosed, American and Iraqi officials said Monday.**

**They said American ground troops — and not just air support as reported Sunday — were mobilized to help the Iraqi soldiers, who appeared to have dangerously underestimated the strength of the militia, which calls itself the Soldiers of Heaven and had amassed hundreds of heavily armed fighters.**

“This group had more capabilities than the government,” said Abdul Hussein Abtan, the deputy governor of Najaf Province, at a news conference.

Only a month ago, in an elaborate handover ceremony, the American command transferred security authority over Najaf to the Iraqis. The Americans said at the time that they would remain available to assist the Iraqis in the event of a crisis.

The Iraqis and Americans eventually prevailed in the battle. But the Iraqi security forces’ miscalculations about the group’s strength and intentions raised troubling questions about their ability to recognize and deal with a threat.

**The Iraqis initially sent a battalion from their Eighth Army Division, along with police forces, but they were quickly overwhelmed, according to an Iraqi commander at the scene. The battalion began to retreat but was soon surrounded and pinned down, and had to call in American air support to keep the enemy from overrunning its position.**

American Apache attack helicopters and F-16s, as well as British fighter jets, flew low over the farms where the enemy had set up its encampments and attacked, dropping 500-pound bombs on the encampments.

**The Iraqi forces were still unable to advance, and they called in support from both an elite Iraqi unit known as the Scorpion Brigade, which is based to the north in Hilla, and from American ground troops.**

Around noon, elements of the American Fourth Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division were dispatched from near Baghdad.

After an American helicopter was shot down at 1:30 p.m., some of those soldiers helped secure the crash site and recover the bodies of the two American soldiers killed in the crash, according to a statement by the American military.

Others joined in the effort to combat the renegade militia, the statement said.

An Iraqi military official said at least 25 security force members were killed in the battle.

Iraqi officials said Monday that they had killed the leader of the militia in the weekend fighting, identifying him as a man who went by the name Ahmed Hassan al-Yamani, but whose real name was Diyah Abdul Zahraa Khadom.

However, a Shiite cleric who has had contact with the group said the real leader was Ahmad bin al-Hassan al-Basri. The cleric said he believed that Mr. Basri was alive and probably hiding near Karbala.

---

## **UNREMITTING HELL ON EARTH; BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



A US Marine stands guard in Fallujah, 14 November 2006. (AFP/Pool/File/David Furst)

---

# AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

## Notes From A Lost War:

### **“The Scariest Place” “They Do Not Have Enough Troops To Hold The Ground They Have Taken, Enabling The Insurgents To Return”**

[Thanks to Z, who sent this in. He writes: A lively demo in SF this past weekend. Militaristic madness has got to go for good. All the best to you! Solidarity, Z]

**Captain William Mackenzie-Green, of M Company, said: “We have pushed them back three kilometres and if we had extra troops then we can clear the area much, much quicker. “However, we haven’t got that, and this means we have to do with the hard way and take back any positions where they return”.**

30 January 2007 Independent News and Media Limited [Excerpts]

**Another day, another attack.**

**Yesterday the barrage of mortars, rockets and rifle fire began raining down on the British base at Kajaki at just after six in the morning.**

It was, in fact, late. A major attack had been expected the previous night after an early evening salvo. What is predictable, however, is that there is no foreseeable end to the assaults facing the Royal Marines in this, the most dangerous part of Helmand.

**The attack was launched from Nipple Hill, an area which had been ‘cleared’ after a fierce battle by 42 Commando more than two weeks ago.**

**The Taliban have now returned to fire at British forces down below.**

The Marines responded immediately- but Nipple Hill will have to be retaken yet again with boots on the ground in some of the most inhospitable terrain in the country.

The Marines have driven back the Taliban fighters in a series of battles, inflicting, by local as well as British accounts, a considerable number of casualties.

**But they do not have enough troops to hold the ground they have taken, enabling the insurgents to return.**

**Captain William Mackenzie-Green, of M Company, said: “We have pushed them back three kilometres and if we had extra troops then we can clear the area much, much quicker.**

**“However, we haven’t got that, and this means we have to do with the hard way and take back any positions where they return”.**

Kajaki has become a symbolic and logistical prize for both sides.

The nature of guerilla warfare here means that the British troops cannot depend on their superior fire power and have to rely on close quarter combat.

**Corporal Steve Machin, a 34 year old from Rotherham with 15 years service, said: “I have seen a fair amount of action, including Iraq. But this is, by far, the scariest place I have ever been to in terms of bullets whizzing around your head.”**

The marines are working with Afghan security forces who are supposed to make up for the lack of numbers. They are not, however, always reliable.

The previous night’s mission, led by Captain Jon Lindsay, had come under fire, not from the enemy but from Afghan police.

**The British troops are fighting from hilltop positions formerly used by the Russians. In the bunkers lies the detrius of a lost war - twisted artillery wreckage, spent shells and also personal items like spectacles and books abandoned when Soviet forces left in a hurry.**

**There have been savage echoes of that in the current conflict. Last year a French relief convoy was ambushed in the area and several soldiers captured. They were, according to local Afghans, disembowelled. A tattered Tricolour is said to fly over a Taliban position to the south.**

The British marines are confident they are too well protected to meet such a fate. **[Right. The Russians were confident too.]** But they also know that the fight in Helmand is not going to get any easier, and the mission has a long way to go.

The Afghans, meantime, complain about lack of equipment. Commander Abdul Razak, of the newly constituted Helmand Security Force, a mixture of police and militia, complained “we haven’t got enough weapons and we haven’t got enough transport.

---

## **TROOP NEWS**

# **A Marine Stationed At Mira Mar:**

# “I Hope You Can End This, Because I Really Don't Want To Go Back, He Adds”

January 30, 2007 Jeeni Criscenzo, Bring Their Buddies Home [Excerpt]

I'm finishing up this blog in the Chicago Airport between flights on my way home to Oceanside.

A young man sat beside me to use the outlet where my laptop is plugged in. I could tell by his appearance that he's in the service. We talked. He's just turning 21. A Marine stationed at Mira Mar.

He's been to Iraq twice already.

I tell him about the march in DC and our meetings with our Representatives. I thank him for what he's doing and he thanks me.

"I hope you can end this, because I really don't want to go back," he adds.

I give him my word that I won't stop until we bring all of our troops home. And I told him that all the people I'm sending this message to make that promise too.

---

## GET THE MESSAGE?



**Iraq Veterans Against The War, a group of Iraqi war veterans calling for the immediate withdrawal of all U.S. troops from Iraq, march with thousands of anti-**

war protesters during a rally around the U.S. Capitol in Washington, January 27, 2007.

---

## **61% Of Americans Support Congress Voting 'To Block Spending Money To Send More Troops To Iraq'**

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

1/29/07 Fair.org [Excerpt]

The limited debate in the network studios presents a remarkable contrast to public opinion. While these shows take apparent pains to present "balanced" discussions of the escalation of the war, the White House's "surge" is solidly opposed by the American public: 63 percent are against the move, according to the latest CNN poll (1/19-21/07).

And while guests who support cutting off funding for sending additional troops to Iraq are hard to come by in the mainstream media, the public is more open to such a tactic.

The CNN poll found 61 percent support for Congress voting "to block the government from spending money to send more troops to Iraq."

---

## ***A Consummation Devoutly To Be Wished:***

### **“Gang Activity In The Military, Poses A Threat To Law Enforcement Officials And National Security”**

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in. He writes: If the ruling class is going to expand the military by recruiting people who attack police officers and sending them to Iraq, they'll make Vietnam's fraggings look mild in comparison.]

23 Jan 2007 BY FRANK MAIN, Sun Times

Members of the Hells Angels, including an Army lieutenant colonel from Illinois, have served the U.S. military in Iraq. Another Iraq war veteran, a Marine who belongs to the Maniac Latin Disciples street gang, is charged with shooting three teens in Aurora.

They are examples of growing gang activity in the military, which "poses a threat to law enforcement officials and national security," according to a new FBI report obtained by the Sun-Times.

In 2005, for instance, a Latin Kings member was allegedly recruited into the Army at a Brooklyn, N.Y., courthouse while awaiting trial for assaulting a New York police officer with a razor. He was reportedly instructed by the recruiter to conceal his gang affiliation, the report said.

The Sun-Times began investigating gangs in the military last year after obtaining photos of gang graffiti on military equipment and buildings in Iraq. Some of the graffiti referred to Chicago-based gangs such as the Black Disciples and Latin Kings.

---

## Northern Michigan Says “Stop the War!”

“Reaction To Our Message Was Overwhelmingly Positive Throughout Our Two-Hour Vigil”





[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Veterans For Peace 50, Michigan, who sent this in. He writes: "The Whole World Is Watching, The Whole World Is Watching." Northern Michigan People For Peace standing in the freezing cold of Michigan is just as powerful, if not more, than the 250,000 who Marched in Washington, DC in 50 + degree weather.]

In conjunction with the national anti-war rally in Washington D.C., and communities throughout the nation, about 35 Northern Michigan residents protested the war Saturday afternoon in Petoskey at the corner of Mitchell St. and U.S. 31.

**Reaction to our message was overwhelmingly positive throughout our two-hour vigil.**

Northern Michigan People for Peace meets 7 p.m., the third Tuesday of the month, at Horizon Books in Petoskey. Our next meeting is Feb. 20. Please come, and help us stop this illegal and immoral war. For more information, call 231.348.5499 or 547.2626.

---

## **South Bay Central Labor Council Says Cut Of War Money And Bring The Troops Home Now**

On Monday, January 22, 2007 the South Bay AFL-CIO Labor Council in San Jose, California passed the resolution below along with a motion to support the anti-war demonstrations on January 27th and on March 18 in San Francisco and Washington, DC and to notify its affiliates encouraging their participation and asking that they contact their representatives in Congress to cut off funding for the war.

### **CUT OFF FUNDING FOR THE IRAQ WAR**

Whereas the war in Iraq has more to do with oil and increasing profits for the military-industrial complex rather than the Bush Administration deceptions that have been exposed as lies while the war and occupation is ongoing; and

Whereas Administration claims that stability, democracy, and prosperity are around the corner while each day that the U.S. stays the violence and lack of security facing our troops and the Iraqi people worsen; and

Whereas our November elections sent a clear message that voters reject the Iraq war, and opinion polls show that seven in 10 Iraqis want the troops to leave sooner rather than later, and most U.S. military and political leaders agree that staying the course is a failed policy; and

Whereas even former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger insists that no military victory in Iraq is possible and (Ret.) Lt. Gen. William Odom calls for "complete withdrawal" of U.S. troops; and

Whereas the war can't continue without war funding; and

Whereas a major factor in ending the Vietnam war was the cut-off of funding by Congress; and

Whereas President Bush will soon ask for further war funding - up to \$160 billion on top of last October's \$70 billion increase, money needed here for health care, education, rebuilding failing infrastructure, etc.; therefore,

**Be it resolved that the south Bay AFL\_CIO Labor Council communicate its opposition to continued war funding - except to bring our troops home safely, and take care of them when they get here - directly with our Representatives in Congress; and**

**Be it further resolved that we call upon the California Labor Federation and others to join us in this resolve to Cut off funds for the Iraq War - Money for People's Needs, Not War - Solidarity with Iraqi Workers; and**

**Be it finally resolved that we join with other groups where appropriate and possible to further the effort to end funding for the war and support our troops by bringing them home now**

---

## **Army Drops 2 Allegations Against Watada**

[Thanks to Pham Binh, Traveling Soldier, who sent this in.]

Jan 30, 2007 By Jaymes Song, The Associated Press

**HONOLULU — The government Monday agreed to drop two allegations of conduct unbecoming an officer from its case against an Army lieutenant who called the Iraq war illegal and refused to deploy.**

The "conduct unbecoming" charge originally carried four counts, Fort Lewis spokesman Joseph Piek said.

The two dropped counts each carried a maximum penalty of a year in prison. They stem from comments Watada made to reporters, explaining why he refused to go to Iraq and why he was challenging the Bush administration's reasons for going to war.

**In exchange, Watada's attorney Eric Seitz agreed that two subpoenaed reporters will not have to testify. They are the Honolulu Star-Bulletin's Gregg Kakesako and freelance reporter Sarah Olson. "We will stipulate and agree to the testimony that the reporters would have otherwise provided and the accuracy to the statements that are attributed to my client," Seitz said.**

Fort Lewis spokesman Piek said he had "no indication whatsoever" that any full settlement could be reached before trial.

“This is still a serious case of an officer who refused orders to deploy,” he said. “For an officer to violate military law and refuse orders such as these is something the military takes very seriously.”

Seitz said the Army wanted Watada to plead guilty to at least two counts of conduct unbecoming an officer and missing movement in return for a sentence that would have included a dishonorable discharge and 18 months in prison.

“We did not feel that was appropriate and there have been no further discussions since the government made that position known to us,” he said.

**Seitz said he has offered three months of confinement and dishonorable discharge, but the Army did not indicate any willingness to go along with that.**

**Watada refused to go to Iraq last June with his unit, the 3rd Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, after deciding the war was illegal.**

**He has said he would be willing to serve in Afghanistan or elsewhere.**

**MORE:**

***Weasel At Work:***  
**Shit-Bag Army Prosecutor**  
**Kuecker Demands Names Of Key**  
**Organizers Of Watada Defense**  
**Campaign;**  
**Two Rallies Outside Fort Lewis On**  
**February 5**



Subpoenaed activist Phan Nguyen speaks out in Tacoma. 1/3/07

January 29, 2007 by Courage to Resist organizer Jeff Paterson, Courage to Resist [Excerpt]

Although the military has dismissed the subpoenas of journalists, Veterans for Peace Seattle Chapter organizers Tom Brookhart and Gerri Haynes, and Olympia-based anti-war organizer Phan Nguyen remain under order to testify against Lt. Watada.

Tom Brookhart and Gerri Haynes came to the attention of Army prosecutors for their role in organizing the VFP National Convention in August. Phan Nguyen, a member of the Olympia Movement for Justice and Peace, was the moderator of a number of press conferences and rallies this summer regarding Lt. Watada and the support his stand against illegal war has generated.

With Lt. Watada now formally acknowledging the remaining statements in question, the only rationale the Army could now have for dragging these prominent anti-war organizers into a military court is to intimidate the peace movement.

**In fact, when Army prosecutor Captain Kuecker first contacted Phan Nguyen in December all of his questions focused on the behind the scenes workings of the regional anti-war movement.**

**“Kuecker basically demanded that I name the names of any key organizers that had anything to do with the public support campaign created to support Lt. Watada,” explained Nguyen.**

**“They are clearly on a political fishing expedition. Unless we fight back, this could have a chilling effect on anti-war organizing at a time when we have to step up to end the war.”**

Amid protest, February 5 court martial:

Lt. Watada's court martial is scheduled to begin Monday, February 5 at Fort Lewis, Washington.

He still faces a charge of missing movement, and two remaining charges of “conduct unbecoming” for public statements critical of President Bush and the Iraq occupation war.

**A series of events are planned for the Fort Lewis area to “stand with Lt. Watada,” including an all day vigil and two rallies outside of Fort Lewis on February 5.**

---

## **2,500 Shut Down Recruiting Center In Seattle;**

# **Members Of Iraq Veterans Against The War Lead The March; “Community Members Emerged From Houses And Joined” “Supporting Soldiers Who Are Resisting This War Is One Of The Best Ways To Bring This War To An End”**

Jan 29<sup>th</sup> by Lori Hurlebaus, Courage to Resist [Excerpts]

Seattle, WA (January 27, 2007) - Over 2,500 people shut down a military recruiting center in Seattle in support of war resisters and in opposition to a troop surge in Iraq.

**Members of Iraq Veterans Against the War led a march that began at the Social Justice Center to a military recruiting center at 23rd Ave. and Jackson St. located in the Central District, a heavily recruited working class neighborhood.**

**Community members emerged from houses and joined the march as it snaked through the neighborhood.**

As the march drew near to the recruiting center the demonstrators began chanting "Occupation is a crime, Ehren Watada should do no time!" and "You gotta resist, don't enlist!"

Many in the crowd were displaying banners and signs in support of Lt. Ehren Watada including a banner that read "Support Ehren Watada, Feb 5, Ft. Lewis, Exit 119" Lt.

**Chanan Suarez-Diaz and Darrell Anderson, both Iraq combat veterans and members of Iraq Veterans Against the War , were attempting to present the recruiters with a book of photos of all U.S. service members who have died in Iraq, but the center was closed as the demonstrators arrived and the recruiters would not accept the book.**

A police line was formed in front of the center as demonstrators continued to amass demanding, "Shut it down!"

"Shutting down the center today is a success because its one less day that the military can recruit another person to die in this war," said Chanan Suarez-Diaz. "We need to continue to build momemtem and support for Lt. Watada and all military resisters.

**“Supporting soldiers who are resisting this war is one of the best ways to bring this war to an end.”**

**“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.” Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War**

## **The Burdens Of Command**

[Thanks to R Santos, who sent this in.]

A new Marine Captain was assigned to an outfit in a remote post in the desert.

During his first inspection of the outfit, he noticed a camel hitched up behind the mess tent.

He asks the Sergeant why the camel is kept there.

The nervous sergeant said, "Well sir, as you know, there are 250 men here on the post and no women. And sir, sometimes the men have "urges." That's why we have the Molly The Camel."

The Captain says, "I can't say that I condone this, but I understand about 'urges,' so the camel can stay."

About a month later, the Captain starts having his own "urges."

Crazy with passion, he asks the Sergeant to bring the camel to his tent.

Putting a ladder behind the camel, the Captain stands on the ladder, pulls his pants down and has wild, insane sex with the camel.

When he's done, he asks the Sergeant, "Is that how the men do it?"

"No not really, sir... They usually just ride the camel into town."

---

## **FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

### **Gulf War November 1990:**

# **“The Commander In Chief Had To Be Protected From His Own Troops”**

[From: THE SPITTING IMAGE: MYTH, MEMORY, AND THE LEGACY OF VIETNAM; by Jerry Lembcke; New York University Press; New York; 1998]

After the November 8 announcement of increased troop deployment, opposition grew. By early December, reports of organizing by students and anti-war groups began to mount.

**The most troublesome voices from the administration’s point of view, however, were coming from within the military. Within a week after the announcement, reports began to trickle out about soldiers resisting service in the Gulf.**

During the next few weeks, a large number of active-duty soldiers and National Guardsmen sought conscientious objector status. And not all of the in-service dissent was stateside.

**When Secretary of State James Baker and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Cohn Powell visited the troops in the Gulf in November, they faced discontent bordering on hostility.**

Later, when President Bush made his Thanksgiving tour of the troops, special security measures were taken, and soldiers “were carefully selected and briefed on how to conduct themselves with him.”

The appearance that the commander in chief had to be protected from his own troops was very embarrassing for the administration.

---

## ***Black Hawk Down*** **While Troops Die, “Democrats (And Rebellious Republicans) Invest Their Passions In Clinical Debates Over ‘Exit Strategies’ And ‘Withdrawal Timetables’”**

**Democrats (and rebelling Republicans) invest their passions in clinical debates over "exit strategies" and "withdrawal timetables," and congratulate themselves for "nonbinding" resolutions that condemn an increase in troops while still allowing them to go into the field.**

Feb. 5, 2007 By Weston Kosova, Newsweek [Excerpts]

Including [Sgt. 1/c John Gary] Brown, 12 soldiers died around 3 p.m. Iraq time on Saturday when his Black Hawk crashed in Diyala province, northeast of Baghdad.

The flight was a seemingly routine haul from the massive Camp Anaconda near Balad to the Iraqi capital, carrying four crew and eight passengers. Not far from the town of Baqubah, Brown's chopper—Easy 4-0—broadcast a mayday signal and went down; an accompanying Black Hawk landed nearby and its soldiers reportedly took fire from insurgents.

Is the president right that the additional troops can turn things around? Or is Iraq lost?

These questions are the makings of a serious and long-overdue debate over the war.

And yet so much of the chatter turns on the politics of the war. Who is up and who is down for 2008? Is the Bush presidency effectively "over" and will Americans trust a Democrat — and possibly a woman — to be commander in chief?

**Democrats (and rebelling Republicans) invest their passions in clinical debates over "exit strategies" and "withdrawal timetables," and congratulate themselves for "nonbinding" resolutions that condemn an increase in troops while still allowing them to go into the field.**

**But few seem to be grappling with the fate of those soldiers.**

There are, as always, more questions than answers about what to do in Iraq. Honest people can disagree about whether it is more dangerous to stay or to leave.

But the 12 Americans who died in the Black Hawk crash offer us a vivid reminder of what is happening on the battlefield, and of the cost so many families are paying when loved ones die in combat.

Guard members have taken on much of the burden of this war, and those who died aboard that helicopter were like many others who have lost their lives in the fighting: ordinary people asked to do the extraordinary.

They were husbands and wives, parents and even grandparents. Some relied on their faith in God, others, their faith in the commander in chief. At least one no longer believed the war was worth fighting, but carried out his duties.

Together, they left behind 34 children and at least a dozen grandchildren.



As we contemplate sending more men and women like them into harm's way, their demise leaves behind perhaps the only question that truly matters in wartime: is it worth it?

---

## On The Stupidity Of Lobbying Congress To Stop The War

January 29, 2007 by James Carroll, The Boston Globe [Excerpts]

While soldiers show astounding courage in conducting their missions impossible, politicians have stepped back from political risk to define their own options in ways that will justify policies of no real change.

**The war-disapproving resolution before the Senate this week, if passed, will have no effect on operations in Iraq.**

Cheney, in characteristic fashion, was the one to throw down the only gauntlet that matters.

"The Congress has control over the purse strings," he said last week. "They have the right, obviously, if they want, to cut off funding. But in terms of this effort, the president has made his decision."

**Cheney is daring Congress to use the appropriations process as a way of challenging Bush's decision, knowing full well that Congress lacks the will to do so.**

### **Troops Invited:**

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org):. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

## Anniversary: January 31, 1968 The Tet Offensive

Peace History: Carl Bunin

The Tet (the lunar new year) Offensive began as North Vietnamese and Viet Cong forces launched surprise attacks against major cities, provincial and district capitals in South Vietnam.

The attack had been anticipated but, nonetheless, half of the ARVN troops (Army of the Republic of Vietnam) were on leave because of the holiday.

There were attacks in Saigon (the South's capital) on the Independence Palace (the residence of the president), the radio station, the ARVN's joint General Staff Compound, Tan Son Nhut airfield, and the United States embassy, causing considerable damage and throwing the city into turmoil.

**OCCUPATION NEVER WAS LIBERATION  
BRING ALL THE TROOPS HOME NOW!**

## **DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK**



[Thanks to David Honish, Veteran, who sent this in.]

## **CLASS WAR REPORTS**

# **Rally Against New NY Police Department's Attack On The Freedom Of Assembly WED Jan 31; LIBERTIES ADVOCATES CONDEMN NEW POLICE STATE RULES**

2007-01-30 Assembleforrightsny.org/

**What: Rally To Resist NYPD's New Public Gathering  
Rules**

**Who: Civil Liberties Organizations, City  
Councilmembers, Bicycling Advocates**

**Where: One Police Plaza**

**When: Wednesday, Jan. 31, 12:00 Noon**

LOWER MANHATTAN - Community groups including Transportation Alternatives, civil liberties advocates including Norman Siegel, and members of New York City Council including Rosie Mendez will rally on Wednesday, Jan. 31, at 12:00 noon outside One Police Plaza to protest New York Police Department Commissioner Ray Kelly's most recent attempt to chill the exercise of free speech and gatherings in public places.

On Friday Jan. 26, the NYPD promulgated new rules dictating when and by whom parade permits must be obtained.

City Councilmember Rosie Mendez promises to overturn these rules in City Council.

Ms. Mendez stated: "I believe that the NYPD 's continued attempt to regulate our free speech is unnecessary and continues to infringe on our First Amendment rights.... permits should not be conditioned on an unreasonable and arbitrary number and they should definitely not be required by groups who stay within the limits of the law."

Ms. Mendez continued: "I vow to work with my council colleagues to protect First Amendment assembly rights and reverse the NYPD's amendment."

**Citizens and civil rights advocates from across New York City call on the City Council to exercise oversight of the NYPD. Police Commissioner Kelly should not be the arbiter of when and where people can gather on streets to voice their grievance, particularly considering that, at times, those grievance concern NYPD.**

**Assemble For Rights coalition asserts that only New York City Council, as the elected representatives of the people, possess the authority to make laws affecting our civil rights.**

**NYCLU Executive Director Donna Lieberman echoed this position: "changes to our city's permit laws should be made by the City Council, not the police department."**

***These new NYPD rules, modifications of rules NYPD sought in August but met with fierce opposition, require that any public gathering by a group of 50 or more obtain a permit.***

***Furthermore, groups of pedestrians and cyclists must apply for permits even if the group is in full compliance with all traffic laws.***

***Anyone without a permit is now subject to arrest. Publishing the new rules means NYPD can begin enforcing them as of Feb. 25.***

Section 1 a. of the newly published rules says: "A 'parade is any procession or race which consists of a recognizable group of 50 or more pedestrians, vehicles, bicycles, or other devices move by human power, or ridden or herded animals proceeding together upon any public street or roadway."

Council Member Tony Avella from district 19 in Queens is also asking the police to withdraw the current proposed rules:

"While I was pleased that the Department's prior proposed amendments were rescinded, I believe that the new proposed rules are no more reasonable than the first.

"I understand the Department's stated purpose of 'preserving the public peace and preventing obstructions of public streets and sidewalks', however the manner in which it seeks to achieve these goals is unreasonable and unduly burdens residents of this city.

**"One example I would offer is that of funeral processions of 10 or more vehicles proceeding more than two blocks, which often violate certain traffic laws by virtue of their need to navigate as a procession through city streets.**

**"It would be wholly unreasonable to require parade permits for such processions and it would create an administrative nightmare for the Department to manage this process.**

The New York Civil Liberties Union today called on the New York City Police Department to abandon new rules the Department has proposed that would require small protest groups lawfully using public streets to obtain police permits.

**"The last thing we need is for small protest groups lawfully using public streets to have to get a police permit or face arrest," said Donna Lieberman, NYCLU Executive Director.**

## **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](http://www.ivaw.net))

### **GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out**

GI Special issues are archived at website <http://www.militaryproject.org> .

The following have chosen to post issues; there may be others:

<http://www.williambowles.info/gispecial/2006/index.html>;

<http://imagineaworldof.blogspot.com/>; <http://qi-special.iraq-news.de>;

[http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi\\_special/](http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/); <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=6&l=e>;

<http://www.albasrah.net/magalat/english/qi-special.htm>

GI Special distributes and posts to our website copyrighted material the use of which has not always been specifically authorized by the copyright owner. We are making such material available in an effort to advance understanding of the invasion and occupation of Iraq. We believe this constitutes a "fair use" of any such copyrighted material as provided for in section 107 of the US Copyright Law since it is being distributed **without charge or profit** for educational purposes to those who have expressed a prior interest in receiving the included information for educational purposes, in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107. **GI Special has no affiliation whatsoever with the originator of these articles nor is GI Special endorsed or sponsored by the originators. This attributed work is provided a non-profit basis to facilitate understanding, research, education, and the advancement of human rights and social justice.** Go to: [www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml](http://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/17/107.shtml) for more information. If you wish to use copyrighted material from this site for purposes of your own that go beyond 'fair use', you must obtain permission from the copyright owner.

---

**If printed out, this newsletter is your personal property and cannot legally be confiscated from you. "Possession of unauthorized material may not be prohibited." DoD Directive 1325.6 Section 3.5.1.2.**