

GI SPECIAL 5C5:

All Out March 17
Stand In Solidarity With
The Troops At The
Fayetteville NC Peace
Rally:
Home To Fort Bragg
“We Won’t Be Speaking TO The
Troops This Time We’ll Be
Saying It WITH Them”
End The Iraq War Now!
Bring Us Home!

[Iraq Veterans Against The War and Veterans For Peace are calling on all who want to stop the war to come to this rally March 17, so that outreach goes forward to the people who can stop the war and have the greatest interest in doing so: the troops. There will also be regional demonstrations in DC and other cities for those unable to travel to Fayetteville. T]

From: Fayetteville Peace Rally

The headline in the January 8 issue of “Army Times” was stark:

“About Face On The War. After Three Years of Support, Troops Sour on Iraq.”

It's not the first such declaration.

Almost a year ago, a Zogby poll published by the military paper "Stars & Stripes" reported that more than seventy per cent of the troops on the ground wanted the U.S. to be out of Iraq within a year.

More than twenty per cent wanted to be out of there tomorrow.

This year, on March 17, when the annual peace march and rally take place in Fayetteville, we will gather in an atmosphere very different from that of earlier years.

On this fourth anniversary of the Iraq invasion, only a small and diminishing minority even of those in uniform believe that the war is anything but a travesty and a waste of our blood and treasure.

Yet these same troops and their families now face a stupid and cynical "surge," that is gambling their lives and the lives of their loved ones for nothing more than an effort by a twisted leadership to avoid facing the truth of the fiasco that their war has been.

More than a thousand active duty soldiers and sailors have signed an Appeal for Redress, asking Congress to end the war and bring them home.

It is difficult and dangerous for those in uniform to speak their opposition openly in public.

On March 17, let's gather in Fayetteville to add our voices to their chorus: End this war Bring Us Home!

This will be the fourth time voices for peace have gathered in Fayetteville to demand an end to this immoral war.

But on March 17, 2007, we won't be speaking TO the troops this time we'll be saying it WITH them.

Program

(Watch for Updates!)

Friday Night (March 16)

5PM: Hospitality Center opens at The Clarion Prince Charles Hotel, 405 Hay St.

Saturday (March 17)

10AM: Pre-Rally Show at Health Dept. Parking Lot

Noon: The March! (3/4-mile route up Hay Street to Rowan Park)

1PM-4PM: The Rally!

Featuring Holly Near, Fruit of Labor, Dan Speller, Dave Lippman, Speakers, Kids Program, Peace Fair & More!

Sunday (March 18)
Activists Conference

Check out the website for the Fayetteville Peace Rally: www.fayetteville-peace-rally.org.

MORE:

Veterans For Peace Needs Help Organizing Outreach To The Troops: “Our Goal Is Outreach To Soldiers” “The Biggest Thing Is Getting To The Men And Women Of Our Armed Forces”

17 Feb 2007 By Cherie Eichholz, Veterans For Peace

On behalf of Veterans For Peace, I am emailing and requesting help with an action planned for this March.

It will be a two fold event.

The first leg of it will come through several SE US military towns (i.e. tentative itinerary includes Jacksonville, NC, Columbia or Charleston, SC, Savannah, GA, Jacksonville, FL, Columbus, GA, and Montgomery, AL) and we are looking for local people to help plan for these stops.

What we are aiming for is that when we arrive in each town, things are pretty much set up.

We hope to have representatives from Veterans For Peace, Gold Star Families for Peace, Military Families Speak Out, Iraq Veterans Against the War, signers of the Appeal For Redress (appealforredress.org), and possibly several war resisters.

We would like to have a program in each town where we can invite the local military to join us for something (i.e. pizza, beer, and discussion, or movie and discussion, or whatever) in the evening.

In addition, my experience and the itinerary tells me we should have some time in the afternoon once we arrive in the cities; this would be a great time for us to head to the mall, or the base, or somewhere military personnel congregate, and “infiltrate them”.

We want to get to these people on this trip!

Our goal is outreach to soldiers as they have an important voice.

70% according to polls want the US out of Iraq.

Thus we want to get them to sign the Appeal, see what soldiers did during Vietnam from the video “Sir, No Sir!” so they know they are not helpless and have them listen to VFP, GSFP, MFSO, and IVAW, so they know vets and soldiers who oppose the war are with them.

We want the 70% to become active and to grow.

HOWEVER, and this is very important, we realize the nature of each stop will be different and that support in each town will be different. In your area, the stop might end up being more of the informal sort, i.e. the “infiltration” part of the previous paragraph.

And that works.

The biggest thing is getting to the men and women of our armed forces.

In this case, what we would then need from you and your team, would be specific advice as to where and when they meet (i.e. maybe at a mall or a strip of bars).

In addition, we will need help with accommodations. Most of these people are veterans and pretty easy going; church floors and/or campgrounds would certainly suffice. And of course we would love to congregate with the hosts as much as possible for pot lucks or breakfasts or whatever.

When we get to the end point, we will work for a week on construction and reconstruction of homes for survivors of hurricane Katrina. VFP was there immediately after the hurricane struck providing humanitarian relief; we were there last spring in order to draw attention to the neglect of gulf coast residents even in the midst of the pursuit of an unjust and illegal war; we are now returning to lend a hand as the government has literally abandoned these people.

There is a distinct connection between what we are doing overseas and our government’s abandonment of our own citizens.

Please think about how you and your peace community might get involved with this.

I know this is asking a lot, but this promises to be a very spirited and important endeavor. And there are a plethora of ways to get involved: offer to house caravaners, work with a local community which will be hosting a stop on the caravan, come to the gulf, forward this email to all of your lists of friends, family, and colleagues, and of course, we can use donations (veteransforpeace.org).

We are at the moment when we have got to act and encourage and support those around us in acting as well.

I was in DC several weekends ago and saw firsthand the momentum we are carrying; I was in the gulf last weekend scouting out worksites, and saw firsthand what government abandonment looks like.

In order to effect change we have got to act now and act in a significant manner. Please contact me directly if you think you can help.

Gratefully,
Cherie Eichholz
Veterans For Peace National Office
veteransforpeace.org
314.725.6005, x105

MORE:

**“After Spending A Year In Iraq, I
Have Found That The Iraqis Are
Not A Threat Or The Enemy”
“We Do Not Know What We Are
Fighting For Anymore; We Do Not
Know What Our Mission Is”**

[From GI SPECIAL 4D24, 4.24.06]

Army Times
April 24, 2006
Letters To The Editor

I am a soldier about to embark on my second tour in Iraq.

My first tour started in November 2003. When we arrived, Saddam Hussein was on the loose. In December, he was caught.

When I came into the military, I signed a contract that said I would defend this country against all threats, foreign and domestic.

After spending a year in Iraq, I have found that the Iraqis are not a threat or the enemy. I did find that we are the threat and the enemy to them.

They acted as we would if someone came into America and said we are going to change your ways.

I feel this war is no longer about taking out a threat. But I believe it is about securing oil commerce for the future.

Securing this country and stabilizing it would mean oil contracts and people lining their pockets with money from the oil that my friends have been wounded for and have died for.

I hear the president speak with the press and tell them things to appease them and to divert them to a different subject.

What I don't see is the president having a conference with the soldiers who have fought on the ground in Iraq.

We do not know what we are fighting for anymore; we do not know what our mission is.

I am not alone in this thought. My boys need to know what they may possibly die for.

Is it for a few extra bucks for Halliburton subsidiary KBR?

Is it about the oil?

Is it for America?

How will this war help my family in the future?

**Staff Sgt. Christopher Galka
Rainier, Wash.**

[Someday, when the history of the movement in the armed forces that stopped this evil Imperial war is written, this letter, for its courage and clarity, will be well remembered, and the writer honored down through the corridors of time. He is true to his oath and his duty. T]

MORE:

“Even At Fort Hood Anti-War Sentiment Sometimes Surfaces” “What Did My Husband Die For?”

03 March 2007 By David Crary, The Associated Press [Excerpt]

Even at Fort Hood, the Army's largest armored base with 43,900 military personnel and 17,800 family members, anti-war sentiment sometimes surfaces.

"I don't support this war," said Ursula Pirtle. "What did my husband die for? I don't believe what we're doing over there helps our country."

Yet she views her fallen husband as a hero. "When he was killed, I would love to have been there holding him," Pirtle said.

MORE:

Build "On The Grassroots Opposition To The War, Especially Within The Military Itself" "The Real Challenge To The U.S. War On Iraq Won't Come From Inside Washington"

February 9, 2007 Editorial, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

THE DEMOCRATS may be talking tougher. But when it comes to doing something concrete to stop the U.S. war on Iraq--or even George W. Bush's surge of more than 20,000 soldiers to Iraq--they're falling far short of the expectations millions of people placed in them.

The hope that the Democrats would put the brakes on Bush's escalation and begin a withdrawal of U.S. troops from Iraq is running smack into the reality that both mainstream parties, whatever their disagreement on tactics, are united on the goal of defending and projecting U.S. power abroad.

After Senate Republicans blocked debate on resolutions opposing Bush's troop surge, the Democrats could point fingers and continue to portray themselves as the opposition to Bush's "new way forward" in Iraq.

But the vast majority of Democrats had sought only a nonbinding resolution criticizing Bush's war plans, not a real effort to stop them.

Meanwhile, at the end of last month, Senate Democrats voted unanimously to confirm Bush's nomination of Gen. David Petraeus--the leading booster of the administration's surge plan in the Pentagon--to be commander of U.S. forces in Iraq.

IF THE Democrats sound antiwar themes now, it's because of pressure from the antiwar majority that expressed itself in the November elections--as well as the worsening crisis in Iraq.

Now, among the 10 Democrats already declared or likely to run for the presidential nomination in 2008, every one at least claims to be against the war. Even the most

conservative, Hillary Clinton, went further than John Kerry in saying that, “knowing what she knows now,” she would have voted against a resolution giving Bush authorization for the invasion.

But in a situation where even fellow Republicans are turning on the White House, talk is cheap. The Democrats should be held responsible for what they do.

These “antiwar” Democrats are mouthpieces for sections of the ruling establishment to express a vote of no confidence in the Bush administration and its failure in Iraq.

But it’s crucial to recognize that this opposition to Bush represents the American ruling class’ concern with saving, rather than burying, the U.S. imperial project.

As a party, the Democrats are every bit as committed to that aim as the Republicans.

The real challenge to the U.S. war on Iraq won’t come from inside Washington.

That fact presents a challenge to the antiwar movement--to focus on its real source of power in building on the grassroots opposition to the war, especially within the military itself.

“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

**NOT ANOTHER DEATH! NOT ANOTHER
DOLLAR!
NOT ANOTHER DAY!**

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

Marine And Sailor Killed In Anbar

March 4, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070304-09

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – One Marine and one Sailor assigned to Multi National Force-West were killed March 2 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province.

Another Marine Killed In Anbar

March 4, 2007 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20070304-10

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Marine assigned to Multi National Force-West was killed March 3 while conducting combat operations in Al Anbar Province.

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



Thanks to Kevin Ramirez, CCCO. He writes: Pics showing what happens when US bases get mortared/rocketed. Obviously taken by a GI. I found them online, and don't know who took them.

Two British Soldiers Killed In Sangin

4 Mar 07 MOD.UK

It with deep regret that the Ministry of Defence must confirm the deaths of two British soldiers, from a Task Force in Helmand province, Afghanistan, on Saturday 3 March 2007.

The soldiers, both from 29 Commando Regiment Royal Artillery, died during a rocket attack in the Sangin area.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

U.S. Special Forces Massacre Unarmed Civilians And Destroy Reporters' Photos; “Thousands Of People Gathered To Demonstrate Against The Shooting” “Death To America, Death To Karzai”

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

U.S. soldiers at the scene deleted photos taken by a freelance photographer working for The Associated Press and video taken by a freelancer working for AP Television News.

March 4, 2007 BBC & By AMIR SHAH & By Rahim Faiez, Associated Press Writer & By CARLOTTA GALL, The New York Times

An incident described by US forces in Afghanistan as a “complex ambush” has left 16 civilians dead and 32 wounded by subsequent gunfire from U.S. soldiers.

American troops opened fire on a highway filled with civilian cars and bystanders.

Thousands of people gathered to demonstrate against the shooting, blocking the road and throwing rocks at police, shouting “Death to America, Death to Karzai”, referring to the Afghan president, and accusing the Americans of deliberately firing on the civilians.

The US military said a minibus containing explosives was driven at the convoy, injuring one soldier in eastern Afghanistan on Sunday

The marines, who were on patrol near Jalalabad airfield, returned fire, and the civilians were killed and wounded in the crossfire during the battle, according to a statement from the military press office at Bagram airbase near Kabul.

The wounded interviewed in the hospital by news agencies said the only shooting came from the American troops.

A hospital official, who asked not to be named, said all the wounded were suffering from bullet wounds and not shrapnel from the bomb explosion.

Among the dead this morning were a woman and two children in their early teens, said Dr. Ajmal Pardez, the provincial director of health, speaking by telephone from the Jalalabad city hospital.

After the suicide attack, the American soldiers treated every car and person along the highway as a potential attacker, even if they had no evidence, and though none of the people showed hostile intent, Muhammad Khan Katawazi, the district chief of Shinwar, told The Associated Press.

At the Jalalabad hospital, several victims said the American convoy approached them on the highway and opened fire. As the convoy neared, many cars pulled over to the side of the road, but were still hit by gunfire.

More than a half dozen Afghans recuperating from bullet wounds told The Associated Press that the U.S. forces fired indiscriminately along at least a six-mile stretch of one of eastern Afghanistan's busiest highways, a route often filled not only with cars and trucks but Afghans on foot and bicycles.

"They were firing everywhere, and they even opened fire on 14 to 15 vehicles passing on the highway," said Tur Gul, 38, who was standing on the roadside by a gas station and was shot twice in his right hand. "They opened fire on everybody, the ones inside the vehicles and the ones on foot."

When we parked our vehicle, when they passed us, they opened fire on our vehicle," said 15-year-old Mohammad Ishaq, who was hit by two bullets, in his left arm and his right ear. "It was a convoy of three American Humvees. All three Humvees were firing around."

Ahmed Najib, 23, lay in the next bed, hit by a bullet in his right shoulder.

"One American was in the first vehicle, shouting to stop on the side of the road, and we stopped. The first vehicle did not fire on us, but the second opened fire on our car," Najib said, adding that his 2-year-old brother was grazed by a bullet on his cheek.

"I saw them turning and firing in this direction, then turning and firing in that direction.

"I even saw a farmer shot by the Americans."

The bomber hit the American convoy with an explosives-packed minivan, said Noor Agha Zawok, the spokesman for the governor of Nangarhar province.

U.S. soldiers at the scene deleted photos taken by a freelance photographer working for The Associated Press and video taken by a freelancer working for AP Television News. The freelance photographer, Rahmat Gul, said he took photos of a four-wheel drive vehicle where three Afghans had been shot to death inside.

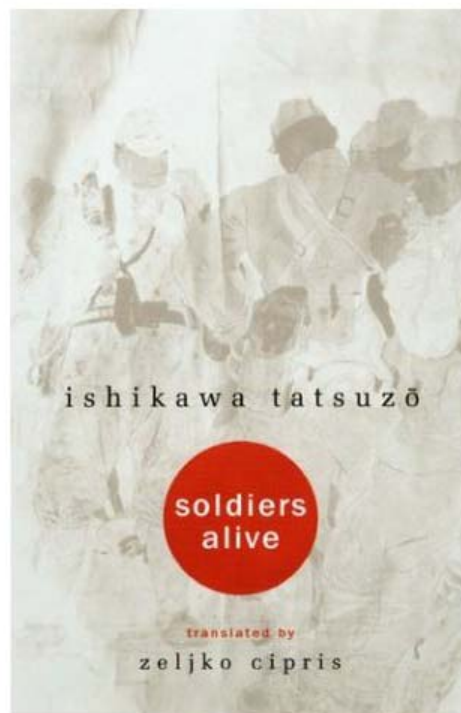
An American soldier then took Gul's camera and deleted the photos. Gul said he later received permission to take photos from another soldier, but that the first soldier came back and angrily told him to delete the photos again.

Gul said the soldier then raised his fist as if he was going to strike Gul.

The U.S. soldiers involved in the attack and ensuing gunfire were part of the U.S.-led coalition, not NATO's International Security Assistance Force. An official who asked not to be identified said the troops were Marine Special Forces.

Lt. Col. David Accetta, a coalition spokesman, said the attack demonstrated the militants' "blatant disregard for human life."

Ishikawa and Kuroshima would understand: insert troops into a hell on earth and there's no way to prevent atrocities. Yet the real fiends in their capital suites are never spattered with a single drop of blood. Solidarity, Z



**“There Is No Way NATO Can
Win This War Now”**

**“How Long Can Any Country
Remain Occupied Against The Will
Of A Majority Of Its People?”**

**“As The British And Russians
Discovered To Their Cost In The
Preceding Two Centuries, Afghans Never
Liked Being Occupied”**

The Taliban is growing and creating new alliances not because its sectarian religious practices have become popular, but because it is the only available umbrella for national liberation.

The insurgents now control at least twenty districts in the Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan provinces where NATO troops have replaced US soldiers. And it is hardly a secret that many officials in these zones are closet supporters of the guerrilla fighters. The situation is out of control.

February 27, 2007 By TARIQ ALI, CounterPunch [Excerpts]

It is Year 6 of the UN-backed NATO occupation of Afghanistan, a joint US/EU mission.

On 26 February there was an attempted assassination of Dick Cheney by Taliban suicide bombers while he was visiting the ‘secure’ US air base at Bagram (once an equally secure Soviet air base during an earlier conflict). Two US soldiers and a mercenary (‘contractor’) died in the attack, as did twenty other people working at the base.

This episode alone should have concentrated the US Vice-President’s mind on the scale of the Afghan debacle.

In 2006 the casualty rates rose substantially and NATO troops lost forty-six soldiers in clashes with the Islamic resistance or shot-down helicopters.

The insurgents now control at least twenty districts in the Kandahar, Helmand, Uruzgan provinces where NATO troops have replaced US soldiers. And it is hardly a secret that many officials in these zones are closet supporters of the guerrilla fighters.

The situation is out of control.

At the beginning of this war Mrs Bush and Mrs Blair appeared on numerous TV and radio shows claiming that the aim of the war was to liberate Afghan women. Try repeating that today and the women will spit in your face.

Who is responsible for this disaster? Why is the country still subjugated? What are Washington's strategic goals in the region? What is the function of NATO?

And how long can any country remain occupied against the will of a majority of its people?

Few tears were shed in Afghanistan and elsewhere when the Taliban fell, the hopes aroused by Western demagoguery did not last too long.

It soon became clear that the new transplanted elite would cream off a bulk of the foreign aid and create its own criminal networks of graft and patronage.

The people suffered. A mud cottage with a thatched roof to house a family of homeless refugees costs fewer than five thousand dollars. How many have been built? Hardly any. There are reports each year of hundreds of shelter-less Afghans freezing to death each winter.

Might Afghanistan have been made more secure by a limited Marshall-Plan style intervention?

It is, of course, possible that the construction of free schools and hospitals, subsidised homes for the poor and the rebuilding of the social infrastructure that was destroyed after the withdrawal of Soviet troops in 1989 could have stabilised the country. It would also have needed state help to agriculture and cottage industries to reduce the dependence on poppy farming. 90 percent of the world's opium production is based in Afghanistan. UN estimates suggest that heroin accounts for 52 percent of the impoverished country's gross domestic product and the opium sector of agriculture continues to grow apace.

All this would have required a strong state and a different world order.

Only a slightly crazed utopian could have expected NATO countries, busy privatising and deregulating their own countries, to embark on enlightened social experiments abroad.

Instead a quick-fix election was organised at high cost by Western PR firms and essentially for the benefit of Western public opinion. The results failed to bolster support for NATO inside the country.

Hamid Karzai the puppet President, symbolised his own isolation and instinct for self-preservation by refusing to be guarded by a security detail from his own ethnic Pashtun base. He wanted tough, Terminator look-alike US marines and was granted them.

And so elite corruption grew like an untreated tumour. Western funds designed to aid some reconstruction were siphoned off to build fancy homes for their native enforcers..

In Year 2 of the Occupation there was a gigantic housing scandal. Cabinet ministers awarded themselves and favoured cronies prime real estate in Kabul where land prices reached a high point after the Occupation since the occupiers and their camp followers had to live in the style to which they had become accustomed.

Karzai's colleagues built their large villas, protected by NATO troops and in full view of the poor.

Add to this that Karzai's younger brother, Ahmad Wali Karzai, has become one of the largest drug barons in the country.

At a recent meeting with Pakistan's President, when Karzai was bleating on about Pakistan's inability to stop cross-border smuggling, General Musharraf suggested that perhaps Karzai should set an example by bringing his sibling under control.

While economic conditions failed to improve, NATO military strikes often targeted innocent civilians leading to violent anti-American protests in the Afghan capital last year.

What was initially viewed by some locals as a necessary police action against al-Qaeda following the 9/11 attacks is now perceived by a growing majority in the entire region as a fully-fledged imperial occupation.

The Taliban is growing and creating new alliances not because its sectarian religious practices have become popular, but because it is the only available umbrella for national liberation. As the British and Russians discovered to their cost in the preceding two centuries, Afghans never liked being occupied.

There is no way NATO can win this war now.

Sending more troops will lead to more deaths.

NATO's failure cannot be blamed on the Pakistani government. If anything, the war in Afghanistan has created a critical situation in two Pakistani provinces.

The Pashtun majority in Afghanistan has always had close links to its fellow Pashtuns in Pakistan.

The border was an imposition by the British Empire and it has always been porous. Attired in Pashtun clothes I crossed it myself in 1973 without any restrictions. It is virtually impossible to build a Texan fence or an Israeli wall across the mountainous and largely unmarked 2500 kilometre border that separates the two countries. The solution is political, not military.

Washington's strategic aims in Afghanistan appear to be non-existent unless they need the conflict to discipline European allies who betrayed them on Iraq. True, the al-Qaeda

leaders are still at large, but their capture will be the result of effective police work, not war and occupation.

What will be the result of a NATO withdrawal?

The NATO occupation has not made this task easy. Its failure has revived the Taliban and increasingly the Pashtuns are uniting behind it.

The lesson here, as in Iraq, is a basic one.

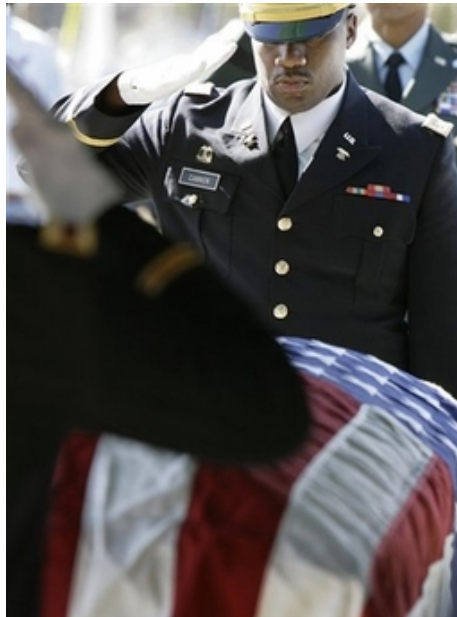
It is much better for regime-change to come from below even if this means a long wait as in South Africa, Indonesia or Chile.

Occupations disrupt the possibilities of organic change and create a much bigger mess than existed before.

Afghanistan is but one example.

TROOP NEWS

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



The casket of Army Staff Sergeant Carl L. Seigart in Picayune , Miss., Feb. 22, 2007. Seigart died on Feb. 14, 2007, in Iraq when an improvised explosive device exploded near the vehicle he was in. (AP Photo/Alex Brandon)

**“I Have Tons And Tons Of Friends
That Were In The Military At The Time
Who Knew I Was Gay Because I
Confided In Them”
“Everybody Had The Same Reaction:
‘What’s The Big Deal?’”**



Former Marine Eric Alva is lobbying for repeal of the military's "broken policy" on gays.
(By Lois Raimondo -- The Washington Post)

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro and D, who sent this in.]

February 28, 2007, Jose Antonio Vargas, The Washington Post

Once a Marine, always a Marine. That pretty much sums up the life of retired Sgt. Eric Alva, who was sworn into the Marine Corps at 19, stationed in Somalia and Japan and lost his right leg when he stepped on a land mine on March 21, 2003, the first day of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

As the war's first injured soldier, Alva was an instant celebrity.

He was on "Oprah."

President Bush awarded him the Purple Heart.

Donald Rumsfeld visited.

And strangers in Alva's native San Antonio still insist on paying for his dinner at Chili's.

Last fall Alva, 36, contacted the Human Rights Campaign, the gay rights group, and asked to be involved in its lobbying effort. Today he'll stand alongside Rep. Martin Meehan (D-Mass.) when he introduces a bill to repeal the military's "Don't ask, don't tell" policy on gay, lesbian and bisexual military personnel.

Q. Why didn't you come out sooner?

A. Eventually my notoriety -- "the injured soldier" -- will wear off. And I can almost hear it now -- "Oh, yeah, he's that gay Marine." I'm okay with that.

The truth is, something's wrong with this ban.

I have to say something. I mean, you're asking men and women to lie about their orientation, to keep their personal lives private, so they can defend the rights and freedoms of others in this country, and be told, "Well, oh, yeah, if you ever decide to really meet someone of the same sex and you want the same rights, sorry, buddy, you don't have the right." That's one factor. The other factor is, we're losing probably thousands of men and women that are skilled at certain types of jobs, from air traffic controllers to linguists, because of this broken policy.

You come from a military family?

I come from a family of servicemen. My dad, Fidelis, is a Vietnam vet. My grandfather, also named Fidelis, was a World War II and Korean War veteran. I was named after them. My middle name is Fidelis. Fidelis means "always faithful."

What does sexual orientation -- gay, straight, bisexual -- have to do with being a soldier? A Marine?

First, thanks for recognizing that I am a Marine.

Second, to answer your question, I have tons and tons of friends that were in the military at the time who knew I was gay because I confided in them.

Everybody had the same reaction: "What's the big deal?" . . .

The respect was still there. Your job is what you're doing at its best.

Your personal life, your private life, is something you do after work.

What's funny is, when I was based in San Diego, Calif., people would go to a gay club and everyone would have a haircut like mine. They had their dog tags on. But come Monday morning, nobody talked about it, nobody dealt with it, everybody was back to work.

So when you were applying to be a Marine in 1990, before "Don't ask, don't tell" was implemented, the application asked for your sexual orientation?

It did.

What did you put down?

I lied, I lied. The lying is what I hated most -- why I had to do it, why I had to keep on doing it, the toll it took on me.

You're wearing a wedding band. What do you tell people when they ask you about your wife?

That happens all the time. It just happened on my way here to Washington, waiting on the plank as I boarded a plane. This very nice woman next to me said she recognized me. She looked at my ring and asked about my wife. I told her I have a partner. His name is Darrell. She paused and said, "Good for you."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP

Iraqi President's House On Fire In Baghdad

March 4 (KUNA)

Iraqi President Jalal Talabani's house in Baghdad caught fire Sunday, Iraqi security source said.

The security source did not give details on the incident nor the cause of fire, adding that ambulances and civil defense people rushed to the scene.

Last month, Talabani suffered a health setback but his condition was stable, and later improved when he was sent immediately to hospital in the Jordanian capital.

Assorted Resistance Action

03/04/07 AP & Reuters

Two policemen were killed and three hurt in clashes the northern Iraqi city of Mosul, police said. Fighting broke out when insurgents opened fire on a police checkpoint, said Brig. Abdel-Karim Khalaf, spokesman for police in Nineveh province.

Another policeman was killed and two others wounded when militants opened fire on a police station in the Iraqi capital's Azamiyah neighborhood police said. Security forces responded by doing house-to-house searches nearby, but found nothing.

A roadside bomb exploded near an Iraqi army patrol, killing four soldiers in a village near Baquba, 65 km (40 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

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

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

MIA---> Missing In America



Homeless Vietnam Veteran in San Francisco 2003.

From: Mike Hastie

To: GI Special
Sent: March 04, 2007
Subject: MIA---> Missing In America

MIA---> Missing In America

Homeless Vietnam Veteran in San Francisco 2003.

Fast forward 10 years, and America will be a culture in chaos.

Some people say it is happening right now.

What you see now, is the early stages.

By 2017, there will be martial law in many cities across America.

Why?

Because most people thought it would never happen here.

They thought the Iraq War would just go away.

It finally did-- in the poverty streets of America.

One of the last things I saw before I left Vietnam, was a brutal suicide by a U.S. soldier.

He was a heroin addict.

He blew his brains out--everywhere.

That has stayed with me for 36 years.

And the soldier who woke me up to tell me that this soldier had shot himself in Charlie Troop, was loaded on heroin himself.

INSANE!

America, listen to your veterans.

Before it is too late.

Put your, "Stop The War Shoes On."

March.

Like your life depends on it.

Because,

it does.

Mike Hastie

U.S. Army Medic

Vietnam 1970-71

March 4, 2007

March!

Photo from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

Say That Again

From: Dennis Serdel
To: GI Special
Sent: Subject: Say That Again

By Dennis Serdel, Vietnam 1967-68 (one tour) Light Infantry, Americal Div. 11th Brigade, purple heart, Veterans For Peace 50 Michigan, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, United Auto Workers GM Retiree, in Perry, Michigan

Say That Again

**Iraqi puppet toy soldiers
marching in a line
putting bayonets on
and then thrusting kill
puppets are aiming with used up guns
to shoot their fellow men
with funny green uniforms
they all look the same
capitalist pigs want their
Iraqi puppet toy soldiers
to fight and die for them
bullets just missing
a puppet toy's head
and a bomb at the corner
a head laying there
body parts all over
even humpty dumpty's doctors
can't put them together again
so they hire more
puppet toy soldiers
plastic Iraqi GI joes
only joining for money but
when the fighting comes down
they run the other way
causing big curly tails
on piggy banks shaking
the idiots invading
when nobody asked them
now they want the county's
own people to kill their own people
like puppet toy soldiers
without any brains
so American Soldiers
won't die and get wounded**

because the American people
don't like the war.

MILITARY RESISTANCE

From: Nick Mottern
To: GI Special
Sent: March 01, 2007 9:26 PM
Subject: MILITARY RESISTANCE

“DEATH” OF CONGRESS SHIFTS WEIGHT OF WAR RESISTANCE MORE HEAVILY ON MILITARY

By Nick Mottern, Director, ConsumersforPeace.org

One can argue that Congress died as a representative body on Feb. 16-17, 2007 when it went on record as doing nothing to withdraw U.S. forces from Iraq. Statements of the Democratic leadership about the war since then can be compared to the chattering of microbes in a cadaver.

The Congressional Iraq failure made it even more clear that Congress will not block an attack against Iran, despite mounting evidence that such an attack is likely within a few months if not weeks.

And nothing can be expected from Congress to reduce U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan, which, in the shadow cast by the death toll in Iraq, is becoming a war and occupation with no foreseeable end, a war possibly spreading into Pakistan. Indeed, the Afghanistan Plus war seems to have wide support in the Congress.

Impeachment, a possible war deterrent, say two Congressional aides of anti-war Congresspeople who prefer to remain anonymous, is not on a back burner, it is not even on the stove.

Thus, in the absence of representative government, the task of ending the U.S. occupation of Iraq, and escalation of violence generally, is falling immediately, directly and heavily on the shoulders of those whom the military is trying to recruit and those already in the military. Put simply: No soldiers, no war.

This development is exemplified in the February 13 “Appeal to Conscience” of retired Army Col. Ann Wright, issued at a time when it was becoming clear that Congress would very likely not reverse the escalation of any of the wars:

“I appeal to the conscience of US Air Force and US Navy pilots and military personnel who command cruise missiles and pilot bombers and those who plan the missions for the pilots and missile commanders. I ask that they refuse what I believe will be unlawful orders to attack Iran.”

The shift in antiwar burden to the military is also seen in the report in The (London) Sunday Times of February 25:

“Tension in the Gulf region has raised fears that an attack on Iran is becoming increasingly likely before President George Bush leaves office. The Sunday Times has learnt that up to five generals and admirals are willing to resign rather than approve what they consider would be a reckless attack.”

The newspaper said also that: “A generals’ revolt on such a scale would be unprecedented.”

It is also important to note that on February 23, the US Army refiled charges in its widely publicized case against First Lt. Ehren Watada for refusing to deploy to Iraq and for conduct unbecoming an officer, accusing him of making statements critical of the war or George W. Bush on four occasions. Lt. Watada faces six years in prison. His first trial ended in a mistrial earlier in February. At that time he planned to testify that he wanted to avoid committing war crimes by fighting in an illegal war.

The current political situation presents a huge challenge to anti-war groups to undertake sustained systematic grassroots education, particularly among people most involved in the wars or likely to be involved. This likely means long-term plans for touring in low-income rural as well as urban areas and to military bases, with education relying on personal contact and not dependent on press coverage.

At least three major tours/campaigns are now being organized to begin to address this need.

Before discussing them, however, it is important to note that the next major national event in anti-war mobilization, marking the fourth anniversary of the invasion of Iraq, will be a rally for ending the war and for impeachment on Saturday, March 17 at the Pentagon. While the rally, organized by ANSWER, is directed at Congress, it also is intended to inspire local organizing, bringing people from more than 200 communities across the country to Washington.

The rally will give a major push to impeachment, incorporating the message of Impeach 07, a group of organizations that came together in February to try to force Congress to undertake impeachment, in large part to create additional pressure on the Bush/Cheney Administration to stop war.

On the same day as the march on the Pentagon, Veterans for Peace and [Iraq Veterans Against The War] will hold an anti-war demonstration at Fort Bragg in Fayetteville North Carolina, followed the next day by workshops and presentations. During the remainder of the month, Veterans for Peace will conduct a bus tour visiting five other military bases in the South. Members of Iraq Veterans Against the War will also participate. (See itinerary below.)

Also on March 17, the national Make Hip Hop Not War Tour will begin with the march on the Pentagon in Washington, DC and then get underway for the University of New Hampshire in Manchester. Over the next month it will visit at least 16 cities and towns from coast to coast and back, concluding April 21 in Baltimore, Maryland.

One of the main goals of the tour is to: "Create a new network of young people, primarily from low-income communities and communities of color to respond to calls for action against war and nuclear proliferation." One aspect of the tour, which will use a bus, will be "Community Drive-bys' in conjunction with door-to-door canvassing by local partner organizations where the bus will add 'street value' to traditional outreach."

(See itinerary below.)

In an extremely important development, Iraq Veterans Against the War is beginning to organize a national campaign that will, according to a draft fund-raising letter:

"1. Mobilize active duty service members to resist the illegal occupation of Iraq,
"2. Amplify the voices of veterans who say that this war is not winnable, and
"3. Persuade young people considering military service that they should think twice before serving in this war."

The campaign will begin with weekend training sessions for IVAW members. "At these intensive retreats," the letter says, "our members will learn about the strategic concepts of our campaign and how they can be turned into practical opportunities for action at the local level."

The campaign will focus on National Guard troops as well as regular military as these troops are expected to be engaged in increasing numbers. The Guard is also facing new rules allowing "back to back" deployment.

For more information on this campaign contact www.ivaw.org.

[Comment: T: IVAW's plans to reach out to troops are clearly focused: The following is an excerpt from a longer message to IVAW members:

[31 January 2007

[Dear Iraq Veterans Against the War

[In the coming year, Iraq Veterans Against the War will use our inside knowledge of and experience with the military to reach out to active duty, National Guard, and Reserve men and women, as well as to recent veterans and youth. Of all the systems continuing to feed the war machine, the military is the one that we are most qualified to challenge. We will seek to empower and give a voice to those still in the military by doing outreach to major military bases and armories, creating new chapters, and effectively using messaging and advertising to let our troops know about IVAW.

[Some of the specific objectives we discussed during the retreat included launching a "counter-retention" initiative to encourage G.I. resistance by a refusal to re-enlist; shutting down the popular on-line video game "America's Army" (Possible headline: "IVAW Shuts Down 'America's Army'); and forming five new chapters on or near military bases.

[Peace,

[Kelly Dougherty

[Executive Director

[Iraq Veterans Against the War]

In addition to these actions, Citizen Soldier has established the Different Drummer Café outside Fort Drum in Watertown, NY. The café was established, says www.differentdrummercafe.org: “to provide active duty and reserve military personnel and families...with an inviting, comfortable and warm place to socialize, listen to music and enjoy other live entertainment. Soldiers will also have access to legal counseling, a bookstore, and a regular program of film showings and discussions on current issues.”

Ann Wright will be appearing at the Different Drummer on March 9 at 7 p.m.

(Perhaps the most popular film with respect to military resistance to war is “Sir, No Sir”, which gives a remarkable history of troop resistance to the Viet Nam War. The film shows the breadth and depth of this resistance, which I believe has not be documented before in such an accessible way for the general public. See www.sirnosir.com.)

Finally, GI Special provides a daily report on military resistance to the Iraq War, including news from Iraq and commentaries by troops. It is run by Thomas Barton at thomasfbarton@earthlink.net. GI Special issues are archived at www.militaryproject.org.

VETERANS FOR PEACE TOUR March 17 – 31

- 17 - Fayetteville, North Carolina (Fort Bragg) Mass demonstration.
- 18 - Fayetteville, NC – Workshops and presentations. Evening vigil at Market House on Hay St.
- 19 - At Fayetteville. Film and discussion – First Christian Church (1505 Fort Bragg Rd.) – 7 p.m.
- 20 - Depart Fayetteville for Ft. Jackson, SC (170 miles)
- 21 - Depart Ft. Jackson for Ft. Stewart, Savannah, Georgia (160 miles)
- 22 - Depart Ft. Stewart for Mayport/Jacksonville Naval Air Sta. (140 miles)
- 23 - Depart Jacksonville for Ft. Benning, Georgia (290 miles)
- 24 - Depart Ft. Benning for Maxwell-Gunter AFB, Montgomery, AL (90 miles)
- 25 - Depart Montgomery for Pascagoula, MS, via Mobile, (210 miles)
- 26 - 31 - Assist in Katrina rebuilding in Pascagoula.

Plans for the tour are developing on a daily basis. Monitor www.veteransforpeace.org

HIP HOP CAUCUS MAKE HIP HOP NOT WAR TOUR March 17 – April 21

March

- 17 – March on the Pentagon
- 21 – Manchester, NH (University of New Hampshire)
- 22 – Boston, MA
- 24 – New York, NY (Columbia University)
- 27 – Greensboro, NC (North Carolina A&T)
- 29 – Orangeburg, SC (South Carolina State)

April

- 1 – Atlanta, GA (Morehouse and Spellman College)
- 4 – Memphis, TN (University of Memphis)
- 8 – Crawford, TX (Camp Casey)
- 9 – Phoenix, AZ (University of Phoenix)
- 10 – Los Angeles, CA
- 11 – San Francisco, CA (University of California)
- 14 – Des Moines, IA (Iowa State University)
- 17 – Chicago, IL
- 18 – South Bend, IN (University of Notre Dame)
- 20 – Pittsburgh, PA
- 21 – Baltimore, MD (Morgan State University)

For specifics on the tour monitor www.hiphopcaucus.org

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



The branches of Bush's government

[Thanks to Katherine GY, The Military Project]

With Iraq War Money “You Could Buy Health Insurance For 139 Million People, All Of The Nation’s Uninsured For The Next Three Years”

February 14, 2007 By Deborah Burger, San Bernardino County Sun. [Excerpt] (Deborah Burger, RN, is president of the California Nurses Association)

Imagine for a moment how else we could have spent \$589 billion, the amount already devoured by the war in Iraq, plus the administration's funding request for the next two years.

With those same dollars, you could buy health insurance for 139 million people, all of the nation's uninsured for the next three years. Or you could fund the current federal program of spending on HIV/AIDS anti-retroviral drugs for the next 60 years. Or you could cover the cost of educating an additional 39.2 million registered nurses.

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:. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

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)

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

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/qispecial/2006/index.html>;

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

http://www.traprockpeace.org/qi_special/; <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=-6&l=e>;

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

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