

GI SPECIAL 5G20:

**Back In The Trenches:
A Perspective:**

**“The Only Solution To This War,
Much Like The War In Vietnam, Will
Be For The Soldiers To Organize
Against It, And End The War From
Within”**

**“When Lower Ranking Soldiers,
Sergeants, And Even Officers Largely
Oppose The War In Iraq, It Becomes
Clear That A Widespread Resistance Is
Beginning To Foment Under The Surface
Of The Army’s Ordered And Regimented
Façade”**

I asked the Sergeant, “No politician will end this war. So who do you think should?”

Another soldier listening in between sips of beer answered out of nowhere, “We should. We should all just refuse to fight in this shit. No fucking way could they give every single soldier in the Army a fucking court-marshal for refusing to fight. They ain’t got enough JAG’s to pull it off! Can’t keep going on forever anyways!”

The Sergeant didn’t seem to disagree, but he just silently shook his head as he sipped his beer.



**From: J.D. Englehart [Iraq Veterans Against The War]
To: GI Special
Sent: July 22, 2007
Subject: Reaching Out To U.S. Troops In Germany**

Germany was more or less exactly the way I left it back in 2005. On the train rides in between major cities, it was refreshing to see beautiful rolling green hillsides with deep dark forests so thick as to practically be impenetrable. Along the way, one would see quaint little villages interspersed with the beautiful countryside, with archaic stone castles towering above them from hilltops.

In Frankfurt, Nuremberg, and Berlin it was a pleasure to be amongst a people and its aura with so much history and culture. I felt almost relieved having come back in Europe, Germany being almost like a second home to me.

This time, I felt quite comfortable coming back as a civilian. In many aspects, I was reliving Germany under a different light.

It was amazing not to constantly feel that wringing in your gut, that horrible nauseous feeling that you were an American soldier in a foreign land, and inevitably headed to the war in Iraq.

As a civilian, it was comforting knowing that I could this time come to Germany as a representative of an organization back home that I could take great pride in, *Iraq Veterans Against the War*.

Instead of being a soldier stationed in Germany, I would be an antiwar American diplomat, pushing the soldiers/veterans movement to all corners of the world.

I liked that aspect of my journey very much. But our trip to Germany was much more than sightseeing and touring ancient castles.

It would prove to be an enduring and emotionally draining undertaking meeting with active duty soldiers in environments that created animosity and confusion.

It was not easy to walk into Joe-bars and sneak onto post with an antiwar philosophy on militarism and a visual distaste for authority. Our ability to crack the wall of mistrust in soldiers proved to be difficult.

However, we soon realized that being completely straightforward with an already disillusioned crowd would give us many opportunities to talk candidly with soldiers, most of who warmed to our presence immediately.

My experience with soldier outreach in Germany was an inspirational one.

I learned that sometimes the most genuine resistance towards the forces of oppression can be found in the least expected, far away places.

Soldiers stationed in Germany seemingly live under a cloak of obfuscation.

Being so far away from their home and a language and culture that they know and understand, soldiers are left with only *The Military* for sustenance, comfort, and a peace of mind. In Germany, the heavy air of discontent surrounding the Iraq War is not as prevalent as it is in the United States.

The protests that the antiwar left conducts in America are largely unseen by soldiers stationed in Germany, and are therefore unknown.

Some soldiers I had talked to were completely unaware of *Iraq Veterans Against the War*, and once aware of such group, were suddenly motivated and encouraged towards antiwar sentiments.

Being suddenly exposed to dissident thought seemed to spark a prairie fire in the minds of some soldiers we encountered.

The biggest advantage that the Army has in Germany, aside from strategic proximity to foreign countries, is that the Army chain of command has almost *no* difficulty placating and subduing its soldiers into an obedient mindset. With soldiers being so far away from American influence, the Army can much easier mould and indoctrinate its soldiers while living and operating in protected social bubbles...their perfect, little Army societies.

For example, I can recall a time while I was a soldier in Germany when the Army very blatantly and purposely lied to the soldiers under its command.

One day, during our closing formation before the weekend, our company commander warned all us soldiers to stay away from Nuremberg that Saturday. His explanation was that there was a Nazi rally scheduled that day, and soldiers were to stay away from any trouble that may ensue.

Of course, my friends and I adamantly despising Nazi-punks, decided to attend and ridicule the protestors.

However, once at the rally, we saw none other than anarchists-- brandishing black flags, wearing black masks, holding anti-imperialist signs, and burning American flags— holding a protest against the imminent invasion of Iraq.

Far from the commander's description, the protest that was held was of anarchist origin, the complete opposite of what you would expect at a Nazi rally.

The Army either was willfully ignorant of the politics of anarchists, or decided to lie to its soldiers lest they be subjected to anti-imperialist, anti-American propaganda.

The US military abroad can easily instill fear, loyalty, and subservience in its soldiers at a level difficult to achieve stateside.

Which is why it is indicative that when lower ranking soldiers, sergeants, and even officers largely oppose the war in Iraq, it becomes clear that a widespread resistance is beginning to foment under the surface of the Army's ordered and regimented façade.

The Army's presence in other countries, in Germany especially, presents an entirely different dynamic to the antiwar movement. While leftist thought is rampant in that country, soldiers surrounded by it are cut off from its leanings by an overly protective military atmosphere.

The idea that the US army in Germany was extremely paranoid by four antiwar veteran/activists proves that the soldiers stationed there are extremely vulnerable to antiwar tendencies, so much that desertion and AWOL in that environment is a major concern for them.

If there is one important lesson that I learned from my trip to Germany, it is that soldiers stationed overseas are widely ignored by the media and activist circles here at home.

While antiwar talk is becoming more commonplace on our television and in our communities, the notion of antiwar sentiments found with soldiers in Germany is sometimes forgotten.

The United States has over 700 bases in around 130 different countries. With some 250,000 uniformed soldiers, sailors and Air Force personnel stationed sporadically throughout these locations, it is testament to the overwhelming size of our empire's military.

While it is unfortunate that the media does not amply cover the activities of the military in these countries, it is a mistake for the antiwar movement to ignore the enormous amount of soldiers stationed overseas.

It is perhaps true that some of the most fervent and dedicated antiwar veterans today at one time had served in one or several other foreign countries, including Iraq and Afghanistan. In some cases, being exposed to other cultures and a whole array of new ideas and philosophies helped to solidify the antiwar/anti-imperialist that veteran activists carry today.

During the Vietnam War, the unpopularity of the war and the savagery that soldiers were exposed to combined to create an environment for soldiers to radicalize and collectively organize from within.

During that time, wherever the US military established its forces, an equal or greater counter-force operated through GI coffee shops, antiwar newspapers, or on-base soldier unions.

The ability for dissent to travel to every corner of the United States Empire created a situation of rebellion that spiraled out of control, providing soldiers the opportunity for outright combat refusal and a break down of military bearing.

Today's military empire is no different, and neither are its soldiers.

As the Occupation of Iraq becomes more of a bloodbath and controversy, so too will the radicalization of GIs become more common and prevalent.

The only solution to this war, much like the War in Vietnam, will be for the soldiers to organize against it, and end the war from within.

We can help create the conditions for open rebellion in the military, but only if we are determined to reach out to active duty soldiers not only within our own borders, but in other countries as well.

The fuse is set for GI resistance across the globe, all it needs is the spark of support from a nurturing antiwar movement at home to ignite this struggle, and bring the war machine to its knees.

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Back In The Trenches: Memoirs Of American Soldier Outreach In Germany, May 2007

By Jeff Englehart, Iraq Veterans Against the War

To anyone paying attention, it is now clear that the Iraqi Occupation is an American travesty and a tumultuous whirlwind of violence that rages horribly out of control.

Even the American media, typically known to embellish pretentious accounts of success in Iraq, has been singing a different tune. A tune that suggests that the US has found itself in a situation where victory in Iraq seems nil, and that a continued military presence there will only bring about more civilian death, destruction, and scores more of American soldiers fruitlessly killed for oil and empire.

Political pundits, even in the most conservatively hawkish tones, now speak openly in doubt of our current strategy in Iraq.

Former Generals publicly accuse the President of horrible mismanagement of the war while speaking candidly for policy change. Presidential candidates denounce the Bush administration for purposely misleading the country into war and promise an immediate withdrawal if elected in 2008.

Everyone with something to gain in DC is pimping the war for their own political agendas, and to speak openly against the war has never been so popular.

However, to the soldier in Iraq who sees a country gone to hell and with the chances for personal survival greatly decreasing with each ambush and roadside bomb, all this antiwar rhetoric back home is all talk and no show.

Ironically, as the depth and extent of action against the war is usually limited only to public discussion and debate, the soldier brave enough to speak out against the war finds her/his voice routinely silenced and ignored.

To keep the truth of the war conveniently hidden from the public mind, a concerned military silences the soldier's voice through draconian punishments meant to scare dissident thought into submission.

In mainstream American discourse, talking heads and antiwar "activists" arrogantly ignore the soldier's voice, as if such testament may bring about a truth far too ugly for most citizens to confront on the level.

This is why in May, after being invited to Germany to participate in outreach to active duty Army soldiers, I decided to jump at the opportunity.

I felt that such a prospect would be beneficial in better understanding the mentality of antiwar soldiers at this stage of the war.

In addition, as a member of *Iraq Veterans Against the War* (IVAW), it would be a huge step to represent IVAW in the European theater and hopefully incite awareness of the soldiers' and veterans' movement to end the Iraq War immediately.

But most intriguing to me was the hope to actually meet soldiers stationed far away from home, who would soon be headed to yet another mission in Iraq.

I felt that I understood their situation completely. Three years ago, I too was in their situation. While stationed in Germany for almost four years, the Army had deployed me to Kosovo for nine months in 2003, only then to stop-loss me in 2004 and send me to Iraq for one year during Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

This trip to Germany, for me, was not to be for grandiose sightseeing tours to medieval castles.

Far from it, my intention overseas was to meet with these soldiers and show them that there were dedicated veteran-activists back home who cared about their plight.

Most importantly, the key stratagem in going overseas was to help provide active duty soldiers the insight and tools needed to organize from within the war machine to end the occupation of Iraq.

Within one week of getting the call, myself and three other members from IVAW were boarding a plane, anxious and excited, headed back to a turbulent chapter of my life to meet with soldiers and help them organize.

Ansbach

Our first stop off the plane was a quaint barbeque in the town of Ansbach. Located about 25 miles southwest of Nuremberg, the town of Ansbach has a German population of around 50,000 and is also home to the 12 Combat Aviation Brigade, part of the famous V Corp, stationed just outside of town on the post Storck Barracks.

The German groups who invited us there, the *Ansbach Peace Coalition* and the *Stop The War Brigade*, welcomed us with German schnitzels and good Franconian wheat beers. During our backyard dinner, we discussed the politics of the war in Iraq, Germany's complicity in supporting the war, and how the US installation in Ansbach affected the local community. We soon discovered that much like in America, Ansbach residents critical of the war were accused of "anti-Americanism" and hindering foreign relations with the United States.

In reality, the *Ansbach Peace Coalition* was uncomfortable with their government's infraction of Article 26 of the German constitution, which stated that no war of aggression should ever be declared by the state of Germany, nor shall it participate in such wars by lending assistance from German soil. America's blatant use of its German bases to deploy troops and equipment to Iraq and Afghanistan, and the German government's willful indifference to such, is a direct contradiction to the People's Constitution.

Exacerbating the problems further was the US military's intentions to expand Storck Barracks onto a nature preserve protected under German law. This aspect of the US's presence in Ansbach was widely unpopular amongst its residents. As we talked, I glanced around the conversation to observe the members of the *Ansbach Peace Coalition*. None of them appeared hostile in any way, but rather looked much like any peaceful gathering of families and neighbors one may encounter on a Sunday evening in any suburb in America.

"Funny," I said aloud, "None of you look like anti-American zealots or terrorists one may expect to find lurking in the shadows, holding bombs and sneaking through some dark alleyway."

“Oh no! Certainly not,” a stoic and calm Boris, from the *Ansbach Peace Coalition* retorted. “In my home town of Ansbach, I have met many, many good Americans over the years. Many have been soldiers. I know they are but instruments of a democracy from their own home. My heart aches to know the pain they go through in Iraq. I want them to live. I want Iraqis to live. I want your politicians to end the war now!”

After a quiet puff on his cigarette Boris added, “You know, Americans are always welcomed in Deutschland. Just please, Please! Leave your weapons at home.”

It all made perfect sense to me.

**Conversation At The Gazebo:
“We Handed Him An *Iraq Veterans Against The War* Pamphlet.
He Told Us He Was Damned Proud Of Our Organization And
What We Stood For”**

The following night, our IVAW contingent went to downtown Ansbach to check out the local soldier-watering hole. The name of the bar was *The Gazebo*. Fitting, I thought, as in my experience in the Army, gazebos were the perfect place to take a smoke break, bullshit with your battle-buddies, and break up the monotony of slaving away in the motor pool.

As we entered, the ambiance of the establishment hit me like a ton of bricks. Indeed, *The Gazebo* was what we called in Germany a “Joe bar.” A Friday night, soldiers from wall to wall, sporting high’n tights, flirting with German girls and just generally drinking to forget. Some things never change.

The feeling in there was tense. None of the soldiers I glanced over seemed genuinely happy with their current state of affairs. I felt nervous, like we were being watched. Sure enough, an IVAW companion spoke into my ear that we were definitely out of place. Many of the soldiers studied our movements, looking us up head to toe. We must have certainly stood out as foreign elements as our shaggy hair, beards, and counter-culture clothing attire conflicted greatly with our conservative surroundings.

With IVAW literature hidden in our backpacks, we decided it was at first best to grab a pool cue and attempt to fit in.

At length, we eventually engaged in conversation with a few soldiers standing around the pool tables. One, a young Specialist door gunner, began talking about the war.

“You know, it’s fucked up man!”

“Yeah, what’s that?”

“Well, I just got back from Iraq, and here it is, just under a year later, and here we go again.”

“Whaddya do over there, anyways?”

“I’m a door gunner on a Blackhawk. I can’t even remember how many missions I did, I quit countin’ em. No point! They had us in the air all the goddamn time, doing all sorts of stupid missions.

“A lot of escorting brass. Funny shit, man! They would fly these mother fuckers from one green zone to another. It’s not like we were droppin’ them off in the middle of Baghdad. Their time in a combat zone, in the fucking shit, was when they were flying over it, safe and sound! And then they have the balls to tell Rumsfeld and reporters that Iraqi stabilization is going according to plan, that we’re well on our way to winning this fucking war!”

“Yeah, it’s fucked up, man,” said the door gunner, carelessly taking shots at the cue ball,

“The press is only getting one side of the story over there, the General’s side. Fuck that! If reporters were to ask the grunt on the ground, Americans at home would be crying themselves to sleep every night. Iraq ain’t so pretty once you ask a soldier what he thinks about fighting for *Freedom and Democracy!*”

The Specialist continued his drunken tirade, “Yeah, this one time...oh man get this...this one time some stupid fucking Colonel gets off the bird at some FOB. Nothing new there. But this one time the dumbass gets off the chopper and leaves his fucking M-4! Just left it sitting there on the seat! So we get back, its late at night, I’m dog-tired, I’m in my room chillin’, when all of a sudden they tell us to get back on, some fucking Colonel forgot his weapon and we gotta go take it back to him!”

“Ha! Do ya think some General read him his article 15 for that?”

“What the fuck do you think, man? Hell no! So we land, and some lieutenant comes running out to meet me half way on the tarmac. So I got this here M-4 of his, I say, ‘Here you are, Sir, one gold-plated M-4 for the commander’. He looks at me, grabs this weapon, runs off saying nothing more than ‘Thanks, Specialist. The Colonel sure appreciates it.’

“Thanks for what? Your ass is out here at 2:30 in the morning, just like me, on a top-secret mission to return some Colonel his rifle before the fucking *Stars and Stripes* finds out about it. You know what happens to me if I leave my M-9 just sittin’ around...field grade Article-15, man. I lose my rank, my pay, they probably pull me off the gun...its fucked man. The whole army, its all jacked up!”

At this point, I ask him what he thinks about the war.

“Its bullshit. All of it. Ain’t no use of being there except to line all of Bush’s buddies with billions and billions of dollars. Terrorism. Yeah, that’s why we’re there, alright...*Our* brand of terrorism. American terrorism. Hey man, whaddya think its called when you blast a neighborhood of civilians with bombs and 50 cal from the sky? Whaddy think its called when you rain hell-fire and brimstone from the sky, with just the push of a button?”

I answer, "Terrorism?"

"You're fucking goddamned right."

Eventually the door gunner went home. Said he was drunk and didn't feel like chasing away his depression with booze until the early morning hours.

But before he walked out, we handed him an *Iraq Veterans Against the War* pamphlet. He told us he was damned proud of our organization and what we stood for.

He was glad we had decided to come all the way to Germany. He then said he was going to tape the pamphlet on his wall, above his bed. There it was, in bold three inch black lettering... "IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR".

He said he hoped that his First Sergeant would come in one day and see it. It might have him doing "Hey you" details for a month, but he didn't care.

"Fuck'em", he said, "I don't care about this bullshit and what they think about it anymore!"

Our conversation with the door gunner was an inspirational beginning to our journey, but *The Gazebo* would prove to be a tough venue in which to meet antiwar soldiers. One soldier gave us the cold shoulder, and told us that he didn't want to hear our "commie bullshit."

In another instance, a couple of soldiers were open to talk about where we all had served and what jobs we did in the Army. However, when getting on the topic of where they stood on the Iraq war, they were much more hesitant.

They audaciously told us that they had "been given orders not to talk to American activists that would be coming to town," suggesting that press conferences we would be holding for the German press later that week tipped off their chain of command as to our presence in Ansbach.

Finding conversations with soldiers and passing out IVAW literature eventually landed us right in the middle of a confrontation with Gazebo bouncers, as they crumpled and tore our flyers and physically shoved us out the door.

The neanderthalic approach of the bar security almost erupted into a violent clash between them and us four disgruntled war vets, and certainly did not give the impression we hoped to put off to observant soldiers.

The encounter left a bitter taste in my mouth, and immediately my suspicions pointed to the 12th CAB's chain of command. However, after smoking a cigarette and waiting for a cab, I realized that the owners of *The Gazebo* were capitalists pure and true. They probably supported the war effort more than any other business in Ansbach.

A whole brigade of morose and bitter soldiers provided *The Gazebo* with thousands of euros in bar tabs, despite the inconvenience of weekly fistfights and tears in the beers. Money talks, and what proprietor of such a soulless enterprise would be ok with a bunch

of “leftist-wackos” inside his establishment, assuaging his customers and turning them away from their hired-hit man profession that was bringing in so much profit? On a strictly capitalist-minded level, it made perfect sense.

The German peace groups were surprised to hear about the outburst. They had hoped that we could help to turn the place into an “antiwar coffee house” of sorts, eventually seeing *The Gazebo* evolve into a breeding ground for clandestine communication and dissent.

But it was not to be. Not while the establishment provided soldiers with cheap booze, bad pop-music, and throes of floozies to hit on. It was just another Joe-bar, and would never likely provide the energy of antiwar subversion needed to motivate soldiers into organizing against the war.

Not that the clientele there were incapable of questioning the war.

On the contrary, our conversation with the door gunner left us with the impression that those were the standard sentiments within his unit.

However, with a chain of command watching the joint and an ownership adamantly opposed to sober and thoughtful soldiers, *The Gazebo* was a place that would not likely take kindly to our presence again. Besides, the bouncer made damn sure we understood that we were never welcome back, shaking his ape-like fist in the air to confirm it.

With that in mind, we decided to alter our approach in meeting soldiers.

We had plans on getting inside the military base later that week, but first we needed to test the waters a bit more. We needed to find a much more relaxed medium. Somewhere less tense, which encouraged a carefree and happy atmosphere. The following night we found exactly what we needed when happening across the annual Spring Festival.

Next, The Spring Festival; “No Fucking Way Could They Give Every Single Soldier In The Army A Fucking Court-Marshal For Refusing To Fight”

German festivals are like the carnival that comes to your hometown. Good food, great beer, bumper cars and coin-toss, except that they smell better and you don’t feel as dirty or ripped off when you get in your car to leave.

Once again, we didn’t show up for the fun and games. I knew from experience that soldiers flock to these events, perhaps for the entertainment, or maybe because the nostalgia reminds them of home. At any rate, we headed into the beer tents, IVAW literature in hand, hoping to find a pack of soldiers to speak with.

Sure enough, we came across a group of about a dozen American soldiers or so. There they were, drinking and laughing merrily.

It brought back memories from my own experience in Germany, living life to the fullest before you go sacrifice it over in Iraq.

This time we had no hesitations about talking to the soldiers, as the festival atmosphere seemed relaxed and far from scrutinized.

We figured a blunt and direct introduction was in order. As one of the soldiers was walking beers-in-hand back to his buddies, I approached him with an IVAW flyer and asked,

“Hey man, are you an Iraq veteran against this war?”

He looked at me baffled, as though surprised at what I was actually saying to him in American English, “Well, uh, I’m not quite a veteran yet, but yeah, I’m against this fucking war!”

From there the dialogue flowed naturally. I told him that I was also stationed in Germany not more than two years ago, and had been deployed to Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom II.

My IVAW companions and I showed him the pamphlets we had, told him that IVAW was a growing organization of Iraq War veterans committed to ending the illegal war of aggression and bringing all of our brothers and sisters home immediately.

He had no idea that IVAW even existed.

As the young soldier stared down at the IVAW pamphlet in his hand he exclaimed, “Oh man! Where the fuck have you guys been?! This is fucking awesome! Hey, if you want to talk to some guys that hate the army as much as you do, you should go talk to my buddies over there!”

He pointed in the direction of his friends behind me. As I turned around, I saw a whole group of them sitting at the end of a long wooden table. They were eyeing us over, looking to see what crazy asshole was holding up their friend with the beers.

We confidently strode over to the soldiers. They immediately started questions in our direction.

“Who are you guys?”

“You American?”

“What’s that you got in your hand?”

I spoke up, “Hey guys, I’m Jeff, I’m an Iraq war veteran from the States. These guys here are my friends, they too are veterans of this war. We’re here representing a group called Iraq Veterans Against the War. You should know about us. It could be in your best interests.”

I felt as though my introduction was somewhat arrogant and contrived. I can't stand sounding like a businessman. So quickly, I added, "Fuck this war, man! We're here to get to know the soldiers tied up in this shit. We're here 'cause we wanna help you."

At that, we started handing out fliers. The first soldier we met was doing a good job of talking us up, "These guys were in Iraq while you were Saar'nt, the first time, 2004, right?"

The Sergeant replied, "Fuck yeah. We had it easier then. Haji's didn't really know an RPG from the hole in their ass. Now shit's all fucked up. They can nail Kiowas with eyes closed now."

I asked him where he was in 2004.

"Oh fuck man, I was just about everywhere. Baghdad, Tikrit, Balad, Falluja..."

That's where the Sergeant trailed off. I asked him what he did over there. He told us he was an Eighty-eight Mike. A truck driver. He took a sip from his giant mug of beer, then continued with his story,

"It was pretty fucked up, man. Never knew what the fuck we were doing. They'd tell us, 'OK, here's your convoy, you'll have escorts, you gotta git to Tikrit.' But you don't know what the hell you escortin', and then it turns out you ain't got no escort at all.

"You got some pouge attachment in ratty-ass humvees and only two of 'em have crew-serves, and those two crew-serves are nothin' but some old ass M-60's, no 50 cal's, hell, even we had a couple of 50 cal's, but here we are, haulin' ass down some crowed streets with a full load, hitting cars and runnin' haji off the road, but again, we don't know what the fuck we're haulin', till we get to Tikrit turns out the fucking trailers we were haulin' were goddamned empty!"

"You're kidding me, they had you hauling empty connexes?"

"Yep. Only to load up some other empty connexes and bring 'em back to where we started."

The large bodied Sergeant took a long pull off his beer and continued, in almost hushed tones, "You see, a lot of these guys here ain't never been to Iraq. I'm an E-6, some of these guys here are my soldiers. I tell 'em here, 'Hey, I can drink with y'all and we can all have a good time, but once we git down there, if you think I'll be fuckin' around, you're wrong. If you're thinkin' I won't put a boot in your ass, you're wrong.' See, some of these guys, they're still kids. But they won't be when they come back, don't matter how old or young they are."

We told him we understood. When we all came back from Iraq, we had all changed. Most of our membership in IVAW still has issues, big and small, directly related from the war. We asked the sergeant why he continues with this shit,

"Why don't you get the fuck out, man?"

“Look,” the Sergeant replied, “I really ain’t got no family back home. I’m single. I’ve been in Germany for almost six years now. I just re-enlisted myself.

“What the fuck am I gonna do if I go back? Naw, my place is here. I brought back all my soldiers from the last time I was there. I ain’t sayin’ I’m fucking Rambo or nothin’, I’m just sayin’ that I know what to expect down there. I know what ambushes look like before they happen. I have gut feelings when we come across IEDs. These guys don’t. I want them to come home, even if it means I don’t. That’s really all that matters to me, is gettin’ these guys home alive!”

“But what do you think about the war? Do you really want to keep going over there?”

“Well hell no I don’t! I know, I keep sayin’ ‘Fuck this shit’. I know it’s about oil. My guys know it’s about oil. Ain’t no illusions about this shit, man. Maybe when Bush gets outta office shit will be different, maybe it won’t. Maybe Americans really want that oil more than they ever thought they would. Maybe America is addicted to oil, maybe they just need it more than anything. Hell, I don’t know.

“But is it worth all these guys gittin’ killed over it? No. But until the means of the war outweighs the ends, until so much blood is on our hands that America drowns in it, then I don’t see no way out.”

I agreed with him on that.

I asked the Sergeant, “No politician will end this war. So who do you think should?”

Another soldier listening in between sips of beer answered out of nowhere, “We should. We should all just refuse to fight in this shit. No fucking way could they give every single soldier in the Army a fucking court-marshal for refusing to fight. They ain’t got enough JAG’s to pull it off! Can’t keep going on forever anyways!”

The Sergeant didn’t seem to disagree, but he just silently shook his head as he sipped his beer.

“Take a look at this material here,” breaking the silence as I continued, “Again, we’re a growing organization of veterans who want to bring you guys home. Enough is enough!”

“I can understand if you guys want to stay in the army, we’re not trying to tell you not to be in the army, and IVAW is NOT anti-soldiers, by the way.

“But these politicians, these crooks and war criminals, they’re putting you guys in bad situations, dangerous situations, both morally and physically. Think about it.

“We’re not asking you to go AWOL or nothing, that would be stupid. But at least look at these pamphlets, check us out on the internet, and help us out however you can, because we want to work with smart guys like you to shut this war down.”

At that, the group took the flyers. One soldier said, "Hey how many you got? I'll pass them out everywhere."

We advised him to be careful, in fact, suggested otherwise. We reminded him that as a soldier in the United States military, you have the right to have possession of one copy of printed material, but multiple copies suggests distribution, and could land you facing UCMJ charges.

"Oh I know, man," the soldier answered, "but fuck 'em. What are they gonna do, send me to Iraq? Again?! Fuck 'em. I ain't gonna get caught anyways. All I want is to give 'em to some friends of ours."

With that, we handed him a whole bundle of IVAW pamphlets. I asked the Sergeant if he was OK with it.

"Yeah, I ain't got no problems with it. Just don't tell anyone I OK'd it. In fact, when you *do* get caught, Wendell, I wasn't even here, got it?"

"Roger, Saarn't."

"And hey," the Sergeant told me, holding out his hand, "Give me a couple, too."

The Bloody Details On How To Get On To The Army Post.

A few days had gone by after our encounter at the Spring Festival. We had to take care of the usual formalities associated with the work of stopping an illegal war of aggression, greed, and empire. We were escorted to meetings with German political parties sympathetic to our work. We attended informal get-togethers with reporters, and were present at drawn-out and overly dramatic press conferences. It was all designed to build up interest and esteem in the community for a major protest planned on the last day of our stay in Germany, right outside the front gates of Storck Barracks.

The day before the protest was to occur, our IVAW contingent got together in a private meeting and planned out the bloody details on how to get on to the Army post.

Once there, we planned to pass out IVAW literature while our IVAW ally Adam Kokesh read the "*Ansbach Appeal for Peace*," as well as an invitation for all soldiers to attend the protest outside of their barracks. We planned the action to go down during the lunchtime hours in the Army DFAC, where we hoped to reach as many soldiers in one sitting as possible.

To this day, I still do not personally know what transpired inside that base. I was denied access onto the installation despite my many pleas to utilize--as a veteran of this great country America--their on-base PX facilities.

While I waited outside the gate in a borrowed, unmarked car, the other three comrades of mine made it inside. Apparently, their "still valid" military ID's worked somehow.

What I do know is that Adam read the statement while the other two filmed it and passed out IAW literature. They were then chased off base by some sell-out Sergeant First Class. One from our contingent barely retrieved his passport from the gate security, just before the Sergeant First Class ran up to catch him.

In the white flash and heat of the moment, the only thing I remember seeing in our hasty retreat was the Sergeant First Class, with rent-a-pig security guards in tow, all standing in front of the post, shaking their fists in anger as we sped away in our small Opel hatchback.

(For more details on our Army post infiltration, go to Sergeant Kokesh Goes To Washington http://kokesh.blogspot.com/2007_05_01_archive.html, scroll down to May 17, 2007. Also check out <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JtNEo4SMllg> for live video footage of the action.)

The Demonstration In Front Of The 12th CAB Storck Barracks

At last, the time had come for the demonstration in front of the 12th CAB Storck Barracks.

The Ansbach Peace Coalition came in full regalia, brandishing cardboard signs, banners, and a PA system that would help in addressing the soldiers locked away inside their protected little Army world. As our IAW contingent arrived on scene, members of the Peace Coalition met us with German police officers. We were told that as guests in Germany, we would have the freedom of speech and assembly as guaranteed to all German citizens.

Nevertheless, there were exceptions. We were warned that we would be arrested on site if we attempted to incite a riot or if we used vulgar language and obscenities.

All of this seemed in good order to me, until the officer then added, "Ah und one more z'ing. Ze militaree alzo rekwested z'at wee arrest you eef any of zou eincourage Amerikan soldats to go a'vol or to dezzert."

An IAW ally of ours asked, "Ok, but *will* we be arrested if we encourage them to go AWOL?"

To which the police officer curtly replied, "Z'hat ist up to ze armee's dizkretion."

Mechanically I turned my attention towards the front gate, where a group of uniforms began to form.

As if to compliment the police officer's ominous warning, standing stoically in front of MPs and rent-a-cops was none other than the brigade Command Sergeant Major. He never said a word, nor did anyone even think to talk to him. With eyes that would make a Private soil his fatigues, the CSM stared blazingly at us from across the street, waiting in prone to strike us down.

Command Sergeant Major is a rank that even most high-ranking officers will not dare to confront. Years upon years of taking the Army's abuse with a smile and a *thank you* are

what set aside common people from Command Sergeant Majors, and this one couldn't wait to chew our heads off.

His face read *Patriot*, and his collar screamed *Uncompromised Loyalty*. I had no control over the sense of caution that swept over me. I knew instinctively that we would have to be smart about what we said, for it was coldly obvious from the lines drawn on his brow that the CSM would be looking for any reason he desired to ensure that we would all be spending the night in a German jail cell.

In retrospect, I know now that the static currents of animosity and machismo emitting from the front gate that day was a good sign.

It was proof that, more than anything, the US Army in Germany was frightened at the potential of their own soldiers deserting and vanishing away into a foreign country.

Our mere presence as veterans--as survivors and witnesses--to the unforgivable crimes committed in Iraq was a direct threat to their twisted world of silence, subjugation, and manipulation.

We stood openly proud in *Absolute Opposition* to the war and the Army's compliance to it.

Our group of four *Iraq Veterans Against the War* came all the way to the Army's doorstep in Germany to speak candidly with our fellow brother and sister soldiers. The lines were drawn, and nothing they could do would stop us. And to add insult to injury, we would be speaking sedition right under the nose of their pretentious authority.

The Army, much like any other institution of rule and order, fears greatly what it cannot defeat or control.

Indeed, the army was scared, and rightfully so.

Their means of coercion, conformity, and fear that normally holds together their good order and discipline could soon begin to unravel at the seams.

If history repeats itself, much like it always does, then it seems only rational that when corrupt and conniving politicians declare illegal and immoral wars for profit and power, the time will come when a military's morale will snap and well-conditioned, obedient soldiers will begin to think individually of their role in the madness.

Soldiers are not, and never have been, machines that execute orders unconditionally.

On the contrary, they are human beings.

And historically, when soldiers are forced into a war of oppression, of killing the innocent, of plunder, rape and murder, eventually the moment comes when

soldiers will refuse the mission, will refuse the fight, and sometimes even point their rifles the other way.

Could the simple testimony of a hardened veteran spark the revolution that I had dreamed of during so many grueling nights in Iraq? Was it possible? Could it all start right here, right now?

With hopeful fantasies floating through my head, I decided that it would not be so bad spending a night in jail, let alone an eternity. When my turn came to speak to the soldiers behind the barbed wire fence, I took the microphone with trembling, white-knuckled hands, but spoke with a voice that threw all caution to the wind...

“Thank you for showing up to this little party we have here. Good afternoon Germany. Good afternoon Sergeant Major!

“And to all you soldiers over the wire there, hangin’ out the window of your barracks rooms, an especially big hello to all of you.

“My name is Jeff Englehart. I was a Cavalry Scout with the Big Red One, Third Brigade, out of Vilseck, Germany.

“Listen, I got out of the Army back in May 2005, but not before Rumsfeld stop-lossed me and all my buddies and sent our asses to Baquba, Iraq in 2004. Some of you know that year. Operation Iraqi Freedom II, the year I like to point out that, if there was any heart or mind in Iraq worth winning, well, we lost completely during that mission.

“Whether it was the Battle of Najaf, or Falluja, or Ramadi, or Sammara, or a bogus handover of sovereignty, or a bullshit election, or a torture scandal at Abu Gharib...Yeah, we were all pretty busy that year, and America lost any integrity it once had while we were at it.

“I came all the way over here from the United States on a mission of *Blind Faith*. I wanted to meet active duty soldiers here. I wanted to talk to them, because I knew if anyone would feed me some truth about this war, to be around straight talk again, like the good ol’ days when I was in, it would be you soldiers here.

“Some of you may wonder why I came here to do this. Yeah, I’ve met with active duty back home in the States, but it doesn’t compare to this.

“I remember when I was a soldier here in Germany. Me and my buddies were always in the field, always training to go to Iraq. I know what its like to be so far away from home and how isolated you all may feel right now before you go to Iraq. I know it feels awful lonely being in this situation, and you may be hearing that America supports you in your endeavors, but I know that you know that America is not at war...America’s soldiers are at war...America is at the mall!

“I’m here to say what you cannot say yourselves. I’m here in solidarity with you guys, headed to Iraq only three months from now. I would have loved to be in an antiwar protest outside my barracks, standing up against something I didn’t

believe in. I guess that's kind of my blind faith, what I'm doing here. I'm just trying to do it right this time around.

"I don't see any soldiers over here, on our side of the wire, standing with us to protest this Occupation of Iraq. That's ok. I understand that MP's are blocking the gate. I can see your Sergeant Major leading the pack to silence us and prevent you all from hearing the truth.

"Your chain of command probably told you a little bit about us. No doubt they were lying to you. You see, we're from an organization back home called *Iraq Veterans Against the War*. Sometimes crazy and frightened people claim that we are anti-American. Nothing is further from the truth.

"We're antiwar.

"We're anti-having our brothers and sisters dying needlessly for a war of empire and oil.

"We're anti-soldiers coming home from this horrible debacle only to be denied health care from an ungrateful and reprehensible government.

"We're anti-having our country's good name and reputation throughout the world being smeared and disgraced by greedy and malicious war criminals in Washington, D.C.

"We're anti-the death of scores of thousands of innocent Iraqis being butchered in this senseless war, *in our name* nonetheless.

"So while some may claim that we're anti-American, let me assure you, there's a BIG difference between what *they* say, and what *we* as veterans of this horrible war stand for.

"Its true. Your chain of command is *lying* to you. You know this! The lies start in the Oval Office and they landslide all the way down to you in Iraq. What do you expect? Bullshit rolls down hill.

"But President Bush didn't just lie to you; he's lied to and betrayed an entire country of Americans, over and over, to justify his bloody wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Where was the Iraq-Sadaam connection to 9-11 that put us in Iraq in 2003?

"Where are these mysterious Weapons of Mass Destruction that we were undoubtedly supposed to find in Iraq, the WMD that were never there, just figments of a tyrant's imagination?

"Where is this democracy that we supposedly...benevolently...gave to an Iraq suppressed under a US occupation? Where is the freedom we gave to an Iraq horribly oppressed by a military police state and corrupt puppet government made up from murderers, gangsters, militia heads, and sell-outs?

“Where is the prosperous future we promised an Iraq torn to shreds by our ‘Divide and Conquer’ imperial strategy, creating civil war and ethnic cleaning rarely seen of this magnitude in Mesopotamia?

“Where is the ‘Support for the Troops’ that this criminal administration boasts over and over to a placated American populace? Does Bush consider it ‘Supporting the Troops’ by sending you to a strategically and *morally* failed military adventure in Iraq?

“Does he really ‘Support the Troops’ by sending the most wealthy and powerful army in the world to a guerrilla war with no body armor, no vehicle armor, and in many cases, no drinkable water? Was Rumsfeld ‘Supporting our Troops’ when he indignantly told a National Guard in Kuwait that ‘You go with the army you have, not the army you want’?

“The hypocrisy doesn’t stop there, my friends. When you make a sacrifice to go and fight in Iraq, a concept most other Americans would never dare consider, for the ideals of Freedom, Justice, and Liberty for all, does it not leave a bitter taste in your mouth when you realize that you have been used and deceived?”

“Why is it that mercenary killers in the Blackwater Corporation get paid ten times more than you do, to do the same exact job, but with much better equipment, much cushier living conditions, and with more time off?

“Why is it that Bush and his cabal of criminal goons are lining their pockets with billions of dollars to destroy Iraq, to rebuild Iraq, to privatize Iraq, and to carve out future oil profits for Exxon, Shell, and BP? And all the while doing it in blood of your efforts?

“Why are you fighting and dying over there for no better reason to make our ruling elite trillions of dollars, and giving you nothing more than a broken home, piss-poor veteran benefits, and a real bad case of PTSD?”

“And why are you in Iraq combating freedom fighters when you could be back at home battling the real terrorists of the Minutemen, the KKK, and an ultra-right wing group of criminal thugs known as neoconservative Republicans, who are dismantling the very freedoms and liberties that you signed an oath to protect?

“After World War II, when the Allied Forces defeated Nazi Germany, a war crimes tribunal was held in Nuremberg whereas Nazi commanders were tried and summarily executed for the crimes they committed against humanity. The commanders’ excuse was that they were ‘Just following orders.’ But their excuses were no refuge from the horrible truth of their actions. After being found guilty for crimes against humanity, their executions were but just a sliver of justice done for the enormous amount of death, destruction, and systematic murder wrought on the people of Europe.

“So when the Democratic Party fails miserably in bringing George Bush to justice in impeaching him, I lose faith in their brand of ‘Democracy’ we are forced to accept in this country.

“Besides, impeachment, or merely firing Bush for what he has done, would be by all standards not doing justice to all those killed by his hand.

“And because tyrants in the Bush Administration are guilty beyond all recognition of Crimes Against Humanity and of High Treason as dictated by our American Constitution...

“...true justice would be done if George Bush, Dick Cheney and Donald Rumsfeld were to be tried, convicted, and hanged for their crimes against the world.

“Of course, such an outcome of this charade would be rationally viewed as impossible.

“Indeed, the biggest hypocrisy of all is the government in which you are fighting for.

“Which is why I have come here today to remind you all of your soldier’s duty to America.

“When you signed that oath to join the United States military, you made a promise to defend the United States Constitution from ‘All enemies, both foreign and domestic’.

“Politicians are flawed, and are inherently prone to corruption. Men of power have historically betrayed their fellow citizens out of greed, prestige, and lust for power.

“Our politicians are no different.

“Therefore, it is your duty as protectors of the American way of life to defend our facets of democracy from oppressors who wish to destroy it, even if those oppressors happen to be American, or are in your chain of command.

“And remember, you are an American before you are a soldier. You have an obligation as an American to protect and defend our ideals of liberty and justice, be it soldier or civilian.

“Nothing is more patriotic than ensuring that your country is safe from any attempt to destroy the fabric of our free society.”

At this point, I was briefly interrupted in my tirade when the German M.C. whispered in my ear that police officers were beginning to surround the speaker’s platform.

I took a momentary pause to look the situation over. Sure enough, cops were beginning to form around us, some even speaking privately to my IVAW companions.

I wondered to myself if something I said had triggered them to arrest us. Perhaps I was once again speaking too long, too much, or had spoken too many abrasive statements against the government.

Then I remembered the stern warning from the police officer not to encourage desertion. Across the fence, confined within the protection of their army base, I could see soldiers still perched in the windowsills of their barracks rooms.

Our event here had garnered quite a crowd of soldiers, even if they were not directly within our vicinity. With that in mind, I decided to push the envelope in an alternate direction, one that I hoped the Army would hate to hear, but most likely would not be expecting...

“Again, I can see all you guys hangin’ out in your windows, listening to all this bullshit I’m saying. You may agree with it, or not. But the way I see it, it’s the truth. The war is wrong on all standards, no matter how you look at it, and anyone who says that we’re doing good things over there, that we’re giving them democracy, or fighting the terrorists over there instead of at home is either having a hard time facing reality or is horribly brainwashed.

“But the worst reality to confront is the realization that we do not live in a true democracy, and that the checks and balances of our system do not work. When problems occur in our society, we as citizens do not have the capability to vote out the problem and collectively right the wrongs.

“If that were the case, the overwhelming majority of Americans opposed to this war would have brought you home by now. Unfortunately, that is not the case anymore.

“We live in a capitalist feudalism where the citizens are merely considered consumer cattle and are allowed no true decisions or power to effect change in their society.

“Our freedoms in America are strictly limited to only *The Freedom to Consume*.

“We live in a one party system, where there is NO difference between the two political choices you get to vote for; there is NO political difference between Republicans and Democrats. Both parties behave as puppets to a profit-driven, power mongering system of greed, gluttony, and acquisition.

“And as it stands, you cannot put faith in one party keeping another in check. No! The Democrats, trusted in America to pull you guys out of Iraq, have exactly as much to gain, as well as to lose, by *staying* in Iraq!

“So to think that by staying in, waiting it out, and hoping to survive until it’s all over so you can keep your career in the Army, is ultimately suicidal.

“I know, and have heard it many times from many soldiers, that you guys don’t want to go over there again. For some of you, this will be your first deployment to Iraq. Good luck.

“For the rest of you who’ve been there a couple of times or more, you know as well as I do that your number is up eventually.

“Look at the way that they use soldiers as bargaining chips for the Presidential elections in 2008. That’s all you mean to the politicians in D.C., just another tool in the absurdly maniacal game of power-politics in their twisted world of reality.

“Let me ask you this, how many soldiers will die, how many of YOU will die, until November 2008, when they can decide, at their convenience, whether or not to pull you guys out.

“American soldiers deserve better than this. You put your life on the line for us back at home, and this is how the system treats you. You are disposable to them. The loss of your lives, the pain and grieving your families will endure, is inconsequential to them.

“They are not human. They forgot the meaning of life.

“They only know greed and death. They thrive off pain and suffering, and they won’t even bat an eye to the destruction at their hands. They don’t care about you. They are America’s ruling elite, and you are just another social security number.

“And ultimately, you will be just another name on another wall commemorating yet another war of profit and empire.

“Check this out, your Sergeant Major out here told us that if we, the *Iraq Veterans Against the War*, encouraged you all to desert or go AWOL from your obligations as soldiers in this illegal war, he would have us arrested.

“That’s what your chain of command is most afraid of.

“Without you, they have no war. No more glory. No more combat patches to go around. Ha! Can you imagine what would happen if the whole Army didn’t show up for formation tomorrow?!

“But we are NOT here, at least officially, to encourage you all to desert from the army.

“Hell no! On the contrary, we would rather see all of you *organize* from within, to put a block on your own death sentence, to bring this war machine down!

“No amount of civilian dissent and protest will ever convince these politicians to put an end to this war. And in the event of this war’s conclusion, they will only find another reason to start another war, be it three years from now or thirty!

“What I’m sayin’ is that you cannot expect the course of this war to change. It will only get more deadly, more bloody, longer, and worse. Likewise, you’ll never see any politician in D.C. completely pull any of you out immediately.

“It’s up to you, the gears within the machine, to stop this war where it starts, at the tip of your guns.

“You all need to organize! If you want to live, organize! If you want to stop going to Iraq, organize! Because no one is going to do it for you.

“Organize little, organize big, every effort counts. Talk to your battle buddies about the war. Figure out who’s to blame for putting you in this fucked up situation.

Write flyers! Write antiwar magazines! Write on the internet! Distribute the information! Set up meetings off base! Meet with German activists, write up a plan of attack!

Strike the war machine where it hurts, the jugular of its own hypocrisy and lies!

“This is how it all started some thirty years ago, during the wholly unpopular Vietnam War. Another war of carnage and systematic killing, of greed and empire, brought to its end by the very soldiers who organized against it, who sabotaged its every effort, and eventually who refused to fight it. Without antiwar soldiers and veterans organizing during the sixties and seventies, who knows, we may still be fighting insurgents in Indochina to this very day.

“The United States military is made up of some of the finest and most intelligent men and women in the world.

“We have a long tradition of hard work and ingenuity. We represent some of the finest and most altruistic of human endeavors. Not long ago, we were seen the world over as the harbingers of freedom and liberty, and our values were respected and admired immensely.

“Its time we put an end to the madness and brutality of our occupation in Iraq. Our government’s policies of imperialism, war, destruction, and of brutal oppressions in third world countries completely contradict the American values we were born into.

“If an oligarchy of corrupt politicians cannot see the error of their ways, then it is up to us, as soldiers and veterans of this horrible war, to organize and force them to own up. True patriots follow the values of freedom that America should represent, not the orders of gangsters and crooks.”

With that, I concluded my rant. I looked around once again, and noticed that the cops had backed away from their advance on the microphone. The Command Sergeant Major never altered his expression of grumpy indifference through out the entirety of speech, but nonetheless withstood his post at the entrance to the base.

With adrenaline coursing through my veins from the most confrontational stance I had ever taken against the Army in my life, I handed the microphone back to the M.C. and resumed my place in the protest under a shady spot provided by a small sapling tree.

My nerves felt on edge from the encounter, and I needed to sit down and silently collect my thoughts. The protest concluded while I sat by myself, the other IVAW members brilliantly denouncing the war over the P.A. The threat of arrest from the German police slowly subsided, and members from the *Ansbach Peace Coalition* seemed gleefully pleased with the outcome of their protest at the base.

But while I sat in solitude at the outer fringe of the crowd, I became suddenly concerned that our words as peaceniks and antiwar veterans perhaps may have fallen on deaf ears.

I wondered greatly if what we said would have any impact on the soldiers/veterans movement.

Would our plea for organized resistance work as well as it had in our tumultuous American past, from Haymarket to the fall of Saigon?

Life in these ominous times always seems at the point of collapse.

With the war in Iraq raging furiously everyday, a war with Iran forebodingly over the next horizon, and an administration in Washington stubbornly obsessed with their disastrous path, no time for a massive resistance was better.

Would a complacent American populous and a suppressed military enlistment respond to a call to arms? Only time of course, would tell.

The protest outside Storck Barracks that day concluded our stay in Germany.

The following day, as we were waiting at the Frankfurt airport for our departure flight to the United States, an IVAW companion decided to kill some time by checking his email in an internet café located in the terminal.

Shocked with enthusiasm, our cohort-in-thoughtcrime insisted that I immediately read an email, sent from a soldier who was present at the demonstration at Storck Barracks that day. His message was short, but very inspirational...

“To The Iraq Vets Against The War,

I was in the barracks yesterday when you had your protest against the war. You guys are doing a good thing.

Me and some friends were listening to your speeches and we couldn't agree more. You're also right that its completely fucked up, that guys in Blackwater make ten times as much as we do to do the same job. It's bullshit. As soldiers, we don't get any respect for what we do.

I know that there are protests in America all the time. Before I was stationed out here, I knew they were happening close by but I didn't care too much about it. I thought they were ungrateful for the sacrifice American soldiers are making over there, like they didn't appreciate us or what we do.

Now I know I was wrong.

After I got back from Iraq, I really felt like we were screwed over by these politicians that have no clue what they're doing.

You're right, they don't care about us at all. We could get blown up tomorrow, and they wouldn't give a fuck.

When I get out of here I'm going to start going to protests back stateside. We have to end this war!

I also heard about you guys sneaking on post to read your statement in the chow hall. I wasn't in the chow hall when you read it, but you should know that it was fucking awesome!

A lot of my friends were there, and they told me all about it.

You really pissed off our sergeants! Its great that you were there.

The pamphlets you handed out are really getting around. I think a lot of guys are reading them.

And I know a lot of guys really agree with what you said.

Well, I just wanted to let you know that you guys are doing a good thing. Please keep it up!

And tell your buddies back home, there are a lot of pissed off soldiers over here!

**Peace!
Soldier X**

PS. If you guys ever wanna come back to Ansbach and need to get back onto post, get ahold of me. I have a key to the back gate and could let you in!"

The email was touching.

All the doubts I had after giving my speech the day before evaporated like a fog being lifted from my eyes.

If only just this one soldier got it, and would at least begin to start questioning the war, then the protest was not a lost cause. Far from it, from the tone of this soldier's email, it sounded as if the sentiments expressed were common across the board.

No longer did I feel any reservations about speaking out to soldiers.

I knew intrinsically that the young Americans caught in the deadly web of Iraq know better than any vapid media mouthpiece or two-faced politician just how lost the war really is.

Troops Invited:

What do you think? Comments from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to 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.

THIS IS THE ENEMY: BRING THE WAR HOME NOW



(AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais)

One day while I was in a bunker in Vietnam, a sniper round went over my head. The person who fired that weapon was not a terrorist, a rebel, an extremist, or a so-called insurgent. The Vietnamese individual who tried to kill me was a citizen of Vietnam, who did not want me in his country. This truth escapes millions.

**Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 13, 2004**

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