

## GI SPECIAL 5L10:

# The Soldiers Truce: A Hidden History From The First World War



**German and British soldiers fraternize – Christmas 1914**

[Thanks to 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]

**“To many, the end of the war and the failure of the peace would validate the Christmas cease-fire as the only meaningful episode in the apocalypse.**

**“It belied the bellicose slogans and suggested that the men fighting and often dying were, as usual, proxies for governments and issues that had little to do with their everyday lives. A candle lit in the darkness of Flanders, the truce flickered briefly and survives only in memoirs, letters, song, drama and story.”**

December 1, 2005 by John V. Denson, 2005 LewRockwell.com [Excerpts]

**The Christmas Truce, which occurred primarily between the British and German soldiers along the Western Front in December 1914, is an event the official histories of the “Great War” leave out, and the Orwellian historians hide from the public.**

Stanley Weintraub has broken through this barrier of silence and written a moving account of this significant event by compiling letters sent home from the front, as well as diaries of the soldiers involved. His book is entitled *Silent Night: The Story of the World War I Christmas Truce*. The book contains many pictures of the actual events showing the opposing forces mixing and celebrating together that first Christmas of the war.

This remarkable story begins to unfold, according to Weintraub, on the morning of December 19, 1914:

**“Lieutenant Geoffrey Heinekey, new to the 2ND Queen’s Westminster Rifles, wrote to his mother, ‘A most extraordinary thing happened. . . Some Germans came out and held up their hands and began to take in some of their wounded and so we ourselves immediately got out of our trenches and began bringing in our wounded also. The Germans then beckoned to us and a lot of us went over and talked to them and they helped us to bury our dead. This lasted the whole morning and I talked to several of them and I must say they seemed extraordinarily fine men . . . . It seemed too ironical for words. There, the night before we had been having a terrific battle and the morning after, there we were smoking their cigarettes and they smoking ours.” (p. 5)**

Weintraub reports that the French and Belgians reacted differently to the war and with more emotion than the British in the beginning. The war was occurring on their land and “The French had lived in an atmosphere of revanche since 1870, when Alsace and Lorraine were seized by the Prussians” in a war declared by the French. (p. 4).

**The British and German soldiers, however, saw little meaning in the war as to them, and, after all, the British King and the German Kaiser were both grandsons of Queen Victoria. Why should the Germans and British be at war, or hating each other, because a royal couple from Austria were killed by an assassin while they were visiting in Serbia?**

However, since August when the war started, hundreds of thousands of soldiers had been killed, wounded or missing by December 1914 (p. xvi).

It is estimated that over eighty thousand young Germans had gone to England before the war to be employed in such jobs as waiters, cooks, and cab drivers and many spoke English very well. It appears that the Germans were the instigators of this move towards a truce.

**So much interchange had occurred across the lines by the time that Christmas Eve approached that Brigadier General G.T. Forrestier-Walker issued a directive forbidding fraternization:**

***“For it discourages initiative in commanders, and destroys offensive spirit in all ranks . . . Friendly intercourse with the enemy, unofficial armistices and exchange***

***of tobacco and other comforts, however tempting and occasionally amusing they may be, are absolutely prohibited.” (p. 6–7).***

**Later strict orders were issued that any fraternization would result in a court-martial.**

Most of the seasoned German soldiers had been sent to the Russian front while the youthful and somewhat untrained Germans, who were recruited first, or quickly volunteered, were sent to the Western Front at the beginning of the war. Likewise, in England young men rushed to join in the war for the personal glory they thought they might achieve and many were afraid the war might end before they could get to the front. They had no idea this war would become one of attrition and conscription or that it would set the trend for the whole 20TH century, the bloodiest in history which became known as the War and Welfare Century.

**As night fell on Christmas Eve the British soldiers noticed the Germans putting up small Christmas trees along with candles at the top of their trenches and many began to shout in English “We no shoot if you no shoot.”(p. 25).**

The firing stopped along the many miles of the trenches and the British began to notice that the Germans were coming out of the trenches toward the British who responded by coming out to meet them. They mixed and mingled in No Man’s Land and soon began to exchange chocolates for cigars and various newspaper accounts of the war which contained the propaganda from their respective homelands.

**Many of the officers on each side attempted to prevent the event from occurring but the soldiers ignored the risk of a court-martial or of being shot.**

**Some of the meetings reported in diaries were between Anglo-Saxons and German Saxons and the Germans joked that they should join together and fight the Prussians.**

The massive amount of fraternization, or maybe just the Christmas spirit, deterred the officers from taking action and many of them began to go out into No Man’s Land and exchange Christmas greetings with their opposing officers.

Each side helped bury their dead and remove the wounded so that by Christmas morning there was a large open area about as wide as the size of two football fields separating the opposing trenches.

**The soldiers emerged again on Christmas morning and began singing Christmas carols, especially “Silent Night.” They recited the 23RD Psalm together and played soccer and football. Again, Christmas gifts were exchanged and meals were prepared openly and attended by the opposing forces.**

**Weintraub quotes one soldier’s observation of the event: “Never . . . was I so keenly aware of the insanity of war.” (p. 33).**

The first official British history of the war came out in 1926 which indicated that the Christmas Truce was a very insignificant matter with only a few people involved. However, Weintraub states:

**“During a House of Commons debate on March 31, 1930, Sir H. Kinglsey Wood, a Cabinet Minister during the next war, and a Major ‘In the front trenches’ at Christmas 1914, recalled that he ‘took part in what was well known at the time as a truce. We went over in front of the trenches and shook hands with many of our German enemies. A great number of people (now) think we did something that was degrading.’**

**“Refusing to presume that, he went on, ‘The fact is that we did it, and I then came to the conclusion that I have held very firmly ever since, that if we had been left to ourselves there would never have been another shot fired. For a fortnight the truce went on. We were on the most friendly terms, and it was only the fact that we were being controlled by others that made it necessary for us to start trying to shoot one another again.’**

**“He blamed the resumption of the war on ‘the grip of the political system which was bad, and I and others who were there at the time determined there and then never to rest . . . Until we had seen whether we could change it.’ But they could not.” (p. 169–70)**

**Two soldiers, one British and one German, both experienced the horrors of the trench warfare in the Great War and both wrote moving accounts which challenged the idea of the glory of a sacrifice of the individual to the nation in an unnecessary or unjust war.**

**The British soldier, Wilfred Owen, wrote a famous poem before he was killed in the trenches seven days before the Armistice was signed on November 11, 1918.**

He tells of the horror of the gas warfare which killed many in the trenches and ends with the following lines:

***If in some smothering dreams you too could pace  
Behind the wagon that we flung him in,  
And watch the white eyes writhing in his face,  
His hanging face, like a devil’s sick of sin;  
If you could hear, at every jolt, the blood  
Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,  
Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud  
Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues – My friend, you would not tell with  
such high zest  
To children ardent for some desperate glory  
The old Lie: Dulce et decorum est  
Pro patria mori.***

(The Latin phrase is translated roughly as “It is sweet and honorable to die for one’s country,” a line from the Roman poet Horace used to produce patriotic zeal for ancient Roman wars.)

**The German soldier was Erich M. Remarque who wrote one of the best anti-war novels of all time, entitled *All Quiet On The Western Front*, which was later made**

into an American movie that won the Academy Awards in 1929 as the “Best Movie” of the year.

He also attacked the idea of the nobility of dying for your country in a war and he describes the suffering in the trenches:

*“We see men living with their skulls blown open; We see soldiers run with their two feet cut off; They stagger on their splintered stumps into the next shell-hole; A lance corporal crawls a mile and half on his hands dragging his smashed knee after him; Another goes to the dressing station and over his clasped hands bulge his intestines; We see men without mouths, without jaws, without faces; We find one man who has held the artery of his arm in his teeth for two hours in order not to bleed to death.”*

I would imagine that the Christmas Truce probably inspired the English novelist and poet, Thomas Hardy, to write a poem about World War I entitled “The Man He Killed,” which reads as follows:

*Had he and I but met  
By some old ancient inn,  
We should have sat us down to wet  
Right many a nipperkin!*

*But ranged as infantry,  
And staring face to face,  
I shot at him as he at me,  
And killed him in his place.*

*I shot him dead because – Because he was my foe,*

*Just so: my foe of course he was;  
That’s clear enough; although*

*He thought he’d ‘list, perhaps,  
Off-hand like – just as I – Was out of work – had sold his traps – No other reason  
why.*

*Yes, quaint and curious war is!  
You shoot a fellow down  
You’d treat if met where any bar is,  
Or help to half-a-crown.*

Many leaders of the British Empire saw the new nationalistic Germany (since 1870–71) as a threat to their world trade, especially with Germany’s new navy.

**The idea that economics played a major role in bringing on the war was confirmed by President Woodrow Wilson after the war in a speech wherein he gave his assessment of the real cause of the war.** He was campaigning in St. Louis, Missouri in September of 1919 trying to get the U.S. Senate to approve the Versailles Treaty and he stated:

**“Why, my fellow-citizens, is there (anyone) here who does not know that the seed of war in the modern world is industrial and commercial rivalry? . . . This war, in its inception, was a commercial and industrial war. It was not a political war.”**

Weintraub alludes to a play by William Douglas Home entitled *A Christmas Truce* wherein he has characters representing British and German soldiers who just finished a soccer game in No Man’s Land on Christmas day and engaged in a conversation which very well could represent the feelings of the soldiers on that day.

**The German lieutenant concedes the impossibility of the war ending as the soccer game had just done, with no bad consequences – “Because the Kaiser and the generals and the politicians in my country order us that we fight.”**

**“So do ours,” agrees Andrew Wilson (the British soldier)**

**“Then what can we do?”**

**“The answer’s ‘nothing.’ But if we do nothing . . . like we’re doing now, and go on doing it, there’ll be nothing they can do but send us home.”**

**“Or shoot us.” (p. 110)**

The Great War killed over ten million soldiers and Weintraub states, “Following the final Armistice came an imposed peace in 1919 that created new instabilities ensuring another war,” (p. 174). This next war killed more than fifty million people, over half of which were civilians. Weintraub writes:

**“To many, the end of the war and the failure of the peace would validate the Christmas cease-fire as the only meaningful episode in the apocalypse.**

**“It belied the bellicose slogans and suggested that the men fighting and often dying were, as usual, proxies for governments and issues that had little to do with their everyday lives. A candle lit in the darkness of Flanders, the truce flickered briefly and survives only in memoirs, letters, song, drama and story.” (p. xvi).**

He concludes his remarkable book with the following:

**“A celebration of the human spirit, the Christmas Truce remains a moving manifestation of the absurdities of war. A very minor Scottish poet of Great War vintage, Frederick Niven, may have got it right in his ‘A Carol from Flanders,’ which closed,**

***O ye who read this truthful rime***

***From Flanders, kneel and say:  
God speed the time when every day  
Shall be as Christmas Day. (p. 175)***

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## IRAQ WAR REPORTS

# **“We’ll Not Send Another Son Over There To Die” South Suburban Resident On 2nd Tour Killed By Bomb In Iraq**

December 7, 2007 BY COURTNEY GREVE, Southtown Star

The last time DeWayne White called home from Iraq, his mother was staring at a crimson sunset unlike any she had ever seen.

“Baby, you should see this sky,” Sandra Miller told her eldest soldier son.

“It’s so beautiful. I wish you were here to share this with me.”

They talked a few minutes more about nothing in particular. Then White signed off with a trademark “see ya” and his breathy, staccato laugh.

“I can hear his laughter,” Miller said, her eyes puffy and bloodshot. “I hope I don’t lose that sound.”

Pvt. White, 27, of Country Club Hills, was killed Tuesday when the vehicle in which he was riding was struck by an improvised explosive device in Bayji, Iraq.

Another 101st Airborne soldier, Sgt. Eric J. Hernandez, 26, of New Jersey, was also killed. A third infantryman, Capt. Adam Snyder, of Florida, died Wednesday from injuries suffered in the blast.

It was Pvt. White’s second tour in Iraq. The Army private and his Fort Campbell-based 1st Brigade Combat Team were deployed in September.

“We are so proud of him,” his mother said, pulling his Army portrait from the pages of her Bible.

Pvt. White’s younger brother DeShaun was hours away from boarding a flight for his second tour in Iraq when he learned of his older brother’s death.

The military granted DeShaun White, an Army specialist, an emergency leave and put him on a plane home.

“I have a bond with the guys going over there,” DeShaun said. “I feel bad I won’t be there with them, but I feel worse about what happened to my brother.”

Chester Miller, stepfather of DeWayne, DeShaun and their sister Nekita, said DeShaun will not return to a combat assignment.

“We’ll not send another son over there to die,” said Miller, a police officer in south suburban Phoenix.

The soldiers’ father, Lenell White Jr., is retired from the U.S. Air Force. The boys grew up admiring his uniform and playing with toy guns, DeShaun White said.

The brothers joined the Army together in November 2004.

In their first tour in Iraq, a yearlong stretch that began in September 2005, they were stationed 35 miles apart and never saw each other.

“DeWayne wouldn’t talk about the casualties or the danger because he didn’t want us to worry,” said his mother, who works as a private mortgage insurance processor in Downers Grove.

Pvt. White grew up in Chicago’s Woodlawn community and attended Curie High School. When his mother and stepfather moved to Country Club Hills during his senior year, he earned his GED and trained to be a welder through a Job Corps program.

For the next few years, he worked a series of jobs in Tennessee, Kansas and the south suburbs.

It was during one of his stints in Clarksville, Tenn., that Pvt. White met his wife, Synaca. They were married in February. The Millers missed the celebration because of a snowstorm in Chicago.

The snow was also falling Tuesday when they got the news of his death. Sandra Miller was a passenger in her cousin’s car when Synaca White called.

“She said, ‘Mom, there’s been an accident in Iraq,’ “ Miller recalled. “Then she said DeWayne didn’t make it.”

Pvt. White loved to dance, draw cartoons of hip-hop characters and play pool. He adored the family’s dog, a Rottweiler named Zeus. And he did a dead-on impression of Donald Duck, his siblings said.

His family remembered how willing Pvt. White -- a broad-shouldered man who stood 6-foot-2 -- had always been to help others.

Country Club Hills lowered the American flag flying outside city hall to half-staff Thursday.

Pvt. White is also survived by a stepsister, Kimberly Highsmith, and a stepbrother, Chester Miller Jr.

Services are pending.

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## **U.S. Military Vehicle Blown Up; Casualties Not Announced**



Damaged U.S. armoured vehicle after it was hit by a roadside bomb attack in Latifiya, 50 km (31 miles) southwest of Baghdad December 12, 2007. REUTERS/Thaier al-Sudani

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## **REALLY BAD PLACE TO BE: BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW**



U.S. soldiers with 1st Platoon, Alpha Company, I-327th Infantry 1st Brigade Combat Team, 101st Airborne Division Air Assault, set up concertina wire to close a road after discovering a homemade explosive during a patrol in Baiji November 24, 2007. REUTERS/Stefano Rellandini

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## AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

### **Two Foreign Occupation Soldiers Killed, Three Wounded; Nationality Not Announced**

December 12, 2007 The Associated Press

Two NATO soldiers were killed and three others were wounded when a roadside bomb struck their convoy, the alliance said. NATO did not disclose the nationalities of the victims or give the exact location of the blast. Most of the NATO troops in the east are American.

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## TROOP NEWS

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



A U.S. Army doctor bandages the arm of a soldier wounded by a roadside bomb at Ibn Sina Hospital in Baghdad Dec. 13, 2007. (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

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# **Rotten Shits Who Wouldn't Let Iraq Veterans Against The War March In Veterans Day Parade Surrender; "We Have Engaged The Politics Of Intolerance And Injustice, And They Have Been Vanquished On The Field Of Battle"**

December 01, 2007 Jan Allan Ruhman, Vetspeakblog.blogspot.com [Excerpts]

**As the point man for VetSpeak.org in San Diego, California; I have been working on the issue of the Iraq Veterans Against the War, Veterans for Peace and Military Families Speak Out having been denied the right to march in the 2007 Veterans Day Parade in Long Beach, California.**

A clear and blatant attempt to marginalize and silence through denial, and by inference, and to question the motives, impugn the reputation, and call into question the Patriotism of unwelcome, yet knowledgeable and experienced Veterans, Active Duty GI's and Military family members with whom they disagree politically.

A tactic employed all too often in our public discourse and one that does a disservice to all Americans.

Since my presentation before the Long Beach City Council, following Veterans Day 2007, on Tuesday November 13, 2007, was posted on VetSpeak.org and sent out as a "call to action" to individual Veterans, Veterans groups and their supporters, you all have rallied to the cause and forwarded the link on to friends and family nation wide.

**The result of which was, that the Mayors Office, City Council Members Offices and the Parade Committee Chairperson were inundated with telephone calls and letters.**

Our call to action link was received and sent by retired USAF Major Bobby Hanafin to a friend of his, Wade R. Sanders, Esq., who is currently the Senior Military and Veterans Advisor to the Lt. Governor, John Garamendi, of the State of California. A Vietnam Veteran himself and a true American Patriot in the best tradition of the "Winter Soldier", Wade Sanders took the bull by the horns and placed calls to the Mayors Office, the City Council Members and the Chairwoman of the Veterans Day Parade Committee.

**I'm proud to report that the battle has been won.**

**A 34 year old wrong has been righted in Long Beach. I spoke with Mr. Sanders this morning and followed up, as he suggested, with a phone call to the Chairwoman of the Long Beach Veterans Day Parade Committee and was informed that a letter will go out to the Veterans and Military Family groups denied entry in this year's parade inviting them to participate in the parade in 2008.**

**From this day forward, hopefully, all Veterans' and Military Family groups that desire to march and be honored for their service and sacrifice on behalf of our country will be permitted to march in future Veterans Day Parades in Long Beach California, and anywhere else in America for that matter; regardless of their personal political beliefs about this war or war in general.**

**In Long Beach, Ca., at least, they will hereafter be honored and ARE WELCOME to march behind their organizational banners and SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER, a tradition that is American as Apple Pie.**

**Each and every one of you played a critical role in reversing this abuse of power that has gone unchecked since 1973 when the City of Long Beach first denied the Vietnam Veterans Against the War the right to march in that Veterans Day Parade 34 long years ago.**

You can be proud that you rose to the challenge and stood up to the politics of intolerance and defended the rights guaranteed to all Americans under the Constitution of free speech and to peacefully assemble.

**We have engaged the politics of intolerance and injustice, and they have been vanquished on the field of battle.**

The war, however, is far from over.

I'm looking forward to helping IVAW, VFP & MFSO form a large contingent to march in the 2008 Veterans Day Parade in Long Beach and invite veterans and supporters from across the country to come March with us in 2008.

Your service to our country continues and for that America is a better place today than it was yesterday.

God Bless you and yours.  
Semper Fi.

## **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, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657**

# **“Grotesque” Veterans Charities Nothing But Collection Agencies For The Scum Who Run Them; “One Group Passed Along 1 Cent For Every Dollar Raised”**

[Thanks to Alan Stolzer, Military Project, who sent this in.]

Dec. 13, 2007 By Philip Rucker, Washington Post [Excerpts]

**Americans gave millions of dollars in the past year to veterans charities designed to help troops wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan, but several of the groups spent relatively little money on the wounded, according to a leading watchdog organization and federal tax filings.**

Eight veterans charities, including some of the nation's largest, gave less than a third of the money raised to the causes they champion, far below the recommended standard, the American Institute of Philanthropy says in a report.

One group passed along 1 cent for every dollar raised, the report says. Another paid its founder and his wife a combined \$540,000 in compensation and benefits last year, a Washington Post analysis of tax filings showed.

There are no laws regulating the amount of money charities spend on overhead, fundraising or giving. But the institute's report suggests that 20 of the 29 military charities studied were managing their resources poorly, paying high overhead costs and direct-mail fundraising fees and, in some cases, providing their leaders with six-figure salaries.

The 12 charities rated as failing by the institute -- including the Military Order of the Purple Heart Service Foundation, the AMVETS National Service Foundation and the Freedom Alliance -- collected at least \$266 million in the past fiscal year.

“They know how to work the system, and they seem pretty good at not going over the line, although it is pretty outrageous that so little money is actually winding up benefiting charities,” said Daniel Borochoff, president and founder of the Chicago-based institute.

“People want to help the veterans,” said Rep. Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), a member of the oversight committee. “They don't want to enrich organizations that are cynically exploiting veterans for their own personal gain.

One egregious example, Borochoff said, is Help Hospitalized Veterans, which was founded in 1971 by Roger Chapin, a veteran of the Army Finance Corps and a San Diego real estate developer.

The charity, which provides therapeutic arts and crafts kits to hospitalized veterans, reported income of \$71.3 million last year and spent about one-third of that money on charitable work, the philanthropy institute said.

**Chapin, 75, the charity's president, received \$426,434 in salary and benefits in the past fiscal year, according to a filing with the Internal Revenue Service. His wife, Elizabeth, 73, received \$113,623 in salary and benefits as "newsletter editor," the Post's review of the tax filing showed.**

Rick Cohen, an expert on nonprofit groups and former executive director of the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, called the spending decisions of some charities "grotesque."

"I think in light of the Iraq war and the Afghanistan war, these veterans are the people who we should really be protecting and not using as excuses or avenues for ripping off charity philanthropy," Cohen said.

**MORE:**

## **Sewer Rat Controlling "Charity" For Hospitalized Vets Stuffs His Own Pockets: Now He Hides In His Hole; "Intolerable Fraud"**

December 13, 2007 Matthew Jaffe and Rhonda Schwartz Report, ABC News

**The director of a national charity for veterans has gone into hiding after defying a congressional subpoena.**

Roger Chapin, head of the California-based charity, Help Hospitalized Veterans, refused to appear today before a congressional hearing chaired by Congressman Henry Waxman, D-Calif., who is investigating how the charity's money was spent.

Waxman said Chapin had evaded attempts by U.S. marshals to find him for the past week to serve a warrant to compel Chapin to answer questions before Congress about his charity, which raised more than \$98 million last year.

**"There have been serious allegations against Mr. Chapin, including allegations that he is paying exorbitant salaries to himself and his wife, using donations to pay for questionable expenses, such as new condos, shifting funds among his various groups to skew reporting numbers and concealing millions of dollars in payments to for-profit fundraising corporations," Waxman said.**

Help Hospitalized Veterans was one of more than a dozen charities for veterans rated “F” by a leading charity watchdog group, the American Institute of Philanthropy.

At today’s hearing of the House Oversight and Government Reform Committee, Waxman criticized these charities for “intolerable fraud” and “a sickening betrayal of our most fundamental values.”

“A disturbing number of groups are raising millions of dollars in the name of helping veterans but keeping most of the donations for themselves,” said Waxman.

“Instead of using the money to provide financial assistance or help veterans obtain care, these groups and the professional fundraisers they employ blatantly line their own pockets. They betray their donors and the troops who desperately need help.”

“Right now there’s incredible waste out there, and it’s being done in the name of our brave veterans,” said AIP’s Daniel Borochoff. “We owe a lot more to these veterans than too many of these nonprofit groups are providing.”

**Ed Edmundson, whose son Eric was wounded in Iraq, fought back tears as he described how some charities “use these soldiers as a commodity to raise funds.”**

“I am concerned (about) the negative effect that the few self-serving nonprofits will have on the ability of the legitimate nonprofits to obtain funding from the general public,” Edmundson said, choking back tears. “It would be an unfortunate turn of events if the service they provide is not available.”

At one point, Waxman read a letter from former Sen. Bob Dole that called these groups “parasites” and applauded Waxman’s committee for “exposing the downright fraud used by some.”

“I cannot imagine anyone, or any group, stooping so low to enrich themselves by exploiting veterans’ misery,” Dole wrote.

Last month, Chapin walked out of an interview with ABC News’ Brian Ross for a report that appeared on “Good Morning America.”

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## **As V.A. And Health Profiteers Fight Over Money, Clinics Close Down: [The Vets Get Shit On, As Usual]**

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

December 12, 2007 By DINESH RAMDE, The Associated Press & By Brad Bryan, Leader-Telegram staff [Excerpts]

**Two Veterans Affairs clinics in northwestern Wisconsin closed abruptly this week, without advance notification, leaving nearly 1,000 local veterans wondering where they will get health care.**

Northern Wisconsin military vets celebrated when Veterans Administration outpatient clinics opened this summer in Rice Lake and Hayward.

Those who showed up at the clinics Monday found the doors locked. They were not pleased.

"They're ticked," Jim Sanders of Rice Lake said of veterans who will now have to travel to Minneapolis or regional outpatient facilities in Chippewa Falls or Superior for treatment.

**"It's a mess," said Sanders, who is commander of the local American Legion Post 87. "I hope the government cracks down on them."**

"Guys are worried. We've got some guys on oxygen, some guys who aren't doing so well, don't know what's going to happen," said Jim Sanders, the post commander for the American Legion Post 87 in Rice Lake. "But (if) they need to get to a clinic and don't know how, one way or another we'll get 'em there."

Some 915 veterans had enrolled at two VA clinics opened in Rice Lake and Hayward earlier this year to handle simple outpatient procedures such as regular checkups, physicals, blood draws and x-rays.

**But the Kentucky corporation that runs the clinics closed them Monday, saying the VA hadn't fulfilled its promises to help run them profitably.**

The VA, in turn, accused the company of leaving veterans in the lurch.

Veterans with appointments scheduled this week are being sent to other clinics within 60 miles, including those in Superior, Chippewa Falls and Minneapolis, said Ralph Heussner, a spokesman for the Minneapolis VA Medical Center that oversaw the two Wisconsin clinics.

The VA hired the company, Corporate Health & Wellness, Inc., in February to run the two clinics. The Paris, Ky.,-based company agreed to accept a fixed sum per month instead of having the VA reimburse it dollar for dollar, president and chief executive Mary Cheek said.

It quickly felt pressure from the government to spend more on supplies and equipment than it had budgeted and could pay.

"We were losing \$26,000 a month," Cheek said.

When she told the government its demands were wiping out her profits, Cheek said, she was told to file for an adjustment to the contract. But nothing ever came of the filings. Closing the clinics, she insisted, was a temporary measure that the company was forced into.



Regardless, the move could constitute a breach of contract the VA will discuss with its attorneys, Heussner said.

Wisconsin's two Democratic senators and U.S. Rep. Dave Obey, D-Wausau, issued a strongly worded joint statement Tuesday condemning the closings.

"It's behavior like this that shows why contracting out government services is a real risk to the taxpayer and the American public," Obey said.

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

### **Resistance Action**

12.12.07 By Laith Hammoudi, McClatchy Newspapers & 13 Dec 2007 Reuters & December 14, 2007 News Limited

A policeman was injured when guerrillas opened fire targeting a police patrol in Doura neighborhood south Baghdad around 5,30 pm.

Guerrillas killed a contractor working with U.S. forces in a drive-by shooting in Mansour district of western Baghdad.

A car bomb targeted the convoy of the mayor of Hit, a town in the western province of Anbar, killing two of his bodyguards and wounding six others including three civilians on Wednesday, police said.

Police said the body of a policeman was also found in Dour on Wednesday, shot in the head.

One person was killed and five wounded, including three police, near the Italian embassy in central Baghdad, security sources said.

Clashes between police and militants left two policemen dead and two insurgents dead in western Mosul, police said. The clashes occurred after police shot dead a bomber.

Guerrillas killed one policeman and wounded four others when they attacked their patrol vehicle in southeastern Mosul, police said.

A roadside bomb wounded three policemen, in northeastern Mosul, police said.

A car bomb wounded two policemen in the Waziriya district of northern Baghdad, police said.

<b>IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE</b>
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**END THE OCCUPATION**

**FORWARD OBSERVATIONS**

**Operation Iraqi Freedom**



From: Mike Hastie  
To: GI Special  
Sent: December 08, 2007  
Subject: Operation Iraqi Freedom

**OPERATION IRAQI FREEDOM**

**Bringing freedom to the Iraqi people,  
is like bringing food to the dead.**

**Mike Hastie  
Vietnam Veteran  
December 8, 2007**

Photo and caption 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](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T)

## ***The Sgt. Gets It Right: Vietnamese “Were Fighting To Reunite Their Country And To Kick Out The Foreign Invaders”***

Letters To The Editor  
December 10, 2007  
Army Times

Concerning Master Sgt. Kurtis R. Lukens' letter stating we fought in Vietnam to stop the spread of communism (“Not for nothing,” Nov. 5): the North Vietnamese and their allies, the Viet Cong, were not fighting to spread communism.

They were fighting to reunite their country and to kick out the foreign invaders.

They were successful on both counts.

As for the totally unnecessary invasion and occupation of Iraq, if it continues we will break our military and our economy, and we will all end up having to learn to speak Chinese.

Former Sgt. Edward A. Halenar  
Orleans, Ind.

**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**

### **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](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org):. Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Replies confidential. Same address to unsubscribe.

**“Since The Armed Forces Are Overwhelmingly Working Class In Composition, A Revolutionary Movement Must Also Aim To Win Over The Military, And Thus Take Away From The Ruling Class Its Principal Means Of Violent Repression”**

**“The First World War Ended Because Of The Revolutionary Wave That Swept Europe-- Soldiers From All Sides Who Were Sick Of War Rose Up Against Their Real Enemies At Home”**

Actually, the First World War ended because of the revolutionary wave that swept Europe--soldiers from all sides who were sick of war rose up against their real enemies at home. Fifty years later, the disintegration of the American armed forces during the Vietnam War showed a similar process, albeit on a smaller scale.

December 7, 2007 By Brian Jones, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

WE LIVE in an extremely violent world.

One way to look at all of this violence is to blame human nature. People are naturally violent, goes the argument, and that's why we live in such a violent world.

Following this reasoning, we should say “thank goodness” for the police, the army and prisons, since they work to stop all of the violence.

The mainstream media share this framework. You can tell by the way they talk about “cycles of violence” or print headlines that scream about how violence “broke out” here, or violence “broke out” there. And since we’re naturally such violent folk, violence requires little more explanation than that.

But violence never simply “breaks out.”

Violence is always a means to some end, not an end unto itself. To really explain the violent nature of the world, we need a different framework altogether. We must understand the conditions that produce violence, and the ends toward which much of the violence in the world is consciously organized.

IN ALMOST every country of the world, the state power--the government--is the greatest source of organized violence.

States have armies, whose main purpose is to use violence against other state armies. States also have police forces, whose purpose is to use violence to control the domestic population.

**Rather than see the state as a neutral force, standing above society (and ostensibly “protecting” everyone), Karl Marx and his collaborator Frederick Engels were the first to describe all states--from ancient Rome to today--as instruments for one class to rule over another. As Engels wrote:**

**“The ancient state was, above all, the state of the slave owners for holding down the slaves, just as the feudal state was the organ of the nobility for holding down the peasant serfs and bondsmen, and the modern representative state is an instrument for exploiting wage labor by capital.”**

The occupation of Iraq didn’t just “break out” or flow naturally from some “cycle” of violence.

The occupation of Iraq was organized by a specific group of people--the American ruling class.

They organized all of these violent means toward a very specific end--their ability to control the largest supply of oil in the world, and thereby to maintain a dominant position in the world’s marketplace.

Likewise, to report that violence “broke out” in Palestine only serves to hide the real objectives to which that violence is directed.

The media are thus obscuring Israel’s interest in using violence to destroy any possibility of Palestinian statehood, and the Palestinians’ interest in using violence to win liberation from their occupiers.

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MANY WHO recoil at the violence of our world turn to the ideas of pacifism and declare their opposition to all forms of violence.

But can we truly condemn all violence? What of the basic right of self-defense?

There are two problems with a moralistic approach to these questions: one, it fails to appreciate the difference between the violence of the oppressed and the violence of the oppressor; and two, it serves to justify the existing ruling-class monopoly on the means of violence.

The Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky brilliantly illustrated the first point in his famous pamphlet, *Their Morals and Ours*. Citing the American Civil War, he poses the question: "Is the violence of the slave the same as the violence of the slave-master?":

"The question lies not even in which of the warring camps caused or itself suffered the greatest number of victims. History has different yardsticks for the cruelty of the Northerners and the cruelty of the Southerners in the Civil War.

"A slave-owner who through cunning and violence shackles a slave in chains, and a slave who through cunning or violence breaks the chains--let not the contemptible eunuchs tell us that they are equals before a court of morality!

Likewise, should we wag our fingers at the Jews, trapped by the Nazis, awaiting the gas chamber, who smuggled guns into the Warsaw Ghetto?

If they tried to shoot their way out of the ghetto, should we cheer them or scold them?

**The ruling class would have us believe that the violence of the state--of the police, of the military--is "heroic," but that the violence of the poor or the oppressed is "terrorism."**

**Malcolm X eloquently challenged this hypocrisy when he asked an audience in Detroit:**

**"How are you going to be nonviolent in Mississippi, as violent as you were in Korea?**

**"How can you justify being nonviolent in Mississippi and Alabama, when your churches are being bombed, and your little girls are being murdered, and at the same time, you're going to be violent with Hitler, and Tojo, and somebody else that you don't even know?**

**"If violence is wrong in America, violence is wrong abroad.**

**"If it's wrong to be violent defending Black women and Black children and Black babies and Black men, then it's wrong for America to draft us and make us violent abroad in defense of her.**

**"And if it is right for America to draft us, and teach us how to be violent in defense of her, then it is right for you and me to do whatever is necessary to defend our own people right here in this country."**

Anyone who wants to revolutionize society--to rid the world of so much violence--must eventually face the question of how to deal with the overwhelming violence of the state.

In 1917, the workers of Russia would never have been able to take power if Russian soldiers had not refused their orders to repress that revolution. The soldiers, in fact, joined the revolution.

Actually, the First World War ended because of the revolutionary wave that swept Europe--soldiers from all sides who were sick of war rose up against their real enemies at home.

Fifty years later, the disintegration of the American armed forces during the Vietnam War showed a similar process, albeit on a smaller scale.

It is not enough to be disgusted by the violence of our society.

All those who genuinely want to end it should start by supporting the right of people to defend themselves from violent repression and to resist occupation by any means necessary.

But since the armed forces are overwhelmingly working class in composition, a revolutionary movement must also aim to win over the military, and thus take away from the ruling class its principal means of violent repression.

A revolution that eliminates classes and class oppression will eliminate the need for violent repression--and eliminate the desperate, frustrating social conditions that lead to individual acts of violence as well.

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## OCCUPATION REPORT

***You Want Some Terrorism?  
Here It Is, Up Close And  
Personal:***

**“He Described How The  
‘Amerkan,’ The Americans, Pulled  
Him And His Family From Their  
Beds And Forced Them Against**

# **The Walls, Guns Pointed To Their Backs”**

**“His Daughter And Son, Wafaa, 6,  
And Hussein, 7, Shook With Fear”**

**“Two Young People Forever Associate  
Americans With The Fear They Felt In The  
Middle Of The Night When Foreign Soldiers  
Burst Into Their Home”**



U.S. army soldiers from Blackfoot Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment kick down a door during an operation in the village of Walush in Diyala province, north of Baghdad, Dec. 9, 2007. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnjakovic)

December 13, 2007 Leila Fadel, McClatchy Newspapers

**BAGHDAD - Suheila Hammad held her daughter in her arms before dawn on Tuesday. Outside she heard the U.S. Special Forces and the Iraqi army in her area just south of Fallujah.**

**First they raided a home two doors down, blew the doors out and went in looking for their target.**

**The soldiers pulled the family out of the home and the second floor was destroyed, the family said.**

**A picture shows a burned-out room and shattered glass.**



**The soldiers progressed to the second house, searching for their target, an al-Qaida in Iraq member who was believed responsible for attacks on U.S. and Iraqi forces.**

**At the second house in this place, once an al-Qaida bastion, they blew the doors off and pulled the residents from the house. The Iraqi soldiers toyed with them, telling them to raise their arms up, drop their arms and raise them again.**

**A few soldiers walked away speaking a language the families didn't understand.**

**It was then that a bullet pierced the window where Suheila held her daughter Hadil. The bullet pierced Hadil's neck and passed through her, embedding in the wall of the room.**

**No one came into the house and Suheila was too afraid to call out for help, she said.**

Hadil bled to death in her mother's arms. Three men were detained, two were later released. The U.S. military said the man detained is an al-Qaida in Iraq member. There were no reports of Hadil's death, they said.

Wednesday morning Ali walked into my room. He works at the hotel where our offices are housed. We chat while he works most mornings. This day he was visibly tired.

"How's your neighborhood," I asked.

"Not good Leila, not good," he replied. He stopped his work and walked over to my desk.

"They came at 3 a.m. looking for someone from the Mahdi Army," he said, referring to the U.S. military. The Shiite militia loyal to Shiite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr controls his neighborhood.

**He described how the "Amerkan," the Americans, pulled him and his family from their beds and forced them against the walls, guns pointed to their backs.**

**The U.S. soldiers had broken down the doors and taken them by surprise, looking for their target.**

**His daughter and son, Wafaa, 6, and Hussein, 7, shook with fear.**

**Because I didn't understand the word shiver, he impersonated his children quivering. The soldiers searched the home and found nothing.**

**They told Ali he could file for compensation for the damages they caused.**

**"After this, why would I want their money?" he said.**

**Last month a child and two men were killed as they rushed through a military checkpoint while the U.S. military were conducting an operation in Bayji. A U.S. military official estimated the child was about 3 years old.**

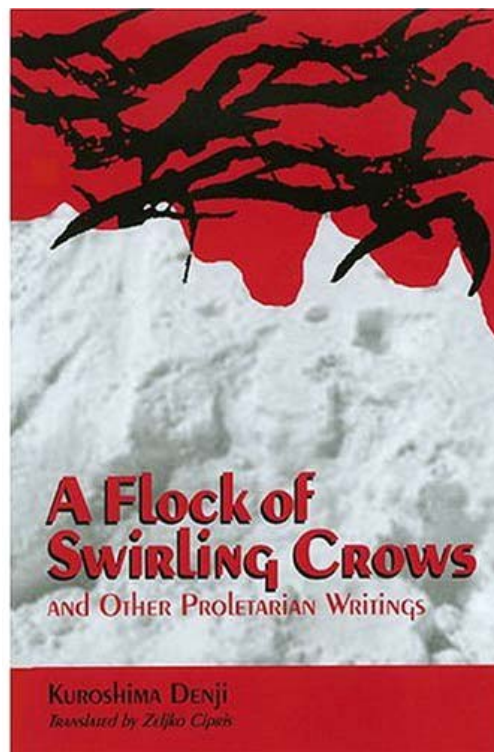
In Baghdad up to four people were killed, including three women, when a minibus ended up on a road meant only for car traffic.

Bank employees on the bus were killed when soldiers fired warning shots that fragmented and hit the bus.

These deaths were not deliberate.

But Suheila does not have her daughter, a 3-year-old was shot as he huddled in the back of a car and two young people forever associate Americans with the fear they felt in the middle of the night when foreign soldiers burst into their home.

**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**



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**60% Of Iraqis Want U.S. Troops  
Dead:  
Big Surprise**



A foreign occupation soldier from the U.S. army soldier from 23rd Infantry Regiment shines light in the faces of Iraqi women forced to submit to his questioning after their home was invaded at night in the village of Walush in the volatile Diyala province, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) north of Baghdad Dec. 9, 2007. (AP Photo/Marko Drobnjakovic)

**[61% of Iraqis say they approve of attacks on U.S.-led forces in their country, up from 47 percent in January. A solid majority of Shiite and Sunni Arabs approved of the attacks, according to the poll. 9/27/2006 By BARRY SCHWEID, AP & Program on International Policy Attitudes**

**Iraqis feel about U.S. troops trampling them in the dirt the same way Americans felt about British troops trampling them in the dirt in 1776. They are right to resist by any means necessary. T]**

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

**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.org/](http://www.ivaw.org/))

## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



### **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER**

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## Received:

# “Inching To The Left”

From: Sarie Bryson  
To: GI Special  
Sent: December 10, 2007

Just a note: I think the story below about Democratic Party leaders and “anti-war” organizations would have been better titled using the word “peace” in place of “anti-war”, as in United for Peace and Justice, which as you know involves itself in politics and allies with the DP, and not which the reader may also unfortunately infer, that other leading “anti-war” organization, the A.N.S.W.E.R. Coalition, which as you also know does not involve itself in electoral politics and of course, being anti-imperialist, attacks both imperialist parties.

But good story anyhow. It’s good to see David Swanson (with whom I had a pretty good email exchange way back about the imperialist nature of the DP) still inching to the left slowly and, seemingly, surely.

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

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

<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/2007/index.html>; <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=6&l=e>; [http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi\\_special/](http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/);  
<http://www.albasrah.net/pages/mod.php?header=res1&mod=gis&rep=gis>

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