

**GI SPECIAL 6B12:**

# **IVAW's Seattle Chapter Spearheading A Week Of Active Duty Outreach To Ft. Lewis From February 18-24**



February 15, 2008 By Kelly Dougherty, Former Sergeant, Army National Guard;  
Executive Director, Iraq Veterans Against the War; IVAW Newsletter [Excerpts]

**IVAW is in high gear!**

**Our members are focused on reaching out to their active duty brothers and sisters.**

**Our strategy is built around mobilizing the military community to withdraw its support for the war, and our members are putting that strategy into action.**

IVAW's Seattle chapter is spearheading a week of Active Duty outreach to Ft. Lewis from February 18-24, with support from the Bellingham chapter and other members in the northwest.

The Seattle chapter has been very active - holding weekly meetings and working closely with GIs at Ft. Lewis to spread the word about IVAW's work to end the war.

As part of this effort, the chapter is hosting a "Soldier, You're Not Alone" benefit concert on February 21st in Tacoma.

All ages are welcome, and active duty servicemembers get in free with a Military ID.

Spread the word!

MORE:

## "Soldier Your Not Alone" Benefit Concert



**Son of Nun**  
*Ryan Harvey*

**SAINTS OF EVERYDAY FAILURES**

**ANCIENT HEADS**

**EASTERN SUNZ**

**SOLDIER, YOU ARE NOT ALONE**

Thurs. Feb 21 @ Hells Kitchen  
7 - 11 P.M.  
\$8 at the door.  
Service Members w/Military I.D.  
get in free.

3829 6th ave  
tacoma WA 98406

The poster features a list of bands at the top, the title "SOLDIER, YOU ARE NOT ALONE" in a bold, military-style font, and event details below. At the bottom, there is a photograph of three soldiers in camouflage uniforms sitting on the ground, looking down. Helicopters are also depicted in the background.

**Thursday, February 21, 2008**  
**From 6:00pm To 10:00pm**

**Hell's Kitchen  
3829 6th Ave  
Tacoma, WA 98406  
(253) 759-6003**



**Seattle Chapter 8 will be hosting an Active Duty Benefit Concert called “Soldier your not alone” on Feb 21st @ Hell’s Kitchen in Tacoma, Washington.**

**This is an all Ages event!!**

**Active Duty allowed in Free with Military ID.**

**Open to the public.**

**Come one come all.**

**Contact: Chanan Suarezdiaz, Seattle chapter 8**

**Contact e-mail: [chananivaw@yahoo.com](mailto:chananivaw@yahoo.com)**



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

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

**“The military are the final, essential weak point of Bush and Cheney.” David McReynolds 9.29.07**

**MORE:**

**“If You Look Without Prejudice At  
Our All-Volunteer Military, You  
Quickly Realize That It Truly Is  
One Of The Least Elitist, Most  
Diverse Institutions Of Power In  
American Society”**

**“Our Military Remains Deeply Rooted In  
The Broad Middle-And Working-Class  
Elements Of Society”**

**“Most Progressive Voices Fail To  
Recognize This”**

[Thanks to Dennis Serdel, Vietnam Veteran, who sent this in.]

**“Ordinary Americans trust the military, in part, because the ‘have-nots’ have direct access to it — far more access than most will ever have to elite universities, elite law firms, Washington lobbying outfits, or other institutions of influence and power”**

February 4, 2008 By William J. Astore, Mother Jones.com [Excerpts]

William J. Astore is a retired lieutenant colonel (USAF). He has taught cadets at the U.S. Air Force Academy, officers at the Naval Postgraduate School, and currently teaches at the Pennsylvania College of Technology. He is the author of Hindenburg: Icon of German Militarism, among other books.

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**Recent polls suggest that Americans trust the military roughly three times as much as the president and five times as much as their elected representatives in Congress.**

What explains the military's enduring appeal in our society?

Certainly, some of this appeal is obvious. Americans have generally been a patriotic bunch. "Supporting our troops" seems an obvious place to go. After all, many of them volunteered to put themselves in harm's way to protect our liberties and to avenge the terror attacks of September 11, 2001.

For this, they receive pay and benefits that might best be described as modest. Trusting them—granting them a measure of confidence — seems the least that could be offered.

Before addressing two other sources of the military's appeal that are little understood, at least by left-leaning audiences, let's consider for a second the traditional liberal/progressive critique.

**The military and its influence are considered so tainted, so baneful that within progressive circles there's a collective wringing of hands, even a reflexive turning of backs, as if our military were truly from Mars or perhaps drawn from the nether regions where Moorlocks shamle and grunt in barbarian darkness.**

If you want to change anything — even our increasing propensity for militarism — you first have to make an effort to engage with it.

And to engage with it, you have to know the wellsprings of its appeal, which transcend corporate profits or imperial power.

**Despite often compelling evidence to the contrary, Americans like to think of their societal institutions as being open, fair-minded, and democratic.**

**If you look without prejudice at our all-volunteer military, you quickly realize that it truly is one of the least elitist, most diverse institutions of power in American society.**

**Most progressive voices fail to recognize this.**

**Yet it's my belief most Americans do and it's a big reason why they say they trust it.**

Our military is demonstrably diverse — racially, by class, and even more politically than most critics imagine.

As a retired military officer who now finds himself a liberal arts professor in academia, I'm struck by the relative conformity of the latter, at least when contrasted to the diversity I found in my former life.

Racial minorities from the lower classes are well represented in our military. (Some critics have claimed that they are over-represented, at least in frontline infantry units.)

**I've seen more black or brown faces in positions of authority within our military than in academia. (In my last job in the Air Force, my boss was a black female colonel.) Indeed, until very recently in American society, our military was one of**

**the few places where African Americans and Hispanics routinely bossed around whites.**

(Louis Gossett Jr.'s drill instructor in the 1982 movie *An Officer and A Gentleman* was not exceptional; many times I've witnessed real versions of him in action.)

**Ordinary Americans trust the military, in part, because the “have-nots” have direct access to it — far more access than most will ever have to elite universities, elite law firms, mainstream media outlets, Washington lobbying outfits, or other institutions of influence and power.**

**Indeed, our military remains deeply rooted in the broad middle-and working-class elements of society.**

**Our Ivy League schools, our white-shoe law firms, Boston's Beacon Hill, New York's Upper West Side have little presence in it.**

**Yet everywhere you go in small-town and rural America, you bump into ordinary people who know someone in the military: a nephew, a cousin, a close buddy from high school, even, these days, the girl next door.**

**If you were to place yourself among the rank-and-file of today's military, you'd find yourself among young people (many of color, some of them recent immigrants) who more accurately mirror the composition of our old small towns and new inner city neighborhoods than nearly any other institution of power.**

In that sense, the military is a grandly successful social *mélange*, with, of course, a notable exception. Women. The all-volunteer military is predominately male and will remain so, at least for the foreseeable future. Military service remains largely a gendered activity, commonly associated within academia with retrograde notions of aggressive (and disreputable) masculinity and therefore dismissed as outmoded, even pathologically so.

**The point is this: It's not enough simply to rail against the military or militarism, however enlightened it makes you feel.**

**There are powerful reasons why Americans trust our military and continue to join its ranks.**

**Unless these are grasped, efforts to redirect our nation along less militaristic lines will founder on the shores of incomprehension.**

The comment by John Kerry in 2006, to the effect that students who can't make it in college end up “stuck in Iraq,” struck many Americans as grossly unfair precisely because military service still remains a proud first-choice for many young Americans.

If the operating equation is military = bad, are we not effectively excusing ourselves or our children from any obligation to serve — even any obligation simply to engage with the military?

Rarely has a failure to sacrifice or even to engage come at a more self-ennobling price — or a more self-destructive one for progressive agendas.

MORE:

***“Why Would We Want To Give  
Up Our Lives For This  
Bullshit?”***

**Meet Bill Davis, Vietnam  
Veteran:**



Bill Davis, Veterans Day, Chicago, 1977 [Photo: firemtn.blogspot.com]

**An Organizer's Very Personal  
Story Of His Work Inside The  
Armed Forces To Stop An Imperial  
War:**

# **“We Started Hooking Up With Guys From Other Units That Had Their Own Organizations”**

## **“GIs Would Come Out There In Support Of Demonstrations”**

I was banned for life from the base. A week after I was discharged, I took a job driving a cab and was back there anytime I wanted.

So, I'd go through the barracks and put antiwar literature in all the day rooms, slide it under the doors at night, and leave bundles with guys that I knew.

**Bill Davis, Vietnam Veterans Against The War, interviewed by Martin Smith, Veteran, U.S. Marine Corps; Iraqi Veterans Against The War. Published in the International Socialist Review Issue 56, November–December 2007. The following transcript is from a June 2004 conversation with Davis. [Excerpts]**

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**MY NAME is Bill Davis, and I'm with Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) here in Chicago. I'm the national coordinator.**

**I've been with the organization since I was a staff sergeant in the Air Force in 1970.**

I enlisted in Fairmont, West Virginia. I come from a family whose service in the military dates back to the American Revolutionary War. My father was career navy and large numbers of uncles on both sides of the family were career military.

I realized I had probably made a mistake when I arrived at basic training with a hangover in San Antonio, Texas, and got off of the train (because there was a major airline strike in 1966), and immediately this guy started yelling at me. Basic training was not really a big problem for me. I just came out of high school and a year-round athletic program, so there were no physical difficulties.

I got through basic training and was sent first to Amarillo for some technical training and then on to Chanute Air Force Base (AFB) in Illinois, close to Champaign. I got a lot of mechanical training, primarily on ground support equipment but some jet engine too. From there I was sent to Seymour Johnson AFB in North Carolina and assigned to a field maintenance unit for F-4 fighters, Phantom F-4s. We didn't have any planes there; they were all in Asia.

So we spent a lot of time waxing equipment, training, painting rocks, and things of that nature.



I joined the athletic program on the base and played football for the base football team. I'd report every morning to my duty assignment and then take off and spend the entire day at the gym and doing things that jocks do.

I tested well so even though I'd never worked on the equipment I understood a lot of the concepts.

I left Seymour Johnson AFB in late 1967.

While I was at Seymour, we flew on temporary assignment to Europe and to North Africa once for bases that were being closed down. The French bases were being closed by De Gaulle because they had pulled out of NATO, and Wheelis AFB (in Tripoli, Libya) was being evacuated because their government wanted us out of there.

I remember daily demonstrations at the gates of Wheelis AFB for the brief period when I was there and thought it was fairly unusual.

**I remember the Bedouin tribesmen, with their old muzzle-loading ornate rifles, would fire at every plane that landed and took off. They couldn't do much damage. It was symbolic resistance on their part.**

In late '67, I received orders to go to the Philippines.

I went to stay with my mother in Akron, Ohio, while on leave and ended up being there for almost two months, and when I called for my printed orders to travel, they had basically forgotten about me. My unit had picked up and moved to Korea when the spy boat was captured in Korea, so all my records went with them. So no one knew where I was supposed to go.

**In a couple of weeks, I received orders for Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, which made my mother very unhappy and even my father, being career military, was disturbed by it.**

**He told me to be careful because the Vietnamese guerrillas were the most fantastic guerrilla fighters since the Chiricagua Apache.**

**I thought that was an unusual thing coming from my father, whom I'd always thought was somewhere to the right of Genghis Kahn.**

**But obviously, I didn't understand him and had overlooked his working-class background.**

I arrived in Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, in early January 1968 and was put in a replacement unit to fill in for wherever my particular skills group was needed. The Air Force at least keeps you in your own basic skills group and sends you to do what you were trained for, as opposed to some of the other branches that train you in one thing and then send you to do something else.

Or the Marines, where every marine is a basic infantryman if need be.

I was assigned to a field maintenance unit there with the Caribous, which were the Haviland aircrafts.

I was there for about a week, and I was approached by the executive officer for the base, the commander's assistant, and asked if I wanted to play football for the Cam Ranh Bay AFB. I was kind of skeptical. How the hell could you play football in Vietnam?

They took me out one evening to this field, and it was like a perfectly laid out football field out in the middle of nowhere on the middle of the air force base. But it didn't have any grass, it was like sand.

I said, "Jesus, I didn't come over here to play football. I don't want to play football in 100 degree temperatures and in the sand." Now, you could have likely asked me why I went to Vietnam, and I probably couldn't have given you a straight answer.

Since I didn't want to play, they drove off and left me there. So, I had to walk back a couple of miles in the dark to the regular part of the air force base.

In a couple of days, I was shipped off to Can Tho army airfield down in the Mekong Delta.

All I knew about Can Tho was that, from what I had read about the history of the French Foreign Legion, the place had been overrun by the Viet Minh. I was a little uncomfortable.

### **I arrived at Can Tho in time for the Tet Offensive.**

By my second day there, we were evacuated to a compound in Can Tho City because the airfield was overrun. It wasn't defended too well.

I distinctly remember the Vietnamese bodies caught in the wire around the airfield in Can Tho were left there to rot for the Vietnamese to see what happened to people who came onto the airfield.

The Tet Offensive itself was just a total shock to my system.

I'd presumed that at least if we weren't winning the war at least we were holding our own. While in truth it was a defeat numerically for the National Liberation Front, which took a tremendous hit and gave up a lot.

**There was a big reaction in the United States, but I don't think there could have been a bigger reaction and shock in Vietnam. Nobody had any idea that they were that organized and strong. Everybody thought that they had been pummeled into submission.**

**It became obvious that there was a lot more to this than we were being told.**

The Armed Forces Radio at night would broadcast that a battle had taken place and that there had been heavy casualties inflicted on the enemy and only light casualties on our side. We were not only flying people into combat, we'd be flying in reserves and removing wounded and those killed in action aboard our aircraft.

If we'd make four of five sorties, or runs, with planeloads of wounded or dead guys then I began to wonder what was the basis of determining if a battle had light casualties because they seemed heavy enough to us.

**We began to realize that everything they told us on the radio was absolute bullshit.**

We didn't get a lot of information. We got newspapers from home, but they were pretty dated.

You know in 1968, a lot of shit was happening in the United States, and we would hear about it late and sometimes the coverage would be very minimal.

But it became pretty clear to us that there were a lot of people unhappy about this war, and we spent a lot of time sitting around drinking, smoking, and talking these things out.

**I remember one analysis we came up with was that this was a lot like the American Revolutionary War, and we were like the Hessians.**

**We began to see quite clearly that the people we were fighting for didn't give a shit for us.**

**They were corrupt. The ARVN (South Vietnamese Army) wouldn't stand and fight.**

Almost every time we took an ARVN group into combat soon thereafter Korean, Australian, or American forces would have to go in.

Some ARVN company would be jumped by a squad of Viet Cong and be in full retreat.

**By the time the American, Korean, or Australian forces would go in, the Viet Cong would have disappeared. It was incredible, they'd leave behind two or three guys who would fight to the end and hold off an incredible number of forces. We began to develop a real respect for them.**

We'd get up at night on some tower or high building and see everything that was going around, and we'd been in an aircraft and see that there was fighting going on everywhere. There were gunships pouring some steady stream of fire, bombings, and air support.

We'd wonder how the hell can these people survive that and still keep fighting? So we began to develop a real respect for "Charlie," as we called the Vietnamese fighters.

At the same time, that didn't mean we were in love with him.

Our main goal was to get out of there alive and to see each other out of there alive.

Particularly among the enlisted men, there was a lot of unity.

It became obvious that a lot of guys were resourceful, intelligent people who could extend themselves and do more than the resources available seemed to allow.

**By the time my tour was up in Vietnam, I was solidly an antiwar guy.**

**We were already receiving papers and information from guys back in the States.**

**First, there was the LA Free Press and the Berkeley Barb, but then it became things like antiwar literature that guys would pick up at demonstrations.**

I went to Korat Air Force Base in Thailand the following year rather than come back to the United States. And to be honest, I didn't really know if I wanted to come back to a country that was doing this.

Consequently, when I volunteered to go to Thailand, I was sent to a higher echelon sort of unit, a military intelligence gathering unit, which was a component of the automated battlefield.

**We'd fly in C-130s and drop loads of these fake trees out in the jungle that had all kinds of sensors in them to detect movement, metal, body heat, human smell, feces, and urine. It goes without saying that it was new technology, so it didn't work too well.**

**Plus, your average Vietnamese and Cambodian would look at a fake tree and say, "God, this looks like one of those plastic trees from Denny's or something." It looked out of place.**

But we'd saturate these areas with them. When any of those alarms were triggered, there would be a coordinated bombing, artillery attack, or both on those coordinates. Easily, many times it was just killing elephants, water buffaloes, or civilians. It was along the Ho Chi Minh Trail area, and the idea was to slow the war effort.

But I don't think it really had a lot of effect because the Vietnamese people really extended themselves in terms of what they were willing to do and the sacrifices they were willing to make.

Quite obviously, American and so-called Allied forces weren't willing to make those sacrifices.

**We'd determined pretty quickly both in Vietnam and in Thailand that we didn't want to die.**

**Why would we want to give up our lives for this bullshit?**

In Thailand, I was promoted to staff sergeant, which basically put me in the ranks of career military guys. We formed some pretty tight-knit groups that reached across all kinds of ethnic and racial boundaries.

**Maybe the basis of our unity to begin with was smoking marijuana together, but we quickly developed a fairly serious antiwar analysis. We were quite aware that there was an illegal war going on in Cambodia and Laos. Some of us were really upset and outraged about that.**

There was no use writing home about it because when you're in those kinds of units your mail is heavily censored. I didn't attempt to pass the information on to anyone.

Among our guys, we all took a lot of shit from our various peer groups about hanging out together. The officers and NCOs were always on us saying, "God, you're a staff sergeant and do all this good stuff. Why do you want to hang out with these drug addicts?"

They would bust the houses we had off base, either the OSI (Office of Special Investigations), which was the air force secret police, or the army's CID.

**The authorities began to see us as a threat, so they began to fuck with us more. We were followed. I know that everything we got was opened. Everything we sent was opened.**

**We knew they were following us all the time because we'd gone beyond just hanging out and smoking dope.**

**We'd become outspoken critics of the war.**

**We all wore black wristbands.**

This is when we began receiving literature from Movement for a Democratic Military (MDM).

**The issue of being opposed to the war was equally as important as the unfair manner that people were treated in the military and the concept of GI rights and justice.**

**On the anniversary of Martin Luther King's death, in Thailand there was a huge march on the base of Black guys, and a lot of the army guys from the adjoining base came over and marched too.**

**It was amazing that such a huge march could wind all around through the base, and not one symbol of authority anywhere stepped out to stop it.**

**The problem was that they couldn't send out the security police, the MPs, to stop them because they were about 50 percent Black.**

There was also a rising unity among Latino GIs at that point. A lot of the Chicano stuff was just kicking off in California, and a lot of the guys related to that.

Some of the guys progressed way beyond marijuana, because the air force and the army made prescription drugs easily available. What they didn't make available cost next to nothing in the Thai drugstores, and guys developed some serious problems with painkillers, speed, and sometimes a combination of both —"trashcan," as we called it.

Plus, we all drank heavily too because that's part of the military. They practically gave that shit away, and smoke endlessly and all of that. They busted some of the guys. The problem with drugs is that they make you vulnerable. As some of us became more

serious in our antiwar activities, we were less and less doing the drug stuff, but we still all stayed together.

A couple of the guys flew down to Bangkok for a weekend pass and met with some American attorneys who were connected to MDM. We didn't know a lot about them, just what we had read, but we started calling ourselves that.

**Then, we started hooking up with guys from other units that had their own organizations.**

One group just called themselves the Surfers, and these guys were all California guys who were in avionics and guidance controls. These guys were into doing some pretty heavy-duty psychedelic drugs that they were getting in the mail from the United States.

**These guys were not beyond altering the controls on the aircrafts of some of the pilots that pissed them off.**

**There was one guy who painted his plane slightly psychedelic and called himself the Iron Butterfly. He flew an F-104. Well, the plane crashed, and they were really pissed that someone would take one of their psychedelic icons and make it into a war machine.**

So, you see, there was a whole other type of consciousness. Because they had access to the equipment, they set up a radio.

We had a pirate radio station on base, and we were getting fresh tunes from the United States via reel-to-reel tapes — just hours of music.

**With a transmitter taken from a plane and all the stereo equipment that we could handle, we set up a radio station in the lockers. All we had to do was flip the switch, and the radio station was on.**

When the Iron Butterflies left and went back to the States, we took over the station.

Our programming was so good that it was being played in the officers' club, the chow hall, and in the hospital. We really missed a golden opportunity to have a good antiwar discussion program.

But the authorities were out looking for it all the time. They had guys in the back of pickups with headsets driving around. We'd see them off in the distance when we were just sitting out on the barracks' steps, and we'd always tell whoever was hanging out there that if you see them just go in and turn the radio station off.

Eventually, as our guys started leaving the country and our group got smaller, we turned it over to some other people to run. To their credit, they would do public service announcements of a slightly political nature.

I think these pirate radio stations were pretty common on the air force bases. You really needed to have the right stuff.

The air force barracks had TV antennas because we had this bullshit TV that nobody would watch. Even guys that were restricted to base and couldn't do anything else wouldn't watch it — bullshit programs and combat specials.

Who needed to watch combat?

But the antennas were perfect for broadcasting. I've heard there were a lot of field operations, using the radio nets that the guys had in the field. They would play music while guys were on guard duty.

I left Thailand and was sent back to the United States to Lockbourne AFB in Rickenbacker, Ohio, south of Columbus. It was a strategic air command base, but I was misplaced.

After two years in Asia, I didn't belong in a strategic air command unit.

Plus, obviously, I had an attitude.

I didn't understand Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. Nobody did. And nothing was right. Everything was a struggle.

I wanted to get close to antiwar people, but everything had changed so much, just the way people looked.

Being in North Carolina before I went overseas and everything, I was pretty much out of circulation for four years in one way or another.

I agreed with a lot of the antiwar stuff and everything, but I really didn't know how to relate. I was close to Ohio State University.

After I got my feet on the ground on the base, I got an apartment in the university area.

**I started walking around and checking things out and the next thing I knew I ran into a guy named Mark Rovick who had worked for (the GI underground newspaper) Bragg Briefs and now was working for a paper called the Sky Dove. The official base paper was called the Sky Hawk.**

**We got a big circulation of it started at Lockbourne AFB.**

I had five months left on active duty. I was an NCO and had a considerably successful record with promotions, and I always did good work and did my job. Knowing that people were dying as a result of it but also knowing that I was keeping people I knew alive by doing it too, it was a very heavy contradiction.

I tried to balance it by just being as outspoken as I could about the war. I slowly made friends in the community.

**People told me about Vietnam Veterans Against the War. I was a little hesitant to go to them at first.**

**In late April 1970, on the hundredth anniversary of Ohio State University, major rioting broke out.**

**I was at the air force base and I heard about it.**

**I ran upstairs into the supplies and took all the gas masks and took off for town and gave them out to everybody I knew. I took the whole squadron's gas masks, like they needed them anyway.**

**I found myself in the streets in pitched battles against the Columbus police while on active duty.**

**I was bayoneted in the thigh by an Ohio National Guardsman while I was waiting for a bus back to the air force base. I had a lieutenant in the National Guard put a .45 to my head.**

**I got my ID out and told him that technically I outrank you. Guardsmen standing behind him were bewildered.**

That was before Kent State.

**When the Kent State killings happened on May 4, 1970, we actually had a huge brawl at the NCO club on base.**

**These fucking asshole "lifers" had been in there drinking for half the day, and one said, "Good, we're finally getting rid of some of them commie students."**

**A lot of these guys had never been overseas and never would and were comfy in their jobs. But a lot of us had been overseas, and we got in a big fight at the bar.**

The lifers went to the bar every night and listened to the same country music. They got drunk and talked about the same shit. There was nothing more boring than hanging out with these guys.

That's why I'd always roll my sleeves up and go into the enlisted men's club because these guys were so bad, just miserable human beings and alcoholics for the most part.

These were the kind of people who were in charge of things.

On the heels of the Kent State thing, I said, "Fuck it, I can't take this shit anymore."

So, I went AWOL with a group of friends and traveled around Ohio to different **colleges** that hadn't been closed down on the heels of the Kent State thing.

I was making speeches and talking to whatever groups I could and taking part in various antiwar activities.

When the National Guard came back to Ohio State the second time, it wasn't like the first time.



This time they came back in with armored vehicles, machine guns, and the whole thing. One of the National Guardsman told me that they had been showing them movies about how students planned to kill the Guardsmen.

At this point, I joined VVAW and so too did much of the staff of Sky Dove.

I was court-martialed in June 1970 for three or four AWOLs.

At my court-martial, I didn't lie, and I told them what I'd done and why I did it.

I had an Air Force shrink who was one of the craziest people I ever met who said I was passive aggressive, and I said, "Well, what does that mean?" He said, "Well, normally you are passive, but if you get pushed then you become aggressive." "Well," I said, "isn't that how people are supposed to be?"

And he replied, "Well, that's not what the military wants. They want you to be passive-passive and when necessary aggressive-aggressive."

And I was outta there.

I had to go.

I was found guilty. I was broken a couple of grades in rank. I could have done a couple years of hard labor, but they dropped all that, and I received an honorable discharge.

This was based basically on my record.

Maybe it was some sort of beginning realization that they were having problems with the guys that came back from Vietnam.

You know their attitude was let's not talk about it but basically sweep it under the rug.

**I joined VVAW while I was still on active duty and still a staff sergeant. I was just a member of the chapter up until 1972 when I stepped into a leadership role. I'd met people from every Left organization in the world; and once you became VVAW, everyone wanted you to speak and wanted to work with you.**

Historically, VVAW had a number of organizations that wanted to work with it and some that took on an entirely different attitude and wanted VVAW to work with them.

But Columbus was a community under siege because it was such a conservative town.

People from organizations that literally loathed each other came to work together because it was a survival thing. You'd get Progressive Labor Party working with the Yippies, the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), and whoever.

We all worked together well. It was a tight community. It had to be because police were vicious, racist, and everything you could imagine.

I always said that someone secretly picked up Birmingham, Alabama, from the early sixties and dropped it in the middle of Ohio overnight.

They were hanging union organizers there into the 1950s. They just absolutely loathed us.

So we were always under attack, but they seldom attacked any VVAW facilities or houses. They probably thought we'd shoot them, but most of us didn't have any weapons. Like the problem with drugs, we felt that weapons made us vulnerable.

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## **“VVAW Had Chapters All Over The World, Even On Ships, And Active Members In Vietnam”**

**VVAW had a national GI project out of Dayton, Ohio, and we'd get information from there and work with that.**

**My major focus even when I first joined VVAW was to maintain a relationship with the guys at Lockbourne AFB and keep the paper going.**

When we no longer had funding for the Sky Dove, we simply would put inserts into The Veteran or whatever paper VVAW was circulating at the time.

**I was banned for life from the base.**

**A week after I was discharged, I took a job driving a cab and was back there anytime I wanted.**

**So, I'd go through the barracks and put antiwar literature in all the day rooms, slide it under the doors at night, and leave bundles with guys that I knew.**

**Also, guys would show up at my apartment that I didn't even know who had met other guys who told them about me. If nothing else, at my apartment, these guys could relax off base. If they were AWOL, they could hide out.**

After 1972, I assumed partial leadership of the Columbus chapter and joined the regional steering committee. I eventually came to Chicago in 1974.

I went to school and worked at Ohio State a lot. I actually tried out for the football team. I didn't get cut or anything, but [Ohio State football coach] Woody Hayes just made me violently ill, and I had to leave. It was pretty funny. Plus, all these guys were younger, bigger, stronger, and everything. I walked away from it. People thought I was crazy, but I think it was probably the right thing to do.

After that, I'd be outside the stadium before games leafletting for antiwar stuff. All the players and people knew me and wouldn't give me any shit. Then, of course, once everyone was inside, I'd go inside and watch the game too.

We developed a politics of class consciousness and got people to stop attacking the ROTC guys and set up Central Ohio Military and Veterans Counseling out of the campus area.

**We did a lot of outreach and had a lot of spots on rock stations and stuff.**

AWOL GIs, people who were in the National Guard and in the Reserves, and even guys in ROTC would come to us for counseling on how to get out of the military. We were good at it. We were hooked into the GI underground, which was sort of like an underground railroad to move guys who were AWOL or deserting.

No one's really a deserter unless they throw away their uniform and military ID, and it can be proven that they had no intentions of returning. To try Iraq War guys now for deserting is absurd. Particularly, when they come back and turn themselves in.

That was the first thing we'd always tell these guys was that this is never going to end until you turn yourselves in. Then, there were a lot more ways of getting out. Aside from conscientious objector, there were hardship discharges and a whole lot of things you could use. We did upgrade counseling for those who had received less than honorable discharges.

**Ohio became one of the strongest areas doing GI work with Wright-Patterson AFB and Lockbourne, along with our VVAW chapters on the East and West Coasts.**

We worked in concert in a national coalition with all the GI coffeehouses and organizations.

Of course, there were always some arguments about methods and stuff. Just like the arguments that VVAW would have with other political organizations.

The GI organizations were hooked up with other Left organizations, so if we could put all the politics aside and work with the GIs it was good, but sometimes it got a little confining.

**But the work went on, and VVAW had chapters all over the world, even on ships, all up and down Okinawa and Japan, and active members in Vietnam up until the end of the war. We worked with Pacific Counseling Services, which was a National Lawyers Guild project.**

As the war started winding down, a lot of the funding for those projects dried up. VVAW was able to step into the gap somewhat.

We combined with Chicago Area Military Project (CAMP). They did counseling, and their fine publication came over to us. My first assignment when I came over to the VVAW national office was to assume editorship of the GI News, which was a supplement for a separate paper, The Veteran. When CAMP stopped, we tried to fill in the gap.

**A lot of times, the only way you could keep open the lines of communication and cooperation with other things going on was that you had to go there, and we had to go wherever we had various organizations around the world and meet with people and discuss political disagreements and everything.**

We'd go to Japan for anti-nuclear stuff with Gensuikyo and Gensuikin, which were the socialist and communist anti-nuke groups.

**Under their sponsorship, they'd help me get around to all the bases in Japan and talk to the GIs.**

**GIs would come out there in support of demonstrations.**

**We had some fifty marines arrested in Okinawa on July 4, 1973, for passing out copies of the Declaration of Independence.**

**It was a military publicity coup.**

**That one went worldwide.**

**In 1975, I led a delegation of veterans and peace activists to officially meet with representatives of the People's Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam).**

**We had a huge veterans-to-veterans meeting. It was tough. It was very difficult because you had a bunch of people sitting around a table who not that long ago were trying to kill each other.**

**I broke the ice by sending in a whole bunch of Japanese beer; and once everyone got loosened up and talking, it went better.**

**We had a lot of different organizations represented there. It was the New American Communist Movement, RU (Revolutionary Union), the October League, and the SWP.**

**By and large, all the young activists pretty much acted in concert.**

**We're here as a delegation. We've got to be together even though we have our differences.**

**I was singing revolutionary songs with the Japanese students, and there were a number of old CPers who were anti-nuke and old-time peace activists who were along for the trip and told us, "We tried that. Don't ever think about revolution or changing things. You can't do anything."**

**So, we'd eat dried fish, squid, and drink beer to keep them away from us.**

**It smelled so bad that they'd stay up in front of the bus away from us.**

**The Japanese students thought we were great.**

**The CPers called us ultra-left commies. It was funny.**

**At that time, it was hard for anything that you did to not be political.**

**Everything from now on was going to be political.**

**Little did I know that that was to be my life.**

**IN MEMORIAM**  
**WILLIAM HUGH DAVIS, 1948-2007**  
President of Vietnam Veterans Against the War  
Leading figure in the Chicago labor movement

**HONOR THE WARRIOR,  
NOT THE WAR**

**Vietnam Veterans Against the War**  
Fighting for Veterans, Peace and Justice since 1967  
[www.vvaw.org](http://www.vvaw.org)



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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

**“We Will Abandon All Our Duties  
Until The American Troops Meet  
Our Demands”**

**“Awakening” Group Wakes Up;  
Withdraws From Alliance With U.S. Military In  
Iraq To Protest Occupation Forces Killing  
Their Members**

February 17, 2008 The Associated Press

BAGHDAD: A Sunni group withdrew from its alliance with the American military in protest of an airstrike that it said killed three of its members.

The Saturday announcement follows the latest claim of a mistaken killing of civilians or U.S.-allied fighters by American forces. The cases have raised concern about future cracks in Sunni cooperation with U.S. forces, which the Pentagon credits as key to the sharp drop in violence in recent months throughout Iraq.

The awakening council - as the groups are widely known - said Friday that an American helicopter strafed one of its checkpoints, killing three members in the village of Jurf al-Sakr, about 35 miles (35 miles) south of Baghdad.

Sheik Sabah al-Janabi, the head of the north Babil awakening council, said his fighters would cease patrols and stop manning checkpoints for three days to protest the killings and to call for an apology and compensation for the victims' relatives.

"We will abandon all our duties until the American troops meet our demands," al-Janabi told The Associated Press.

**"After each incident, the U.S. forces claim that it occurred by mistake," al-Janabi said.**

**"The U.S. side promises to offer an apology and compensation for the victims' relatives but does not fulfill these commitments."**

Council members and supporters held a rally Saturday in Jurf al-Sakr to air their complaints.

The U.S. military said al-Janabi led a "peaceful demonstration" of about 200 awakening council members, which it calls the Sons of Iraq.

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**FUTILE EXERCISE:  
ONLY 14,387,022 MORE WINDOWS TO GO:  
COME ON HOME NOW!**



A U.S. army soldier with Bravo Company, 1st battalion, 64th armor regiment looks through a window in the Jamia neighbourhood in Baghdad November 4, 2007.  
REUTERS/Stefano Rellandini

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## TROOP NEWS

### GET THE MESSAGE?



Citizens protesting against the Iraq war in Berkeley, California, February 12, 2008.  
REUTERS/Robert Galbraith

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## **New Iraq Veterans Against The War Active Duty Chapter Deployed At Fort Hood**



February 15, 2008 By Kelly Dougherty, Former Sergeant, Army National Guard;  
Executive Director, Iraq Veterans Against the War; IVAW Newsletter [Excerpts]

**Our fourth active duty chapter:**

**Deep in the heart of Texas, soldiers at Ft. Hood who recently returned from Iraq have organized our fourth Active Duty chapter.**

**Organizing an IVAW chapter on a military base isn't easy, which is why we're proud of all our members who are organizing on bases, both active duty and local veteran members who are supporting them.**

**We welcome our newest members back from Iraq, and into the IVAW family!**

**MORE:**

## **IVAW On The Move**

February 15, 2008 By Kelly Dougherty, Former Sergeant, Army National Guard; Executive Director, Iraq Veterans Against the War; IVAW Newsletter [Excerpts]

Working together to build IVAW:

**Members in the Mountain Region are getting together for an organizing retreat February 23-24, and our members in the Los Angeles area have a retreat planned for this weekend.**

**These retreats are organized locally to build member involvement, learn organizing skills, and sharpen IVAW's strategic impact.**

**They're an important part of making sure that IVAW stays strong as we continue our rapid growth.**

### **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**

### **NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT THE NEW 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/))

## **FIGHT THEM NOW, OR THEY'LL FOLLOW YOU HOME**



General Betrayus warming up the traitor Bush. [Don't ask, don't tell.]  
(AFP/File/Stephen Jaffe)

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## **IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP**

**Collaborator Government's Website  
Raided & Hijacked:  
"What Are You Doing For The Country  
Besides Theft, Looting And Killing The  
People?"**



**“It is sure that you will say, according to your media, that terrorism, the nation’s enemies, Iraq’s enemies and supporters of this and that sabotaged the website.**

**“These are your tricks. But the ones who sabotaged the site are Iraqis and we belong to our country not to anyone else.**

February 12, 2008 Washingtonbureau.typepad.com/baghdad/

A nifty Iraqi hacker found a way to protest the government here with the government’s own tool. The Iraqi Presidency Council’s website has been hijacked by someone who calls himself SoSo H H Lion.

Instead of the latest news from the Presidency Council a statement exclaims “Defaced!” in English and in Iraqi slang lashes out at the government.

**The statement titled “To the Iraqi government,” is graced with the old Iraqi flag and the Iraqi national anthem plays to the complaints.**

The flag was recently replaced with an interim flag so that the government could fly the Iraqi flag in the region where they will host a pan-Arab parliament meeting. In Kurdistan the flag is seen as a symbol of the genocide committed against them under Saddam Hussein.

Eventually Iraq will chose yet another flag to represent them. But many Iraqis, like hacker SoSo, are angered by the change. To them it is a symbol that preceded Saddam Hussein and they believe it represents them.

**The hacker asks, “A question; what are you doing for the country besides theft, looting and killing the people?”**

Here are some excerpts from the statement which I suspect will soon be removed:

“Mention one thing that you did and the people will say ‘God have mercy on the government’s parents.’ Of course you know very well that Iraqis are dying by the

thousands. If one person died from the parliament or the ministries wouldn't the world turn upside down? Wouldn't it?"

"You left militias and the problems of the country and came to the symbol of Iraq, the Iraqi flag, and changed it. This is the flag that we raise everywhere and we are proud of it. This is the one we used to wrap our martyrs who sacrificed their souls for the sake of this country."

**"It is sure that you will say, according to your media, that terrorism, the nation's enemies, Iraq's enemies and supporters of this and that sabotaged the website.**

**"These are your tricks. But the ones who sabotaged the site are Iraqis and we belong to our country not to anyone else.**

**"We know very well that this will not change anything but we are expressing the feelings of all Iraqis...Hopefully consciences will awaken."**

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## **OCCUPATION REPORT**

### ***Good News For The Iraqi Resistance!!***

### **U.S. Occupation Commands' Stupid Tactics Recruit Even More Fighters To Kill U.S. Troops**



(AP Photo/Anja Niedringhaus)

Feb. 9, 2008: Iraqi citizens are forced to line up to be searched by US Army soldiers with the 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment when they arrive for a market fair in the Azamiyah neighborhood in north Baghdad. *The Iraqi-American chamber of commerce organized a coaching meeting to teach Iraqis how to run a business.*

**[Right. First step in running a business: make your customers line up at gunpoint so you can search them. Threaten to kill any who give you shit about it. Why, people will come from miles around to throw money at you. T]**

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

**[Those Iraqis are sure a bunch of backward primitives. They actually resent this help, have the absurd notion that it's bad their country is occupied by a foreign military dictatorship, and consider it their patriotic duty to fight and kill the soldiers sent to grab their country.]**

**[What a bunch of silly people. How fortunate they are to live under a military dictatorship run by George Bush. Why, how could anybody not love that? You'd want that in your home town, right?]**

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

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

**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.**

**NEXT TIME SOME STUPID RACIST ASSHOLE  
STARTS RAVING ABOUT HOW IRAQIS ARE  
NOTHING BUT PRIMITIVE BACKWARD  
RELIGIOUS FANATICS, SHOVE THIS ONE UP  
THEIR ASS WITH A SHARP STICK**



A U.S. Army soldier with the 2nd Battalion, 319th Airborne Field Artillery Regiment happily checking out artwork in a bedroom in a house during a night home invasion in the Azamiyah neighborhood, north Baghdad, Feb. 12, 2008. (AP Photo/Anja Niedringhaus)

**GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out**

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

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

<http://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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