

GI SPECIAL 6B16:



ACTION REPORTS

Ft. Dix:

“We Spoke With Drivers When They Paused For The Red Light And Overall, They Welcomed The Stuff We Gave Them, And Then Turned Into The Base”

“Honks, Thumbs Up, Support, And A Few, Just A Few, Signs Of Disapproval”

From: Elaine Brower, The Military Project
To: GI Special
Sent: February 19, 2008
Subject: Outreach at Dix

February 16, 2008 By Elaine Brower, Next Left Notes

Saturday, February 16th, 6 members of Movement for a Democratic Society's Staten Island chapter, made a trip to do outreach to the troops at Fort Dix, New Jersey.

We had literature for the troops who were training on the base this weekend - and cookies and brownies too!

We arrived on base, literally at the front gate, at about 1:15 PM on Saturday. I went up to the Visitor's Center, hoping to get on base, but it was closed. So back to our cars we went.

After driving around the periphery of the enormous facility we returned to main entrance with a new plan: stand right out in front of the Ft. Dix sign on Route 68 - the main entrance to the base - and try to hand out what we had.

We parked in a small welcoming lot behind the huge LED sign “WELCOME TO FT. DIX, US ARMY”, which also announced lots of family activities happening on base.

It was cold, windy and a really large intersection, with cars traveling at the speed of light. We made some makeshift signs on some manila folders I had in my trunk “SUPPORT OUR TROOPS, END THE WAR!” and hit the corner.

Immediately, we started handing out our lit and goodie bags, some made by one of the MDS members, with chocolates, homemade cookies, DVD's of “Sir, No Sir!” and literature which advertised the upcoming Winter Soldier event in Washington, D.C.

We spoke with drivers when they paused for the red light and overall, they welcomed the stuff we gave them, and then turned into the base.

We were there about 20 minutes when 2 DoD Homeland Security SUV's pulled up right in front of me. The officer rolled down his window and said “What's up?” I said we were handing out literature for the troops, and home baked goodies. “Do you want one?” I asked. He smiled and said “Not right now.”

He said we couldn't stand where we were because it was "base property." I asked where we could stand and he said "Oh, right on the other corner, no problem there." I thought he was going to say go back to New York! So we gladly just crossed the street, and marked our new territory, directly across from the "Welcome to Ft. Dix" sign.

Then the 2 DoD vehicles saw our cars and called us over to move them. "Can't be on base property." I asked "Is there anywhere else we can park them?" figuring they would say in New York City, but he said "Oh, just across the street, pull up on the shoulder and the grass, no problem." OK, done.

There we were for 2 more hours, handing out what we had, getting honks, thumbs up, support, and a few, just a few, signs of disapproval.

We handed out, to traffic going on the base, about 100 packets and 25 DVD's.

One woman pulled over her van, got out and asked me if she could take one. Her son had just joined the Marines, and she was against it. She said she was confused because she thought it would be a patriotic thing for him to do, but knows that this war and this government is doing "the wrong thing."

I gave her what I had and she said she would make copies and give them out on the base and to her son and his friends!

We declared victory about 4:30 PM, cold and exhausted, and just as we packed up our stuff, a County Sheriff pulled up.

He rolled down his window and asked "What's going on? I received a call saying you were blocking traffic!" He laughed and smiled figuring that would be pretty hard since it was a huge intersection, with cars traveling at lightspeed.

I said we weren't blocking traffic, just handing out literature for the troops.

He gladly took what we had, and told us "You can stay, just be careful of the traffic." We told him we were just leaving since it was getting cold, and he said "Oh, I don't mean to kick you out. Please, stay if you want to."

We all just looked at each other in amazement, befuddled and just smiled and said to him "Oh, well, that's ok, we'll be back." He said ok, have a good night, and left!

Don't let anyone say Staten Island is a forgotten borough, I don't think Dix will forget us, and I wish I could have been a fly on the wall somewhere on that base Saturday night!

MORE:

**MORE ACTION REPORTS
WANTED:**

FROM YOU!

An effective way to encourage others to support members of the armed forces organizing to resist the Imperial war is to report what you do.

If you've carried out organized contact with troops on active duty, at base gates, airports, or anywhere else, send a report in to GI Special for the Action Reports section.

Same for contact with National Guard and/or Reserve components.

They don't have to be long. Just clear, and direct action reports about what work was done and how.

If there were favorable responses, say so. If there were unfavorable responses or problems, don't leave them out.

If you are not planning or engaging in outreach to the troops, you have nothing to report.

NOTE WELL:

Do not make public any information that could compromise the work.

Whether you are serving in the armed forces or not, do not in any way identify members of the armed forces organizing to stop the war.

If accidentally included, that information will not be published.

The sole exception: occasions when a member of the armed services explicitly directs his or her name be listed as reporting on the action.

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U. S. Marine Killed In Anbar

February 22, 2008 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20080222-01

CAMP FALLUJAH, Iraq – A Multi-National Force - West Marine was killed in action against enemy forces in Al Anbar Province Feb. 21.

IED Kills U.S. Soldier Somewhere Or Other In Iraq

February 20, 2008 Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20080220-11

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division – Center Soldier was killed when the Soldier's vehicle was struck by an improvised explosive device Feb. 20.

Missouri Guardsman Killed in Iraq Leaves Behind Five Children

05 Feb 2008 By: John Gadson; KTVI

A soldier assigned to Fort Leonard Wood has been killed in Iraq. A rocket propelled grenade hit the vehicle Matthew Straughter was riding. He died on January 31st, one day before his 28th birthday.

Thelma Straughter says her husband of nearly two years had been in Iraq since last July. He was a combat engineer specialist; he joined the Missouri National Guard almost two years ago. The father of five came from a proud military past.

Right now his sister Sergeant Katherine Williams is now serving in Iraq and so is younger brother Andrew Straughter. And he has a brother in law Private First Class Walter Williams who is also military. This family tradition spans four generations.

Bay Pays Tribute To Soldier

FEBRUARY 15, 2008 By KATHRYN SCHOENBERGER, TIMES STAFF WRITER;
Watertown Daily Times

ALEXANDRIA BAY — The village and other area communities gathered to welcome home a fallen 10th Mountain Division soldier Thursday.

Residents lined Route 12 as the motorcade for Pfc. Jack T. Sweet made its way through the village to Costello Funeral Home on Church Street.

"I think the community is devastated," said Cynthia L. Simpson, a friend of the Sweet family.

Pfc. Sweet, 19, was killed by a roadside bomb Feb. 8 near Jawwalah, Iraq. He was a member of the 2nd Battalion, 22nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Brigade Combat Team.

Members of five area fire and rescue departments — Alexandria Bay, Three Mile Bay, Clayton, Redwood and Plessis — as well as the local chapter of the American Legion and other area organizations also came out to show their support for Pfc. Sweet's family.

"This is a small town. Everybody sticks together," said Alexandria Bay Fire Chief Robert G. Service II. "So whatever they need, we're going to give them."

The motorcade made a detour off Route 12 to pass Alexandria Central School, which Pfc. Sweet attended. Most of the students, some visibly upset, at the K-12 school lined the walkway outside the building. The youngest children remained inside, but watched from their classroom windows.

As the motorcade approached, the Select Choir sang the national anthem and the hearse paused in front of the main entrance to the school for a moment of silence.

Shawna M. Kernehan, 17, daughter of Robert and Kelly Kernehan, was a friend of Pfc. Sweet and is a student at Alexandria Central. She said it was good for the students to be able to pay tribute to their former schoolmate.

"I'm glad we did it," Shawna said.

After stopping at the school, the motorcade proceeded to the funeral home, where calling hours will be held from 2 to 4 and 7 to 9 p.m. today.

Pfc. Sweet's aunt, LuAnne E. Rowsam, said her family appreciated the support from the area, calling it "phenomenal."

"And the school kids were just amazing," she said.

Mrs. Rowsam said her nephew had always dreamed of being a soldier, and while his death has been difficult for the family, it helps to know he died doing what he loved.

"I think that's a little solace for us all," she said.

Four British Troops Wounded Near Basra

1.21.08 LONDON (AFP) & DPA

Four British soldiers suffered minor injuries when their convoy was hit by two explosions near their base in southern Iraq, the defence ministry in London said Thursday.

“We can confirm that British troops were involved in an incident to the northwest of Basra last night,” a spokesman told AFP.

“It was a British convoy that was passing through the outskirts of Basra on a routine mission.

“There were two explosions reported and our forces have extracted themselves from the immediate area.

The spokesman said the soldiers were based at Basra Airport, outside the southern port city, but he gave no details of their mission nor which regiment they were from. Attacks on the British base were also reported near Basra airport.

**THERE IS ABSOLUTELY NO COMPREHENSIBLE
REASON TO BE IN THIS EXTREMELY HIGH RISK
LOCATION AT THIS TIME, EXCEPT THAT A
TRAITOR WHO LIVES IN THE WHITE HOUSE
WANTS YOU THERE**

That is not a good enough reason.



U.S. Army soldiers search for weapons caches during a mission near Baquba December 15, 2007. REUTERS/Bob Strong

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Royal Marine Dies In Helmand Explosion; Another Wounded

February 20, 2008 Sky News

A Royal Marine has been killed in an explosion in Afghanistan.

The soldier, who has not been named, was taking part in a patrol to disrupt Taliban activity in the southern province of Helmand when the blast took place.

Another marine injured in the attack was taken to the British base at Camp Bastion for treatment for minor injuries. The next of kin have been informed.

The marines were patrolling in Viking armoured all-terrain

TROOP NEWS

**“The Army Decided To Fuck Me
Over”**

**“Three Days Into R & R,
Pacanowski Received A Letter
That Turned The Horror Of Her
Term In Iraq To A Pointless Hell”
“It Was A Notice From The US Army,
Explaining That The Government
Would Not Pay Off Her College
Loans, Despite Previous Guarantees”**

“Three Years After Leaving Iraq, She And Her Mother Are Still Slowly Paying Back Her Loans”



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

25 January 2008 By Maya Schenwar, Truthout Report

It was July 2004 and Jennifer Pacanowski was headed home to Pennsylvania after six months as a medic in Iraq. Like most other soldiers in the Army, she had two weeks at home to “rest and relax” before returning to the combat zone. “It’s kind of a vacation from war,” she says.

But for Pacanowski, this summer vacation did not involve vegging in front of the TV or lazing on the beach; she didn’t waste a moment of her break. She visited the people she was close to, spent a few days in Wildwood, New Jersey, “reliving a childhood vacation,” and hosted a big barbecue for her friends and family.

“I didn’t think I was ever going to see them again,” she says. “I was basically preparing to die.”

Pacanowski joined the Army on April 23, 2003, a month after the Iraq War began. It was a week before the “Mission Accomplished” banner flashed across television screens nationwide, as President Bush announced, “Major combat operations in Iraq have ended. In the Battle of Iraq, the United States and our allies have prevailed.” Like many Americans, Pacanowski and her family thought the war was, for the most part, over.

But by the time of her R & R break in 2004, she could not envision the war’s end - nor a way out of her predicament.

Her small consolation was that, should she get out of the war alive, she’d be student-loan-free and well on her way to beginning a career in nursing.

However, three days into R & R, Pacanowski received a letter that turned the horror of her term in Iraq to a pointless hell.

It was a notice from the US Army, explaining that the government would not pay off her college loans, despite previous guarantees.

Devastated, carrying both her financial burden and a growing feeling that Iraqis wanted the US troops out, Pacanowski dragged herself back for five and half more months of deployment. Loyalty was her only motivation not to desert.

"I couldn't leave my friends in Iraq without me," she said. "They were my best friends in the world and still are. If I didn't go back, they would've had to go on more convoys and endanger their lives even more. I'm not a coward - I couldn't do that just because the Army decided to fuck me over."

Pacanowski now suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). She vomits when memories of the war hit, and had to put the phone down in the middle of our conversation to be sick.

Three years after leaving Iraq, she and her mother are still slowly paying back her loans.

"The Wrong Kind of Loans"

When Pacanowski left college before finishing, she and her Dad, an ex-Marine, discussed the prospect of joining the military. She'd always considered becoming a Marine, and now, with mountains of student loans to pay off, it seemed like the perfect time. Pacanowski, then 23, also had aspirations of becoming a nurse, and she hoped that a few years as a medic would jump-start her career. Thinking she'd be involved in post-war health care aid and reconstruction, her parents supported her decision.

"My dad wouldn't have said, 'Hey, join the Army!' if he thought I was going to go into a world war," Pacanowski says. "That wouldn't have been great parental advice."

Pacanowski arranged a series of meetings with recruiters and researched all branches of the military to determine which would completely pay off her loans. The Army won: its package offered total loan payment, in exchange for forfeiting the GI bill stipend that usually comes with release. Pacanowski's recruiter assured her, after perusing all her paperwork, that her loans qualified for the Army's reimbursement program. Pacanowski then took six months before entering the Army to make sure "everything was aligned," ensuring that her loans would indeed be paid off in full, and that she'd be guaranteed a job as a medic.

Upon arriving in Iraq via Germany, Pacanowski got her first surprise: far from assisting Iraqis with building a health care program, she was riding on gun trucks as an emergency medical first responder, often watching as IEDs exploded and small-arms fire erupted. Every day, she was treating injured soldiers on the road or in the hospital. Some died as soon as they arrived. In her eleven and a half months in Iraq, Pacanowski participated in only one medical civic assistance program, providing direct care to Iraqi civilians.

By the time she got her second surprise - the loan rejection while on break - she was waking up every day expecting to die. Morbidly, that softened the impact of the loan

notice, she says. "There were two things going on," Pacanowski says. "One, I didn't really think I was going to live. Second of all, I knew that if I did, I would have avenues to fight it when I got back to Germany. I have a very strong will."

The Army justified its refusal to pay Pacanowski's loans by stating they were the "wrong kind," asserting that her loans were private, since they were directly borrowed from a bank - even though all of her paperwork showed that they were federal.

"My recruiter must have known my loans looked sketchy, but no one told me," she says. "I found out that when you're in the military, they will fuck you over at any chance they get."

Another Battle, Stateside

With no legal aid available to her in Iraq, Pacanowski pushed through the last five and a half months of her deployment, her outrage at the Army overshadowed by her daily struggle for survival.

Finally, when she was redeployed to Germany, she sought redress. The military appointed her a lawyer who advised her to give up any hope of loan repayment in exchange for the GI bill money she'd agreed to forfeit earlier on.

At that point, Pacanowski's two goals were simple: to get her money - or as much of it as possible - and to get out.

She addressed the "get out" objective first. Under the guidance of her lawyer, Pacanowski fought to leave the Army, and won. She was released on "breach of contract" after showing that her military contract stated that her loans would be paid.

"When I was in the outprocessing office, everyone else looked at my breach of contract slip and said, 'How did you do this?'" Pacanowski says. "Everyone says their recruiter lied to them, but I fucking proved it."

However, on coming home, it became clear that, despite her lawyer's counsel, getting out early might have crushed her chances of reimbursement.

The night Pacanowski's plane landed in Pennsylvania, she received a call at her parents' house from the Army Board of Corrections. A secretary informed her that if she'd stayed in the Army, the military would have paid off her loans, after all. Now that she'd left, both the loan payments and the GI bill compensation were "questionable," and, since she was no longer eligible for a military lawyer, she would have to build a case herself.

"I still had the loans, and now I couldn't even get the GI bill," Pacanowski says. "Essentially, I got out with nothing, except a big pile of shit in my hands to figure out."

For the next few months, she devoted herself to fighting for her loan reimbursement: compiling paperwork, making phone calls and gathering information from recruiters. She spoke with her state congressman, Mario Scavello. Almost every day, she called the secretary of the Army Board of Corrections to clarify details on the information she was expected to supply.

Pacanowski put together a complete account of her situation, which was reviewed by the board. The final decision: the Army would repay a portion of her loans.

She faced the fact that, after putting in a year of unforeseen horror and bloodshed, she'd have to pay off the rest herself.

"I had no fight left in me," she says. "I just wanted to dig a little hole and stay there for the rest of my life."

Pacanowski initially tried to step back onto the path she'd veered off when she entered the military. She took an anatomy class, but found that, far from building up her tolerance for gore, her year in Iraq had upped her sensitivity. Injury and illness were not subjects for study; they were gut-wrenching reminders of IEDs exploding, guns firing and Iraqi children covered in blood, dying upon arrival at the hospital.

Pacanowski "didn't have the stomach to see people die anymore." Her plan for a career in medicine was shot.

As she searched for work and attempted to brainstorm new career options, her mental health was faltering. Then, two and a half years after leaving the war, it took a nosedive. She became an alcoholic, lost the ability to work and began vomiting uncontrollably.

Pacanowski realized her mounting financial obligation wasn't the only debt she'd be paying off. She was also paying for her time at war with her mind.

A Heavy Price

Pacanowski now works as a part-time receptionist at a doctor's office. When her PTSD symptoms flare up and she feels sick to her stomach, she signals to a coworker, who takes over while she runs to the bathroom.

She speaks of an "impending doom feeling," a sense of imminent death for herself and those around her. Coupled with anxiety and nausea, it's tough to leave the house. Driving triggers flashes of the explosions she witnessed on convoys, and she often asks others for rides. Above all, any mention of Iraq is likely to send her over the edge.

"I get sick when I read about it, talk about it, after I eat," Pacanowski says. "I get sick and I move on; it's just life to me now."

Help from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has not come easily. The VA is only required to see psychiatric patients once a month, and Pacanowski feels as if the staff wants to shut her up with drugs and be rid of her. Though she's tried six medications for PTSD, enduring a bout with valium addiction, she has not found relief.

Pacanowski wants to get well, move past her financial burdens and start thinking about her future - beyond what it's going to be like to leave the house each day.

"The fight in me has come back, and I don't want to be a prisoner in my own home," she says. "I want to be a real person again."

For right now, though, the journey from here to there seems unbelievably long. In Iraq - and even during her battle at home with the Army Board of Corrections - the opposition was easily identifiable and wholly separate. Now it's inside of her.

Pacanowski often finds it easier to write than to speak. In the last stanza of a poem, she reflects:

"I'm home. No M16. No I.E.D.S, R.P.G.s and small arms fire or the bad guys. No, now, the enemy is my sickness."

With supportive parents, an understanding boyfriend and a "fighter" personality, Pacanowski is determined to make a comeback. But that doesn't mean she absolves her recruiters and the military enterprise. Joining the military was supposed to ease her debt and boost her career prospects, she says, and it left her with the opposite consequences.

Despite her trials, Pacanowski doesn't fault the armed forces, as an entity: "I still firmly believe in the military," she says. But she condemns the way the system operates.

"I believe the people making these decisions should have a child in the Army," Pacanowski says. "They would be making completely different decisions if it was their kid fighting this war."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Resistance Action

21 Feb 2008 Reuters & By Sahar Issa, McClatchy Newspapers & 22 Feb 2008 Reuters

Commander of Fallujah Brigade, the Seventh Division, Brigadier General Ahmed al-Juburi was killed when a roadside bomb targeted his motorcade. His driver was also killed and one security personnel seriously injured.

A bomber killed at least six policemen and wounded nine others when he detonated a vest packed with explosives outside a mosque near Falluja in western Anbar province.

Guerrillas shot dead a policeman near his house in the town of Numaniya, 120 km (70 miles) south of Baghdad, on Thursday, police said.

Around 2 p.m. Thursday afternoon, gunmen opened fire upon a car belonging to the Crimes Department killing First Lieutenant Ahmed Mohammed and injuring Lieutenant Colonel Hazim and one policeman near the Institute of Law in Waziriyah, north Baghdad.

Five policemen were injured in a roadside bomb explosion that targeted a police patrol in Faisaliyah neighbourhood, central Mosul.

A car bomber killed three policemen and wounded eight others at a police station in Tikrit, 175 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad, police said.

IF YOU DON'T LIKE THE RESISTANCE END THE OCCUPATION

FORWARD OBSERVATIONS

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh had I the ability, and could reach the nation's ear, I would, pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Frederick Douglas, 1852

**"What country can preserve its liberties if its rulers are not warned from time to time that their people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms."
Thomas Jefferson to William Stephens Smith, 1787.**

**"The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!"
-- Camille Desmoulins**

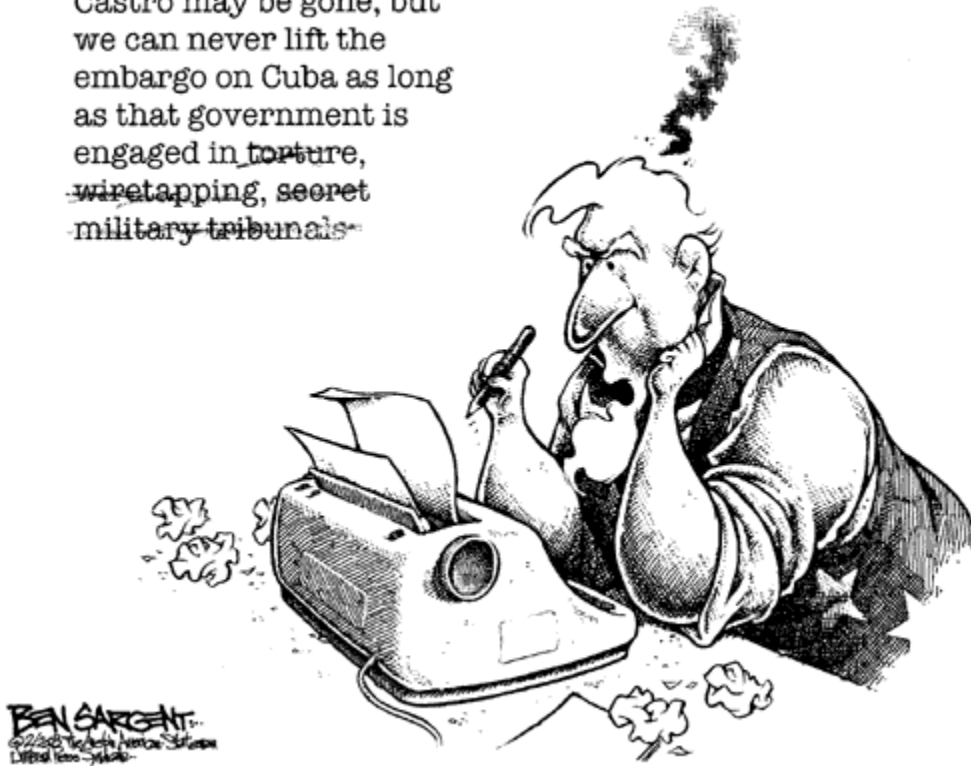
**"When someone says my son died fighting for his country, I say, "No, the suicide bomber who killed my son died fighting for his country."
-- Father of American Soldier Chase Beattie, KIA in Iraq**

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

Castro may be gone, but
we can never lift the
embargo on Cuba as long
as that government is
engaged in ~~torture,~~
~~wiretapping, secret~~
~~military tribunals~~



2/20

[Thanks to SSGT N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

**“Collectively, You Are Much More
Than A Bunch Of Guys And Girls
With Guns”**

**“Collectively You Can Bring
Yourselves Home To Your Wives,
Husbands And Children”
“Collectively You Can Tell This
Government That You Are Done With
This Fight”**

In 1985, at the age of 17, after a few hours in a Montana Jail, I decided to clean up my act and enlist in the United States Air Force.

I gained instant “good girl” status with my Dad and my neighbors. Everyone shook my hand and said how proud they were of me, and my decision.

June 19, 2007 by April Fitzsimmons, Sgt. USAF (1985-1989) Veteranstoday.com.
April Fitzsimmons welcomes your comments. You can email her at
true2selph@aol.com.

LOS ANGELES, Ca - “On your knees!” shouted the Marine Sergeant.

I felt the right one crunch as I knelt on the concrete. “Hands over your head!” he hollered. I lifted them high into the air. I felt vulnerable and scared. “How did it come to this?” I thought. “How did I get here?”

As the US Marines bound my wrists with plastic ties and blindfolded me, my life flashed before me.

In 1985, at the age of 17, after a few hours in a Montana Jail, I decided to clean up my act and enlist in the United States Air Force.

I gained instant “good girl” status with my Dad and my neighbors. Everyone shook my hand and said how proud they were of me, and my decision.

Even though I’d always wanted to be an actor and a writer, enlisting in the military seemed like my best chance for success and the quickest way out of Dodge.

I didn’t have any money for college, I didn’t want to stay in our small Montana town, and while the rest of my classmates shuffled off to school, I felt good about my plan.

It felt safe and special and all the adults in my life said I was brave and courageous.

I went from ex-con to the next American hero overnight and all I had to do was take a test and sign some papers.

I became an Intelligence Analyst in the midst of the Cold War. Stationed in Southern Italy, we spied on the Soviet Union, the Eastern bloc, Iraq and Iran. We listened to them and they listened to us and we reported everything we found to a little office in the states called the National Security Agency.

I got involved with the theatre on base and did some acting to kill the time, but like most folks with a job they can't really talk about, I drank. I drank to unwind, to get jolly, but mostly I drank to forget what I was seeing at work.

One night after hanging out at the NCO club, I was sexually assaulted by a fellow service member in my dorm room.

My roommate was working a night shift and this guy had the key to the girls' dorms and he was letting himself in to see how much he could get away with.

I was so frightened about what happened that I didn't say anything. He was caught a couple weeks later after he raped a girl and I finally got the courage to speak up about my attack.

I testified against him and after the trial he was transferred off the base. I never got therapy. I never told my parents.

I just pretended the whole thing never happened. I stayed quiet.

And then a bunch of really nice things happened to help me forget.

I became Airman of the Year, an intelligence briefer for a General and the Ambassador for our command and just before the first Gulf War, my enlistment ended.

I got an honorable discharge and I finally started to do what I'd always wanted to do in the first place.

I moved to Hollywood and worked on a bunch of movies behind the scenes in film production and then I wrote a book about it and went back to acting school. I didn't tell anyone I was a vet because I was embarrassed about it. I remember being at a barbeque, telling some guy I was trying to impress that I'd served in the military.

"Why would you do that?" he asked, looking at me like I'd just swiped an old woman's purse.

"Um... because I was young," I said and changed the subject.

Contrary to what my recruiter and the out-processing people had told me, the military didn't really give me "special status" in the civilian world unless I wanted to work in the same field I'd already worked in. The thought of spending another minute, hunched over a desk in a windowless room, pouring over data about an enemy that would be obsolete in another twenty years seemed senseless and miles away from the creative life I craved. So I kept quiet about my vet status.

Everything was stat until 9/11. Sitting on my couch in Los Angeles, I watched the plane hit the second building. I watched the suits jockey for sound-bites about the evil-doer's, the axis of evil and evil in general.

And then I saw Dick Cheney. I hadn't really thought of him for years. He was the Secretary of Defense at the end of my service commitment and from his Washington DC bunker had steered the troops into the first Gulf War. I heard Cheney and Bush lie and manipulate the public into thinking that Iraq had something to do with 9/11. I listened as Cheney lied to the public and said we were very unsure of Iraq's weapon capability.

I watched the President get giddier by the day at the thought of a retaliatory strike. And I watched young men and women line up at the recruiter's offices. The whole thing felt wrong.

I started to research and finally do the homework of an American citizen. I read the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Koran, Howard Zinn, Noam Chomsky and John Perkins. I read about the Project for the New American Century and I discovered a formidable plan at work to gain a stronghold in the Middle East. I listened to and met other veterans who were also disturbed by what was happening; people like: Gen Batiste, Gen. Zinni, Gen. Shinseki, Col. Ann Wright, Ron Kovic and Ray McGovern.

I heard James Baker say on NPR that we will go to the war with the Middle East to maintain our economic interests. And then I watched our country privatize the oil fields of Iraq last week. I got so angry with our mission to convert the Iraqis to our "way of life", like we were a part of some religious crusade.

With most of New Orleans still struggling to recover from Katrina, I couldn't believe that we were so preoccupied with trying to mind another country's business when we couldn't even mind our own. I got so outraged at the misinformation being manufactured by the administration and being manipulated by the media that I couldn't keep quiet anymore.

All this flashed through my mind as I knelt on the ground as part of Operation First Casualty.

This action started with a group of veterans from the Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) when they decided to storm Manhattan and D. C. to reenact for civilians the reality of the troops patrolling Iraq. It was named Operation First Casualty under the premise that the first casualty of war is the truth and the IVAW is dedicated to bringing the truth of this war to the streets of America.

It wasn't easy for these former Marines. As we rehearsed and then occupied the streets of Santa Monica, California, it stirred up all their dormant aggression.

It was hot and sweaty in those heavy vests in the 90 degree heat. The experience of the reenactment brought on nightmares and flashbacks and fresh PTSD episodes. But they did it because they're brave and committed to raising awareness in these sleepy, fat towns where folks are more interested in shopping than learning about the human cost of war.

So there I was on my knees with a team of US Marines yelling at me and I started to cry. Not because that's my job (the role of an Iraqi civilian being searched) but because

that's a natural, human response for me when I'm on my knees blindfolded and bound. I cry. From behind the blindfold I could see no future. All I could see was a perpetual cycle of violence, and all I could hear were the frightened sobs of my Iraqi sister, and all I could feel was shame and confusion.

I serve now on behalf of the troops who have seen the moral error of this war. I stand beside leaders like Lt. Ehren Watada who bravely pointed out the constitutional justification for refusing to fight in the Iraq War.

And I support Operation First Casualty and defend Adam Kokesh's right to wear his uniform while performing street theatre in order to wake up Americans to the harsh reality of this war.

And I will continue to stand beside the women and men that slowly come forward after being sexually assaulted by their fellow service members and hopefully give them the support they need to speak up.

This is who I serve now and these are my new heroes. They will receive no medals for their courage.

In fact some of them will go to jail, get demoted and lose their veteran benefits. But the rewards they will reap in their souls, knowing that they did what was morally right during an illegal war, will bestow upon them a lifetime of peace.

I've discovered that heroes come in all shapes and sizes. Is a hero someone who does something just because somebody tells him to? What defines a hero? Throwing oneself in front of a bullet and receiving a medal, does that make a person a hero? What if that bullet was only fired because you were standing there? If you ceased to stand there and take the bullet, would you cease to be a hero?

I believe the heroes of this war are the veterans who are standing up against it.

Personally, I don't think it's heroic to barge into someone else's home with an AK-47 and night goggles, rouse them from sleep, rifle through their possessions, kick their walls and detain the man of the household because he is between the age of 12-50 just because some Commander in Chief, who flaked on most of his service commitment, said that's what has to happen in order to root out every terrorist on the globe.

What part of that scenario is noble, courageous and heroic?

I don't believe that by barging into homes "over there" will prevent them from attacking us here. I think that's part of a cleverly crafted script, brilliantly acted out by the puppets in Washington. By fighting them there, we only create more enemies, here, there and everywhere.

And I don't recall Superman seeking out the evil-doers. I recall him waiting in his office, doing work in his community and addressing the call to action, when the call came. The call came. Saddam is dead. It's time to come home. There are plenty of well paid contractors to clean up the mess.

You belong to and are paid by the American people and the majority of the American people want you home.

It's up to you.

You are more powerful, more strategic, more intelligent and more effective than those ten people in Washington that say you have to stay and clean up Iraq.

It's a political mess now, not a military one.

Collectively, you are much more than a bunch of guys and girls with guns.

Collectively you can bring yourselves home to your wives, husbands and children.

Collectively you can tell this government that you are done with this fight.

Collectively you are the only ones who know the reality of this war and collectively you are the only one's who can speak up against it.

"The dissenter is every human being at those moments of his life when he resigns momentarily from the herd and thinks for himself."

– Archibald MacLeish (US Army Veteran, Pulitzer Prize Winner)

Troops Invited:

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

**“The PKK Has Been Battling
Turkey For Decades To Establish
An Independent Kurdistan”
“They Are Fighting For Kurdish
Freedom And Are Not Terrorists”
“In The History Of The Kurdish People
And Kurdistan, It Is The United States Of**

America, Turkey And The Former Regime In Iraq Who Were The Enemy Of The Kurdish People”



Sozdar Avesta, a leading member of the PKK, says they are fighting for Kurdish freedom and are not terrorists. Photo: Leila Fadel, MCT

February 21, 2008 By Leila Fadel, McClatchy Newspapers

ZAR GALY, Iraq — In the snowcapped Qandeel Mountains of northern Iraq, it's hard to see that the Kurdistan Workers Party — the PKK, as it's known by its Kurdish initials — has been on the U.S. terrorist list since 2002.

Or that President Bush and the U.S.-backed Iraqi government promised Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan that they'd crack down on the group, which has killed hundreds of Turks in its battle for an independent Kurdish homeland.

No Iraqi troops patrol here. PKK men in uniform check the IDs of those who seek to visit. The image of the PKK's leader is emblazoned on a mountain slope, and a sign openly proclaims PKK headquarters. The peshmerga troops of the Kurdistan Regional Government, which officially rules northern Iraq, make no effort to enter.

Indeed, there's little evidence in this tiny village inside what the PKK calls the Medya Defense Area that the Kurdish Regional Government has made any effort to cut off the group's supply lines. The regional government paves the roads and buses in teachers from nearby towns. Residents openly watch PKK television, with the sound up loud.

The only people who seem to be challenged as they come and go are journalists, whose entry into PKK territory is forbidden. But once inside, after sneaking past the last Kurdistan Regional Government checkpoint with a PKK-affiliated escort, one finds PKK officials openly proud of what they've built. The escort called the area the safest place in Iraq.

“A person can leave gold in the street and come back hours later and it will still be there,” he said. He pulled to the side of the road to admire the blanket of snow and the serene Kurdish villages embedded in the mountainsides. Two PKK guerrillas trudged past, weapons slung on their backs. Helicopters buzzed in the air.

The PKK has been battling Turkey for decades to establish an independent Kurdistan that would include part of southern Turkey, and these mountains have been its refuge for 26 years. Last year, the Turkish parliament authorized its military to cross into Iraq after PKK raiders killed a dozen Turkish soldiers and bombed a bus loaded with civilians.

To head off an open invasion, Bush promised to help. The Iraqi government ordered a crackdown on PKK offices in northern Iraq, and the Kurdish Regional Government said that it would move against the group's redoubts.

But there's no sign of that, and PKK officials say they're offended by Bush's characterization of them as an “enemy of Iraq.”

“The president of the United States is saying that the PKK is the enemy,” said a PKK leader, Sozdar Avesta. “But the fact is that until now, in the history of the Kurdish people and Kurdistan, it is the United States of America, Turkey and the former regime in Iraq who were the enemy of the Kurdish people.”

Avesta said that the United States did nothing to stop Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein from gassing Kurdish villages in the 1980s, and charged that Turkey has used cease-fires to crack down on PKK sympathizers and arrest the group's leaders.

“On one side there are unilateral cease-fires in order to solve the Kurdish question through dialogue and peace and democracy,” she said. “On the other hand, there are international forces and regional forces who don't want to solve the Kurdish question. The same forces have played many games in order to stop the solution to the Kurdish question peacefully. So the reality is they are the ones who are the enemy of the Kurds.”

Avesta, who was dressed in military green, wore her hair short and kept her rifle propped against a nearby wall, said the United States and Turkey had ignored the PKK's promise Nov. 30 to lay down its arms if Turkey would move to stop discrimination against Kurds, allow the use of the Kurdish language in schools and government and create an autonomous Kurdish region in Turkey.

She's angry that the United States has divided Kurds, as she put it, between the “good Kurd,” willing to live with few rights in line with U.S. policy, and the “bad Kurd,” who demands an independent state.

“The Americans help Turkey with intelligence against us,” she said. “Despite all our efforts in order to solve the Kurdish question through dialogue, we find that the United States of America does not know any thing about us, because the United State of America wants to get to know us only through the eyes of our enemy.”

She's especially bitter about the powerful Iraqi Kurdish parties, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan and the Kurdish Democratic Party, who've called for the PKK to lay down its arms. They, too, once used these mountains for shelter, she said.

"It's like a mother and her children, but the children are not loyal to the mother," she said.

U.S. officials declined to discuss the PKK in detail. In an e-mailed statement, the military said, "The PKK is a terrorist organization that uses murder as a weapon to achieve political goals." It added that sharing intelligence is the only way to get rid of the PKK.

Avesta scoffed at the idea that PKK members are terrorists.

"If wanting peace means you're a terrorist, I have nothing to say," she said.

"If wanting to speak your mother tongue, if wanting freedom for your ethnic group to organize freely, if those things are terrorism, I have nothing to say. If wanting your natural rights makes you a terrorist, I have nothing to say."

She promised never to surrender.

"There are 40 million Kurds in Turkey under oppression," she said.

"Throughout history there have been 29 Kurdish revolutions against that government. Our movement is the 30th revolution against them.

"If they defeat us, there will be a 31st."

Winter Soldierizing

From: To: GI Special
Sent: February 04, 2008
Subject: Winter Soldierizing

[Thanks to Gordon Sturrock, Veterans For Peace, who sent this in.]

By Jack Dresser, Ph.D., Behavioral Scientist, Co-founder, Lane County Veterans for Peace: Capt., US Army (psychologist, Vietnam era)
<http://www.squadron13.com>; <http://www.VeteransAgainstTorture.com>

In the winter of 1777-78, after suffering three terrible defeats by the much larger British force and marching hundreds of miles, the 11,000-man Continental Army retreated to a winter headquarters at Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. Food was in desperately short supply, 2,000 men were without shoes, and many were without blankets. Typhoid fever, dysentery, malnutrition and exposure claimed some 2,500 lives that winter.

American Patriot morale had declined severely and whole militia companies had deserted to return home. Those that remained to weather the arduous winter formed powerful bonds that led them to eventually prevail in our war for independence.

Of these men and the 700 women who fed, nursed and warmed them through that winter, political activist and revolutionary thinker Thomas Paine wrote, "The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of their country; but he that stands it now, deserves the love and thanks of all men and women."

Those that endured have come to be called the "winter soldiers."

As veterans, we once swore to "support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic." We do not foreswear that oath upon removing the uniform.

Upon that basis in 1971, following prosecution of Lt. Calley for the My Lai massacre in Vietnam, over 150 honorably discharged, many very highly decorated members of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) gathered in Detroit to share their stories. Remaining faithful to their oath beyond their obligated service and harkening back to Paine's words, they named this the "Winter Soldier Investigation."

Atrocities like My Lai had ignited popular opposition to the war, but political and military leaders insisted that such crimes were isolated exceptions.

The members of VVAW testified at that time on the systematic brutality and war crimes they had witnessed and inflicted upon the people of Vietnam, stating that unspeakable atrocities such as "free fire zones" were in fact US government policy, violating the Geneva Conventions and other international treaties which are defined by Article VI of the Constitution as "the supreme law of the land."

Asked by Chairman William Fulbright to present their findings before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Lt. John Kerry delivered ringing testimony on behalf of the group. He explained, "We who have come here to Washington have come here because we feel we have to be winter soldiers now. We could come back to this country, we could be quiet, we could hold our silence, we could not tell what went on in Vietnam, but we feel because of what threatens this country, not the reds, but the crimes which we are committing that threaten it, that we have to speak out."

Kerry concluded his testimony, "We wish that a merciful God could wipe away our own memories of that service as easily as this administration has wiped away their memories of us. But all that they have done and all that they can do by this denial is to make more clear than ever our own determination to undertake one last mission - to search out and destroy the last vestige of this barbaric war, to pacify our own hearts, to conquer the hate and fear that have driven this country these last ten years and more... And so when thirty years from now our brothers go down the street without a leg, without an arm, or a face, and small boys ask why, we will be able to say 'Vietnam' and not mean a desert, not a filthy obscene memory, but mean instead where America finally turned and where soldiers like us helped it in the turning."

But thirty years have passed and America has failed to turn.

Thirty-two years later, America launched another equally brutal, equally mindless, equally unjustified attack on the nation of Iraq, again in violation of international treaty laws - the UN and Nuremberg Charters - that prohibit wars of aggression, and once more violating Article VI, the "Supremacy Clause," of our Constitution. So once again winter soldiers are needed.

Thankfully, a current generation of outraged veterans is arising and a Winter Soldier II investigation is scheduled for March 13-16 in Washington, DC, where members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) will replicate the model of their VVAW predecessors. All other peace organizations nationwide have been asked to suspend public events during that time so that media attention can be focused on this testimony. Information about the event may be found on the group's Web site: www.ivaw.org.

"Over 30 years later," IVAW states, "we find ourselves faced with a new war, but the lies are the same. Once again, troops are sinking into an increasingly bloody occupation. Once again, war crimes in places like Haditha, Fallujah and Abu Ghraib have turned the public against the war. Once again, politicians and generals are blaming 'a few bad apples' instead of examining the military policies that have destroyed Iraq and Afghanistan."

IVAW is planning to provide live broadcasting of the sessions for those who cannot hear the testimony firsthand.

Our blue-and-white Veterans for Peace bus, "Squadron13 Deployed," will be there - our gas budget willing - following a 3,400 mile coast-to-coast awareness raising tour taking the southern route around the Rockies.

We will film and post on YouTube as we go and as we witness.

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/)

OCCUPATION REPORT

U.S. OCCUPATION RECRUITING DRIVE IN HIGH GEAR; RECRUITING FOR THE ARMED RESISTANCE THAT IS



A child is seen in her home amid damage caused by a night home invasion by foreign occupation troops from U.S. forces in the Sadr City District of Baghdad February 11, 2008. U.S. forces said they detained 25 suspected Shiite militiamen during the raids which local residents described as indiscriminately heavy handed. REUTERS/Kareem Raheem

Iraqi citizens have no right to resist home invasions by occupation soldiers from the USA. If they do, they may be arrested, wounded, or killed.

[There's nothing quite like invading somebody else's country and busting into their houses by force to arouse an intense desire to kill you in the patriotic, self-respecting civilians who live there.

[But your commanders know that, don't they? Don't they?]

The women and children were moved into a room, where they huddled together in silence. The men had been forced down onto their knees wherever they were apprehended, their hands secured behind their backs with plastic handcuffs and their eyes covered by makeshift blindfolds. YOCHI J. DREAZEN, Wall St. Journal, 3.12.07

“In the States, if police burst into your house, kicking down doors and swearing at you, you would call your lawyer and file a lawsuit,” said Wood, 42, from Iowa, who did not accompany Halladay’s Charlie Company, from his battalion, on Thursday’s raid. “Here, there are no lawyers. Their resources are limited, so they plant IEDs (improvised explosive devices) instead.”

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

Iraqi Members Of Parliament Not Allowed Inside U.S. Embassy: “They Treat Us In A Disgusting Way”

22 February 2008 By Maya Schenwar, Truthout Report [Excerpt]

Iraqis are currently not allowed to enter the US embassy in Baghdad unless they're escorted by an American citizen, according to [Raed] Jarrar [consultant to the American Friends Service Committee].

Even the five Iraqi MPs set to speak before Congress in March were recently barred from the embassy when they went to submit their visa applications, according to

Dr. Nadeem Al-Jaberi, one of the MPs.

“They treat us in a disgusting way,” Al-Jaberi said.

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 to contact@militaryproject.org. Name, I.D., withheld on request. Replies confidential. Same to unsubscribe.

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



Received:

Urgent Appeal For Interviews With Troops Who Participated In Resistance Movement During Vietnam War

From: Marcus Karl Adams: madams@emich.edu
To: GI Special
Sent: February 18, 2008
Subject: Thesis Assistance

My thesis is titled "The War Within: The Soldiers Resistance Movement during the Vietnam Era," with a Feb. 29 deadline.

I need to interview some primary sources and I'd appreciate your help in putting me in touch with some veterans who were a part for an email interview.

The basic guidelines I'd like addressed regarding their participation in the Soldiers Resistance Movement is: I'd like their name, rank, duty station, time of duty, military specialty, and whether drafted or not.

While the disclosure of their race is optional, I'd like to know why they became political and what affect the movement experience has had in their civilian life.

Any sources and information used will be properly cited in the thesis. I'll also need contact information for whoever participates for verification which will not be published. I shouldn't have to say it, but there is no compensation for their participation.

However, if my thesis is accepted, this may help in the current resistance and the participants will be forever included in a body of scholarship that (hopefully) will be available online through my library later this year.

Any assistance you can provide will be greatly appreciated.

Those with questions can reach me via email or at the address below.

In Solidarity,
Marcus

Until lions have their historians, tales of the hunt shall always glorify the hunters - African proverb

Marcus K. Adams, Library Assistant III
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