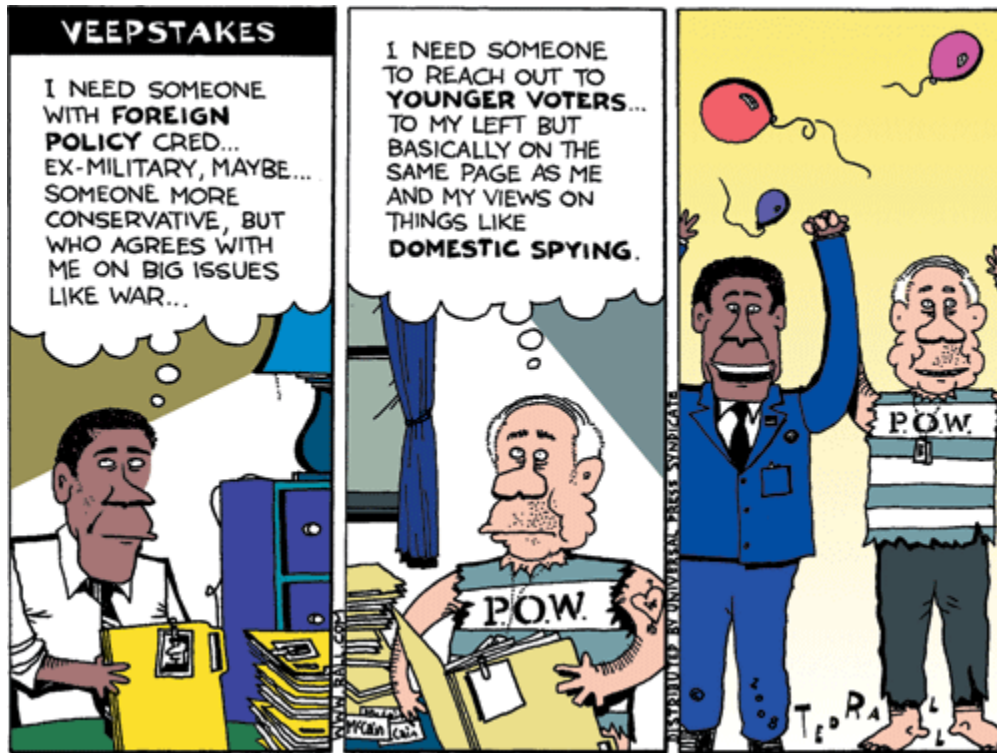
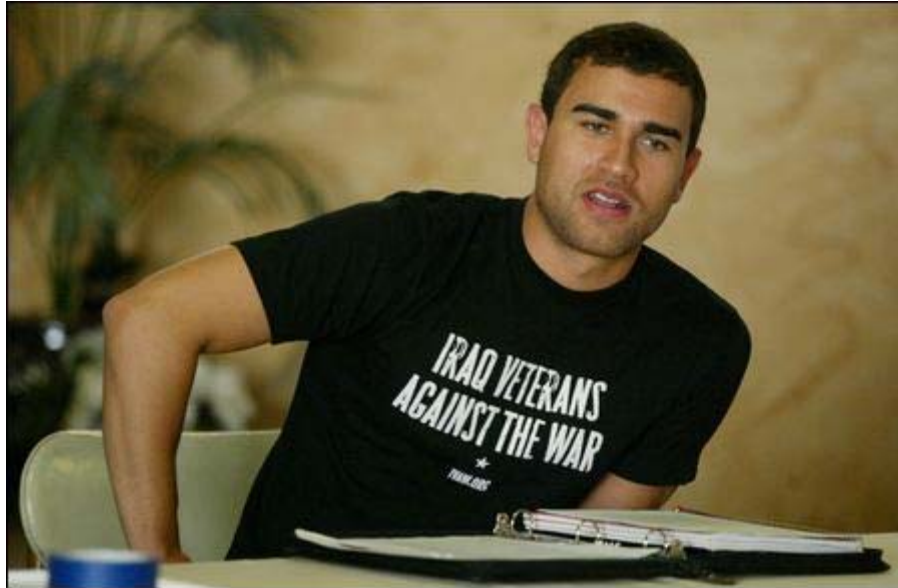


GI SPECIAL 6H10:



**“Ultimately, What’s
Going To Stop It Is The
GIs Standing Up And
Saying, ‘We’re Not Going
To Fight Anymore’”**

Coffeehouse By Fort Lewis Will Reach Out To Active Duty Soldiers'



Mateo Rebecchi, Iraq Veterans Against The War Photo: Dan DeLong / P-I

August 6, 2008 By CAROL SMITH, P-I REPORTER [Seattle] [Excerpts]

A group of local veterans hopes to launch a coffeehouse near Fort Lewis where soldiers – both active-duty and out of the military – could brew both good java and good company.

The coffeehouse would be a safe place, off base, where GIs and their families could go for support, information about their rights and a chance to express what's going on in their lives, said Mateo Rebecchi, 24, a student at Seattle Central Community College and member of Iraq Veterans Against The War, one of the coffeehouse backers.

"We're trying to reach out to soldiers who feel they have nowhere to go," he said.

The coffeehouse would be the third such effort around the country, said Molly Gibbs, a community organizer who has worked with Veterans for Peace and other Seattle advocacy groups.

Rising concerns about the effect of longer deployments, the increase in post-deployment suicide rates, sexual assaults in the military, PTSD and employment have created a need for a place where people can go to share experiences and find resources to cope, she said.

These kinds of coffeehouses have a time-honored tradition in the post-Vietnam era, said Gibbs, whose first job in the mental health field was with Vietnam vets, every one of

whom came back “indelibly shaped” by that experience. Something one of them told her has stayed with her and kept her motivated to help veterans connect.

“I had a friend who was a medic in Vietnam,” she said. “He told me, ‘I left who I was over there – I never came back.’ “

The coffeehouse, which has yet to be named, is still in the fundraising stages, said Rebecchi, who estimated \$30,000 is needed to launch and operate the first year. The group is hoping to nab space in an abandoned coin-operated laundry near the base. The cafe also would serve up music, movies, poetry slams, lectures and access to legal help.

Rebecchi said one of the main goals of the coffeehouse is to inform soldiers and veterans of their rights and to encourage them to speak their minds, even if they don’t agree with official military policy.

One of the best things the community can do for soldiers, and soldiers can do for each other, is to listen to each other’s stories, Gibbs said. Time and again, she’s heard from veterans and active-duty military that what they needed most when they got back from a deployment was a chance to share what happened to them and have it be heard in a nonjudgmental way.

Rebecchi hopes the climate of the coffeehouse will encourage more military members – both active duty and not – to consider ways to end the war in Iraq.

Rebecchi served a four-year tour in the Persian Gulf with the Coast Guard before being honorably discharged. He said he began questioning the war effort while he was deployed.

“Ultimately, what’s going to stop it is the GIs standing up and saying, ‘We’re not going to fight anymore,’” he said.

The coffeehouse effort, which also has been endorsed by Seattle Veterans for Peace, Citizen Soldier, Sound Nonviolent Opponents of War, Fellowship of Reconciliation and Physicians for Social Responsibility, is holding a fundraiser at the Richard Hugo House in Seattle on Aug. 25 from 7 to 9 p.m., featuring Tod Ensign, director of Citizen Soldier and co-founder of the Different Drummer Internet Cafe near Fort Drum in upstate New York.



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. Phone: 917.677.8057

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

**THIS ENVIRONMENT IS HAZARDOUS TO YOUR
HEALTH;
ALL HOME, NOW**



A U.S. soldier from the 4th Infantry Division takes up position at a patrol base in the Sadr city in Baghdad, Iraq, Thursday, May 8, 2008. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)

U.S. Soldier Killed By Baghdad IED

Aug. 13, 2008 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE
No. 20080813-F

BAGHDAD – A Multi-National Division – Baghdad Soldier and an Iraqi interpreter were killed when the vehicle they were riding in was struck by an improvised-explosive device in northwest Baghdad at approximately 10:10 a.m. Aug. 13.

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

3 Foreign Occupation Soldiers Killed Somewhere Or Other In Afghanistan; Nationality Not Announced

August 14, 2008 The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan – An explosion against troops on a foot patrol in southern Afghanistan killed three service members Thursday, the U.S.-led coalition said.

It did not release any details about Wednesday's attack, including the troops' nationalities or the blast's location.

Rockets Fired At Kabul Airport

August 14 2008 AFP

Kabul - Two rockets were fired at Afghanistan's main international airport in Kabul on Thursday, injuring two civilians but causing little damage, the interior ministry said.

One of the rockets, fired from a nearby mountain, landed on empty ground near the main runway but caused no casualties, the ministry's press office said. The other landed at an outer entrance to the heavily secured airport and wounded two passers-by, it said.

Resistance Offensive Cuts Kabul-Kandahar Highway, Disrupting Supply Lines For U.S. Forces:

**“Security In The Provinces
Ringing The Capital, Kabul, Has
Deteriorated Rapidly”**

**“Public Confidence In The
Government Has Virtually
Collapsed Along With The Security
Situation”**

**“Dissatisfaction Of The People Is
Growing, Anger Is Growing, People
Are Joining The Opposition Groups”**

**“The Americans Are Not Looking At Us
Like Human Beings”**

August 13, 2008 By CARLOTTA GALL, New York Times

SAYDEBAD, Afghanistan — Not far from here, just off the highway that was once the showpiece of the United States reconstruction effort in Afghanistan, three American soldiers and their Afghan interpreter were ambushed and killed seven weeks ago.

The soldiers — two of them members of the National Guard from New York — died as their vehicles were hit by mines and rocket-propelled grenades. At least one was dragged off and chopped to pieces, according to Afghan and Western officials. The body was so badly mutilated that at first the military announced that it had found the remains of two men, not one, in a nearby field.

Security in the provinces ringing the capital, Kabul, has deteriorated rapidly in recent months.

Today it is as bad as at any time since the beginning of the war, as militants have surged into new areas and taken advantage of an increasingly paralyzed local government and police force and the thinly stretched international military presence here.

This district is just 50 miles or so south of Kabul. Farther south, beyond the town of Salar, the road — also known as Highway 1 — is even more dangerous, and to drive beyond that point is to risk ambush, explosions and possible slaughter.

When it was refurbished several years ago, the Kabul-Kandahar highway was a demonstration of America's commitment to building a new, democratic Afghanistan. [Translation: they built a military highway to link up occupation military bases.]

A critical artery, the highway quite literally holds this country together.

For the shaky Afghan state, it binds the country's center to the insurgent-ridden south, and provides a tenuous thread to unite Afghanistan's increasingly divided ethnic halves: the insurgent-ridden [translation: foreign-occupation hating] Pashtun dominated south with the more stable, mainly Tajik, Hazara and Turkic populated north.

For the United States and the NATO-led force in Afghanistan, it is an important supply route for the war effort, linking the two largest foreign military bases in the country, at Bagram and Kandahar, and a number of smaller bases along the way.

But today the highway is a dangerous gantlet of mines and attacks from insurgents and criminals [criminals part not true: few occupation allies or other traitors are willing to use it anymore], pocked with bomb craters and blown-up bridges.

The governor of Ghazni Province came under fire driving through Salar on Tuesday and two of his guards were wounded, officials said.

The insurgents have made the route a main target, with the apparent aim of undercutting Afghanistan's economy and infrastructure, said Gen. Zaher Azimi, the Afghan military spokesman. [Translation: aim of cutting the occupation troops' supply line].

The road has become the site of extreme carnage in the last six weeks, disrupting supply lines for American and NATO forces and tying down Afghan Army forces.

One of the worst attacks occurred in Salar on June 24 when some 50 fuel tankers and food trucks carrying supplies for the United States military were ambushed.

The convoy was set on fire. Seven of its drivers were dragged out and beheaded, said Abdul Ghayur, the commander of the private security force that supplied the drivers.

That attack was followed two days later by the ambush that killed the three Americans and their Afghan interpreter, farther north, near a village called Tangi.

The ferocity of their killing, coming amid a sudden spiral of insurgent violence along the road and in the surrounding provinces, forced the Afghan government to send several battalions of the Afghan National Army in July here to Wardak Province, which lies just south of Kabul, to try to secure the road.

Soldiers of Afghanistan's 201st Corps are now posted in old hilltop positions that the Soviet army used in the 1980s, surveying the road and the green side valleys that provide easy cover for the insurgents.

Since their arrival three weeks ago, the Afghan soldiers say they have been engaged in repeated firefights with insurgents and have surprised several groups trying to lay roadside bombs.

Soldiers from one Afghan unit, which had recently set up camp in a school building in Salar, said they were called out Aug. 1 to reinforce the local police, who were besieged in their own station less than three miles down the road.

The Afghan soldiers ran into an ambush almost immediately and had to battle for three hours before they could relieve the police station, said the commander, Capt. Gul Jan, 42.

Haji Muhammad Musa Hotak, a legislator from Wardak Province, says that public confidence in the government has virtually collapsed along with the security situation.

"Dissatisfaction of the people is growing, anger is growing, people are joining the opposition groups," he said in an interview in his Kabul office.

He has not been able to visit his home district for a month since the kidnapping of a Chinese road construction worker there by the Taliban, not even for the funeral of his grandson, he said. "How can we say the situation will gradually get better?"

In one of the most brazen attacks, on July 6, at Durrani, a large verdant village flanked by craggy mountains, the Taliban seized positions just above the road and fired on a convoy of seven tankers.

Army Capt. Muhammad Zaman, 41, was sent in with his platoon to set up base in Durrani just after the attack, as other units pursued the insurgents into villages behind the mountains.

But camping in the open, he had minimal defenses, and no protection against mortar fire, he said. His battalion has served alongside American troops all over Afghanistan, but on this operation the Afghan soldiers are on their own, save for some French troops who were mentoring them. Only one small French team appeared to be present among several hundred Afghan troops.

Coordination with American forces in the area was so poor that a passing American military convoy had fired on his positions just five days before and wounded one of his soldiers, Muhammad Baqer, in both legs.

“I could easily have fired back at them,” he said angrily.

Villagers, too, complained that the American troops were firing recklessly.

“The Americans are not looking at us like human beings, but we are also human beings,” said a 20-year-old mechanic, Hodayun, who uses one name and works in the bazaar down the road at the town of Saydebad.

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Resistance Action

8.8.08 Reuters & By ROBERT H. REID, Associated Press Writer & 8.11.08 Associated Press & Reuters & 8.13.08 AP & (Reuters) & Aug 14 (AFP) & Reuters & (KUNA) & By BUSHRA JUHI, Associated Press Writer

Militants killed a member of a U.S.-backed neighbourhood patrol and wounded two others when they attacked their checkpoint on Friday in Jurf al-Sakhar, about 60 km (40 miles) south of Baghdad, police said.

An attacker blew up a bomb-laden minibus in the town of Khanaqin, 140 km (100 miles) northeast of Baghdad, targeting the mayor's office and Kurdish security services headquarters. The U.S. military later said two had died and 25 were wounded in Khanaqin.

An Iraqi soldier was killed and five were wounded by a car bomb in Salman Pak, about 25 kilometers south of Baghdad, police said.

A female suicide bomber struck a market checkpoint in the provincial capital of Baqouba, killing at least one policeman and wounding nine officers, officials said.

A roadside bomb wounded four traffic policemen in Bab al-Sheikh district of central Baghdad, police said.

Insurgents killed one policeman when they attacked his house in eastern Mosul, police said. One attacker was killed.

A bomber rammed an explosives-laden pickup into a convoy carrying the mayor of Multaqa, west of Kirkuk, 180 miles north of Baghdad. Abdul-Karim Ali Nsaif was on his way to work when the blast occurred, wounding him and three of his guards, said Kirkuk police Brig. Gen. Sarhat Qadir. Jubouri is the leader of a U.S.-backed neighbour patrol in the town.

A car bomber struck an Iraqi checkpoint near a medical college in western Mosul, killing an Iraqi soldier.

A civilian and a soldier were killed and 6 Iraqi soldiers were injured when a bomber driving a car blew himself up near a check point at Ibn al-Athir intersection western Mosul.

A car bomb targeting a police patrol near Baquba, about 60 kilometres (35 miles) north of Baghdad, killed two policemen and injured six, they said.

In Baghdad a policemen was killed and five were wounded when a car bomb hit their patrol on Thursday, an official said.

Two Iraqi policemen were killed and three others were wounded in a bomb explosion on Thursday in Salman Bak district, southern Baghdad. An Iraqi police source told KUNA that a bomb exploded early today in Salman Bak as an Iraqi police patrol was passing by, resulting in the death of two of the policemen riding the vehicle and injuring another three. Police cordoned off the scene of the blast, as well as the adjacent Deyala bridge, while the wounded were rushed to hospitals for treatment.

Three policemen were killed and six others wounded when a roadside bomb hit their patrol near Buhriz, a town about 35 miles north of Baghdad in Diyala province, according to the provincial joint operations center.

A roadside bomb wounded five employees of Baiji oil refinery, police said. Baiji is 180 km (110 miles) north of Baghdad.

The first bomb, in the southeastern district of Zafaraniyah, Baghdad, killed a policeman and wounded three policemen, a police official 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

Vietnam Without Water:
The IVAW Winter Soldier
Investigation
“The War Is The Atrocity”
He Said He “Fought In A War That
Was Already Lost”

At First, He Recalled, “The People Were Incredibly Nice, Offered Us Showers. By August We Started Getting IEDs.”



BY BILL CRANDELL, July/August 2008 The Veteran [Excerpts]

William F. Crandell has been a veterans advocate and writer since returning from service as an infantry platoon leader in Vietnam. He joined Vietnam Veterans of America in 1983 while completing his doctorate in 20th century American history. Crandell recently retired from VA's Office of Inspector General.

It breaks out this way: Some of us see the war in Iraq as a conflict America had no choice but to enter, one that's going well or at least decently. Others say the nation had to get into Iraq, but the current administration bungled it.

The third view is the war was a mistake from the get-go.

Vietnam veterans don't fault the courage and capability of the troops, whichever outlook they have.

Nor do Iraq veterans.

What's striking is how these outlooks parallel the views Vietnam veterans had about our own war while it was on and for at least a decade afterward. The same three-way split shaped the founding years of Vietnam Veterans of America. VVA's commitment that no generation of veterans would again abandon another began with our mutual pledge that we, as Vietnam veterans, would not break with one another over differences in how we saw the war. You could hear it voiced as, "Well, you're full of crap, but you've got a right to your opinion. You fought there."

So it is no surprise that veterans of the fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan have the same range of opinions about their war. They have each other's backs, no matter what they think of the larger issues. Still, they split the way we did.

To see how these viewpoints play out among the next generation of veterans, I went in mid-March to attend Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan, a major project of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), held just outside Washington, D.C., in Silver Spring, Maryland.

For anyone who had attended the original Winter Soldier Investigation in 1971 — and there were well over a dozen old Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) hands present in Silver Spring — it was déjà vu.

The parallels were striking: scores of angry young combat veterans denouncing the war they recently fought as a disaster kindled by inadequate vision, with American troops wasted while being pushed to commit acts that scarred them as much as the outer war had.

IVAW claims more than a thousand members who have served in the United States military since September 11, 2001, organized into 43 chapters in 48 states. Its leaders selected 55 witnesses to testify about their experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan, as well as to present video and photographic evidence.

Veterans described the killing and injuring of innocent civilians and unarmed combatants, racism and sexism in the military, and their experience since coming home.

There also were panels of scholars, veterans, journalists, and others to give context to the first-person testimony, as well as taped interviews with Iraqi civilians.

On the first night, Kelly Dougherty, who served two tours as a military police officer in Iraq and is now IVAW's executive director, told the packed auditorium that she became involved as one of the group's founders "because of the damage to Iraq and our military comrades, and to uphold the values we went to fight for."

She described IVAW's goals as "ending the occupation, full compensation for veterans, and reparations for the human and structural harm done in Iraq."

The mutual support between generations of veterans was obvious.

Barry Romo of VVAW, who testified at the 1971 Winter Soldier Investigation, began his remarks about the event's place in the legacy of GI resistance during wartime by saying, "How honored we are to be here."

Born on the Fourth of July author Ron Kovic sent the message: "It takes tremendous courage to speak up against your country's policies. We are fighting for the soul of America."

Not all veterans agreed.

A middle-aged protester slipped into the conference on the third day, yelling, "You guys are betraying good men." A well-organized security contingent provided by VVAW frog-marched him outside.

The tone of the testimony was anything but defamatory, though many of the acts veterans described were horrific.

"The politicians and the generals have continued these occupations to the point of breaking our soldiers and destroying our military," Brooklyn IVAW member Selena Coppa, a Military Intelligence sergeant on active duty in the Army, said.

"As veterans and as patriots, many of us feel we must speak out about our experiences in order to change current policies and bring honor and dignity back to our military and our country."

Jabbar Magruder, a student at California State University, Northridge, and a sergeant in the Army National Guard deployed to Tikrit in 2005, put it differently.

In a panel describing rules of engagement that grew increasingly permissive until it became, in one soldier's words, pretty much fair game to shoot at anyone who seemed to pose a threat, Magruder commented: "This is not a failure of leadership. Commanders will always give troops tools to defend themselves. The problem is the occupation."

The witnesses, carefully screened by IVAW to verify their credentials, presented a visually mixed bunch.

Like the returning veterans of the 1960s and 1970s, there were men with short haircuts and immaculate shaves, and men with well-trimmed and shaggy beards, and they wore everything from sport shirts to coats and ties. Some displayed glittering medals on their chests, flagrantly proud of their service despite the deeds they denounced.

One of the witnesses, Garrett Reppenhagen, joined the Army a month before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks and became a scout-sniper in the 2nd Battalion/63rd Armor, 1st Infantry Division, performing missions in Diyala Province for a year.

His father served in Vietnam but didn't talk much about it before he died of Agent Orange-related cancer.

One story the younger Reppenhagen told was about having to use an old M-60 machine gun from the Vietnam War—an ancient relic in his telling—that broke down and had to be fired in single shots.

Reppenhagen's testimony was not aimed at his former comrades (he was honorably discharged in May 2005), but at the conduct of the war from the top down.

"Confusion goes on every day in Iraq," he reported. "We went to Iraq to defend their country, but found we had to kill civilians to protect ourselves. The war is the atrocity."

You couldn't help liking Sergio Kochergin, a former scout-sniper in the 1st Battalion/7th Marines.

Part of the invasion force, Kochergin told me that the rules of engagement created situations that led to inappropriate actions, such as the order he received to shoot anybody on the road with a bag and a shovel. "After a month and a half, it was make your own decision."

At first, he recalled, "the people were incredibly nice, offered us showers. By August we started getting IEDs."

Now studying psychology at the University of Oregon, Kochergin has PTSD and finds the VA not much help.

Several witnesses had photos from their tours in Iraq that were shown on large electronic screens. Beyond documenting their service and showing examples of the weaponry they described, the images revealed the terrifying bleakness of the desert and mountains.

Whatever you thought of our generation's war and this one, you couldn't duck the conclusion that Iraq is Vietnam without water.

Screaming Eagles trooper Dave Adams, who was in the invasion, remembered little girls tossing small purple flowers—for about two weeks, while city workers went without pay and businesses were shut in areas closed for security. Then the sniper fire began.

Adams blamed the shift on top leaders "in stuffy Pentagon rooms" who didn't understand the Iraqis or what their lives were like.

After coming home, Adams was hostile to protestors until a buddy called to tell him about several friends who had been killed.

Now an active antiwar organizer, he told me: "I'll be doing this the rest of my life, I'm sure of it."

Captain Luis Montalvan, the highest-ranking IVAW member — having served in the Army for 17 years — testified about accountability and corruption in the military. Montalvan has been diagnosed with PTSD and is currently struggling to receive services and support from the VA.

James Gilligan's voice broke as he described watching fire being directed into an Afghan village.

Jason Lemieux, a former Marine sergeant who served three tours in Iraq from 2003-06, participated in the invasion and march to Baghdad.

He said he "fought in a war that was already lost."

Joshua Casteel served eight years in the Army, including a tour as an Arabic linguist and interrogator at Abu Ghraib.

When I left late Saturday afternoon, the other side was represented on the street by Eagles Up, which describes itself as “part of the pro-war lobby.” Five white-haired men and a middle-aged African-American woman with their backs to the Winter Soldier Investigation held several flags — The Stars and Stripes, Marine Corps, Navy—and signs that said “Honk for victory.” The drive-by commitment was friendly.

The next morning it drizzled, and the sunshine patriots were gone.

August 14, 1980: Polish Workers Strike Against Dictatorship: “They Had Illusions In The Army, And Did Not Make Any Serious Effort To Win Over Rank-And-File Soldiers”



After months of labor turmoil, more than 16,000 Polish workers seized control of the Lenin Shipyards in Gdansk.

Carl Bunin Peace History August 13-19 [Excerpts]

9 August 2000 BY CHRIS SLEE, Green Left Weekly [Excerpts]

Twenty years ago, on August 14, a strike began at the Lenin shipyards in Gdansk, Poland, which led to the birth of the independent Solidarity trade union movement. This movement went on to play a crucial and contradictory role in the restoration of capitalist rule in Poland at end of the 1980s.

The initial issues that sparked the shipyards strike were wages and the sacking of a militant worker, Anna Walentinowicz. The strike quickly spread to other workplaces, reflecting the widespread discontent with the system of bureaucratic "socialism" established in Poland in the late 1940s.

The authorities were forced to negotiate and, in an agreement signed at Gdansk on August 31, conceded a list of demands including the right to form independent trade unions. Solidarity was formally established as a trade union on September 17.

Solidarity developed into a mass social movement challenging Poland's Stalinist regime. It was violently suppressed in December 1981 when martial law was declared by General Jaruzelski, who held the posts of Communist Party first secretary, prime minister and defence minister.

Remnants of the movement continued to organise illegally, re-emerging into legality in the late 1980s. The movement was then converted into a right-wing political party which won the elections in June 1989 and formed a government that set out to restore capitalism.

How did a movement that grew out of a working-class struggle against Stalinism become an agent of capitalist restoration?

Part of the answer lies in the ideological limitations of the leadership. Lech Walesa, the main leader of the Gdansk strike and subsequently the central leader of the union, was a militant worker, but also a socially conservative Catholic. The same was true of many other working-class activists in the union. The striking workers at Gdansk sang hymns and held mass in the shipyard.

Religious beliefs do not necessarily prevent political leaders from playing a progressive role. But the fact that the dominant section of Solidarity's leadership belonged to a church committed to the defence of private property, and hailed its right-wing social teachings, was a problem. It became an even bigger problem when this leadership became the government of Poland and began to implement those teachings.

Another component of Solidarity's leadership was a group of intellectuals who had been active in KOR (the Committee for the Defence of the Workers), an organisation that had carried out solidarity with workers' struggles during the 1970s.

The key figure in this group was Jacek Kuron. In the 1960s he and Karol Modzelewski had called for the seizure of power by the working class. But by the time Solidarity was formed, Kuron had modified his ideas, replacing the perspective of revolutionary overthrow of the Stalinist bureaucracy with one of gradually reforming the state under pressure from mass organisations and struggles.

At that time, Kuron's perspective was still one of reforming the socialist state rather than restoring capitalism. Pressure for reform came mainly from Solidarity, which was then a mass workers' movement imbued with the idea that workers were entitled to control the factories and play a leading role in society.

But after this movement was crushed by Jaruzelski's repression, Solidarity's leadership (including both its Catholic and "leftist" components) adopted a perspective of capitalist restoration. (Kuron himself later became minister of labour in Walesa's pro-capitalist government). The adoption of a policy of capitalist restoration by Solidarity's leadership was made easier by the confused political outlook of most Solidarity activists.

During 1980-81, Solidarity grew to include 10 million members. The consciousness of the activists was mixed. They fought for immediate economic demands (e.g., wage rises) and democratic demands (e.g., freedom of speech). They also struggled for control of the factories, in many cases voting the factory directors out of office and replacing them with new ones.

These demands and struggles represented a progressive response to Stalinist bureaucratic rule. Yet there were also some less progressive elements in the workers' consciousness.

In addition to the socially conservative attitudes promoted by the Catholic church, many workers were impressed by the relative prosperity and democratic rights existing in the advanced capitalist countries and failed to see that the prosperity and freedom of a few imperialist countries is based on the exploitation and repression of people in the Third World.

Not understanding imperialism, they failed to solidarise with Third World struggles for national liberation. While expressing a general sympathy with workers everywhere, most did not take much interest in workers' struggles in the West. Solidarity's newspaper had hardly any international news.

Solidarity lacked a clear program and strategy for overthrowing the bureaucratic regime and creating a democratic worker-ruled society. The organisation's draft program made reference to socialism as one source of inspiration, along with Christianity and democracy.

Solidarity activists carried out a struggle for self-management in many workplaces, but did not have a clear understanding of the need for socialist planning.

They had illusions in the army, and did not make any serious effort to win over rank-and-file soldiers.

While Solidarity was not a consciously socialist organisation, neither was it consciously anti-socialist. As British academic Martin Myant observed in *Poland: a Crisis for Socialism* (1982): "It advocated equality and was particularly emphatic about the need for an adequate assured minimum income and an end to special privileges for a wealthy minority. Many of the specific demands were, even if the authors of the program avoided making the point, quite incompatible with capitalism."

During 1980-81, neither the government nor the leadership of Solidarity could have carried out a program of capitalist restoration, even if they had wanted to.

This was because the workers would not have allowed it. Workers in the factories were attempting to bring the enterprises under their own control, and would not have accepted handing them over to capitalist owners.

The crushing of this working-class upsurge created the conditions in which capitalist restoration could be carried out with little resistance a few years later. In the demoralisation following martial law, pro-capitalist attitudes were able to become dominant in Polish society.

Today, there is a lot of discontent with the results of the restoration of capitalism in Poland and other former Stalinist-ruled states, but still no mass revolutionary parties with a clear socialist perspective.

A mass upsurge of working class and popular discontent is necessary but not sufficient.

A struggle to win the movement to a clear socialist perspective is necessary.

“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

August 15, 1876: Historic Betrayal



Lakota Sioux watch as their Black Hills are invaded. Painting by Howard Terpning

Carl Bunin Peace History August 13-19

August 15, 1876:

Congress passed a law to remove the Lakota Sioux and their allies from the Black Hills country of South Dakota after gold was found there. Often referred to as the “starve or sell” bill, it provided that no further appropriations would be made for 1868 Treaty-guaranteed rations for the Sioux unless they gave up their sacred Black Hills, or Paha Sapa. That treaty had granted them the territory and hunting rights in exchange for peace.

[Excerpts]

STATEMENT OF MARIO GONZALEZ, ATTORNEY, CHEYENNE RIVER AND PINE RIDGE WOUNDED KNEE SURVIVORS' ASSOCIATIONS AND OGLALA SIOUX TRIBE, SUPPORTING PROPOSALS TO ESTABLISH A MEMORIAL AND HISTORIC SITE TO COMMEMORATE THE EVENTS SURROUNDING THE 1890 INDIAN MASSACRE AT WOUNDED KNEE CREEK, SOUTH DAKOTA, IN THE HEARING OF SEPTEMBER 25, 1990, BEFORE THE SELECT COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS, U.S. SENATE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

[Excerpts]

Mr. Chairman, and honorable Members of the Committee, my name is Mario Gonzalez. I am an enrolled member of the Oglala Sioux Tribe and a descendant of Chief Lip's Band. I am appearing here today as the attorney for the Wounded Knee Survivors' Associations and the Oglala Sioux Tribe. I am honored to appear before the Committee to discuss events surrounding the December 29, 1890 Wounded Knee Massacre.

I am also related by blood to some of the victims and survivors of the massacre. Dewey Beard, the last survivor of the Battle of the Little Bighorn and an 1890 Massacre survivor, was a first cousin to my great-great-grandmother, Rattling Hawk. Dewey's real mother, Seen By Her Nation, and my great-great-grandmother, Jealous Of Her, were sisters.

One cannot understand what happened at Wounded Knee without understanding something about the Sioux people and their history.

The term “Sioux” should be distinguished from the word “Siouan,” which refers to a linguistic stock that the Sioux are a part of. Other Siouan peoples include such Tribes as the Mandan, Omaha, Otoe, Winnebago and Osage. The Sioux refer to themselves as “Lakota,” “Dakota,” or “Nakota,” depending on whether the “L,” “D” or “N” dialect is used.

It is also important to understand that the term “Sioux Nation” has been used to refer to different entities at different times. According to the Indian Claims Commission, the Sioux people were divided into seven divisions:

- Mdewakantons
- Sissetons
- Wahpakootas
- Wahpetons
- Yanktonais

Yanktons
Tetons

The Mdewakantons, Sissetons, Wahpakootas, and Wahpetons, or eastern Sioux, are sometimes referred to as “Santee” or “Mississippi” Sioux and speak with the “D” dialect. The Yanktonais also speak with the “D” dialect. The Yanktons speak with the “N” dialect and the Tetons with the “L” dialect.

The Tetons, or the western Sioux, were sub-divided into seven bands:

Blackfeet
Brule
Hunkpapa
Minneconjou
Oglala
Saris Arc (No Bows)
Two Kettle

The Teton Bands held aboriginal title to a vast territory west of the Missouri River in what are now the States of North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Montana, Wyoming and Colorado. Much of this territory was held jointly with the Cheyenne and Arapaho Nations. The Big Horn Mountains were the western boundary. The Yellowstone and Missouri Rivers were the northern boundary. The Republican River was the southern boundary.

In 1874 the United States Army planned and undertook a military expedition into the Black Hills portion of the Great Sioux Reservation. The expedition was led by Lt. Col. George Armstrong Custer, who sent out glowing reports of gold.

This led to an invasion of the Hills by white miners and settlers in violation of the 1868 Treaty and created intense pressure on Congress to open the Hills for settlement. The influx of miners and settlers into the Hills increased when President Grant refused to enforce the Treaty and remove these trespassers. In the winter of 1875 and 1876, most of the Sioux were residing on the Great Sioux Reservation, keeping the peace they promised to maintain under the 1868 Treaty.

Others were exercising their hunting rights with their Cheyenne and Arapahoe allies near the Big Horn Mountains. Contrary to the terms of the Treaty, the Commissioner of Indian Affairs sent instructions to the hunting parties that if they did not return to the Great Sioux Reservation by January 31, 1876, they would be declared “hostile.” The Sioux were under no legal obligation to return and could not return because of the weather. They were attacked, but defeated General Crook at the Battle of Rosebud and annihilated Lt. Col. Custer at the Battle of the Little Bighorn on June 25, 1876.

The U.S. violated Articles 11 and 16 of the 1868 Treaty by attacking the Sioux while they were exercising their right to hunt near the Bighorn Mountains. Although some refer to the Battle of the Little Bighorn as a “massacre,” it was clearly a battle in which the Indians were defending their families against an egocentric Indian fighter who planned to capitalize on the event and become President of the United States.

The United States Government resented its defeat at the Battle of the Little Bighorn. The Battle, therefore, marked the beginning of a course of dishonorable dealings by the federal government with the Sioux people to [get] revenge [for] Custer's defeat. This course has continued down to the present time.

On August 15, 1876, Congress passed an appropriations bill, often referred to as the "starve or sell" bill, which provided that no further appropriations would be made for the subsistence of the Sioux under the 1868 Treaty unless they gave up the Black Hills and reached an accommodation with the United States that would enable them to become self-supporting.

To accomplish this session, Congress requested the President to appoint a commission to negotiate an agreement with the Sioux to buy the Hills.

The 1876 Commission, however, could not obtain the requisite number of signatures required by Article 12 of the 1868 Treaty, so Congress took matters into its own hands and enacted the proposed "Agreement" into law on February 28, 1877. This enactment confiscated the Black Hills, the 1851 Treaty lands, and hunting rights recognized under the 1868 Treaty.

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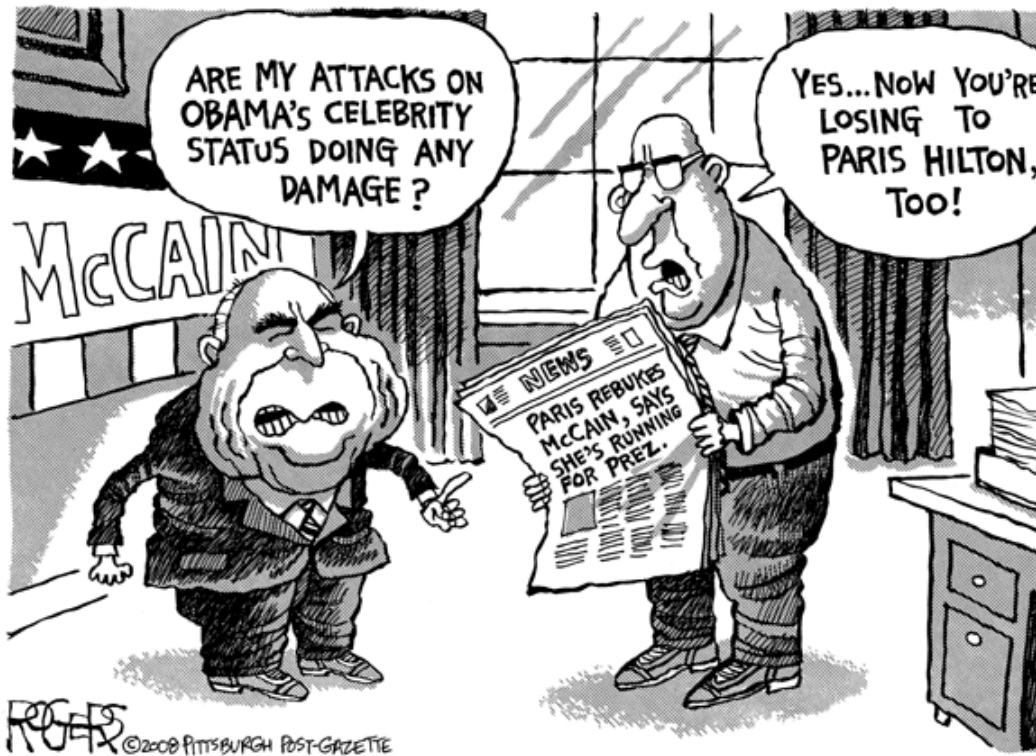
A foreign occupation soldier from the U.S. Army holds Iraqi citizens prisoner in Nahr al-Imam, in Iraq's Diyala province July 30, 2008. The Iraqis are taken out of their homes at gunpoint and forced to sit in the dirt behind barbed wire while the foreigners "examine their identities." (AP Photo/Maya Alleruzzo)

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