

GI SPECIAL 6H20:

“Soldiers In Uniform Began The Four-Mile March To The Pepsi Center In Downtown Denver To Protest The Iraq War”



Iraq Veterans Against The War, Denver [www.ivaw.org/]



Members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) march in downtown Denver, leading several thousands activists towards The Pepsi Center. (Photo: Rocky Mountain News)

MORE:

“Support GI Resistance”



Protesters march Wednesday from the Denver Coliseum to the Pepsi Center after a concert by Rage Against the Machine. Tim Hussin: The Rocky Mountain News

August 28, 2008 By Ruth Conniff, The Progressive & By Patti Thorn, Rocky Mountain News (Colorado) &lvaw.org/ & By Paul A. Anthony, Rocky Mountain News [Excerpts]

It started as a modest sized march.

Two squads of 25 IVAW members each formed up outside the venue and began marching to the Pepsi center.

From the Rage Against the Machine concert at the Denver Coliseum, about 150 soldiers in uniform began the four-mile march to the Pepsi Center in downtown Denver to protest the Iraq War.

The squads were led by members in dress uniforms and combat uniforms, with thousands of supporters marching behind them in support.

The group of mostly young people walked behind a banner that said: "Support GI Resistance."

Though the event, co-sponsored by the anti-war group Tent State University and Iraq Veterans Against the War, was unpermitted, the parade proceeded peacefully.

Behind the troops, who marched calling cadence and chanting antiwar slogans, came a larger group in civilian clothes, cheering and waving signs, and growing larger and larger as the marchers wended their way through the downtown.

Wearing T-shirts and stickers with slogans such as "Arrest Bush" and "Make Out Not War," they sang rolling chants, Marine- style. "Tell Me What We're Marching For," sang one group. "Stop the torture, stop the war," answered another.

People lined the streets to watch, most approvingly.

As the marchers wound their way through the neighborhoods west of the coliseum, they found solidarity with a group of Latinos holding up an anti-war sign and cheering them on.

"Si, se puede!" shouted some young marchers. "Yes, we can!"

Not everyone was as respectful.

From the balcony of an apartment complex, a man yelled at the throngs of protesters to move on. "Don't come back here," he said.

But one protester had the last word: He suggested the man join the Army.

As they drew near the heavily guarded convention center, cops in riot gear lined the street, and helicopters buzzed overhead. At an intersection, the group stopped facing squad cars with lights on and a phalanx of black-clad police.

“We can go on here or not,” one of the march’s organizers told the troops through a megaphone. The march was unauthorized and it was unclear whether the police intended to have a confrontation.

She seemed to be trying to calm everyone for a moment, pointing out that the Denver police so far have not been “prone to violence.”

The march continued, and the civilians bringing up the rear cheered.

It was quite a spectacle: the soldiers in dress uniform and fatigues, and the cops in riot gear watching them from the sidelines.

The soldiers chanted:

“Everywhere we go
People want to know
Who we are
Where we came from.
We are the veterans
Iraq War veterans
Antiwar veterans
Pissed-off veterans”

At an intersection, the group stopped to read a letter to Barack Obama asking that he agree to three core principles: the immediate withdrawal of troops from Iraq, full and adequate health care for all returning U.S. service members, and reparations to the Iraqi people.

The letter also upbraided the Democratic Party for their “initial and continued” support for the war.

The police presence intensified. I passed a cop videotaping the marchers and a marcher in a green “copwatch” vest videotaping him right back.

Over the long course, from the outskirts of town into the denser downtown, the energy from the crowd seemed to build. The marchers chanting had a hypnotic effect.

“It’s alright
Its OK
Remember MLK
He tried to lead the way
But he was shot one day
early in the morning”

Thus far, the march has been peaceful and well received, as residents along the route sprayed the marchers with hoses and provided water from their homes and businesses.

More and more people joined the march, until, suddenly, looking back as the group crossed a bridge and then paused right outside the Pepsi Center, you could see several thousand people in a line stretching as far as the eye could see.

As the group passed into the perimeter of the convention hall, the police presence grew more threatening. “Hey, those ones have masks,” someone pointed out. A group of police in gas masks were pulling on thick gloves and grabbing their batons.

A white van with police in black flak jackets hanging off it rolled alongside the marchers.

The feeling of the whole, thousands-strong group was moving. “It’s beautiful,” one marcher said, looking back at the crowd in the late afternoon sun.

Joey Minicucci, 18, of Littleton, noted that his brother was in the military and would soon be sent to Iraq. That was one of the reasons he was going to the march.

Anne Hill, of Montrose, had other reasons. “I’m marching because it seems to be the last vestiges of our free speech and because people have demands and our government’s not listening,” she said.

The march came to a standstill at the perimeter of the Pepsi Center around 6:30 p.m., at which time the veterans attempted to have their statement delivered to Obama.

Tension with police seemed to escalate, until several veterans stepped forward and saluted police. “We are your brothers and sisters in arms,” said one.

“We don’t want to hurt you. We don’t want you to hurt us.”

With that, the standoff melted away and soon an appropriate aide was contacted.

“I figured as long as we kept things peaceful, they would hear us, and they did,” said Army veteran Jeffrey Wood.

Nancy Pelosi, meanwhile, was answering tough questions from the founder of Digg on CNN about why the Democrats in Congress have failed to pull the troops out of Iraq.

The thing that stays with me is the sight of those troops looking worried but determined in the face of police force and possible public hostility, trying to make their statement for peace, and how, at the last moment, the whole, huge crowd of civilians had joined them, lifting up their little march and transforming it into an enormous, uplifting show of support.

MORE:

**Big Surprise #1:
“Obama Said He Would Deploy An
Additional 10,000 Troops To Afghanistan
Once He Took Office”**

25 August 2008 By Chris Hedges, Truthdig [Excerpts]

Barack Obama, like John McCain, speaks about Afghanistan in words that look as if they were penned by the Bush White House. Obama may call for withdrawing some U.S. troops from Iraq, but he does not want to send them all home.

He wants to send them to Afghanistan, or to what he obliquely terms “the right battlefield.”

Obama said he would deploy an additional 10,000 troops to Afghanistan once he took office.

Do the cheerleaders for an expanded war in Afghanistan know any history?

Have they studied what happened to the Soviets, who lost 15,000 Red Army soldiers between 1979 and 1988, or even the British in the 19th century?

MORE:

Big Surprise #2:

**POLITICIANS CAN'T BE COUNTED ON TO HALT
THE BLOODSHED**

**THE TROOPS HAVE THE POWER TO STOP THE
WARS**



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**Troops Will Long Remember Who
Warned That The Democratic Party**

President Would Keep The Wars Going, And Stressed The Importance Of Helping Build And Strengthen Armed Forces Resistance Now

Troops Will Also Long Remember Who Pandered To The Huge, Understandable Hope That Electing Obama Would Stop The Wars, And Who, By Arguing For His Election, Participated In The Betrayal

[From GI Special 6E12: May 18, 2008]

Comment: T

The Democratic Party faction in control of Congress has already decided to fund the wars and the killing in Iraq and Afghanistan not merely until their candidate takes the White House, but has agreed to fund the wars and the killing for at least half a year into 2009.

Everybody knows that.

Congressional Democrats have no intention of breaking with either the Democratic Party now over that, or rejecting the Presidential candidate and breaking with the Democratic Party later.

Everybody knows that too.

Certainly the time, money and effort spent kissing Congressional ass in Washington DC would be more constructively used to do the work that has some hope of stopping the wars in the real world: supporting resistance in the armed forces.

However, many desperately avoid that reality, hoping for something better, which is understandable. Reality is not pretty, and it's hardly surprising that not everyone can face it now.

Events will be the most powerful teacher.

People, including troops, will long remember who warned that the Democratic Party president would keep the wars going, and stressed the importance of helping build and strengthen armed forces resistance now.

People, including troops, will also long remember who pandered to the huge, understandable hope inside and outside the armed forces that electing Obama would stop the wars, and who, by arguing for his election, participated in the betrayal, rather than telling the truth, however unwelcome and unpopular it may be now.



Vietnam: They Stopped An Imperial War



SOLDIERS IN REVOLT: DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York, 1975. Now available in paperback from Haymarket Books.

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

“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

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. Phone: 917.677.8057

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

U.S. Soldier Killed By Baghdad IED

08/28/08 AP & Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory

A Multi-National Division – Baghdad soldier was killed in a roadside bomb attack while on patrol Thursday in eastern Baghdad at approximately 11 a.m. Aug. 28., the military said.

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



U.S. Army's soldier from the 4th Infantry Division crawls on a roof top of a patrol base in Sadr City in Baghdad, Iraq, May 13, 2008. (AP Photo/Petr David Josek)

AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

**Foreign Occupation Soldier From
Somewhere Or Other Killed Somewhere
Or Other In Afghanistan**

Aug 28 KABUL, Afghanistan (AP)

The U.S. says a roadside bomb has killed a soldier in southern Afghanistan.

A coalition statement says the soldier was killed during a patrol on Wednesday. The victim's nationality and the exact location of the blast have not been released.

**Families Remember Two Fallen
Naperville Servicemen**

August 17, 2008 By Paige Winfield, Naperville Sun

Megan Allen plummeted from joy to sorrow within about 60 minutes Thursday afternoon.

Just one hour after learning she had earned her first job as a third-grade teacher, the 22-year-old found out that the man she planned to marry had been killed by an improvised explosive device while serving with a Marine battalion in Afghanistan.

Marine Cpl. Tony Mihalo, 23, was one of two servicemen from Naperville killed this week in combat. Army Cpl. Jim Hale, 23, who attended Naperville Central High School but moved to Ohio before graduating, died Wednesday when his vehicle also encountered an IED in Baghdad.

Allen began dating Mihalo almost as soon as she met him five years ago. But the two didn't meet in high school - Allen went to Naperville Central while Mihalo was a 2004 graduate of Naperville North.

Instead, Allen saw Mihalo for the first time when she and her friends noticed they were being followed by two boys as they were driving on 75th Street. Despite Allen's objections, one of her friends pulled the car over so they could talk to the guys.

"I was like, they could be psychopaths, what are we thinking," Allen said.

But a relationship between Allen and Mihalo grew almost immediately out of the unexpected encounter. They dated for about one year before Mihalo began his Marine service that would keep him on the move from boot camp through three tours of duty in the Middle East.

Mihalo enrolled in the Marines while still a student at Naperville North High School, where he played as a defensive lineman on the football team. He also played basketball and wrestled.

In October 2004 he headed off to train in San Diego and was deployed for a seven-month stint in Iraq 10 months later, serving with the 2nd Battalion of the 7th Regiment. After spending a year at the Marine Corps Combat Center in Twentynine Palms, Calif., he was deployed for the second time in March 2007.

Allen threw a big party for Mihalo when he finished the tour last January, expecting that he was back to stay. But that wasn't the case.

He was called to Afghanistan one month later, this time to serve in the 3rd Battalion because the unit was short on combat veterans. Allen said the last time she spoke with him 20 days ago, he talked about completing the last two credits of his associate's degree and studying criminal justice when he returned home in October.

"He was talking about what he was going to do when he got back," said Allen, adding that he loved wrestling, history and politics. "He was always dreaming about the future."

Just before that last phone call, Mihalo had been hospitalized for three days after being hit by a grenade. When Allen - tipped off by a phone call from the Marines - asked him about the shrapnel, he at first denied that he had been injured.

“Tony is the type who plays off his injuries like they’re nothing,” Allen said. “He doesn’t like to show any weakness.”

Allen said Mihalo gave the same response each time he was hit by a bullet - injuries which earned him three Purple Hearts before the fourth one he was awarded posthumously this week. Mihalo also received a posthumous promotion from lance corporal to corporal.

Bill Wolfe, Mihalo’s stepfather, said his son considered the Purple Hearts bad luck and hardly ever talked about them.

“He would be upset with me for talking about that because to him, those were not important wounds,” Wolfe said.

Wolfe said Mihalo’s death makes him feel like it’s not the nation, but the families of servicemen and women who are truly fighting the war. Most Americans don’t feel the burden of the war because there is no draft, war bonds or rationing, he said.

“We’re not a nation at war,” Wolfe said. “There are families in the nation who are at war. My siblings are at war because of Tony.”

Wolfe lives in the Naperville Royal Oaks neighborhood with Mihalo’s mother, Debbie Wolfe, and his two younger sisters, Barbara, 14, and Christine, 12. Mihalo also has an older brother: Michael, 25.

Mihalo was also remembered Friday by Dick and Cindy Allen, his future father- and mother-in-law.

“We loved him very dearly,” Cindy Allen said. “He was a wonderful, wonderful guy, just spectacular. He was the son we never had.”

The family stood close as Naperville Mayor George Pradel commended Mihalo and Hale during a short ceremony Friday at Naperville’s Millennium Carillon. Later that afternoon, they met with Marine officials to discuss funeral plans.

Hale’s wife Jessica, and three children, Jaden, 4, Jessie, 2, and Jordan, 4 weeks, live in El Paso, Texas, and were not present at Friday’s ceremony. His mother, Virgie Fox of Columbus, Ohio, said her son decided he wanted to enter the military after the 9/11 attacks.

“I just talked to him two weeks ago, and he told me, ‘Mom, be strong,’” Fox said in a phone interview. “He wasn’t afraid. He said he was doing something he had to do. Even though it’s hard to believe, I know in my heart that he’s at peace now.”

TROOP NEWS

**“The Army Took My Husband
From Me. The Army Destroyed My
Husband”**

**“Three Deployments Is Two Too
Many”**

**“The Army Saw Him As Just Another Set
Of Boots On The Ground,” Said Barrett’s
Widow**



TRAVIS VIRGADAMO: Deemed suicidal in boot camp, Virgadamo was still shipped to Iraq with a prescription for Prozac when he turned 18. After continuing to struggle with depression in Iraq, his prescription was switched and he was put on a week of “stress management,” his grandmother said. When his gun was returned to him, he shot and killed himself. (Special to The Denver Post)

“They had also put him in suicide watch in boot camp.” When he turned 18, “they deployed him to Iraq. “Taking Prozac,” she said. “That is a suicidal medicine, especially with teens. I was livid. I just couldn’t believe they put him on Prozac.”

08/27/2008 David Olinger and Erin Emery, The Denver Post [Excerpts]

Chad Barrett's war on terror started in the hours after the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, when he was called to help dig bodies out of a smoking Pentagon.

It ended Feb. 2, 2008, in Mosul, Iraq, when his roommate awoke to find him gasping and gurgling, with foam coming from his mouth.

Barrett had been cleared for a third combat tour in Iraq despite a recent suicide attempt, crushing headaches and a mental illness treated with medication for anxiety and depression. Two months after he arrived, he killed himself by swallowing an unknown number of pills.

He was the sixth soldier from Fort Carson to commit suicide in Iraq. At least 10 others have killed themselves in the U.S., nine after returning from the war.

"There is no way in hell he should have been deployed. The Army saw him as just another set of boots on the ground," said Barrett's widow, Shelby.

"From the second tour on, he changed 180 degrees. Three deployments is two too many. The Army took my husband from me. The Army destroyed my husband."

This year, the Army reported that 76 percent of suicide attempts in Iraq and Afghanistan were deployment-related, and 61 percent of the soldiers who killed themselves in 2007 had been deployed at least once to Iraq or Afghanistan.

"The Army is making great strides in treating soldiers with post-traumatic psychological symptoms as well as decreasing the stigma associated with treatment for these symptoms," Brig. Gen. Rhonda Cornum said when its yearly suicide report was released in May.

Some soldiers and their advocates question whether that message is getting through, particularly at Fort Hood.

Bryan Hannah, a soldier being treated for post-traumatic stress disorder at Fort Hood, said two people at its mental-health center told him, "We're not here to make you better; we're here to make you deployable."

At Fort Hood, anyone seeking mental- health treatment "can kiss any hope of promotion goodbye," he said. "Everyone treats you like crap. There's a huge stigma to asking for help."

Carissa Picard of the Fort Hood-based group Military Spouses for Change agreed.

She said soldiers tell her that if they go for help with PTSD, the clinic looks for other problems first — such as alcoholism. "Oh, you've got a drinking problem. You go through that first, and then you can come back to mental health," she said. "But the real problem is the PTSD. The real problem is the mental-health condition."

Jonathan Berry, a 19-year-old soldier from White Cloud, Mich., with a history of suicidal thoughts, had three weekly televised conversations with a psychiatrist last month while assigned to an Army behavioral-health clinic in Maryland, according to his fiancée and an Army source.

He jumped out of a window after the third, killing himself.

Marla VerDuin, Berry's fiancée, said he told her that he "just had to sit and talk to someone over a TV" once a week.

VerDuin said he had no roommate in his last days there and was not permitted to socialize with other soldiers.

"I know that he was by himself. He sat in his room and played a video game."

Parents of several of the soldiers who reportedly committed suicide after deploying from Fort Hood say warning signs were missed or overlooked by an Army bearing the brunt of a prolonged war in Iraq.

Two were women who had reported being raped. A third woman was killed by a jealous soldier who then killed himself.

When 19-year-old Amy Duerksen shot herself in Iraq, her diary was left open to a page describing how she had been raped at a training session before Fort Hood deployed her.

Her mother, Michelle Duerksen, said Amy's unit ignored clear signs that she was feeling suicidal.

"She had stopped eating," her mother said. "She was telling people she was going to kill herself."

Michelle and her husband, a retired Army chaplain, adopted Amy at age 4, a girl who had been severely abused and neglected and who would struggle with depression as a teenager.

After Amy was raped, "she had evidently told people about the history of abuse," because her commander knew about it, her mother said.

At the end, "her commander was yelling at her," she said. "She was laughing and singing — she was sent with a male to the chaplain.

"The chaplain couldn't speak very good English, told her to start obeying orders. It was a series of people who could have done something better."

When she and her husband read the investigative report on their daughter's death, they learned one soldier had commented, "Duerksen finally did it," upon hearing the gunshot.

"Reading the investigation was just horrifying to us," Michelle Duerksen said.

She regards her daughter's death as "friendly fire — because they failed to take care of a fellow soldier."

Last August, Paul Norris became the 20th Fort Hood soldier to commit suicide in Iraq, according to records provided by the Army.

Norris, a 30-year-old veteran of combat tours in Bosnia and Iraq, shot himself. But first he shot and killed Kamisha Block, a 20-year-old woman who had spurned him.

Military officials announced both deaths as “noncombat” incidents under investigation.

Kamisha’s parents, Jerry and Jane Block, say Norris had stalked and assaulted their daughter before he killed her, and she had reported the assaults to the Army.

“He just kept doing it. He was ‘in love’ with her. She was trying to get away from him,” Jerry Block said.

“He verbally and physically assaulted her. It was reported to the higher command,” Jane Block said.

“He was e-mailing her and e-mailing her and e-mailing her. She wouldn’t answer his e-mails. He went into her room, killed her, and then he killed himself.”

She said Army officials have never explained why officers who knew of Norris’ assaults and harassment failed to protect her daughter.

The Army did give them a hefty investigative report that included sworn statements from other soldiers “that he was out of control,” she said.

“The last time he assaulted her, he drove around looking for her. That was probably a week or two before he killed her,” she said.

“I asked, ‘After the second assault, what did y’all do then?’ The only thing they told me was a lot of mistakes were made.”

That policy — allowing deployment on psychotropic drugs with caution — enabled Chad Barrett to embark on a third combat tour with Klonopin and Pamelor.

It also enabled Travis Virgadamo, an 18-year-old soldier from Nevada, to take Prozac to Iraq.

Virgadamo’s grandmother, Katie O’Brien, said he joined the Army as a 17-year-old after his father married a Filipino woman and moved to the Philippines.

At Fort Stewart, Ga., “he had a difficult time in boot camp,” she said. “They sent him to anger-management classes. Feeling somewhat deserted by his father — he was so young. They had also put him in suicide watch in boot camp.”

When he turned 18, “they deployed him to Iraq.

“Taking Prozac,” she said. “That is a suicidal medicine, especially with teens. I was livid. I just couldn’t believe they put him on Prozac.”

Virgadamo told his grandmother he was put on a suicide watch again in Iraq.

In July 2007, he came home for a rest-and-relaxation break. He talked to his grandmother about terrible things he'd seen and said he couldn't go back. He talked of fleeing to Canada. She asked if he wanted to spend the rest of his life as a fugitive, looking over his shoulder.

Virgadamo went back. Last August, on his 19th birthday, he called his grandmother from Iraq.

She urged him to go to a doctor and demand to stop taking Prozac.

"Grandma, I did that," he told her, "and they put me on something else. They changed my medicine, gave me a week of stress management."

On Aug. 30, the Army gave Virgadamo his gun back, and "he killed himself that night," she said.

"I don't think he should have ever been sent there.

"Why would you deploy someone who was a danger to himself and maybe others? When they know, it's just unacceptable, pushing them out there."

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



The coffin containing the body of U.S. Army 1st Class Sgt., Dominican Jose Enrique Ulloa, killed in Baghdad, during his funeral service in Jima Arriba, north of Santo Domingo, Aug. 21, 2008. (AP Photo/Ramon Espinosa)

Be Army Drugged: Need To Save Money Caring For Wounded Soldiers?

**No Problem: Give Them Deadly
Drugs And Watch Them Die:
“The Army Is ‘100 Percent’
Responsible For His Death, She
Said”**

**“He’d Still Be Alive Had They Not Given
Him That Crap, And He Would Have Been
Medically Retired”**

[Here it is again. Same old story. Used up, thrown away, and the politicians couldn't care less. To repeat for the 3,525th time, there is no enemy in Iraq. Iraqis and U.S. troops have a common enemy. That common enemy owns and operates the Imperial government in Washington DC for their own profit. That common enemy started this war of conquest on a platform of lies, because they couldn't tell the truth: this war was about making money for them, and nothing else. Payback is overdue. T]

08/25/2008 By David Olinger and Erin Emery, The Denver Post [Excerpts]

Last year, one in eight soldiers surveyed in Iraq and one in seven in Afghanistan said they had taken sleeping pills or antidepressants.

If those surveys are accurate, nearly 20,000 soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan took mental-health [translation: violence and/or suicide inducing] or sleep medication [translation: drugs, not “medication] last year.

[A]bout half of those soldiers took antidepressants.

Some soldiers say they are frustrated that the Army plies them with medicine but does not treat the underlying cause of the pain.

Robey Covel, 33, a soldier from the 2nd Brigade, 4th Infantry Division who was training to become a Green Beret, was prescribed 1,110 Percocets over the course of six months, medical records he provided show.

Covel said an Army physician's assistant prescribed the painkillers for broken ribs, and knee, neck and back injuries. In August 2007, an initial MRI showed he had a bulging disc in his spine, yet it wasn't until February that Covel saw a medical doctor for the injury. The doctor found that Covel's condition had worsened.

While taking Percocet, Covel worked as a safety officer on a range with live machine-gun fire. "They tell you, 'Don't drive a motor vehicle,' but you can go shoot a machine gun on Percocet," Covel said.

Sgt. 1st Class Chuck Clamon also is frustrated by the number of drugs he has been prescribed since he was injured March 29 during his third tour in Iraq.

An improvised explosive device hit a truck filled with ammunition a few feet ahead of Clamon's truck. When the ammunition blew, his head smacked into the windshield. His spine slammed into the radios behind him. His shoulder dislocated.

Now he is one of more than 16,000 people who have entered new Warrior Transition Units, where injured soldiers are transferred to recover.

At 33, he walks with a cane and occasionally falls on the floor when his legs give out. Pounding headaches form behind his eyes. His short-term memory is gone. His hands shake uncontrollably.

"They think I've developed a seizure disorder in my left hand where it does what it wants to when it wants to, from my fingertips all the way up to my shoulder. It bounces all over the place," he said.

He takes Seroquel and Ambien to sleep; Vicodin, Migranal, Naproxen and Neurontin for pain; plus an antidepressant and a muscle relaxer.

He said the Army's drugs are helping — but haven't gotten to the root of his medical issues.

His wife walks the dogs, mows the lawn, takes out the trash. "I feel helpless," he said. "I don't feel like an active person. I could care less about actually leaving the house now."

Other families are asking whether the cocktails of medication prescribed for combat stress, head injuries and body pains are lethal.

Chad Oligschlaeger "was completely different" when he returned from his first tour in Ramadi, Iraq, in 2006, his mother, Julie, said. He was 19, but "he looked older. He was drinking. At night he told me horrific stories. Then he'd go to bed, and I'd just sit there and cry."

On a rescue mission, the young Marine had seen his mentor, "Fitz" — 2nd Lt. Almar Fitzgerald — fatally wounded by a roadside bomb. "I think that was the catalyst that threw Chad over the edge. Body parts of friends, the women and the kids he killed, that got him," his mother said.

In March 2007, Oligschlaeger told a substance-abuse counselor he was drinking a liter of whiskey in two to three hours every day.

His mother said he also divulged his mental-health problems to a sergeant, who accused him of faking illness to avoid his next tour.

Oligschlaeger was sent back to Ramadi the next month. When he left Iraq in November, the nightmares and hallucinations were getting worse. Sometimes he would awaken and see Fitz sitting beside him.

He entered a substance-abuse program in April, then was referred to a PTSD-treatment facility.

But it had a waiting list, and “they kept pushing the date out,” his mother said.

In the meantime, he was ordered back to the Twentynine Palms base in the Southern California desert.

He was given an assortment of medication: a sleeping pill, a sedative, an antidepressant and Seroquel. He also began taking Chantix, an anti-smoking drug the Federal Aviation Administration recently forbade pilots to use because it had been linked to seizures, loss of consciousness and other serious side effects.

Oligschlaeger’s roommate had moved off base, so he was alone. When he returned home for a visit on Mother’s Day, May 11, his family noticed he seemed confused about how many pills he was taking and when he had taken them.

Back at the base, he made his last phone call at 12:48 a.m. May 17. Two days later, his fiancée, Adrianna Avena, called to tell him her wedding dress had arrived, but she got his voice mail. She called the next day and again got his voice mail. Finally, at 5:30 p.m. May 20, after frantic calls and text messages from Chad’s fiancée and others, two Marines went to check his room.

They found him alone — and dead — on the floor.

His mother suspects her son accidentally took too many pills. She also found a receipt for a six-pack of beer he had bought on the base.

“I believe he had been lying there for three days,” she said. “The barracks are supposed to be checked daily.”

Three months later, she is waiting for a formal report on her son’s death.

In West Virginia, 23-year-old Andrew White, a Marine reservist, died suddenly this year while taking the antidepressant Paxil along with Klonopin, an anti-anxiety medicine, and massive doses of Seroquel.

His father, Stan, said Andrew’s mental health deteriorated after his brother was killed in Afghanistan, and the Marines subsequently told him he would be going for a second round of combat in Iraq.

“He started having nightmares. Everything went downhill from there,” Stan White said.

Seroquel, an antipsychotic drug, is dispensed in doses as small as 25 milligrams for anxiety and insomnia.

A doctor with the Department of Veterans Affairs and then a private psychiatrist both prescribed much larger doses to Andrew White — up to 1,600 milligrams a day.

When his mother came home from work Feb. 12 and found her son unresponsive, he was also taking Paxil and Klonopin.

Stan White said the state medical examiner ruled that his son’s death was accidental due to intoxication from Paxil and Seroquel.

But in general, 1,600 milligrams of Seroquel would be “an enormous dose.” ... “The normal maximum dose would be about 800 milligrams a day.”

Andrew White was one of four young veterans in West Virginia who died this year while taking similar combinations of drugs for PTSD.

Eric Layne was another. “He was taking a lot of medicines,” his wife, Janette, said. “Paxil and Seroquel. He had been taking Klonopin. He was taking pain medicines. You should not die from taking pain medicine with PTSD.”

His symptoms had worsened gradually after he came home from Iraq in 2005. As a young West Virginia National Guardsman, “he was physically fit. He had a clear head. He was calm. He was easygoing. He was funny. Everyone wanted to be around him,” his wife said.

Postwar, he had grown angry and withdrawn even from his best friends. “It got to the point where he wouldn’t even pick up the phone when they called.”

Finally he began going to a VA hospital for intensive PTSD treatment. The medication and camaraderie with other veterans helped him mentally, “but physically he was deteriorating,” his wife said.

“Everything from slurred speech to excessive weight gain, inability to urinate. He would shake, developed tremors in his hands. Every weekend he came home, it was something more noticeable.”

In January, 29-year-old Layne came home from the hospital for the last time. He died in his sleep that night.

His wife said the death certificate listed a combination of four drugs as the cause: paroxetine (generic Paxil), morphine, Seroquel and the painkiller Tramadol.

Stan White said he believed his son’s doctors advised he could take extra Seroquel if he “was having a bad day and it’s not working.”

disagrees.

After [Renea Waltz] husband's first combat tour, he told a sergeant he felt sick and was having nightmares, and he was advised to "just keep it under wraps," she said. "I felt like they treated him like he was a malingerer, that there was nothing wrong with him, that he was just a pain in their ass, to be honest with you."

After his second combat tour, he took the drugs prescribed to him, she said, and he died.

The Army is "100 percent" responsible for his death, she said.

"He'd still be alive had they not given him that crap, and he would have been medically retired, and he probably would have lived a comfortable life," she said.

"It really upsets me that nothing's been done about it."

IRAQ RESISTANCE ROUNDUP



(Graphic: London Financial Times)

Hundreds Sign Oaths Pledging Armed Resistance To Occupation: "Which Iraqi Does Not Know How To Use A Weapon?"

Aug 29 (AFP)

Hundreds of Iraqis are signing blood oaths to continue their fight against US forces in Iraq despite an order from Moqtada al-Sadr for them to lay down their arms.

All vowed to fight on, despite orders by Sadr on Thursday to his 60,000-strong Mahdi Army militia to suspend their armed operations indefinitely.

“I will follow the orders of Moqtada al-Sadr but I prefer to fight,” said Adnan Habib, a 22-year-old labourer who attended Friday prayers in Sadr City.

Another Sadr supporter, Ali Abdel, a 19-year-old high school student, said he had been wanting to join the ranks of the Mahdi Army since the death of his mother in an attack targeting a police patrol a year ago.

“My entire family has signed to fight, including my father. If my mother was alive, she would also have signed.”

When asked if he knows how to fight, Ali replied with a broad smile: “Which Iraqi does not know how to use a weapon?”

An official, who asked not to be named, said Iraqis had begun signing oaths in blood 16 days ago and would continue doing so until the end of the Muslim holy fasting month of Ramadan, due to start next week.

“This morning hundreds signed the pledge,” the official said.

Sadr said he wants to create a special unit of fighters who would continue the armed resistance against coalition forces, while the Mahdi Army in general would be transformed into a cultural and social organisation.

Many young Sadr loyalists told AFP they did not see any role for themselves except as fighters.

“I prefer to resist by force using arms, this is the only thing I am capable of doing,” said Mohammed Mussa, a baker for the past 18 years.

**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**

August 29, 1970: In Memoriam The Los Angeles Police Murder Ruben Salazar As Thousands Of Chicanos Demonstrate Against The War On Vietnam



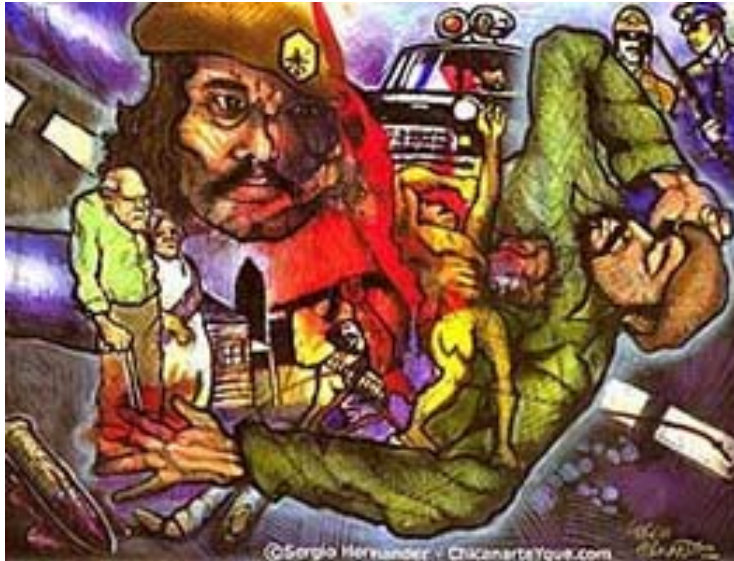
Carl Bunin Peace History Aug 27-Sept 2

Between 15 and 30 thousand predominantly Chicanos (Americans of Mexican descent) gathered in East LA's Laguna Park as the culmination of the Chicano National Moratorium.

It was organized to protest the disproportionate number of deaths of Chicano soldiers in Vietnam (more than double their numbers in the population). There had been more than 20 other such demonstrations across the southwest.

Three died when the anti-war march turned violent.

The Los Angeles Police Department attacked and one gunshot, fired into Silver Dollar Bar, killed Ruben Salazar, a Los Angeles Times columnist and a commentator on KMEX-TV (he had been accused by the LAPD of inciting the Chicano community).



OCCUPATION REPORT

“I Think Bush Administration Should Do Something Because We All Know They Are The Real Government”

August 27, 2008 By Laith, “Inside Iraq”

Before leaving the house, my wife told me that while she got some news about a plan for building the biggest Ferris wheel in the world in Baghdad.

I replied mocking “let the government first supply us electricity for two continuous hours, then it can build this Wheel”.

When I came to the office, I read the news in many newspapers. My wife was not telling me a joke. Its a plan suggested by Baghdad municipality. The plan suggests building an amusement park which included a Ferris wheel called (Baghdad Eye). It is planed to make it higher than London Eye and another Ferris wheel in another country.

I can not describe the pain of my heart when I read the news. I even can not my feelings now. I wish I can cry.

I wish I had power to do something, to change this ill reality.

We don't have power in our houses and our great officials plan to build the biggest Ferris wheel.

Yesterday was one more hot and moist day of August.

We don't have an air conditioner in our house because we don't have enough power.

I can buy four but they will be not more than a decoration. We use the air cooler which is not really effective but it's better than nothing.

I spent the day at home. My two years old son was crying all the time because the poor child can not stand the hot weather. I tried to keep him always near the air cooler but its never enough.

My son is only one child. We have hundreds of thousands all over Iraq.

In stead of building new power plants, our government is planning to waste our money by doing useless projects. With the beginning of 2008, The PM said that 2008 would be the year of building and reconstruction.

It looks that the rebuilding of our government means only changing the pavements and planting few flowers here and there.

This silliness and money wasting should be stopped.

Iraq doesn't need Ferris wheels or new pavements. We need real building and real projects.

I think Bush administration should do something because we all know they are the real government and I'm sure they can make it clear to their Iraqi guys who claim being politicians that building a Ferris wheel or new pavement or even filling streets with blast walls have not relation at all with construction or building a modern democratic country.

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

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK

STAHLER.
THE COLUMBUS DISPATCH
2008



NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT TRAVELING SOLDIER

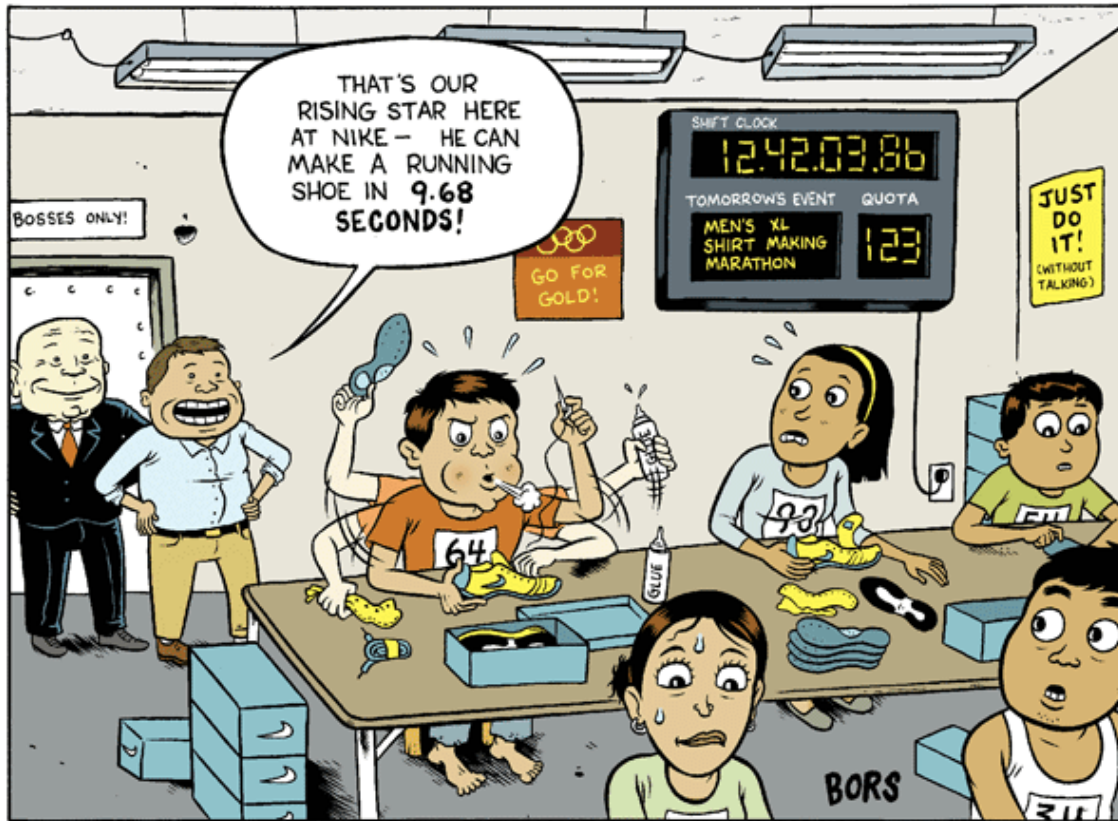
Telling the truth - about the occupation or the criminals running the government in Washington - is the first reason for Traveling Soldier. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on the resistance - whether it's in the streets of Baghdad, New York, or inside the armed forces.

Our goal is for Traveling Soldier to become the thread that ties working-class people inside the armed services together. We want this newsletter to be a weapon to help you organize resistance within the armed forces.

If you like what you've read, we hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers. <http://www.traveling-soldier.org/>

And join with Iraq War vets in the call to end the occupation and bring our troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

CLASS WAR REPORTS



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GI Special

www.militaryproject.org

This is how Bush brings the troops home,
BRING THEM ALL HOME NOW, ALIVE.



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

<http://williambowles.info/gispecial/2008/index.html>; <http://www.uruknet.info/?p=6&l=e>; http://www.traprockpeace.org/gi_special/;
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