

## GI SPECIAL 7D5:



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: "Such pretty bringers of death."]

# The Troops Aren't Coming Home

[Thanks to Phil G, who sent this in.]

March 30 By Aaron Glantz, Examiner.com [Excerpts]

It may seem counter-intuitive but by September of this year dovish Democrat Barack Obama will have actually sent more troops into combat than his hawkish predecessor George W. Bush.

How can this be?

After all, Barack Obama announced this month a phased withdrawal of all combat troops from Iraq by August 2010.

But the time-line of the drawdown is back-loaded with the first US troops not scheduled to come home until this September – and even then our force in Iraq will only be reduced by 12,000.

At that point, approximately 135,000 US troops will still occupy the country.

That's the same number that invaded Iraq back in March 2003.

At the same time, Obama announced Friday he's sending 21,000 more troops to Afghanistan and Pakistan – 17,000 combat troops plus another 4,000 to train Afghan forces and advise the Afghan government.

What this means is that under President Barack Obama the Global War on Terror is not winding down as many people expected. It is escalating.

We should all be ready for the human and economic consequences.

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## **ACTION REPORTS**

# **Outreach To The New York National Guard; “All Kinds Of Cars And People From All Walks Of Life Stopped, Rolled Down Their Windows And Took What We Had”**

From: Elaine Brower, Military Project  
To: GI Special  
Sent: April 05, 2009  
Subject: Staten Island Armory outreach

On Saturday morning, at 6:00 AM sharp, me and my friend Richie from Staten Island went to the National Guard Armory in Staten Island.

We had homemade cookies, thanks to our friend Addie from MDS/SI (Movement for a Democratic Society), and lit packets, with DVD's. (A big thank you to her since she contributed cookies for our outreach at Huntington 2 days before.)

When we first arrived it was rainy, dark and cold. There were a few cars already in the lot. But within a few minutes, a steady stream of vehicles proceeded to enter the main gate on Manor Rd.

We started handing out our stuff presenting it with extended arms to vehicles trying to get into the gate. We had a lot of success, much to our surprise.

All kinds of cars and people from all walks of life stopped, rolled down their windows and took what we had.

Some asked what it was, and we told them it was reading material written by Iraq Veterans Against the War, homemade cookies and a great movie about GI resistance in Viet Nam. They said, "OK, thanks."

At one point, a Ferrari drove in, then a brand new Corvette, and a new Hummer. I turned to Richie and said "Hey, the National Guard pay must be very lucrative, I think I might join!"

One by one the cars came, some drove right past us, either not seeing what we were doing, or just too tired to stop. But most waved and stopped, said "good morning" and took what we had to offer them.

At one point I said to Richie "this is really strange. Everyone is really pretty nice and taking our literature."

Then we saw some uniforms heading our way and figured the jig was up!

It was about 6:30 AM at that point, and I was ready to get thrown off the property. But a female Sgt. in uniform, and another soldier, just stopped right inside the main gate where the small greeting center stood. They waited outside this small center, chatting with each other, waiting for more cars to arrive. She started asking them for ID, but only smiled at us, about 30 yards away inside the main gate.

Inside the small booth was a cardboard cutout of a smiling guardsman, and I yelled to her "that looks so real!, we thought it was someone watching us."

She didn't understand me, and said "I'll get what you have when I am done here." And then waved and smiled at us.

So we stayed there until about 7:10 AM, and finished giving out about 35 packets of lit, 10 DVD's of "Sir, No Sir," and almost all the rest of the great chocolate chip-butterscotch cookies that Addie had made for us.

I told the Sgt. we had to go, and offered her a lit packet. She said she would get one on the inside, she was busy. So with that we left, and headed for the UFPJ march in Manhattan that same day.

I myself was feeling tired but happy that we had a successful morning, since the remainder of the day was downhill.

By late afternoon, when I was done marching through the police barricades on Broadway, marched right past the New York Stock Exchange without stopping for a second, which made no sense at all and made me increasingly sad, all I had to do was remember my early morning outreach, and smiled!

**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.

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## **IRAQ WAR REPORTS**

### **U.S. Soldier Killed In Diyala**

April 5, 2009 Multi National Corps Iraq Public Affairs Office, Camp Victory RELEASE No. 20090405-05

TIKRIT, Iraq – A U.S. Coalition forces Soldier died as a result of operations in Diyala province, Iraq, April 5.

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# **So Much For That Bullshit About Iraqi ‘Sovereignty’ “U.S. State Department Re-Signed The Security Firm Formerly Known As Blackwater Despite Iraq Saying It Didn’t Want The Company There”**

March 17, 2009 (UPI via COMTEX)

**The U.S. State Department re-signed the security firm formerly known as Blackwater despite Iraq saying it didn’t want the company there, records show.**

The State Department said \$22.2 million deal signed with Blackwater, since renamed Xe, in February was a contract modification concerning aviation work, The Washington Times first reported.

The contract expires in September, months after its contract for work in Baghdad was to have run out.

One observer said the deal raises questions about why the United States would want to pay a contractor for work in Iraq if the government won’t approve its operating license.

“Why would you continue to use Blackwater when the Iraqi government has banned the highly controversial company and there are other choices?” asked Melanie Sloan, executive director of the non-partisan Citizens for Responsibility and Ethics in Washington.

The private security firm has been heavily criticized, particularly for a 2007 incident that left 14 Iraqi civilians dead and six former guards facing manslaughter charges.

Xe spokeswoman Anne Tyrell declined to comment to the Times on the company’s work in Iraq or the contract modification.

**She said the company was aware that the State Department indicated it didn’t plan to renew its contracts in Iraq but that Xe officials hadn’t received specific information about leaving the country.**

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# **AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS**

## **Virginia Tech. Sgt. Killed By IED Near Helmand**

April 05, 2009 U.S. Department of Defense News Release No. 219-09

Tech. Sgt. Phillip A Myers, 30, of Hopewell Va, died April 4 near Helmand province, Afghanistan of wounds suffered from an improvised explosive device. He was assigned to the 48th Civil Engineer Squadron, Royal Air Force Lakenheath, United Kingdom.

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## **Romanian Officer Killed In Afghanistan; Four Soldier Wounded**

4.7.2009 Defense.Ro

One officer was killed and four other soldiers were wounded today, April 7, at around 7.45 (Romania time) in Afghanistan.

Captain Vasile-Iuliu Unguras driving a patrol mission, consisting of four Humvee vehicles in the maneuver battalion 21 on the highway A1, Kandahar - Kabul. 20 miles North East of Qalat, one of the cars passed over an IED killing the officer and wounded the other soldiers.

After the attack, the area was secured and the wounded soldiers were evacuated to military hospitals in Kandahar and Lagman.

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## **Resistance Rocket Attack On Dutch Military Base Kills One Soldier, Five Wounded**

04.07.09 (AP)

The Netherlands' defense chief said Monday that one soldier has been killed and five others injured during a rocket attack on a Dutch army base in Afghanistan.

Gen. Peter van Uhm said at a press conference in The Hague that 20-year-old Azdin Chadli was killed in the attack, which also wounded two Afghan soldiers.

Chadli, the 19th Dutch fatality in Afghanistan, had arrived just a week earlier, Van Uhm said. The attack took place at Camp Holland, the Dutch headquarters in the country. Two of the wounded in critical condition were moved to Kandahar for treatment.

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## **IED Wounds Two Australian Soldiers**

April 06, 2009 News Limited

TWO Australian soldiers have been wounded in Afghanistan when their vehicle hit a roadside bomb.

The soldiers, serving with the Special Operations Task Group (SOTG), were travelling in their vehicle in southern Afghanistan on Saturday when it struck an improvised explosive device.

One soldier was left with serious leg wounds and injuries to other parts of his body and was evacuated to a coalition medical facility by helicopter.

The other soldier suffered minor wounds and was later evacuated to Tarin Kowt, where he is resting before a medical assessment to decide whether he is fit to return to duty.

The Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, said the seriously wounded soldier was stabilised at coalition medical facilities in Afghanistan and would be flown to Germany for further treatment.

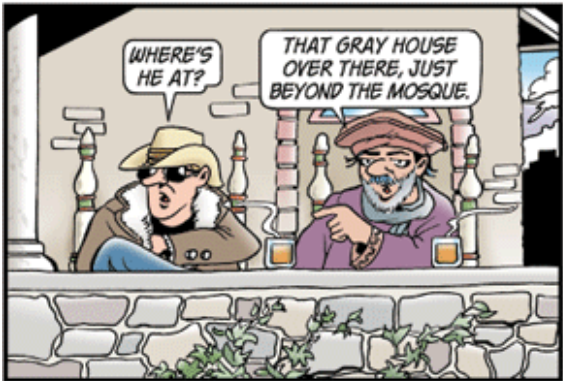
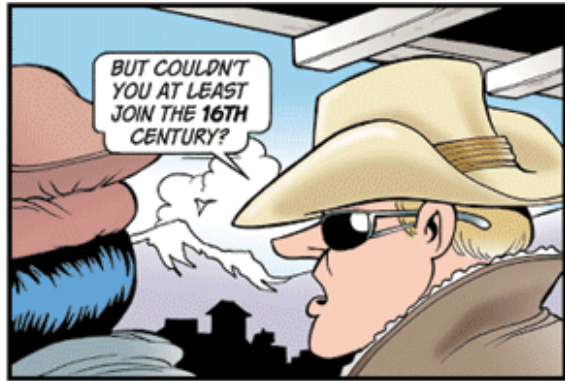
"It appears the immediate first aid that his mates applied and the surgery he received at the coalition hospital saved his life," Air Chief Marshal Houston said today. "He remains seriously ill and in intensive care, but is responding to treatment.

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

**Telling the truth - about the occupations 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 to Imperial wars 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 Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! ([www.ivaw.org/](http://www.ivaw.org/))**



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



## TROOP NEWS

**“I May Regret For Fighting The War  
But I Won’t Regret For Joining The  
Anti-War Cause”**

**“The Veterans Erected A Makeshift  
‘Watch Tower’ On The Ground And  
Posted A Big Banner On It, Which Says  
‘Operation No Change’”**



March 21 (Xinhua)

Although the size of anti-war demonstrations is shrinking in the United States, a group of veterans has become more visible in the crowd of demonstrations.

The group, known as Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), has been actively involved in a series of protests to mark the sixth anniversary of the Iraq in recent days.

Dressed in black T-shirts and military Khaki pants, the group’s presence is evident among thousands of anti-war protesters who took part in the rally in Washington D.C. Saturday.

**The veterans erected a makeshift “watch tower” on the ground and posted a big banner on it, which says “Operation no change,” a critical expression of President Barack Obama’s new plans for Iraq.**

On March 19, the group launched a 24-hour vigil or demonstration across the White House, the first anti-war protest in Washington D.C. on this Iraq war’s anniversary.

The IVAW, founded in 2004 and headquartered in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, has about 1,600 members with 53 chapters, including those in overseas U.S. military bases.

The organization advocates immediate withdrawal of all foreign troops from Iraq and full benefits for war veterans.

“What Obama is doing with our foreign policy on a fundamental level is not change. Though we are going to re-label the troops non-combat troops, they are still out there,” argued Adam Kokesh, a prominent figure of the IVAW.

Kokesh, a decorated former Marine served in Iraq, made his name by interrupting John McCain’s speech accepting the Republican nomination for president hopeful on Sept. 4 last year by yelling anti-war slogans in the audience.

He does not endorse the policy of McCain’s Democratic opponent Obama, either.

Obama has been known for his opposition to the Iraq war and won staunch support from anti-war activists in last year’s presidential election.

However, his decision last month to pull out all U.S. combat troops in 18 months, three months later than the timetable he promised during the campaign, was not well received among the anti-war crowds.

In particular, they criticized him for keeping a large presence of 50,000 non-combat troops in Iraq beyond August 2010 and planning to increase troop levels in Afghanistan.

“Any occupation is a crime,” another IVAW member, Mike Mlekowski, told Xinhua.

“No war is better than any other war. Russians have failed in Afghanistan and I don’t see any reason how can we work out there after the disaster in Iraq,” he said.

“While the people in America lose their jobs and homes, the government still plans to spend billions of U.S. dollars into another war. This is not what I want,” said Kyle Simgh, another IVAW member who had been in Iraq for two years.

“I also feel sorry for the Iraqi people. Their lives haven’t been any better after the invasion,” he said.

Some IVAW members voiced concerns and frustrations of their lives after returning from Iraq.

One of them is Floyd Holt from Connecticut, who remains unemployed and struggles to feed his young family. He has an 8-month son and his wife is recently pregnant again.

“I am feeling bad. We fought a wrong war and we don’t get due compensations,” he said.

Like many of the soldiers who served in Iraq, Holt was diagnosed with PTSD or the post traumatic stress disorder, which affects 20 percent of the veterans returning from Iraq according to official estimate.

Holt said he hasn't received any treatment or compensation for his disease from the government.

"Sometimes I have bad dreams about horrible things I saw in Iraq. I may regret for fighting the war but I won't regret for joining the anti-war cause," he said.

**DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE  
MILITARY?**

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 wars, 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

**“I Never Had Any Of These  
Problems Until I Got To Balad”  
“The DoD Tries To Say That The  
Dioxin Was Of No Threat To Human  
Life”**

**“It's Time Someone Is Held Responsible  
For Negligence To Me And My Fellow  
Soldiers Going Through The Same  
Thing”**

April 3, 2009 By Nora Eisenberg, AlterNet. [Excerpts]

Nora Eisenberg is the director of the City University of New York's Faculty Fellowship Publication Program. Her third novel, When You Come Home, which explores the 1991 Gulf War and Gulf War illness, was recently published by Curbstone Press.

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Cancer, pulmonary disease, multiple sclerosis, sleep apnea, heart disease: Iraq and Afghanistan combat veterans have suffered all these and more from toxic fumes spewing from burn pits on American bases.

The Disabled American Veterans now has information on 182 sick veterans in a database developed by Assistant National Legislative director, Kerry Baker.

Forty-eight have developed lymphoma, leukemia or other cancers; and 16 veterans in the database have died.

And on March 30th, a group of seven lawmakers asked Secretary of Defense Robert Gates to attend to these findings as well the findings from an independent scientific consultant, which found a serious danger that veterans may become ill from burn pit fumes.

As early as 2006, the DoD had been informed by Air Force Bioenvironmental Engineering Flight Commander Darrin Curtis that the pit was an acute health hazard.

Though the Department of Defense has admitted that samples at the large burn pit at Balad contain Acetaldehyde, Acrolien, Arsenic, Benzene, Carbon Monoxide, Ethylbenzene, Formaldehyde, Hydrogen Cyanide, Hydrogen Fluoride, Phosgene, Sulfur Dioxide, Sulfuric Acid, Toluene, Trichloroethane, Xylene, and other chemicals, to date, it has insisted the pit presents no known dangers.

Rep. Bishop's office has developed a website in which veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan can tell their stories.

**In just a few days, many stories of negligence and suffering have emerged, adding to a tragic saga.**

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Dave:

Dave was stationed at Balad, less than half a mile downwind from a double burn pit.

**“They burned plastic, chemicals, tires, metal and who knows what else in that pit.**

**“Two months in everyone was coughing up black stuff.**

**“Three months in my black stuff started to include blood.**

**“I went to the clinic and the front desk turned me away. They said that I didn't need to see a doctor because it was just the burn pit crud.**

“They said, ‘A doctor cannot help you if you are not ill from a disease.’

Later in the deployment, the smoke was so bad that we all were puking from it. Found out later that it was probably arsenic in the smoke.

"An air force memo outlined Dioxin, the chemical that made everyone sick from agent orange, comes from burning the same materials that were in the burn pit.

**"The DoD tries to say that the dioxin was of no threat to human life. . I might not be the smartest guy in the world but dioxin is dioxin and it's harmful to humans no matter what the source.**

**"Be it agent orange or standing in the plume of the burn pit .. But whatever, I came back home and was still coughing and having breathing problems. The doc gave me Sudafed."**

Dave's Physical Training run time went from 10:12 to 13:59 in 6 months.

**His squad leader told him it was his fault. He should run even more, to run faster. "So I took his advice . and then boom. Emergency room. Couldn't breathe. Had to be put on a machine.**

**"And the salt in the wound: The DoD says that burning tires, plastics, chemicals, medical waste, metal, oil, etc. isn't harmful.**

**"Which makes you wonder why it's illegal to burn that stuff back at home. "**

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Terry

Terry, deployed with the 101st Division, was stationed in Balad.

"Two weeks after arriving in country on my most recent deployment to Balad, I started developing symptoms that were eventually diagnosed as Still's Disease (Adult Onset Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis). The experts say that the disease is triggered by something to which you're exposed."

Terry is an Army Reserve Major and civilian airline pilot, and the illness has put both his military and civilian careers in jeopardy.

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Kathy

Kathy was a staff sergeant with the National Guard in Balad. She became sick while there, and once home was diagnosed with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease -- hearing loss and tinnitus.

"My health began to slowly decline. Widespread muscle aches and pains w/stiffness gradually settled in, as did neuralgia and sleep apnea."

She now sleeps with a breathing machine.

Kathy has done extensive research and has found dozens of studies that have linked high concentration of particulate matter to cardiovascular problems, as well as to premature death.

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Michael

Michael was stationed in Balad Iraq from Oct 2005 until June 2006. "During this time I would always complain about the smoke. We were told it was safe.

"Well I started choking in my sleep waking up not breathing. At the time I was also being treated for PTSD so that's what I was told it was from. I got medavaced from Balad in June.

"I seen another doctor; he told me that it did not sound like PTSD. I did a sleep study and I found out that I had sleep apnea really bad. since then I have had three surgeries on my face and now I have chronic pain in my face because the first surgery did not go well.

"I have breathing problems during the day, a problem with the lower part of my lungs so now I'm on inhalers.

**"I never had any of these problems until I got to Balad.**

**"It has pretty much ruined my army career.**

**"It's time someone is held responsible for negligence to me and my fellow soldiers going through the same thing."**

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Robert

Robert was deployed to Balad, Iraq from February to June 2006.

**"Virtually every night my tent was hazy and full of smoke and at times you could even see bits of ash floating in the air. The smell was so acrid that even holding your head on the sheet/blankets would not help you get that "clean" breathe of fresh air. I never got a good nights sleep there."**

Things he saw in the burn pit included 55-gallon drums of unknown fluids, tent parts, cabinets. anything from paper to the kitchen sink.

He now has problems doing "normal tasks like moving boxes, putting on my boots, playing with my children .

"It feels like someone is grabbing me in the center of my chest and squeezing to prevent me getting a good breath . I find myself gasping for air and hyperventilating to catch my breath.

For Robert, a 42-year-old father of six, “The most troubling of this isn’t my health as it is its the health and welfare of the thousands of other service men and women who have come and gone through Balad. My oldest two children also joined the Air Force. and ironically enough my oldest daughter is heading to Balad this summer on her third deployment to the same base. My son is also heading to Balad this summer on his first deployment. What is in their future. one can only hope .”

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Derrol

Derrol was stationed at Bagram, Afghanistan and later Balad, Iraq as an Air Force reservist on active orders for over six years.

**From the steady burning pits, he suffered both coughing and diarrhea.**

**“An x-ray for a back problem showed that one half of my right lung was missing . they found 2 large nodules/masses in my lower right lung.**

“A CT scan “showed a total of 7 nodules/masses in my right lung and scarring in my left.

A Line of Duty was initiated and pushed through rather quickly to confirm the injury as active duty, deploy related.

“I contacted the VA and started a claim in November of 2007. I again deployed to Qatar for 4.5 months last summer and the claim was held until I was released from active duty in Sept 2008.

“It is now March 24, 2009 and I still have not heard from VA as to my medical board rating for compensation and disability. I also have problems with my stomach now and shortness of breath, I am still waiting on VA.”

John and Wallace both worked for KBR at Balad. They both now have colon cancer.

**Veterans who are suffering health problems they believe are connected to burn pit fumes should report their condition to Kerry Baker at 202-314-5229, to add to the database.**

**Troops Invited:**

**Comments, arguments, articles, and letters from service men and women, and veterans, are especially welcome. Write to Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657 or send email [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org): Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057**

## 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 Douglass, 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**

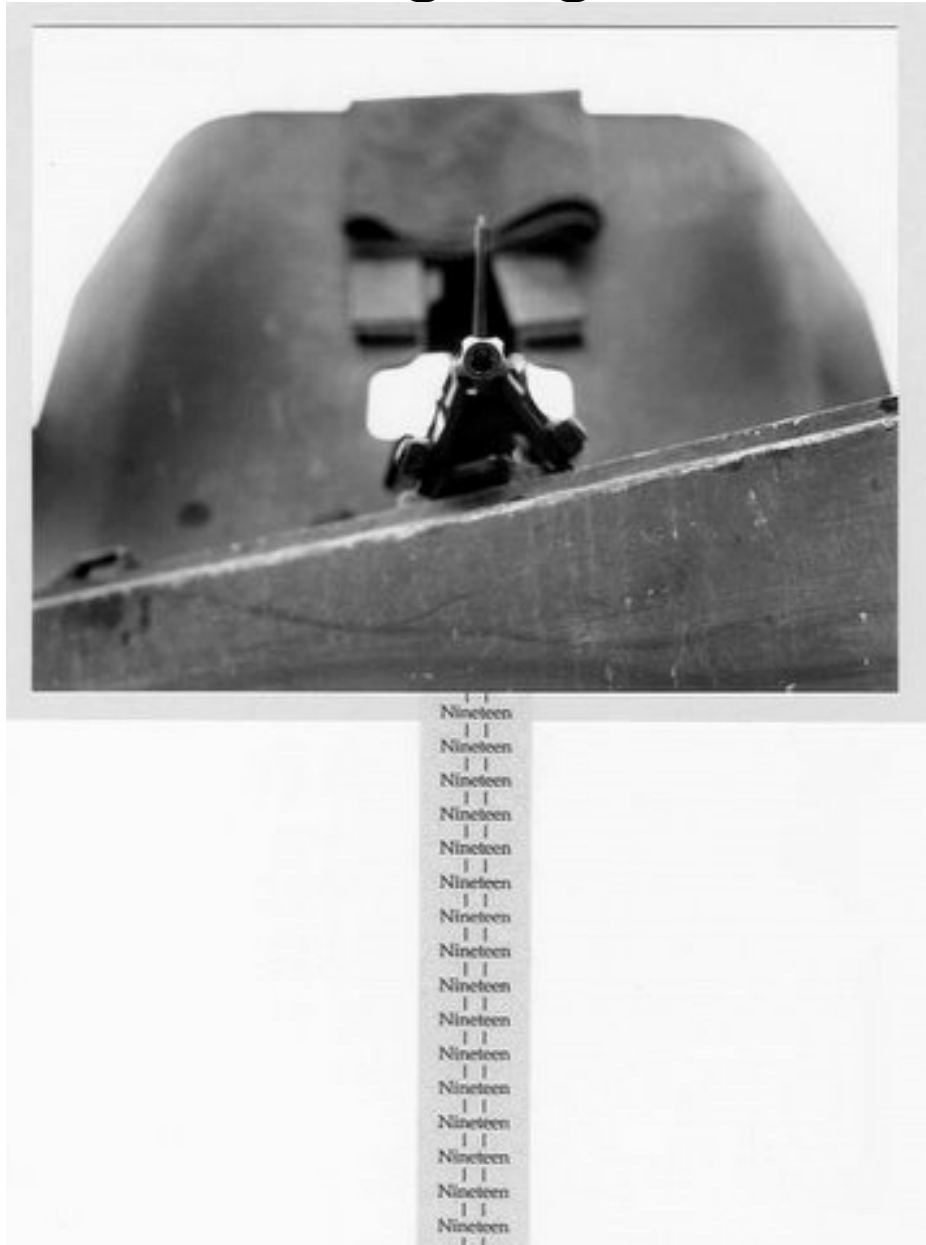
**We stand in a moment of time between the eternal past and the eternal future, content that, for us, all that was before and all that will be cannot exist for us, and yet we exist because all that was before us gave us our moment in time, and we will share the responsibility for all that will exist in the eternal future.  
-- Abraham Lincoln**



Firearms are second only to the Constitution in importance; they are the peoples' liberty's teeth.

-- George Washington

## Average Age 19



From: Mike Hastie  
To: GI Special  
Sent: April 05, 2009  
Subject: Average Age 19

## Average Age 19

58,000 American soldiers were killed in Vietnam.

Their average age was 19.

From the senior prom to Vietnam.

Fast forward two generations,  
and America is on the verge of chaos.  
You can only stretch a military so thin.

You can only stretch veterans so thin.

You can only stretch society so thin.

When jobs become a bullet proof vest,  
and sickness in the family is being treated  
with over the counter drugs,  
and you constantly avoid going to places  
that might lead to trouble,  
and fear becomes a constant companion...  
one more stressor can cause chaos.

We are all being backed into a corner.

All of America's wars for profit are coming  
home where they all started.

They all started when the general public  
decided to do nothing.

Absolutely nothing.

Except for great political conversations  
at Starbucks.

Protest?

That's for the anti-war people.

If you don't take your heart to the street,  
it will eventually stop beating.

Mike Hastie

U.S. Army Medic

Vietnam 1970-71

April 5, 2009

A nation that continues year after year to spend more  
money on military defense than on programs of social  
uplift, is approaching spiritual death.

Martin Luther King Jr.

April 4, 1967

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: ([hastiemike@earthlink.net](mailto:hastiemike@earthlink.net)) T)

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

**FTA Is Back!**  
**The Film Provides A Rare Glimpse  
Into The Revolt From Below That  
Ultimately Forced The Pentagon  
To Withdraw In Defeat From  
Vietnam**

**“It Lets The Anti-War GIs Speak For  
Themselves”**

**“One Of The Greatest Concentrations Of  
Anti-War Sentiment And Activism Was  
Found Among GIs Themselves”**

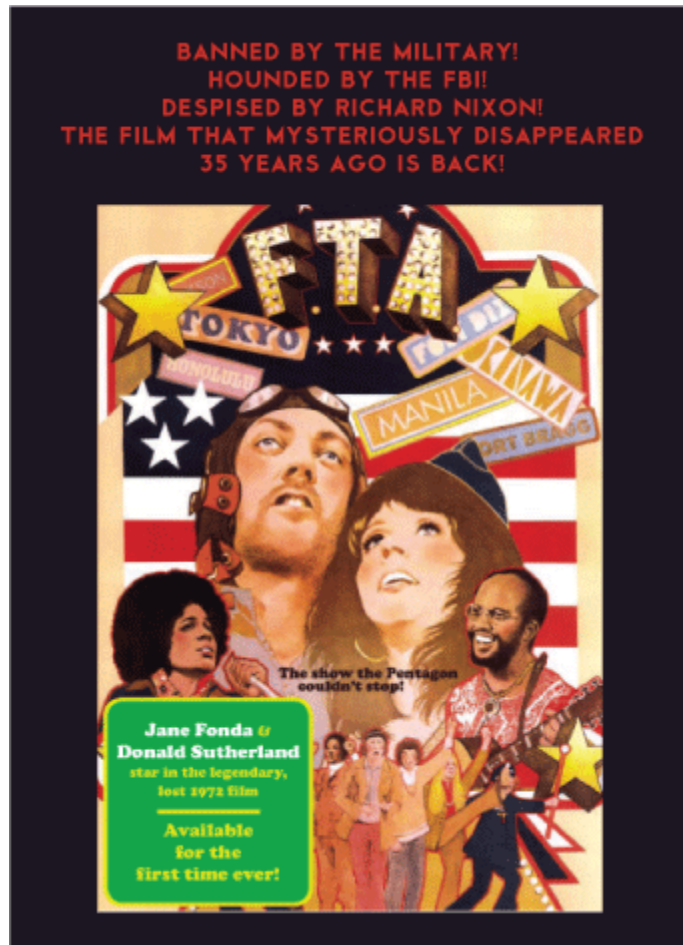
**FINALLY, AFTER 35-YEARS IN EXILE  
FTA IS BACK! AVAILABLE FEBRUARY 24  
EXCLUSIVELY ON DVD  
FROM DISPLACED FILMS AND  
NEW VIDEO/ DOCURAMA**

**FTA:**

**Ultra-Rare! F.T.A. (aka FREE THE ARMY aka FUN, TRAVEL, ADVENTURE), 1972,  
Displaced Films, 97 min. Dir. Francine Parker.**

**F.T.A. was originally released by American-International but pulled from  
distribution after only one week, with rumors of pressure from the Pentagon.**

**– Phil Hall, Film Threat**



## About The Film:

[Thanks to Mark Shapiro, Military Project, who sent this in.]

04. 01.09 by Jay Rothermel, Monthly Review [Excerpts]

*Preamble: "This film was made in association with the servicewomen and men stationed on the United States bases of the Pacific Rim, together with their friends whose lands they presently occupy."*

Accepting his Oscar for Best Actor, Sean Penn jokingly referred to the Academy as lovers of "commies and homos." It's a tribute to the low level of politics among our cultural workers today that Sean Penn would be surprised at acknowledgement of his performance.

The Academy loves movies about exceptional heroes, whether they are overcoming physical disabilities, sports team segregation, the Holocaust, or the Roman Empire.

The entertainment industrial complex also loves it when its celebrities serve as a prophylactic for US humanitarian imperialism in countries like Sudan or Tibet.

(Poor Rose McGowan, conversely, hasn't been heard or seen since expressing understanding for what motivated men and women in Ireland to join the IRA.)

All of which brings us to the opposite end of the movie food chain, far from the heights of Oscardom: FTA, Francine Parker's documentary about the "Free the Army" tour.

Washington and Wall Street long ago erased this movie.

The miracle of globalized media today, however, means we can sit at home and watch it on DVD or its showing on that greener-than-green parrot cage called the Sundance Channel.

What strikes the viewer first about FTA is the humility, sense of proportion, and optimism the film has about events it depicts. We are a long way here from the old Michael Moore bazooka and the longeurs of Ken Burns, Inc.

There are many similarities between FTA and the great rock concert documentaries of the same period: only a few lines of narration for context, and then getting out of the way of the performances.

**FTA the movie was long ago blacklisted from theaters, just as FTA the traveling political musical extravaganza was blacklisted from history.**

A key part of the "culture war" trumpeted by media and academic hacks of the Bill Bennett-David Horowitz-Rush Limbaugh variety (and which is itself part of a larger 30 year war against the gains of the labor, civil rights, women's, and anti-war movements) is the depiction of the those opposed to the Vietnam War as "stabbing our troops in the back."

One tonic effect of FTA's DVD release and Sundance showing is to put the lie to that libel.

**As Washington's invasion and war against the people of Vietnam proceeded, one of the greatest concentrations of anti-war sentiment and activism was found among GIs themselves.**

The script for the FTA revue itself was drawn exclusively from material GIs published in their own anti-war newspapers.

FTA was the product of a flourishing anti-war culture.

Today we see this culture boiled down to a History Channel "flower power" documentary, histories like Tom Brokaw's Boom, and the memoirs of Senators and ex-Senators like John Kerry and Bob Kerry.

One of the great pleasures of FTA is the forthright energy of the performers and their audience.

The GIs heard their own thoughts -- salty, sarcastic, and full of gallows humor and solidarity at the same time -- repeated back to them. The leaps of consciousness over

just a few years as they rejected each rationale of the Washington war machine confirmed the anti-war movement's strategy of orienting to these "workers in uniform."

The cast of the FTA revue is filled with gifted performers. They continued with their artistic careers after the U.S. anti-war tide receded. It is a pleasure to see them in their youth, energized by work that gave shape to the feelings of the immense majority.

Between concerts they marched in solidarity with local activists protesting Washington's devastating "military base colonialism" in the Philippines, Okinawa, and Japan.

Today one of the movie FTA's great strengths is its potential as a recruiting tool. It is the perfect length to have classes, meetings, and potlucks built around it.

The moral authority of the movie is without equal: completely ignoring the pundits and the bi-partisan Wall Street war party in Washington, it lets the anti-war GIs speak for themselves.

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**April 6, 1712: Honorable Anniversary:  
Courageous Slaves Rise To Kill Their  
Masters;  
"Death Was Preferable To Life In  
Bondage"**

Carl Bunin Peace History April 6-12

Slavenorth.com & Pbs.org [Excerpts]

In 1712, some slaves in New York City rose up in a crude rebellion that could have been much more deadly, had it been better planned.

As it was, it was among the most serious slave resistances in American history, and sparked a vicious backlash by the authorities.

The stage was set for an uprising.

First, the city had a large population of black slaves -- the result of many years of trade with the West Indies. Secondly, communication and meeting among enslaved persons was relatively easy, since the New York City's inhabitants lived in a small area on the southern tip of Manhattan.

Thirdly, living in such a densely populated area also meant that slaves worked in close proximity to free men, a far cry from the situation on the plantations to the south.

The revolt was led by African-born slaves, who decided death was preferable to life in bondage.

They managed to collect a cache of muskets and other weapons and hide it in an orchard on the edge of town.

On the night of April 6, twenty-four of the conspirators gathered, armed themselves, and set fire to a nearby building. They then hid among trees, and when white citizens rushed up to put out the blaze, the slaves opened fire on them, killing five and wounding six.

The surviving citizens sounded the alarm. Every able-bodied man was pressed into service, and appeals were made to governors of surrounding colonies. The militia pinned down the rebels in the woods of northern Manhattan. The leaders of the uprising committed suicide, and the rest, starving, surrendered.

**The death toll in the 1712 uprising doesn't seem high, but in a New York county that, at that time probably numbered some 4,800 whites, it was shocking.**

**In considering the psychological impact on the survivors, imagine some sort of attack on modern New York, with its 8 million people, that would leave casualties of 10,000 dead.**

A special court convened by the governor made short work of the rebels. Of the twenty-seven slaves brought to trial for complicity in the plot, twenty-one were convicted and put to death.

Since the law authorized any degree of punishment in such cases, some unlucky slaves were executed with all the refinements of calculated barbarity.

New Yorkers were treated to a round of grisly spectacles as Negroes were burned alive, racked and broken on the wheel, and gibbeted alive in chains.

In his report of the affair to England, Governor Hunter praised the judges for inventing 'the most exemplary punishments that could be possibly thought of.' “[

White New Yorkers had been apprehensive before the revolt of April 6; now they were spurred into action.

Strict laws were soon enacted, and more would come, over the next thirty years. No longer could more than three black slaves meet. A master could punish his slaves as he saw fit (even for no reason at all), as long as the slave did not lose his or her life or limb. Any slave handling a firearm would receive twenty lashes. Anyone caught gambling would be whipped in public.

Involvement in a conspiracy to kill would result in execution, as would a rape. There was even a law that discouraged masters from freeing a slave:

The master could free a slave, but only after posting a bond of 200 (pounds). This money would be paid to the freed slave if that slave couldn't support himself or herself.

**These laws would, in the end, prove to be futile. In 1741, New York would see another uprising.**

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## **April 6, 1968: Anniversary Of A Murder By Cowards In Blue**



Bobby Hutton

Carl Bunin Peace History April 6-12

Bobby Hutton, the 17-year-old first member of the Black Panther Party was gunned down by officers of the Oakland Police Department.

Police opened fire on a car of Black Panthers returning from a meeting. The Panthers escaped their vehicle and ran into a house. Police attacked the house with tear gas and gunfire.

After the building was on fire, the Panthers tried to surrender.

**Hutton came out of the house with his hands in the air.**



But a police officer shouted, "He's got a gun." This prompted further police gunfire that left Hutton dead and Panthers co-founder Eldridge Cleaver wounded.

Police later admitted that Hutton was unarmed.

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## DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

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## CLASS WAR REPORTS

**“We In Oakland Have Had Enough Of  
Police Terror, Gentrification And  
Racism”**

# **“The Community Knows What It Feels Like To Be Occupied By The Oakland Police And Can Empathize With A Man Desperate To Stay Out Of Jail Who Saw No Options For Himself”**

March 30, 2009 By Dana Blanchard, Socialist Worker [Excerpts]

ON MARCH 27, thousands of police from California massed at the Oracle Arena in Oakland to pay tribute to the four Oakland police officers who were shot and killed the previous weekend by 26-year-old Lovelle Mixon.

Two of the officers were shot by Mixon during what was called a routine traffic stop in impoverished East Oakland.

Mixon, apparently terrified of being sent back to prison, then fled to his sister's apartment, where he killed two more officers before being gunned down by police in an operation that terrorized the residential neighborhood for almost an hour.

The memorial service was broadcast on all the major news networks, and Sen. Dianne Feinstein flew in from Washington to pay her respects, along with Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger and State Attorney General Jerry Brown.

The spectacle at the sports stadium is being used to rehabilitate the scandal-ridden Oakland Police Department and draw attention away from the police shooting of Oscar Grant III on a Bay Area Rapid Transit (BART) station platform on New Year's Day.

But the funeral pageantry has been unable to hide the broken system of prisons and parole that leave former inmates like Mixon--who had been in and out of prison for almost half of his life--without jobs, homes, education or hope.

In contrast to the scene at Oracle Arena is the mourning of Lovelle Mixon's family members, who are trying to call attention to his plight. Two days before the stadium event, the family was part of a procession through East Oakland. The participants wore T-shirts emblazoned with Mixon's picture and tried to understand how their loved one ended up in this situation.

Lolo Darnell, one of Mixon's cousins who was at the demonstration, said, "He needs sympathy, too. If he's a criminal, everybody's a criminal."

**There has been no letter from President Barack Obama to Mixon's family, nor a public funeral or big-name speakers on his behalf.**

**There has, however, been a lot of quiet support for family members from the community, which knows what it feels like to be occupied by the Oakland police**

and can empathize with a man desperate to stay out of jail who saw no options for himself.

On the Internet, local listservs are filled with comments asking questions like when the Oakland police will stop acting like an occupying army that treats residents “like terrorists in their own neighborhood.”

On the sides of the boarded-up apartment building where Mixon made his final stand against dozens of SWAT team officers, there are impromptu messages like “Stop state killing” and “RIP L.M.”

\*\*\*\*\*

THE TWO standards of grief in this tragedy are even more clear when considered against the backdrop of Oscar Grant’s killing on New Year’s Day by BART police officer Joahannes Mehserle.

The struggle to win justice for Oscar and his family has taken to the streets in demonstrations of thousands, forcing the Alameda County District Attorney to charge Mehserle with murder. But even in this case of the death of a young man whose only crime was being Black, the state has been pretty clear where its sympathies lie.

Oakland Mayor Ron Dellums was one of the first on the scene at Highland Hospital to grieve with the slain officers’ families after Lovelle Mixon shot them. But he made excuses for the BART police who stood by and watched Oscar Grant die, and who subsequently arrested and brutalized his friends.

**As Jack Bryson, the father of two of the young men on the platform with Oscar that night, put it, “Some lives are worth more than others. Where was Governor Schwarzenegger when Oscar got killed?”**

The need to continue to press for the police to be held accountable in Oscar’s death was made even clearer in the aftermath of the shooting of the four officers.

**Mehserle’s first court hearing was postponed until May last week--because Mehserle’s attorney, a former officer, said he was too distraught over the loss of his department friends to provide adequate counsel.**

**This excuse rings hollow to many of us who have seen countless defendants without means represented by inadequate attorneys and shuffled off to prison without a second thought.**

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THE RESPONSE from the community shows that many people--especially people of color who have been living through the violence of economic crisis and police brutality--feel that what Lovelle Mixon did wasn’t simply a senseless act of violence, but was rooted in the whole relationship of Blacks and Latinos to the criminal justice system in Oakland.

Mixon was 26 years old when he died after the SWAT team raided his sister's house. He had just been released after serving nine months in prison for identity theft and forgery. It was his second time in prison--previously, he served six years as a youth for his part in an armed robbery.

After parole officers went several times to his mother's house to find Mixon after a missed appointment in February, a warrant was issued for his arrest.

When Mixon was pulled over that day, he knew he was headed back to prison.

It's neither surprising nor unusual for people serving time in California state prisons to get out and then be sent right back after being paroled--over 70 percent of parolees in the state return to prison within three years.

Why? California is in the midst of a severe economic and fiscal crisis, with an unemployment rate of 10 percent. That means there are almost no job prospects or social services for parolees and their families. Lovelle Mixon was depressed and violent not because that's who he was, but because the system made him that way.

Attorney General Jerry Brown acknowledges that the criminal justice system didn't work in this case, but rather than propose providing money for social services and job training for those caught up in the system, his solution is more cops on the streets and more harassment by parole officers.

Brown, for example, proposed that the state highway patrol, county sheriff's department and the city police force "should have a list of the more dangerous, threatening parolees so they can keep a watch on them."

What evidence does Brown have that Lovelle Mixon was any more threatening than anyone else?

Nothing more than false accusations and a record showing he was unable to find work.

Brown went so far as to say that there could have been as many as "a hundred shooters" in East Oakland--and no wonder, if his criteria for what makes a person violent is that they are depressed, unemployed and sick of the system.

This racist assessment of the Oakland community by people like Jerry Brown goes hand in hand with the call for the militarization of the police and more cops on the streets.

It is up to us to organize for an alternative and stand up for all the victims of police brutality.

We shouldn't allow the shooting of four police officers to be used as a way to downplay the murder of Oscar Grant and to justify choices about the budget that mean more spending on cops, and less on social services and schools.

We in Oakland have had enough of police terror, gentrification and racism.

We demand our humanity and our community back, in the name of Oscar Grant and Lovelle Mixon.

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