

Military Resistance 9L23



AFGHANISTAN WAR REPORTS

Wisconsin Soldier Killed In Kunar



12.27.11: Joe Altmann, an Army medic from Marshfield, Wis., died on Christmas Day after insurgents in Kunar province attacked his unit with small-arms fire. (AP Photo/Courtesy of Janice Altmann)

Dec 27, 2011 Army Times

A Hawaii-based soldier was killed in Afghanistan on Christmas Day, the Defense Department said Tuesday.

Staff Sgt. Joseph J. Altmann, 27, of Marshfield, Wis., died in Kunar province of injuries suffered when insurgents attacked his unit with small arms fire.

He was assigned to 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 25th Infantry Division, out of Schofield Barracks.

According to the Marshfield (Wis.) News Herald, Altmann was a 2003 graduate of Columbus Catholic High School in Marshfield.

His father, John Altmann, told the newspaper his son was on his third tour of duty, having previously served in Iraq.

"We very proud of him," John Altmann said. "He's our hero. This is what he wanted to do. He had just re-enlisted because he loved his job so much."

Staff Sgt. Altmann also is survived by his mother, Janice.

Oxnard Sergeant Killed By Afghanistan IED Attack



Sgt. First Class Clark A. Corley Jr., from Oxnard, was one of three soldiers killed in an IED attack in Afghanistan. (KABC Photo)

December 08, 2011 KABC

OXNARD, Calif. -- A U.S. Army soldier from Oxnard died from wounds suffered from an improvised explosive device attack in Warduk Province in eastern Afghanistan Dec. 3.

Sgt. First Class Clark A. Corley Jr., from Oxnard, was one of three soldiers killed in the attack.

Spc. Ryan M. Lumley, from Lakeland, Fla., and Spc. Thomas J. Mayberry, from Springville, Calif., were also killed in the attack.

All were assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 5th Infantry Regiment, 3rd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Armored Division out of Fort Bliss, Texas.

According to the Army, Corley, 35, was an Infantryman (MOS 11B) who entered the Army December 1995. He was previously stationed at Fort Benning, Ga., Fort Irwin, Calif., Fort Lee, Va., Schofield Barracks, Hawaii, Camp Hovey, Korea, and Fort Hood, Texas.

Corley's military education includes Hazardous Materials Certification, Radiological Safety, Action Officer Development Course and Sling Load Inspection Certification. Corley's awards and decorations include the Army Commendation Medal with four Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Achievement Medal with two Oak Leaf Clusters, Army Good Conduct Medal-Fourth Award, National Defense Service Medal, Korea Defense Service Medal, Iraqi Campaign Medal with a Campaign Star, Global War on Terrorism Service Medal, Army Service Ribbon, Overseas Service Ribbon, Combat Infantryman Badge, and the Expert Infantryman Badge.

Corley is survived by his spouse and one child.

A memorial ceremony in honor of the fallen soldiers will be coordinated and announced at a later date, according to the Army.

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

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

**“It Was Another Day Just Trying
To Stay Alive”**

**““They Would Fight In The Snow,
Patterson Said Of The Enemy”**

**“They Wouldn't Take A Break. They'd
Keep Going”**

FREDERICK, Md. — Whether at home or abroad, military personnel and their families face a strain during the holiday season.

For some, there is the joy of a loved one returning just in time to spend the holidays with their loved ones. Others, however, must live with the fear of knowing their special person could be in harm's way.

"It's a time when most people think about gathering with family and sharing in the holiday season," said Col. William Sean Lee, state chaplain for the Maryland National Guard. "Because of the separation with the deployment, they can't do that. That's part of the quiet sacrifice of the military families. They'll never get that time back — ever."

There was nothing greater for the Revesz family than the return home of their son, brother and friend — Army Sgt. Brent Patterson.

Patterson just wrapped up a 12-month tour in Afghanistan. Before that, he spent 15 months in Iraq. The three-time recipient of the Purple Heart has not been home for the holidays in three years.

"It got to the point where it didn't feel like a holiday," Patterson, 23, said from his family's Frederick home this week. "It was another day just trying to stay alive."

Being holed up in bunkers, worrying about the next attack, eating MREs — that's how Patterson spent his days.

"They would fight in the snow," Patterson said of the enemy. "They wouldn't take a break. They'd keep going."

**“Afghanistan Has Never Been And
Is Never A Country Where The
Invaders Can Survive Or Be
Settled”**

**“The Collapse Of The Genghis,
British Empire, And Red Empire Are
The Living Examples That The US
May Learn From”**

“Afghan Resistance Statement On The Occasion Of The 32nd Anniversary Of The Former Soviet Union Invasion Of Afghanistan”



December 26, 2011 Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan; shahamat-english.com

Afghan resistance Statement on the Occasion of the 32nd Anniversary of the former Soviet Union Invasion of Afghanistan:

Thirty two years ago, on this day, the 6th of Jaddi, 1358 (AH anno hegirae) corresponding to 27th December, 1979, the former Soviet Union, in much the same way and for much the same reason as the present-day U.S., violating all human rights and ethics, invaded our country.

Still, more than three decades after the former Red Army invasion of Afghanistan, the Afghan are suffering from the aftermath of the war and the impact of it appears to be seen largely in terms of destruction of our country and economic infrastructure.

Millions of our countrymen were made homeless leaving their country to migrate to other countries.

The former Soviet Union invasion cost the Afghans the gravest material, emotional and psychological losses in addition to losses of lives of more than one and a half million Afghans.

The Afghan Muslim nation is still suffering from the negative effect of what happened, in return, the world including the America were disposed of the Red Empire by the downfall of the former Soviet Unions at the hands of Afghan Muslim nation which got several countries permanent independence and recognition of their identities.

At this stage, the US and the other countries, having been disposed of the Red Empire, had to comfort the miserable Afghans and extent assistance to the war-torn country. Contrarily, the worst was yet to come. The US and their allied countries destroyed and ruined whatever parts of our country had been left by the former Soviet Unions.

Afghans, with help of Allah, are well-trained and able to carry out Jihad and combat all the invaders.

The Afghan Muslim nation, in the same way as in the past defeated the entire Eastern bloc headed by the former Soviet Unions though their Jihad getting the world rid of the

communism, are successfully withstanding all the coalition forces led by the US invaders and will make them all face the same fate that befell the then Red Army who under the pretext of Peace Treaty of Geneva pulled out of Afghanistan in failure.

The current invaders are, too, looking for the pretence to withdrew from Afghanistan in a face-saving way and are in the point of fleeing.

بَلِّغِ الْأَمْرُ مِنْ قَبْلُ وَمِنْ بَعْدُ وَيَوْمَئِذٍ يَفْرَحُ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ بِنَصْرِ اللَّهِ يَنْصُرُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَهُوَ الْعَزِيزُ الرَّحِيمُ

To Allah belonged the matter before and (to Him it belongs) thereafter. And on the day the believers will rejoice with Allah's help. He help whomsoever He wills, And He is the Mighty, the Very-Merciful.

The sequence of the events, if observed, it becomes crystal clear that Afghanistan has never been and is never a country where the invaders can survive or be settled.

Besides, the collapse of the Genghis, British Empire, and Red Empire are the living examples that the US may learn from.

The US invaders and their allies, instead of putting the tested brave Afghan nation to the test and fighting them, are to put an end to their invasion.

Furthermore, the western nations should insist on their rulers not to commit war crimes any longer that may further disgrace their nations nationally and internationally but to let the miserable Afghans live freely.

The Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan believes that Afghanistan is sure to be liberated from the occupation of the US invaders with help of Allah Almighty and through their Jihad the and the current invaders are bound to be destined with the same fate that the former ones befell, if Allah wills it.

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

IRAQ WAR REPORTS

Car Bombing At Iraq Interior Ministry Kills 7

December 26, 2011 VOA News

Iraqi authorities say a bomber has blown up a car outside the interior ministry in Baghdad, killing seven people and wounding more than 30.

Officials say the assailant drove his vehicle into a security barrier near the ministry during Monday's morning rush hour. They say five policemen were among those killed.

Iraqi Interpreters For U.S. Military In Dangerous Limbo: Thousands Were Promised Spots First In Line For Special Visas To The U.S., But The Process Has Slowed To A Crawl; Now The Iraqis, Targeted For Death Because Of Their Service To America, Can Only Wait



December 26, 2011 By David Zucchino, Los Angeles Times [Excerpts]

Reporting from Baghdad—

He rarely leaves his house. He's been shot at by gunmen in a passing car. He gets death threats over the phone.

"Traitor," the callers say. "American agent."

Tariq, 27, is a quick-witted, tech-savvy Iraqi who tosses off idiomatic American English phrases such as "I'm outta here" and "That's cool."

When he served as an interpreter for the U.S. military, Tariq lived on a secure base, safe from fellow Iraqis determined to kill him because of his service to America.

But when the unit he served pulled out of Iraq on Oct. 13, he was dismissed and escorted off the base.

The U.S. government promised Tariq and thousands of other former interpreters that they would be first in line for special visas to the United States.

But with the pace of visa approvals having slowed to a crawl, that promise rings hollow for Tariq, who stays locked in his parents' home, working the phones and the Internet to track his application.

For the first time since his work as an interpreter ended, Tariq left his home one day this month and drove through Baghdad to meet a reporter. He brought along his brother, a tall, burly fellow who literally watched Tariq's back with each step. Tariq asked that his surname not be published.

"I served the Americans very well, but now they've left me on my own, with no security," he said in nearly flawless English.

"They've expelled us all from the only places in Iraq that were safe for us — U.S. bases."

Three words from U.S. legislation are imprinted on his brain: "special immigrant visa."

The Refugee Crisis in Iraq Act, passed in 2008, provided fast-track status for Iraqis who had worked for the U.S. government or military.

The law authorized 5,000 special visas per year — 20,000 through 2011. But through October, just 3,415 had been issued to Iraqis, according to the Iraqi Refugee Assistance Project.

Applicants have been told to expect waits of at least eight months. Tariq applied two years ago, then filed an amended application in October 2010.

During his recent brief excursion out of his house, Tariq was guarded and edgy. His brother hovered at his shoulder, tensing at each passing car or pedestrian.

He calls the U.S. consular office regularly, only to be told that his application remains on "administrative hold." He posts queries to a chat room on the U.S. Embassy's Facebook page.

In one query, he asked: Is there light at the end of the tunnel for me?

The answer from the consular office suggested that if Tariq was unhappy with the process and wanted his application returned to him, the embassy would be glad to oblige.

Tariq let out a sharp laugh.

"I guess I got my answer," he said.

MILITARY NEWS

**NOT ANOTHER DAY
NOT ANOTHER DOLLAR
NOT ANOTHER LIFE**



The remains of U.S. Army Pfc. Cody R. Norris, age 20, of Houston, TX, at Dover Air Force Base November 12, 2011 in Dover, Delaware. Norris was killed by small arms fire November 9 while serving in Kandahar province, Afghanistan. (Photo by Brendan Hoffman/Getty Images)

Military Defense Lawyers Defy Guantanamo Commander's

Order To Sign His New Rules “Within 48 Hours”

**“They Say The Rules Would
Violate Attorney-Client Privilege
And Legal Ethics, And Deprive The
Prisoners Of Their Constitutional
Right To Counsel”**

**“They Sent A Written Response
Contending That Requiring Them To
Abide By Such Rules In Order To See
Their Clients Was Illegal”**

**“The Chief Defense Counsel Of The
Military Tribunals, Marine Col. Jeffrey
Colwell, Said He Shares The Concerns
Of The Attorneys”**

Dec 27, 2011 By Adam Goldman and Ben Fox - The Associated Press [Excerpts]

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico — The new commander of the Guantanamo Bay prison is seeking to impose significant changes to communications allowed between lawyers and prisoners facing war-crimes charges at the U.S. base in Cuba, The Associated Press has learned.

The proposed changes, contained in a 27-page draft order, have sparked a backlash from the Pentagon-appointed attorneys representing the five Guantanamo prisoners charged in the Sept. 11 attacks.

They say the rules would violate attorney-client privilege and legal ethics, and deprive the prisoners of their constitutional right to counsel.

The order is still in draft form and has not yet been signed by the commander, a detention center spokeswoman, Cmdr. Tamsen Reese, said Tuesday. She said Rear Adm. David Woods was not immediately available for an interview.

Lawyers for the Sept. 11 prisoners received the draft order from Woods on Dec. 22 and were told to sign an agreement to abide by the rules within 48 hours.

Instead, they sent a written response contending that requiring them to abide by such rules in order to see their clients was illegal.

“This requirement, as a precursor to engaging in client communications, interferes with the attorney-client relationship, compels counsel to violate ethical obligations, and therefore renders it impossible for counsel to effectively represent our clients,” they wrote, appealing for more time to review the proposed order.

The memo was signed by at least one member of each legal team representing the five prisoners, according to a military official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the document had not been publicly released.

The most significant disagreement is over the handling of legal communications, which are typically sent by courier from the defense lawyers, who are based in the Washington area, and the prisoners at the base on the southeastern corner of Cuba.

Under the proposed rules, a “privilege team,” which would include Defense Department and law enforcement officials, would conduct a security review of all communications to the prisoners, according to the memo.

The lawyers say such a review is unnecessary, since they all have security clearances and know not to release classified information, and also overly intrusive.

They say it would be impossible for Woods to ensure that these officials do not share this information with the prosecution or others because the members of the team wouldn’t be under his command.

The chief defense counsel of the military tribunals, Marine Col. Jeffrey Colwell, said he shares the concerns of the attorneys in the Sept. 11 case. He also objects to a provision in the rules that would allow detainees to receive only letters from their lawyers and not any supporting documents such as legal motions or articles about their case.

“The government’s interpretation is very restrictive,” Colwell said.

Woods can change the rules because he has authority over the detention center, where the U.S. holds 171 prisoners. The government has said that 30 to 60 of the prisoners could be charged before military tribunals and the new rules would only cover communications between those prisoners and their lawyers. A separate set of rules covers the rest.

Woods has not said publicly why he has proposed the rules.

In his draft order, he says the rules he has proposed are motivated by his responsibility for “maintaining safety and security, as well as good order and discipline,” at the prison.

This is not the first attempt by Woods, who took command Aug. 24, to tighten security at the prison.

In October, he ordered a search of prisoner’s cells and the plastic bins where they are allowed to keep personal papers such as mail from their lawyers or family mail sent to them through the Red Cross.

Cmdr. Thomas Welsh, the senior legal official at the detention center, testified at a hearing in November that the inspections were intended to make sure prisoners did not improperly mix personal and legal mail, which are supposed to be kept in separate bins, and to make sure they didn’t have any “incendiary” magazines or material that could pose a security threat.

The defense team for Abd al-Rahim al-Nashiri, the Guantanamo prisoner charged with orchestrating the attack on the destroyer Cole in 2000, faced a similar set of restrictions in November. A lawyer for al-Nashiri said they would also violate the attorney-client privilege and asked the military judge in that case to intervene.

The judge directed prison staff to not read attorney letters to clients, but came before last week’s broader order from Woods.

There is no judge yet in the Sept. 11 case, so those attorneys cannot yet ask a court to intervene.

Rick Kammen, a civilian attorney for al-Nashiri, said that his defense team also has concerns about the proposed rules but has not yet decided how to respond. He said the changes underscore the argument among many that the cases should be tried in the established civilian federal courts rather than military tribunals, where the rules have evolved in recent years.

“The rules keep changing. The landscape keeps changing daily,” Kammen said.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN MILITARY SERVICE?

Forward Military Resistance along, or send us the address if you wish and we’ll send it regularly.

Whether in Afghanistan or at 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 and economic injustice, inside the armed services and at home.

Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Resistance, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 888.711.2550

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.”

“The limits of tyrants are prescribed by the endurance of those whom they oppose.”

Frederick Douglass, 1852

The Social-Democrats ideal should not be the trade union secretary, but the tribune of the people who is able to react to every manifestation of tyranny and oppression no matter where it appears no matter what stratum or class of the people it affects; who is able to generalize all these manifestations and produce a single picture of police violence and capitalist exploitation; who is able to take advantage of every event, however small, in order to set forth before all his socialist convictions and his democratic demands, in order to clarify for all and everyone the world-historic significance of the struggle for the emancipation of the proletariat.”

-- V. I. Lenin; What Is To Be Done

Wow! What A Big Surprise!! “Poor People Are Quicker Than Middle-Class Or Rich Individuals To Recognize The Suffering Of Others And To Show Compassion, According To A New Study”

Dec. 27 Health Day News

Poor people are quicker than middle-class or rich individuals to recognize the suffering of others and to show compassion, according to a new study.

It included more than 300 young adults who were divided into groups that took part in three experiments designed to assess their levels of empathy and compassion.

The findings challenge previous research that concluded lower-class people are more likely to react with anxiety and hostility when faced with adversity, said the researchers at the University of California, Berkeley.

"These latest results indicate that there's a culture of compassion and cooperation among lower-class individuals that may be born out of threats to their well-being," study author and social psychologist Jennifer Stellar said in a university news release.

"It's not that the upper classes are cold-hearted. They may just not be as adept at recognizing the cues and signals of suffering because they haven't had to deal with as many obstacles in their lives," she explained.

The findings, published online Dec. 12 in the journal *Emotion*, suggest a scientific basis for emotional differences between the rich and poor that are depicted in such Charles Dickens classics as "A Christmas Carol" and "A Tale of Two Cities."

The results also indicate that people from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may do better in cooperative settings than those who are wealthy.

Military Resistance Available In PDF Format

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ANNIVERSARIES

December 28, 1971
**“Members Of The Vietnam Veterans
Against The War Leaving The Statue
Of Liberty, Which They Had Occupied
For Two Days”**



(Source: Photograph Collection of the American Museum of Immigration, Liberty Island, U.S. Department of the Interior, NPS)

[This comes from the weblog maintained by James Starowicz, Veterans For Peace: imagineaworldof.blogspot.com] [From the history of the Statue Of Liberty, by the National Park Service, www.cr.nps.gov]

Tim MacCormick of New Jersey and fourteen other members of the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, on the afternoon of December 26, 1971, arrived on Liberty Island by the Circle Line boat along with other tourists.

But, when the last return ship to Manhattan sailed that evening, the veterans were not aboard. Instead, just before closing time, they hid among the exhibit partitions, building materials, and storage closets which were lying about the monument's base while work was being finished on the American Museum of Immigration.

When NPS personnel made their 7:30 evening check-up of the statue, they found that the veterans had seized control of the landmark and barricaded the three ground floor entrances.

The men inside refused to speak to or admit any Park Service people, but on the door they posted a typewritten statement addressed to President Richard M. Nixon:

“Each Vietnam veteran who has barricaded himself within this international symbol of liberty has for many years rationalized his attitude to war. . . . We can no longer tolerate the war in Southeast Asia. . . . Mr. Nixon, you set the date (for leaving Vietnam), we’ll evacuate.”

On December 27, twenty-one National Park police flew to Liberty Island from Washington where they were joined by New York City police and Coast Guardsmen. These security forces stood by while the government attempted to reach a peaceful compromise with the occupiers. They were told that they would be permitted to picket and protest on the island if they would simply vacate the statue, allowing it to reopen to visitors.

The veterans rejected the offer, flew the United States flag upside down from the statue’s crown, and waited.

Law enforcement officers also waited. During that day thousands of disappointed tourists were told at the Battery that they could not go out to the statue. Congresswoman Bella Abzug (Democrat-New York) sent a telephone message of support to the demonstrators.

Meanwhile, United States Attorney Whitney North Seymour, Jr., went before District Court Judge Lawrence Pierce to request an injunction directing the veterans to open the doors, leave the statue except during regular visiting hours, and permit Park Service personnel and tourists to enter.

On the morning of December 28 Judge Pierce issued a temporary restraining order, instructing the protestors to leave the statue “forthwith.”

Two hours later, after conferring with their lawyers, the veterans removed the barricades from the entrances and emerged with “clenched fists raised.”

They had cleaned up their debris and caused no significant damage to the property. The monument was reopened to the public, with the first ferry-load of visitors arriving at 2:15 that afternoon.

Tim MacCormick issued a statement to the press explaining why they had picked this particular target:

“The reason we chose the Statue of Liberty is that since we were children, the statue has been analogous in our minds with freedom and an America we love.

“Then we went to fight a war in the name of freedom. We saw that freedom is a selective expression allowed only to those who are white and maintain the status quo.

“Until this symbol again takes on the meaning it was intended to have, we must continue our demonstrations. . . . “

MORE:

A Vietnam Veteran Who Occupied The Statue Of Liberty Remembers; An Iraq Veteran Against The War Understands

December 24, 2006 By Tim Blangger of The Morning Call

Nestled in a corner of a tiny Carbon County hollow, between an unnamed hill and an unnamed stream, Paul Fichter's home sits in quiet, exurban isolation. His lawn, a collection of lush ferns scattered among mature pine trees, is calming, meditative.

But climb the steps of Fichter's simple wooden porch and the mood changes. Next to the door, a three-foot-long Air Force missile pierces the weather-worn trailer's side at combat-ready angle, its fin end exposed.

Granted, Fichter's eccentric outdoor inventory includes a miniature Arc de Triomphe model encased in a backyard terrarium, twin Buddha-like statues, an Allentown fire hydrant and one of the city's discarded Call Box emergency telephones, the last two bought at auction.

But the missile ...

The ordnance helps Fichter disguise damage a falling tree did to his trailer several years ago. The outside of the trailer looks fine, but inside, the damage is more apparent. The roof still leaks.

For those who know Fichter, the missile also recalls the Vietnam War and the effect it had on him. He was one of 15 veterans who occupied the Statue of Liberty for three nights and two days over the Christmas holiday 35 years ago, starting on Christmas Eve.

Fichter looks good for a 61-year-old. He's stopped drinking but still smokes. He ties his long, silver-gray hair in a ponytail. When he thinks, he sometimes strokes his substantial gray beard. The war, that war, for good or bad, plays a big part in who he is.

A star football player at Emmaus High School — he was starting offensive end on the 1962 team that shared a league championship with football powerhouse Northampton that year — he was drafted after he failed to register for classes at Moravian College, which he attended for a year.

After a year in the Army, he decided to volunteer for duty in Vietnam, in part, he says, because he liked the anti-authoritarian air the veterans returning from the war displayed. He wasn't very political or even all that upset about being drafted, he remembers

But the year Fichter spent in Vietnam turned out to be a traumatic experience. When he talks about it today, his voice changes, takes on a once-removed quality. "You just didn't know who the enemy was," he says, haltingly.

Friends of Fichter's from Emmaus also served in Vietnam. But Bill Trotter, his football teammate, thinks the experience especially affected Fichter.

"He was always a very intelligent, very introspective guy. I think he had much more of a difficult time adjusting," says Trotter, now a partner in the Hotel Bethlehem. "He thought about a lot of things and I saw that intensified when he came back. He thought a lot about his experiences and it had a deep impact on him."

The decision to become part of the anti-war movement was a slow process for Fichter.

When he came home, he decided not to marry or have children. "I was in no condition to marry anyone. I knew of the problems, of what happened when guys tried," he says.

"I came to realize that, basically, I came home to a parade, which is to say Emmaus in 1968 was an environment that was still in favor of the war. I received slaps on the back and handshakes and 'Nice job; well done, lad' for what had been the most morally abominable thing I had ever done or ever hoped to do."

One night in the spring of 1971 — he remembers it was a Monday, for some reason — Fichter caught bits of a national news report from Washington, D.C., where an anti-war group, the Vietnam Veterans Against The War, was camping on The Ellipse and returning war medals.

The vets sardonically called their non-violent "assault on Congress," as Fichter puts it, Dewey Canyon III, a reference to Dewey Canyon II, the military code name given to a secret operation in Laos, Vietnam's neighbor, which began earlier that same year.

Fichter was moved by what he saw in the coverage of that event, especially images of Vietnam Vets and Gold Star mothers, women who lost sons in the war,

being turned away from the iron gates of the Arlington National Cemetery, where they had wanted to hold a demonstration.

“I came to a rapid conclusion,” he recalls. “If I was going to be involved in any capacity beyond an individual effort, this would be the organization.”

The next day, he arranged for a leave of absence from his construction job and drove to Washington to join the Dewey Canyon vets.

That trip began his involvement with the group, which included attending dozens of gatherings, conventions and protests.

Almost by chance, he came to be among the veterans who occupied the Statue of Liberty.

He first learned of the planned action at a peace encampment at Valley Forge, outside of Philadelphia.

“I was quietly approached and told that if I wanted to take part, I should be at a certain time and place the next day,” Fichter recalls. Once they were there, the group still wasn’t told of its final destination, although Fichter says at least a few of the veterans knew the details.

He believes the secrecy had much to do with a widely held belief among the vets that the government had spies inside the anti-war movement.

“There was a general expectation that we were going to spend some significant time in prison for our actions,” Fichter says. The vets feared the Nixon administration would bring down the full weight of the federal government on them, he says.

The Statue of Liberty occupation coincided with other veteran actions around the country, including a protest in which several veterans chained themselves to the fence near the Betsy Ross house in Philadelphia.

Fichter’s group stopped at a home in northern New Jersey — Fichter isn’t sure exactly where — and the group made sandwiches, which they stuffed into the pockets of their jungle fatigues. Then they drove to Manhattan and boarded the last ferry of the day to Bedloe’s Island.

The 15 men ascended the Statue of Liberty then hid in the arm, which was undergoing repairs, and waited until the staff of the National Park Service left the island.

“We wanted to stay in the statue until the war ended, but we knew that was fairly optimistic,” he says. One of the vets, armed with a roll of dimes, went to the pay phone in the statue’s lobby and began calling media outlets. Within hours, the occupation was national news.

The event itself was actually uneventful. The vets didn’t want to damage the statue, just draw attention to their opposition to the war.

The vets ate sandwiches and drank instant coffee, which they found in the canteen area of the statue.

They held a news conference and discussed the occupation with officials from the National Park Service.

Bill Garvin, one of Fichter's best buddies, took an American flag from the lobby and climbed out onto the statue, hanging the flag upside down — an international symbol of distress. The image made many newspapers the following day.

“We tried to keep a focus,” Fichter says. “We weren’t against the American people or the people who worked for the National Park Service. We showed that we were some human beings who were trying to end the war.”

The vets negotiated with park officials and, after three days, they left as a group, returning on a ferry to Manhattan. They had taken up a collection among themselves and left the money for the coffee they drank. They also left a note apologizing for any inconvenience they might have caused park workers.

No charges were filed.

In the end, says Fichter, there was no “mindless cheering and shouting.” A few other vets met the occupiers as they returned and there was a press conference at a local restaurant. Mostly, the protestors were hungry.

“We hadn’t won. The question was, did we do anything? We had tried. That was our perspective,” says Fichter.

Fichter continued to work with Vietnam Veterans Against the War but eventually came to realize he had to stop.

“I began to burn out,” he says. “I continued with local actions, but the torch was being passed. I was no longer able to function that well. I had encountered too much.”

A few weeks after the occupation, Fichter says, the Allentown office of the FBI called, leaving a message with his mother, Muriel, an English teacher at Emmaus High School. They wanted to interview Fichter — “interview being an interesting euphemism,” he says.

They didn’t ask about the statue occupation, Fichter says, but wanted to know about his involvement in the veterans’ peace group.

The interview “contributed to the hastening of my psychological decline,” Fichter says.

Vietnam began his descent, but it wasn’t until 40 years after his return that he took steps to arrest it.

Three years ago, at the start of direct U.S. involvement in Iraq, Fichter sought help from the Veterans Administration for the first time.

Fichter says the Iraqi war may have contributed to his mounting emotional problems. He can't say for sure. Doctors told him to stop following the news because doing so might upset him.

He was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress syndrome and began taking medication. He makes a point of praising his VA doctors and the help he's received.

He is now semi-retired from his landscaping and handyman jobs, collecting disability benefits.

Fichter's delayed reaction to his post-traumatic stress syndrome doesn't surprise veteran Michael Hoffman, also from Emmaus, who experienced a similar, if not quite so delayed, reaction from his Iraqi tour of duty.

"At first I was happy to be back, but slowly, I started having problems," says Hoffman, 26, who now lives outside of Philadelphia. "I started drinking continually and started having nightmares. I realized something was wrong. I was never for the war, but I had the usual soldier's mentality. I had orders. I followed the orders, and then I got to go home."

Reluctantly at first, Hoffman started speaking out against the war, then the 1997 Emmaus High School grad became one of the founding members of Iraqi Veterans Against The War.

Veterans from both Vietnam and the Iraq conflict have made strong connections, Hoffman says. "So many of the Vietnam Vets devoted their lives after Vietnam to making sure it didn't happen again. Now, they're watching my generation fight a war they swore they would never allow. It is literally killing them inside. I'm seeing Vietnam Vets who were clean and sober for years go back to drinking. Iraq is making them relive Vietnam."

Less than four years into the Iraq war, Iraqi veterans are speaking out against it, says Frank Corcoran, a Vietnam veteran who volunteers for Veterans for Peace, a Philadelphia-based group opposed to the Iraq war.

The Iraqi Veterans Against the War held national planning sessions last January in Philadelphia. A series of informational meetings, to get their word out, followed, says Corcoran.

"Most of our members are out of the service and actively speaking out," says Corcoran. "We're a lot of ex-Marines, ex-medics, folks who were deep into" the war.

That Iraqi vets are voicing their opposition to the war doesn't surprise Ted Morgan, a political science professor at Lehigh University, who teaches courses on the Vietnam war.

Opposition to the war among Vietnam vets was a "historically unprecedented movement in the military. It took an enormous breaking through of people's consciousness. Before Vietnam, there was a very strong consensus in the country that the United States could do no wrong overseas." Vietnam Veterans were part of changing public opinion, Morgan says.

“Vets in the (Vietnam) war, whether they were in the VVAW or not, were not viewed as anti-war people but as really important voices in the movement. They had super credibility for what they were saying because they had been there, engaged in combat and had seen it first hand.”

In a storage room in his trailer, Fichter keeps a box of booklets and flyers from his days in Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and he has been thinking about looking through it for the first time since he ended his involvement.

“Those were some good times,” he says. “I’d like to work on the differences between the VVAW in big cities and smaller towns. A lot of the vets from the bigger cities were socialists. Guys like me from the smaller towns, we worked at Bethlehem Steel. We didn’t want to end capitalism. We wanted to end the war.”

Fichter is also slowly working his way back. He’s happy in his home — “Hovel, Sweet Hovel,” a sign near his door reads — calmly talking about this being where he wants to settle for the rest of his life. A small stream runs behind the property and a series of landscaping lights flicker off the water at night.

He watches the stream from a window, sitting in a barber’s chair in his living room, between two bookcases. One holds books about Vietnam and a few war mementoes, including a helmet Fichter wore when he served as a military policeman. The other bookcase has a Civil War theme. “I guess I was looking for something, a war that had some meaning,” Fichter says of his interest in the 19th-century war between the states.

A third bookcase, the largest of the three, holds hundreds of dusty folk recordings, mostly on long-playing, 331/3 records. The large television near the chair is dark and silent. Folk music from a satellite radio station floats in the background.

At last, Paul Fichter may have found his peace.

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Traveling Soldier is the publication of the Military Resistance Organization.

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 and all other forms of injustice inside the armed forces.

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

We hope that you'll build a network of active duty organizers.

***Great Moments In U.S. Military
History:
December 29, 1890:
Massacre At Wounded Knee;
“Many Women And Children Standing By
Their Tipis Under A White Flag Of Truce
Were Cut Down By Deadly Shrapnel
From The Hotchkiss Guns”***



A mounted soldier rides among the dead Indians at Wounded Knee

[Via Peace History December 25-31 By Carl Bunin]

English.uiuc.edu

From Momaday, “The American West and the Burden of Belief” in Geoffrey C. Ward, *The West: An Illustrated History*. Copyright © 1996 by The West Book Project, Inc. (Little Brown, 1996).

On December 15, 1890, the great Hunkpapa leader Sitting Bull, who had opposed Custer at the Little Bighorn and who had toured for a time with Buffalo Bill and the Wild West show, was killed on the Standing Rock reservation.

In a dream he had foreseen his death at the hands of his own people.

Just two weeks later, on the morning of December 29, 1890, on Wounded Knee Creek near the Pine Ridge agency, the Seventh Cavalry of the U.S. Army opened fire on an encampment of Big Foot's band of Miniconjou Sioux.

When the shooting ended, Big Foot and most of his people were dead or dying.

It has been estimated that nearly 300 of the original 350 men, women, and children in the camp were slain. Twenty-five soldiers were killed and thirty-nine wounded,

Sitting Bull is reported to have said, "I am the last Indian."

In some sense he was right. During his lifetime the world of the Plains Indians had changed forever.

The old roving life of the buffalo hunters was over. A terrible disintegration and demoralization had set in. If the death of Sitting Bull marked the end of an age, Wounded Knee marked the end of a culture.

"I did not know then how much was ended.

"When I look back now from the high hill of my old age, I can still see the butchered women and children lying heaped and scattered all along the crooked gulch as plain as when I saw them with eyes still young.

"And I can see that something else died there in the bloody mud, and was buried in the blizzard. A people's dream died there. It was a beautiful dream...." -Black Elk-

Paula M. Robertson: From Encyclopedia of North American Indians. Frederick E. Hoxie, Ed. Copyright © 1996 by Houghton Mifflin Company.

Many women and children standing by their tipis under a white flag of truce were cut down by deadly shrapnel from the Hotchkiss guns.

The rest fled under withering fire from all sides.

Pursuing soldiers shot most of them down in flight, some with babes on their backs.

One survivor recalled that she was wounded but was so scared she did not feel it. She lost her husband, her little girl, and a baby boy.

One shot passed through the baby's body before it broke her elbow, causing her to drop his body.

Two more shots ripped through the muscles of her back before she fell.

The warrior Iron Hail, shot four times himself but still able to move, saw the soldiers shooting women and children.

One young woman, crying out for her mother, had been wounded close to her throat, and the bullet had taken some of her braid into the wound.

A gaping hole six inches across opened the belly of a man near him, shot through by an unexploded shell from the guns.

Others told of women, heavy with child, shot down by the soldiers. Bodies of women and children were found scattered for three miles from the camp.

On New Year's Day, a pit was dug on the hill that the Hotchkiss guns had been on, and the frozen bodies of 146 men, women, and children were thrown into the pit like cordwood until it was full.



Indian Bodies on the ground at Wounded Knee

The whites stripped many of the bodies, keeping as souvenirs the Ghost Shirts and other clothing and equipment the people had owned in life, or selling them later in the thriving trade over Ghost Dance relics that ensued.

One member of the burial party remarked that it was “a thing to melt the heart of a man, if it was of stone, to see those little children, with their bodies shot to pieces, thrown naked into the pit.”

Besides the 146 buried that day, others who had been wounded died soon afterward, and relatives removed many of the bodies before the government burial party arrived.

Estimates of the number of Lakotas slain vary, but many authorities believe that the figure is around three hundred men, women, and children.

Not many escaped.



The mass grave at Wounded Knee

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 email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe.

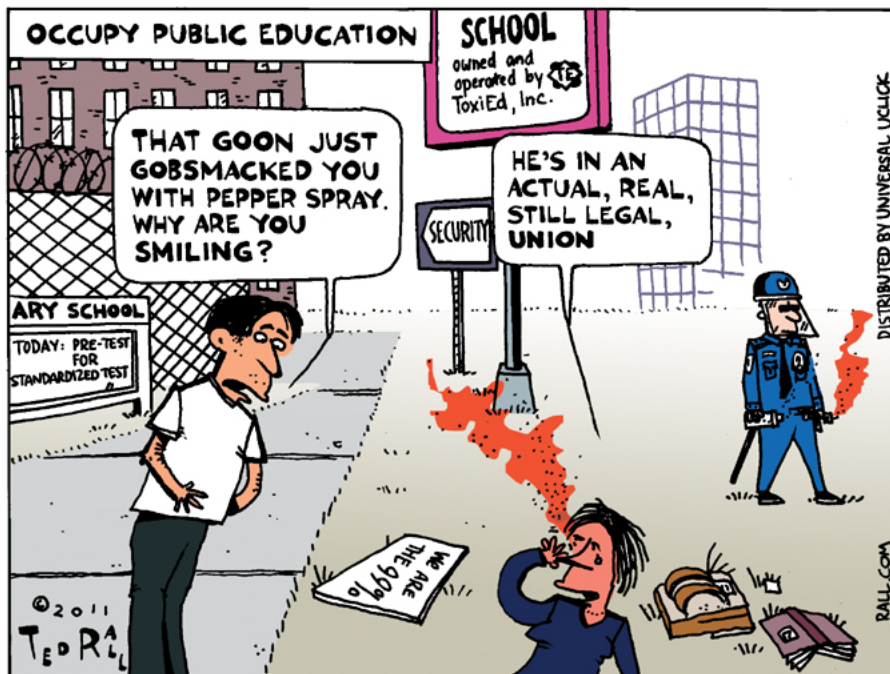
“The single largest failure of the anti-war movement at this point is the lack of outreach to the troops.”

Tim Goodrich, Iraq Veterans Against The War

DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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