

# Traveling Soldier

<http://www.traveling-soldier.org>

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## There Is A New Reality Growing Among Active Duty Troops

**To:**  
*Members Of The Armed Forces,  
The United States Of America*

**From:**  
*Fabian Bouthillette  
Lieutenant, USNR  
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Class of 2003  
Iraq Veterans Against the War  
Military Resistance*

**Subject: Reality**

On Dec. 1 the Commander-in-Chief announced his plan on how to move forward in Afghanistan and, with that, his decision to send more troops.

CNN - the lesser of evils in the dark world of American television news, but it helps keep tabs on our President - announced as "breaking news" the Pentagon's plans which involve deploying 30,000 more troops.

The only thing breaking about the news of further troop deployments are the hearts of hundreds of thousands of military families nation wide and troops who have already carried the red, white, and blue banner of empire for eight years too many.

There is nothing new about the news of Obama sending more troops to Afghanistan except that he chose December 1 as the date to announce his inevitable decision -one that most people not buying his message of hope should have seen coming - and someone else chose to leak the decision a bit early.

In fact, any person paying attention to the historic inability of the White House and Pentagon to adapt to past mistakes in warfare would only have assumed a troop increase. Look how well the surge worked in Iraq.

Nov 30, 2009 By Jade Bulecza, WALB:

A Ft. Benning soldier originally from Cook County was killed in Iraq on Sunday. 25-year-old Staff Sgt. Briand Williams died in combat when insurgents attacked his unit. He joined the army immediately after his Cook County High Graduation in 2002.

Dec 12 Reuters News Agency:  
A roadside bomb detonated near a U.S. military Humvee

vehicle, police said. A U.S. military official said three U.S. soldiers were wounded in the incident in north Baghdad.

We sent a few thousand more troops and, voila, the war is over, peace has been restored, Iraq has democracy; our troops are back in the homeland where they belong. Just like that time Lyndon Johnson kept sending more troops to a jungle relatively near Afghanistan and managed to turn that evil pinko terrorist haven into a flourishing democracy.

So, obviously, we should just try the same surge strategy that has worked so well in bringing to a close the occupation - excuse me, War on Terror; excuse me again, Overseas Contingency Operations - of Iraq. Obama has already mimicked his predecessor in the handling of our crumbling economy - a bail out of large banks - something he deserves a lot more criticism for. He got away with that one - for now.

A surge deployment of more troops to Afghanistan, however, will see him held accountable.

And the people that are going to figure out a way to hold him accountable first won't be average Americans (unless the economy really does collapse rapidly) and it definitely will not be our Congress which seems to have forgotten about the Constitution, if they ever knew it in the first place. No, it will be those with the most to lose in the Bush era lie that our Commander-in-Chief continues to tell who will hold him accountable: our country's beloved troops... us.

The mainstream media will always tell the country that Sergeant McHero from Wherever, America has fought faithfully and to the best of his or her abilities against the vile terrorists.

(Is this propaganda being fed to Obama as well by our "intelligence" services? It seems like it, one likely reason his popularity rating is declining).

However, it is true that there are plenty of Sergeants, and all service members, who feel a sense of worth and accomplishment after returning from a deployment, or after their term of service overall. They deserve the coverage they get.

Actually, they deserve more coverage as the Veterans Administration and military health care in general continue to betray the average soldier.

Consider the following letter received by Traveling Soldier, a newsletter produced by the Military Resistance organization in New York City:

From: Soldier R  
To: Traveling Soldier  
Sent: October 27, 2009

A soldier passed away last night after recent tonsil surgery. He could have been dead as long as forty eight hours because that was the last known contact anyone had for him.

I want everyone to know that soldiers aren't dying because the Army is sending us overseas. Some of them pass away because the Army doesn't care.

Please keep his family in mind. This took place on 21 October 2009. I prefer to remain anonymous, but that's up to you.

R

*"There are a lot of troops...who don't like seeing America function as an empire."*

Our soldiers don't even have to be sent overseas to illegal wars (remember, war must be declared by Congress: Article 1 Section 8 of the Constitution) to suffer a betrayal from their government. Soldier R above could very well be Sergeant McHero – too proud to let his brother soldier die without honor.

Still, our media will put the Soldier Rs in the news from time to time to make us feel like we are doing at least something for our troops, who fairly assume they will be taken care of after volunteering for war. But what about the soldiers out there who are overseas; who are sick of fighting, and can see what our government is truly after... empire.

Has Obama ever really questioned how and why the Vietnam "War" was ended?

The Commander-in-Chief was a tweener and early teenager as the American War in Vietnam came to an end. Is that too young to remember the resistance within the military to the occupation of Vietnam? Perhaps Obama is completely ignorant to the very tangible revolt of soldiers that forced our government to withdraw?

Yes yes, we are all taught to believe that President Nixon somehow found some honorable solution to get out of Vietnam and that one day he just decided that it wasn't worth fighting anymore.

Do you really believe that the political will to prosecute the Vietnamese for communism just – POOF! – vanished because Dick Nixon saw the light? That seems quite out of character for Mr. Watergate himself. Actually, Mr. Nixon did know when to call it quits on his own reign as emperor of the free world. He had lost credibility with the American people, and quitting was his best option, just as quitting an imperial agenda in Vietnam was his best option after losing the trust of the military. Without getting into a prolonged history lesson, we should all at least be made aware of the existence of a history of GI resistance during Vietnam.

That is to assume that we do not already know about GI resistance to another war that was also little more than an imperial occupation. Obama is risking irreparable damage to our armed forces, but he is clueless that there is more to it than risking the lives of those who have sworn allegiance to him (What's that? Oh, troops swear allegiance to the Constitution. Let's just ignore that for now).

Obama's irreparable damage to himself will come should he take the dissent of troops lightly -- and there is plenty of it -- as it was the troops themselves in Vietnam that forced Nixon's hand into ending that war.

Well documented by David Cortright in his book *Soldiers in Revolt*, Cortright, himself a Vietnam veteran, tells the story of the Vietnam GIs who found ways to resist, or even outright mutiny against the orders from their chain-of-command, right up to the Commander-in-Chief.

Often using the Department of Defense's own statistics, Cortright explains a history that has been erased -- quite deliberately, one can prove -- in order to stifle any spirit of resistance to our government's orders from the average American, but more specifically, from the military.

This erased history of mutiny in our armed forces during Vietnam covers everything from the fragging (murder) of officers and non-commissioned officers (NCOs) thought to have too much bravado for combat, to the outright refusal of soldiers and units of soldiers to engage in combat operations.

And once the war took to the air in the late 60s and into the 70s, there are plenty of documented cases of pilots dropping bombs off target on purpose, flight crews refusing to load weapons on aircraft, and even sabotage of equipment. From *Soldiers in Revolt*:

One indication of the extent of the problem comes in figures supplied to the House Internal Security Committee by the Navy Department in

late 1971. The Navy listed 488 'investigations on damage or attempted damage' during fiscal year 1971, including 191 for sabotage, 135 for arson, and 12 for "wrongful destruction"; the figures showed a considerable increase over earlier years.

*"[O]ur rank and file...want out of their roles as occupiers."*

Captain Ward of the *Constellation* [an aircraft carrier] told a press conference in November of 1972 that "saboteurs were at work" during the period of unrest aboard his ship. He admitted that bomb and ordnance handling machinery had been damaged and that various other types of equipment had disappeared over the side.

An entire aircraft carrier was incapacitated by rebellion. *USS RANGER* and *USS FORESTAL*, also aircraft carriers, were victims of sabotage in 1972. The Navy openly admitted that three aircraft carriers, our country's biggest weapons of peace (other than the weapon that brought peace to Hiroshima and Nagasaki), were put out of commission by sailors strung out by an illegal war, and sick of following the orders of their government.

No, we have not currently seen any sort of mutiny or resistance to combat on the level of a sabotaged aircraft carrier. And with the Navy's limited role in the occupations [wars] of Iraq and Afghanistan, eased racial tensions (relative to the 60s and 70s) aboard ships, and crews made up entirely of volunteers (the Navy is not having trouble

recruiting) we probably will not see any ships suffer a crew instigated casualty (unless Obama really takes this empire thing too far).

However, our Army and Marine Corps are strung out. The threat of mass combat refusals is becoming real. Our troops on the ground have seen the truth of our conflicts, and with the escalation of hostilities in Afghanistan, will begin to see the truth more rapidly.

Obama actually out-earned his formal rival, Senator McCain, in presidential campaign fundraising from members of the military. What message should Obama interpret from that? Considering his campaign's anti-war message and McCain's heavily pro-war message it should be clear that our rank and file, for the most part, want out of their roles as occupiers. Perhaps we understand what many of our rank and file came to understand in Vietnam:

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.

Mike Hastie  
U.S. Army Medic  
Vietnam 1970-71  
December 13, 2004

Replace Vietnam with Iraq or Afghanistan, and Vietnamese with Iraqi or Afghani, and we get to the true nature of our current combat engagements.

This truth escapes millions.

Sure, we do engage, capture, or kill a member of Al Qaeda or the Taliban from time to time.

But on average, the persons we engage in combat are citizens of their own country trying to kick out the invading armies of the world's first global empire.

If 100,000 Iraqis or Afghans came here to kick out our corrupt government and setup a "fair" democracy, would we be terrorists for resisting?

The truth that Mike Hastie speaks of above is being realized by our troops in Afghanistan and Iraq.

With that, and with Obama's promise last week to send more targets to Afghanistan for the Afghan resistance to shoot at (and they'd rather not), Obama is risking the type of breakdown in our military that forced Nixon to withdraw our complete presence from Vietnam (a country that has recovered quite well without us, by the way).

It is understandable that many Americans, including members of the armed forces, hoped that Obama would end our current wars of empire, and therefore not risk the erosion of our military, which they believed would provide a true and potentially devastating blow to our national security that everyone seems so worried about.

Today, there is a new reality growing among active duty troops:

This letter to the Traveling Soldier newsletter shows how far that new reality has come:

From: SGT A  
To: Traveling Soldier

Sent: November 04, 2009  
9:42 PM

Subj: From a Sergeant's Perspective

I was promoted to Sergeant less than a year ago.

Although I am thoroughly opposed to the Army as a whole, and the war in the Middle East (I spend 15 months over there for no good reason), I decided that I could take advantage of the system and become one of the few Non-commissioned Officers that refused to buy into the Army BS.

Goodness knows we could use more of those.

*"[T]here are already those in our Army (Sergeants, no less) fed up with our current wars."*

I was leaning heavily on the example set before me by some of the best Sergeants I had worked with, all of whom hated the Army with a fervent passion, but got their jobs done no less effectively.

I respected them because I could relate to them, and I would have taken a bullet for them without a second thought (whereas I would have had to take a moment to think about it for all of my "hooah" super-goArmy-high-speed NCOs)...I firmly believe that, as a leader, if you want to develop the trust necessary to survive in a combat zone, it requires you being a member of the team in garrison.

You can't bark orders and turn your back one day, and then expect a soldier to take a bullet for you the next. That's not how it works.

For all of you Privates out there reading this, now that there are Sergeants who hate the Army as much as you do.

Sergeants who would rather be at your side when the shit hits the fan than standing over you expecting you to handle it alone.

There are Sergeants who would rather lose their rank than conform to the Army's expectation of dictatorship in leaders.

Your leader and friend,  
SGT A

Our Commander-in-Chief needs to realize that there are already those in our Army (Sergeants, no less) fed up with our current wars. They are still patriots, and they are still striving for excellence. But their patience for wars of empire, and for our government, is waning.

\* \* \*  
Mr. President, don't bark orders and expect your military to take a bullet for you while troops are still getting disrespected at home. Don't expect our troops to even take bullets for each other. And when they don't, it's YOUR fault, not the military's.

YOU have put the military in a compromised position.

YOU are creating Sergeants that would rather lose their rank than conform to dictatorial leadership.

And with your speech announcing an increase in troop numbers in Afghanistan without – still – an official declaration of war, you are continuing the role of dictator that your predecessor was eased into by our voluntarily ignorant Congress.

\* \* \*

It is a big risk escalating the occupation of Afghanistan.

But Obama is already looking forward to 2012 and the risk of not being re-elected.

He seems to have forgotten that there are a lot of troops (risking more than re-election) who don't like seeing America function as an empire.

If the political will to end our conflicts in Iraq and Afghanistan never truly materializes, Obama can expect to be held accountable – perhaps by the 30,000 or so surge troops that he is now preparing to send to Afghanistan for target practice.

Very respectfully,

Fabian Bouthillette  
Lieutenant, USNR  
United States Naval Academy,  
Class of 2003  
Iraq Veterans Against the War  
Military Resistance  
December 20, 2009

## Military Resistance [www.militaryproject.org](http://www.militaryproject.org)

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



### Traveling Soldier Editorial Board

J. Englehart (Iraq Veteran); P. Binh; F. Bouthillette; A. Winslow; T. Barton

*Traveling Soldier* is brought to you by *Military Resistance*

Email us at:

[contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org), and on the web at [www.traveling-soldier.org](http://www.traveling-soldier.org)

If you have a problem, if you or your family are getting screwed, if you agree or disagree with what this newsletter says - we want to know. If you want people to know what's really going on in Iraq, or if you're stateside and you want people stuck in Iraq to know what's going on at home, write to us. We hope that you'll join with us in building a network of active duty organizers.

Telling the truth about the occupations and the criminals running the government in Washington is the first reason for *Traveling Soldier* and *Military Resistance*. But we want to do more than tell the truth; we want to report on resistance 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.

"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.

I say that when troops cannot be counted on to follow orders because they see the futility and immorality of them THAT is the real key to ending a war.

-- Al Jaccoma, Veterans For Peace

Read more issues of *Traveling Soldier* at <http://www.traveling-soldier.org>. Have an experience you'd like to share? Get in touch with us at [contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:contact@militaryproject.org).

# ***Military Resistance Ten Points***

## **Mission Statement**

1. The mission of Military Resistance is to bring together in one organization members of the armed forces and civilians in order to give aid and comfort to members of the armed forces who are organizing to end the wars of empire in Afghanistan and Iraq. The long term objective is to assist in eliminating all wars of empire by eliminating all empires.

2. Military Resistance does not advocate individual disobedience to orders or desertion from the armed forces. The most effective resistance is organized by members of the armed forces working together.

However, Military Resistance respects and will assist in the defense of troops who see individual desertion or refusal of orders as the only course of action open to them for reasons of conscience.

3. Military Resistance stands for the immediate, unconditional withdrawal of all U.S. and other occupation troops from Iraq and Afghanistan.

Occupied nations have the right to independence and the right to resist Imperial invasion and occupation by force of arms.

4. Efforts to increase democratic rights in every society, organization, movement, and within the armed forces itself will receive encouragement and support.

Members of the armed forces, whether those of the United States or any other nation, have the right and duty to act against dictatorships commanding their services, and to assist civilian movements against dictatorship.

This applies whether a political dictatorship is imposed by force of arms or a political dictatorship is imposed by those in command of the resources of society using their wealth to purchase the political leadership.

5. Military Resistance uses organizational democracy.

This means control of the organization by the membership, through elected delegates to any coordinating bodies that may be formed, whether at local, regional, or national levels.

Any member may run for any job in the organization. All persons elected are subject to immediate recall, by majority vote of the membership.

Coordinating bodies report their actions, decisions and votes to the membership who elected them, and may be overruled by a majority of the membership.

6. It is not necessary for Military Resistance to be in political agreement with other organizations in order to work together towards specific common objectives.

It is productive for organizations working together on common projects to discuss differences about the best way forward for the movement.

Debate is necessary to arrive at the best course of action.

## Membership Requirements

7. It is a condition of membership that each member prioritize and participate in organized action to reach out to active duty armed forces, Reserve and/or National Guard units.

8. Military Resistance or individual members may choose to support candidates for elective office who are for immediate withdrawal from Iraq and Afghanistan, but do not support a candidate opposed to immediate, unconditional withdrawal.

9. Members may not be active duty or drilling reserve commissioned officers, or employed in any capacity by any police or intelligence agency, local, state, or national.

10. I understand and am in agreement with the above statement. I pledge to defend my brothers and sisters, and the democratic rights of the citizens of the United States, against all enemies, foreign and domestic.

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Signed

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Date

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(Application Taken/received by)

Send Application to:  
Military Resistance: [Contact@militaryproject.org](mailto:Contact@militaryproject.org)  
Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, NY 10025-5657  
888-711-2550