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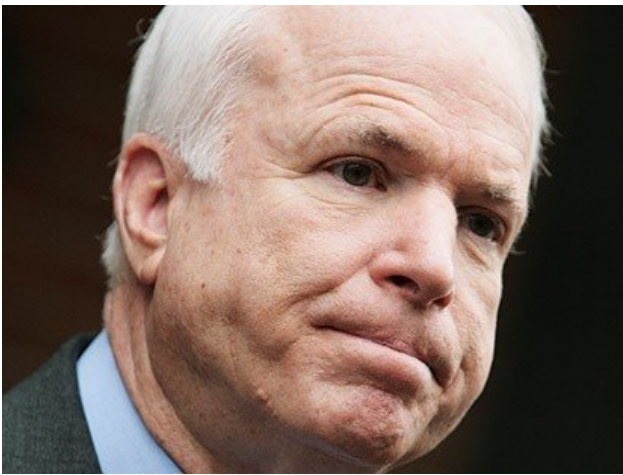
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October, 2008
Issue #20

Hate the War? Try Voting Against It



This man is for the war:

- Said staying in Iraq for 100 years would be "fine with me"
- Sang "Bomb bomb bomb bomb bomb Iran"
- Agreed with Cheney that the Iraq war would be easy, cheap, and that U.S. forces would be "greeted as liberators"



This man is for the war:

- Plans to keep at least 80,000 troops in Iraq permanently
- Wants to withdraw troops from Iraq and send them to Afghanistan to establish a permanent occupation
- Voted for all war-funding bills until he started running for president

Vote Against the War, Vote Herman

July 24, 2008 Interview By John Dillon,
VPR News, Montpelier, Vt. [Excerpts]

An Iraq war veteran is challenging Congressman Peter Welch, saying the Democratic incumbent has failed to live up to his promise to end the war.

Former Army Specialist Thomas Hermann announced his candidacy today. Hermann is running as a Progressive Party candidate.

(Dillon) Thomas Hermann says he joined the Army five years ago, believing in the mission in Iraq. He says he had not planned to run for political office when his tour ended.

(Hermann) "I had an awakening in Iraq, where a lot of my points of views got drastically changed."

(Dillon) Hermann said that during his 16-month tour, he concluded that the Iraqi people were justified in defending their country against the U.S. invasion.

He says he's now running for Congress because, he says, the Democratic majority has failed to end the war, and hold President Bush accountable.

(Hermann) "And there's more. This is a campaign to empower all citizens to participate in our democracy. We will show that the doors of Congress can be swung open once again for the people."



(Dillon) Hermann is 29 and has never held political office. He's originally from Florida and moved to Vermont in March. He now lives in Barre where he works on a farm.

(Hermann) "What's the alternative, vote for a person that keeps voting to fund the war, not impeaching, following the Constitution? No, the answer to it is getting into the political career and engaging everyday citizens to support you."

(Dillon) Hermann is not a complete political neophyte. He's listed as a Vermont volunteer on the Ralph Nader for President Web site. No Republican has emerged to challenge Welch, who is now running for re-election after one term. The congressman's opposition is coming from the left side of the political spectrum.

Some anti-war activists are critical of Welch because they say he's voted to

support defense spending. Hermann was introduced by Dan DeWalt of Newfane, an activist who led an impeachment drive against President Bush.

(DeWalt) "Two years ago, when Peter Welch was running for Congress, he told us he was going to do everything to end the war.... The first thing the Democratic Congress did when they got to Washington was fund the escalation of the war. The second thing they did was re-fund it."

MORE:

Iraq Combat Vet Challenges Pro-War Democrat

From: James Marc Leas
To: GI Special
Sent: July 21, 2008

Peter Welch fails to represent Vermonters.

Two years ago, Peter Welch told Vermonters to send him to Congress. Welch said that getting out of Iraq was a top priority for him, and he assured us that Congress could hold the executive branch accountable without impeachment hearings.

But when Peter Welch got to Washington, he showed himself to be a party loyalist, stepping into line as the Democratic Congress funded the escalation of the Iraq occupation, allowed wiretapping of Americans without a warrant, acquiesced to torture, and shrugged at signing statements that circumvented the law.

While Peter Welch was making promises he did not keep, Thomas James Hermann was serving with honor in the armed forces in Iraq.

He served in the infantry, putting his life on the line to protect our Constitution. He participated in 150 combat missions during his first year in Iraq.

Then he was stop-lossed and served another 4 months in combat.

As Thomas Hermann witnessed first-hand the tragic consequences of Presidential malfeasance, and the enabling Congressional dithering, he knew that he would have to do more when he got home.

He now believes that the corruption and political game playing of the Democrats and Republicans in Washington require a candidate for Congress who answers to the Constitution and his/her Vermont constituents.

Thomas James Hermann will be calling for bringing all the troops, mercenaries, and US corporations home from Iraq now.

He calls for taking good care of our soldiers when they get home. He calls for holding Peter Welch accountable for voting funding for the war and for opposing impeachment of Bush and Cheney.

Hermann believes that ending the war and its enormous drain on resources is crucial for improving the economy, the environment, health care, education, and respect for United States.

Thomas Hermann, 29, lives in Barre and works on a farm nearby.

Today he submitted petitions with the signatures of 837 Vermonters from 113 Vermont towns and villages to be on the Vermont Progressive Party primary ballot for U.S. Congress.

You can reach Thomas James Hermann by phone at 802 461-4433 or by email at [thomasj.hermann\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:thomasj.hermann[at]gmail.com)

"If They Don't Have Soldiers To Fight The War, They Can't Fight The War No Matter How Much Money They Have"

By Jason Hurd, Iraq Veterans Against the War, Asheville, NC Chapter; *WIN Magazine*, Spring/Summer 2008

I'm a firm believer that you should exert yourself where you have the most influence.

IVAW's strategy is to undercut military support for the war.

If you think about all the things that support this war — corporations, big oil, Congress, the executive branch — those are all things that none of us can do anything about.

There's too much money.

There's too much political power.

Where we have the largest impact, as IVAW, is on the military community.

There's a mutual respect among every veteran I've met, especially every combat-veteran.

Regardless of views on the war, you look at each other and you say, "You've experienced the same things that I've experienced."

I think organizing military bases is where we can have the most impact.

If other organizations could help us get a larger presence around military bases — get us help organizing — I think that's going to have a great impact.

The philosophy is that if they don't have soldiers to fight the war, they can't fight the war no matter how much money they have.

We see what helped end the Vietnam War was that all these soldiers said, "No. We're not going to do this anymore. This is screwed up."

That's what we want to do.

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Anti-War Vets Set Up Coffeehouse at Ft. Lewis to Reach Troops

Wednesday, August 6, 2008

By Carol Smith

P-I Reporter

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

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

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

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

Rising concerns about the effect of longer deployments, the increase in post-deployment suicide rates, sexual assaults in the military, PTSD and employment have

created a need for a place where people can go to share experiences and find resources to cope, she said.

These kinds of coffeehouses have a time-honored tradition in the post-Vietnam era, said Gibbs, whose first job in the mental health field was with Vietnam vets, every one of whom came back "indelibly shaped" by that experience. Something one of them told her has stayed with her and kept her motivated to help veterans connect.

"I had a friend who was a medic in Vietnam," she said. "He told me, 'I left who I was over there – I never came back.'"

The coffeehouse, which has yet to be named, is still in the fundraising stages, said Rebecchi, who estimated \$30,000 is needed to launch and operate the first year. The group is

hoping to nab space in an abandoned coin-operated laundry near the base. The cafe also would serve up music, movies, poetry slams, lectures and access to legal help.

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

One of the best things the community can do for soldiers, and soldiers can do for each other, is to listen to each other's

stories, Gibbs said. Time and again, she's heard from veterans and active-duty military that what they needed most when they got back from a deployment was a chance to share what happened to them and have it be heard in a nonjudgmental way.

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

Rebecchi served a four-year tour in the Persian Gulf with the Coast Guard before being honorably

discharged. He said he began questioning the war effort while he was deployed.

"Ultimately, what's going to stop it is the GIs standing up and saying, 'We're not going to fight anymore,'" he said.

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

For more information, contact Gibbs at [mollygibbs3\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:mollygibbs3[at]gmail.com)



CHANGE WE CAN BEREAVE IN

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