

Traveling Soldier

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

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Issue 28

Against The Giant: "I Really Enjoy Reading The Paper And Knowing There Are Others Out There Who Agree With Us"

From The Editors: To protect the writer, ID has been removed from this email as published here. The Military Resistance organization, which produces Traveling Soldier, will follow up with the writer privately.

We welcome letters from members of the armed services.

To: Traveling Soldier

From: Soldier R [Germany]

January 17, 2010

The support, hope and dedication you show us soldiers is something not found too many places.

I'm not sure if I've ever shared this with you. . .

My view of Traveling Soldier and Military Resistance is that it is against the giant.

The organization that cares only for the big picture, and those lost in the process are worth it The Army teaches us that if we enter a building with ten people and come back out with seven, then it is a successful mission.

That is sad in itself. Not to mention the stories the lost soldier's loved ones are told.



I am on my way to work this morning because I failed to show up yesterday to a meeting which I was unaware of. The NCO who I am reporting to. . . my first impression of him was him yelling

at us and demanding to be called sergeant. This "old Army" and "new Army" stuff gets old after the first couple of years.

I hate the fact that the Army turns into a spitting contest. It only works until somebody pulls rank into the conversation. I believe that many people in the Army simply have the wrong goals and the wrong focus.

Please send each new issue of *Traveling Soldier* to my new address. I will let you know if I find anyone else interested over here. I'm sure they exist, it's just a matter of meeting them.

There are several websites that have come to light since my last communication that I would like to bring to everyone's attention.

www.traveling-soldier.org

www.soldiersperspective.us

www.freeculturewarrior.org

These are some great organizations focused on the truth and ALL soldiers, leaving politics out recognizing everyone's opinion, no matter how obscure. I believe many of us have the same goals in mind.

I've been quite busy to include work and personal life. I bought a new car, got married and PCSed to Germany. The car is awesome, my wife is wonderful and loving and Germany is much better than Ft. Polk.

I will not be deploying in the unit I am in right now. I am in a strictly garrison unit which means that I will probably be a paper pusher unless I volunteer to go "down range". I will recognize this as an option, but right now I am trying to settle in.

Here's to a new year and much more accomplished for each and every person willing to accept the help. I really enjoy reading the paper and knowing there are others out there who agree with us.

Sincerely,
[XXXX]

"If The Regular Civilian Population Could See The Shit That Goes On At Drum, People Would Flip Shit"

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To: Traveling Soldier

From: Pfc P - Fort Drum

Oh lord. Just another day in paradise here.

The last time I spoke with yall, it took 4 different congressionals to keep me from deploying. I assumed that with them crawling all over my unit they would give up and get me med boarded quicker. Which was farther from the truth than I could imagine.

Im starting to believe ill see the second coming of christ before I get the hell out of fort drum. If the regular civilian population could

see the shit that goes on at drum, or I could get the truth out people would flip shit.

Ive seen my brigade chapter soldiers out of the army in 24 hours. That quick, honestly. So, why is it taking an upwards of 2 years for some people to get out with medical conditions.

Bear with me for a min. Little side story here. I went home to texas a few months ago for my grandmothers funeral. I spoke with my mothers friend.

Hes the head warden of a prison

in Texas. He made a joke, at the time was funny. He said, "You know you could have gone into a police station, shot someone, gotten convicted, gotten a degree in prison, and been out in 4 years on good behavior."

It was funny at first, had a good laugh. Now thats kinda set in. Slowly pissed me off. Got me thinking. What am I doing here? Im looking to get out with 6 years in the army infantry. 0% college completed. PTSD up the ass. I hate people.

And a really short fuze. What did I, as a human being accomplish. Nothing.

I stand out in the middle of the road every morning pulling road guard, freezing my ass off with this beautiful ny weather. Cause that is all my dead mans profile will let me do.

Oh ull get a laugh out of this. Out of the blue last week. My brigade decided to weigh and tape everyone. Everyone being the people who are are dead man profiles and or med boarding.

Now think about that. Ive spoken with a few people about this. Just using common sense.

If your not allowed to do pt, without breaking your profile you

will get out of shape. I was in great shape when I did pt all the time. 2 years of being broke. No pt. You get out of shape. This applies to 90% of us.

Some people just have great genes. The rest of us have to work at it. So knowing that they bring us this double edged sword.

EITHER A. Break profile to work out and make tape. or B. Dont and get chaptered out for being out of shape. Granted that will take 6 months of paperwork on their part. But I doubt they will care.

And I have seen the 10th mountain chapter people out for breaking profile, under failure to adapt or some other bullshit they come up with.

As of now no ones brought this to light.

But im waiting to see what happens.

When it does I imagine it will be a mass exodus. They will probably try to get us out quickly.

On the other hand some people say im overly paranoid. I blame that on combat.

I just dont put anything past the army or anyone in it. Nothing supprises me.

Well enough bitching on my part.

I love what yall do and hope you keep it up

“When I First Came (Into) The Army, I Didn’t Want To Think About Having To Fight Back ... With My Leaders”

Coffee Strong, Manzel’s Java Joint, Is One Of A Handful Of Military-Friendly – But Decidedly Anti-War – Outposts That Have Popped Up Over The Past Few Years

March 1, 2010 By Jon R. Anderson, Army Times [Excerpts]

LAKEWOOD, Wash. — Seth Manzel is not your typical peacenik. An Iraq veteran with an ash-black crucifix tattoo on his forearm, he wears his hair short, as if he were still an infantry squad leader. At home, he has a safe full of guns. At work, he’s the strong-arm night guard for a rough-and-tumble motel.

But by day, he helps run a coffee shop just outside Fort Lewis, where war fighters mingle with anti-war activists over hot brew and heated discussion.

“I’m not against violence or war in general. I’m certainly not a pacifist,” Manzel said. “Soldiers go into the military with an idea that we’re the good guys — we have the moral high ground and (are) a force for good in the world.”

But his first firefight was a turning point for him. “It occurred to me that if the tables had been turned and someone had invaded us, that I’d be the one throwing pipe bombs and picking off people from the roof of my house with a hunting rifle. That’s what any good American would do.” Manzel soldiered on but with increasing remorse. “I feel like I’ve definitely done some things that are pretty horrific and that I’ve got a debt to the world to work off,” he said. Part of his penance, Manzel said, is paid by serving free coffee to GIs and helping those who might have second thoughts about their role in the military.

Dubbed Coffee Strong, Manzel's java joint is one of a handful of military-friendly — but decidedly anti-war — outposts that have popped up over the past few years, with varying degrees of success. In many respects, they are the spiritual — if less radical — heirs of the coffeehouses that were common near military bases in the tumultuous Vietnam era. Among the new breed:

-Under the Hood Café: Cynthia Thomas, an 18-year Army wife, launched this café just outside Fort Hood, Texas, about a year ago, when her husband was sent on his third deployment. It's "a place for soldiers to gather, relax and speak freely about the wars and the military," according to the café's Web site. "Support services for soldiers include referrals for counseling, legal advice and information on GI rights."

--Norfolk OffBase: "Our model, rather than a full-bore coffeehouse, is more of a resource and organizing center," director and former soldier Tom Palumbo said. Located in a converted warehouse in Virginia's Hampton Roads area, Off-Base offers referrals to a volunteer network of legal, mental health, housing and financial assistance.

--A Different Drummer Café: This café, considered the first modern GI coffeehouse to set up shop, opened outside Fort Drum, N.Y., in November 2006. Although it shut down about a year ago, its Web site, www.differentdrummercafe.org, run by Vietnam veterans, remains an active voice in the Fort Drum community. Percolating up as part of the late 1960s peace movement, a slew of coffeehouses served up brew

and small pamphlets outside military bases during most of the Vietnam War. Only one from that era remains on active duty: the Quaker House outside Fort Bragg, N.C., which opened on a quiet residential street in 1969. Its motto now: "40 years of front-line peace witness — and just getting started."

"It's been quite a ride," said Chris McCallum, author of "Yes to the Troops — No to the War," which chronicles the Quaker House story. "Jane Fonda came and went. So did '60s radicalism. The house was spied on and fire-bombed. But since Sept. 11, it's

a quote from Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who is buried in Norfolk: "The soldier, above all other people, prays for peace, for he must suffer and bear the deepest wounds and scars of war."

"There are a lot of veterans here who are suffering those wounds without much support," Palumbo said.

He says that 40 percent of the homeless in the Hampton Roads area are veterans. This summer OffBase will begin offering transitional housing for veterans as well as a full coffee shop with expanded support services.



PHOTO BY JON R. ANDERSON: Army Times Staff

been more active than ever."

The modern variety of GI coffeehouse is not nearly as strident as those of bygone days. Norfolk OffBase is often misunderstood, Palumbo said. "We're not all the crazed radicals some would paint us as," he said. "You don't have to be disagreeable to disagree." You also don't have to be a pacifist to oppose fighting, he said, offering

Coffee Strong sits along railroad tracks, sandwiched between fast-food shops just outside Fort Lewis' main gate. On a recent Friday afternoon, a trickle of troops came and went.

With most of the post deployed, business has been slow. Coffee Strong makes a little money selling coffee to civilians— service members and vets drink free— and otherwise operates on donations.

"At first we kept the place very neutral in terms of our views on the war," said Manzel, who left the Army after returning from Iraq with a Stryker Brigade in 2006.

"But we found as we put more things like that up," — he indicated the "Support War Resisters" banner covering one wall — "we had more soldiers coming in."

A linguist from a National Guard military intelligence battalion walks in and orders a latte. She comes here during every weekend drill, she said.

"At first I thought they were against the military. It was really kind of weird. Now it's the only place I come when I'm here," she said. "They seem supportive and want to make sure you're not being taken advantage of. That's a good thing."

Manzel calls it "encouraging soldiers to advocate for themselves." He says the coffee shop isn't doing anything subversive.

"GI rights counseling is what we concentrate on the most," he said. "We'll help people stay in the Army, if that's what they want to do. We have had AWOL come to us and helped them get back into the Army. ... And we've helped people get out of the Army."

Fort Lewis officials say they have no problem with Coffee Strong. "It's just another business in the community outside the gate," post spokesman Joe Kubistek said.

"Officially, they say we're not blacklisted," Manzel said.

In walks a tall soldier with a combat patch on his left shoulder and deep scars carved into the side of his skull.

Former Marine Cpl. Andrew VanDenBergh, Coffee Strong's only paid employee, greets the soldier by name as he pours him a cup of joe.

The soldier, Pfc. Robert Ritter, says he visits the coffee shop as often as he can.

"It's a nice place," Ritter said. "I don't try to get involved in politics. To me, politics and lies go hand in hand. I already have enough mistrust." Ritter said he recently was busted down a rank for not getting to his medical appointments on time, but he's still getting paid as an E-4.

"Save the money," VanDenBergh warns. "Finance will come looking for it eventually." Ritter nods in agreement.

He said he's never heard anything negative from his command about Coffee Strong.

"I've actually been able to help some people with some of the little pamphlets they have here about knowing your rights," he said.

"When I first came (into) the Army, I didn't want to think about having to fight back ... with my leaders.

"You don't think like that. You just trust."

"I Did Not Expect To Have Traveling Soldier's Presence In Afghanistan Corroborated By A Man In Prison In Illinois" [Traveling Soldier Gets Around]

Editors Note:

Recently, Fabian Bouthillette and T. Barton, Military Resistance Organization, and members of the Traveling Soldier Editorial Board, visited an inmate in a large American prison. So that no

retaliation is risked against the prisoner, his name is omitted.

This is from the report:

By Fabian Bouthillette

Recently, he explains, he had his

cell shaken-down by a guard who is notorious with the prisoners for being too "by-the-book."

This prison guard had just returned from a one year tour in Afghanistan with the National Guard. He apparently wanted to

let everyone know that he was back, and decided the best way to do so was to just go around shaking down cells.

So, while the guard was rummaging through his cell, procedure mandated that he stand outside the cell.

Each cell has a trunk where the prisoner is allowed to keep personal belongings.

[XXXXX] chooses to keep books, legal documents, and some *Traveling Soldier* and *Military Resistance* newsletters in his trunk.

When the guard got to looking through his personal trunk, he noticed that the guard hesitated for a moment to look carefully at some *Traveling Soldier* and *Military Resistance* newsletters.

[XXXXX] isn't supposed to talk during the shake down, but he decided to speak and asked the guard if he had ever seen *Traveling Soldier* before.

The guard replied, "Yeah, I saw those in Afghanistan."

It actually took me a moment to realize what [XXXXX] had said.

I asked him if he was absolutely sure that the guard had said he saw *Traveling Soldier* in Afghanistan.

[XXXXX] assured me that that was what he was saying. Truly, T and I were shocked.

Very pleasantly shocked, obviously.

I did not expect to have *Traveling Soldier's* presence in Afghanistan corroborated by a man in prison in Illinois, but sure enough, that's what happened.

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/>

Traveling Soldier Editorial Board

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

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Military Resistance www.militaryproject.org

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



Invitation to Submit

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 to *Traveling Soldier* at contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Phone #: 888.711.2550

"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*