

Traveling Soldier

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Free To Service Men and Women

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Donations Welcome

Issue 32

Indiana Soldiers Organizing Open Resistance To Afghan Deployment, "Charging Their Company Is Not Properly Trained Or Mentally Fit For Battle"

[Thanks to Clancy Sigal, who sent this in.]

August 10, 2010 By CLARE BAYARD, CounterPunch

Army Reserve members facing imminent deployment to Afghanistan are publicly charging that their company is not properly trained or mentally fit for battle.

Several members of the Indiana-based 656th Transportation Company, which is due to activate August 22nd, are requesting a Congressional inquiry into the unit's lack of readiness. Alejandro Villatoro, a sergeant in the company, is amongst those coming forward.

Sergeant Villatoro says, "The main reason I am doing this is that I want people to know the lack of training and education our soldiers been receiving, and the focus on the mission is just not adequate to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. All I am asking is more time to reevaluate the training and mental health of these soldiers before sending them into war."

At risk to themselves, these soldiers



are going public with firsthand experiences of failures in military training, mental healthcare, and leadership, which many veterans charge are problems endemic to the military.

Three members of this company, Sgt. Villatoro and two reservists who wish to remain anonymous (referred to here as Private First Class A and Specialist B), have come forward to expose a crisis.

The 656th has been assigned to convoy security operations in Afghanistan. Yet, only 10% of its soldiers qualified on the .50 caliber guns that will be their primary weapon.

Most have not learned to operate the heavy Mine Resistant Ambush Protected (MRAPs) vehicles they will be driving in Afghanistan, and Villatoro fears a repeat of his experience invading Iraq in 2003, with gun truck drivers who had

never learned to drive a stick shift.

The company's mandatory trainings have been cut from the required 40 hours down to two-hour PowerPoint presentations.

Officers told the soldiers that funding cuts were the reason that their recent two-week training at Indiana's Camp Atterbury, scheduled to be run by a privately contracted company, was reduced to some hastily improvised sessions with almost none of the equipment necessary for training.

"We're part-time soldiers, we only train once a month, and when we do actually have trainings that are supposed to last any significant amount of time, we don't do anything that seems useful." says Private A, a 21 year-old reservist.

Training inadequacies go beyond the issue of equipment. "Most of the things we're being taught are being applied specifically from Iraq and from Iraq vets. Afghanistan is a whole different ballgame. The only thing that's the same is IEDs. The language, the landscape, the situation... everything is different" says Private A.

While U.S. and European diplomats have recently admitted they are floundering in the immensely complex social and political landscape of Afghanistan, Private A describes the level of preparation his company was offered: a single cultural awareness class focused, again, on Iraq rather than Afghanistan.

"Everything they mentioned pertained to Iraq, so people were asking, 'Well, in Afghanistan, what's this like?' And they'd say, well, we can't really tell you. Or just make up facts. It's not making me feel any more comfortable about my first time deploying."

The company has experienced numerous changes in leadership, including the transfer of their first sergeant after the disastrous Camp Atterbury training, where morale plummeted to a new low and one servicemember attempted suicide.

Specialist B, a 20 year-old from Indiana, says "I would like to believe that I'm fully prepared to go to war, but that is just not the case. I don't know what my mission will be, I feel as if I have to defend my very close battle buddies and not my chain of command.

"I fear that my chain of command will fail me in the ultimate end and as a result my life will be on the line, or one of my buddies' lives will pay the price for the lack of leadership."

Private A Says "There's No Reason We're Even There. I'm Going Overseas To Fight People Where I Have No Idea That They Did Anything Wrong"

Two weeks out from their activation date, Sgt Villatoro explains "It's just not possible to be sufficiently trained in this time frame, let alone broadly enough for not knowing what our mission will be."

"It just doesn't make sense. And it's dangerous. I just don't understand why they'd put us in that much danger, to the point where it doesn't make sense cause we're unprepared for anything." says Private A.

In every branch of the military, servicemembers continue to question the legitimacy of the mission, and whether they can in good conscience participate in these projects.

Sgt. Villatoro says, "That's the part I struggle with, that we don't have to do this. It's kind of hard to convince a soldier that they do have a choice. That the mission we were

given, we believe it's not effective.

"Sit down and look at the effectiveness of trying to win the hearts and minds of the Afghan people. Sending 30,000 more soldiers with weapons doesn't make sense to me. We don't know anything about the culture, diplomacy; they train us on how to conduct traffic checkpoints."

These servicemembers also express concern about the effects on the Afghan people of deploying unprepared soldiers, untrained on their weaponry and equipment, and many in need of mental health support.

"What I'm afraid is that the rules of engagement might go out the window. That's what happened when I went (to Iraq), they told us that as soon as you feel threatened you're able to shoot. I'm afraid soldiers are going to forget the rules of engagement, go by their emotions, their anger and frustration, and take matters into their own hands." says Sgt. Villatoro.

Lack of training on guns and vehicles makes soldiers a danger to themselves as well as others. The 656th will be operating top-heavy MRAP vehicles on Afghanistan's difficult terrain, without having practiced driving these rollover-prone trucks even on Indiana's flat roads.

"Whether we run off the road and kill somebody, or it's somebody who snaps... If you don't get mental help, that's what is probably going to happen. And when you don't have prepared soldiers, you're going to have accidents." says Private. A.

"It's not enough for Obama to say that it's not weak to ask for help," says Maggie Martin, an organizer with Iraq Veterans Against the War who works on issues of stopping deployment of soldiers with trauma and mental health needs.

"We have to create a community where people know that. What the 656th is doing, in trying to delay the deployment and call attention to these issues-- that is really important in helping soldiers know that they have to stand up for themselves and let people know what's happening,"

Alejandro Villatoro enlisted as a high school senior in 2000 for economic reasons. Six months ago, he told his command he was applying for conscientious objector status. He avoided thinking about his participation in the invasion of Iraq in 2003 until entering non-commissioned officer training three years later.

"As a leader, I wanted to take initiative and learn more about the war...It took me about two years to learn and decide what we were doing was ineffective and immoral."

When Sgt. Villatoro learned that his unit was slated to deploy to Afghanistan this fall, he decided to drop the conscientious objector application to go through deployment with his soldiers. "I wanted to be with them to educate them about the wars, what's worth fighting for, what it really is to be a soldier."

"They know my situation, that I wanted to get out and am only doing this for them" says Sgt. Villatoro.

In conversations with soldiers in his unit, Villatoro found that many soldiers shared these concerns, and some felt ready to risk speaking out. Even more have indicated their agreement through informal surveys made by Villatoro, but stay quiet for fear of retribution.

Specialist B says "I have too many concerns with the 656th deploying to Afghanistan," echoing the basic sentiment of many others in

the company. Private A says "If we can't even get little stuff like trainings scheduled, how are we supposed to nail down a complex mission in Afghanistan?"

Others appear comfortable or even enthusiastic about deployment. Villatoro says, "There's a lack of knowledge; the motivation is money or medals, coming back with ribbons and hoping to have war stories. It's not about the Afghan people, or thinking this will end the war. They don't think that's going to happen."

"You have a bunch of people who want to go just for the experience and for the money. I think that a lot of it is the money. That's the only thing that's keeping me from saying OK, thanks and goodbye; there's not a lot of jobs out there." says Private A, who is from a small farming town and enlisted at 17.

"I Just Want Future Soldiers To Realize You Have To Take This Stuff Into Your Own Hands"

"The only thing that's making me go is that I need the money. When I get back, I want to start school again and didn't have money to do that before. That's essentially the only thing that's keeping me there."

Sgt. Villatoro says he feels a sense of responsibility to help younger soldiers to recognize where they may need more experience to understand their own lack of preparation.

"You can ask some of these soldiers if they're satisfied with the training so far, and they'll say yes. But you ask, Is it sufficient for you to conduct a mission in Afghanistan? That's where the confusion sets in."

After his own experiences in the 2003 invasion of Iraq, Sgt. Villatoro names a key fear of sending out young, unprepared soldiers, many on their first de-

ployment, without clarity about what they are expected to do and how they're going to survive.

"As a young soldier, there's a lot of insecurity," he says. "You're scared, you're not going to remember the rules of engagement or what you're supposed to do. You just want to get through the firefight."

Private A sums it up: "It just doesn't make sense to send an unprepared soldier into battle. It's like brushing your teeth without toothpaste." After his command denied him an audience (and declined to comment for this article), Sgt. Villatoro and an increasing number of servicemembers from the 656th are looking to elected officials for assistance. Villatoro visited the office of Chicago's Representative Luis Gutierrez to underline the need for soldiers to be properly trained and mentally fit before deploying; Gutierrez has acknowledged the severity of these concerns and is taking the matter under advisement.

He was accompanied by allies including veterans of the Navy, Marines, Army and Illinois National Guard, representing service in Vietnam, Kosovo, Afghanistan and Iraq. Sgt Villatoro and several soldiers from his unit met last week to discuss the matter with Senator Dick Durbin (D-Illinois), an advocate for mental healthcare for soldiers and veterans. Durbin's office offered to forward a letter from Sgt Villatoro to the military liason in Congress.

Yesterday, Sgt. Villatoro filed an official request with his office to open a Congressional inquiry into the 656th's unfitnes for deployment.

With only a couple weeks left before their activation date, these soldiers are taking multiple courses of action to address this situation.

* * *

On why he decided to speak out, Private A says, "I just want future soldiers to realize you have to take this stuff into your own hands."

More and more soldiers are stepping up to join Sgt. Villatoro in speaking up about the concealed chaos of the 656th.

Their perspectives, politics and hopes span a wide range; they unify behind lack of faith in their company's preparation and leadership, and a common belief that the Afghanistan war is only getting worse.

"I ask soldiers: what do you hope, do you really think this last push will end this war? A lot of them say no, because they know they're not there to help the Afghan people," says Sgt. Villatoro.

Private A says "No, absolutely not. There's no reason we're even there. I'm going overseas to fight people where I have no idea that they did anything wrong. We're not even fighting al-Qaeda, we're just over there picking a fight, driving around and seeing who shoots at us, then shooting them. I don't even understand the reason we're over there."

"They Know They're Not There To Help The Afghan People" Says Sgt. Villatoro"

"The mission as a whole in Afghanistan has lost its purpose," says Specialist B. "The government can say whatever and do whatever and get away with it, with very little justice to the American people."

There is precedent for a unit to successfully delay its deployment, as another National Guard unit and

family members managed to do in 2007. Servicemembers, families, allies, and groups like Iraq Veterans Against the War organize resistance both publicly and under the radar.

Despite his principled objection to the Afghanistan War, Sgt. Villatoro is prepared to deploy with the soldiers in his charge if they are unable to delay the 656th's activation. "I ask myself why I feel so responsible. I put a lot of blame on myself because of mistakes I made as a young naïve soldier, and I don't want to do it again or see other young soldiers make those mistakes."

Sgt. Villatoro says, "This war has never ended for me. I feel bad a lot about the soldiers, how they keep re-enlisting. My war, my fight will never end until every soldier is home."

Unfortunate Truth

May 20, 2010 By Soldier R, Traveling Soldier Correspondent reporting from Germany.

This past week has been a sad one that is often recurring and an expected event on all military posts. One by one, day by day, units began returning from Camp Grafenwoehr in east Germany where they were training for deployment.

The good news is, as long as it was, no one gets hurt or injured because they do not use real rounds.

The bad news is trouble begins to brew in their home lives as they return.

One of the biggest and most common family problems when a soldier returns is loyalty to their spouse. It can start many different ways and each scenario is different, but most of them start with some type of argument over something small.

In one recent case, the couple was arguing because the soldier was looking at pornogra-

phy while he was at training and the spouse said that she felt insufficient because of this.

Granted this is understandable, no one should have been hurt during the confrontation. The thing that really gets to me is when it turns into a fight and somebody does get hurt. I have been in Germany for five months and I have yet to see a male get beat by his spouse.

The number of female abuse victims we have is ridiculous. I believe if you are going to get caught cheating on your spouse, then you should just come out and tell them and move out because it is not worth someone being injured or staying in the hospital on the brink of death.

To continue, I would like to discuss the many soldiers in the Army who see many repercussions due to the chain of command getting upset when the truth is revealed. One of my coworkers who is a Specialist was recently relieved of his job and sent back to his unit because he was honest with the CSM while he was driving her around.

The CSM was asking him about an upcoming school that would last about a month. She made a good point when she said that since his wife had just been approved for command sponsorship two months ago and he would leave for this school the

following month that he had spent only about two out of six months with her, not to mention all the time he has had to work while she has been here.

The Specialist simply agreed with her.

As soon as his chain of command found out about the conversation, they got upset and told him that he would have to return to his parent unit and work for them, but did not give him a valid reason.

A perfectly good soldier has been taken out of a very promising job opportunity because the chain of command is afraid to admit that they have failed to take care of a soldier and his family.

Another way the Army has failed is when it comes to making sure that a soldier has sufficient down time to take care of himself.

One of my coworkers, a Sergeant who works mid shift, is continuously asked to come in on his off time and stay after his twelve hour shifts to attend "mandatory" training.

Now, the good thing is that if he talks to the right people and puts up enough of a fight, sometimes he is allowed to go home and get some sleep before his shift the same night.

If he does not say anything, then the chain of command fails to realize that waking up at 1645 to come in for PT at 1700, working from 1900 to 0700 and then attending a daily meeting at 0800 and then further requiring him to attend "mandatory" training from 0900 until it is complete tends to wear a person down, especially when they have to do it four days a week.

It gradually gets worse when the same person has to work Friday through Monday and is required to report Tuesday through Thursday for "mandatory" training.

Also, allow me to explain the "mandatory" training.

I put it in quotations because if it truly was mandatory, then there would be no exceptions, regardless.

The fact is, they constantly grant exceptions to those who are out of town, high ranking, or are simply on the "in-crowd" of the chain of command.

If you are not one of those people, then you do not get special treatment.

I know for a fact, from my experience, that this is not the only place that this happens.

Every unit in the Army has this type of special treatment and discrimination of soldiers.

A prime example of this is the one writer who referred to the discrimination of single soldiers simply because they live in the barracks and are accessed much easier than married soldiers.

Though I can see this happening on occasion due to a breakdown in communication, it should not take place as often as it does.

I am also not saying that either married or single soldiers deserve more attention and special treatment than the other, I am simply asking that the chain of command pay closer attention to the decisions they make and how they affect the whole.

Is it the end of the Army if one single soldier does not attend "mandatory" training that is not actually mandatory for everyone SSG and higher?

Will the world come to an end just because they delay one soldier's school date so he can spend a little time with his family who he has not seen in four months?

No.

But both you and I realize that this will take much collaboration and collective thinking before anyone begins to see even the slightest change.

* * *

Suicide

July 17, 2010 By Soldier R, Traveling Soldier Correspondent reporting from Germany.

Through all the time I have spent in the U.S. Army, never once have I met a single person like the U.S. Military men and women. Without even knowing so much as which branch of service you are in, they are not hesitant in the least to jump in front of a bullet for those with whom they serve. Many times however, once these people end their tour of service and begin new lives, slowly adapting to the ever so strange way of the civilians, it is difficult for them to maintain the once solid rock foundation they had with their brothers and sisters in arms. It makes it even more difficult when those surrounding a prior service member do not have the slightest clue as to what war entails and what kind of things may be going through their head.

I would like to introduce to you a horrid truth that many may not be aware of and is a growing problem with war and conflict directly related to service in the U.S. Military: Veteran suicide.

Recently the U.S. Army suffered the loss of a brother. His story is one of heroism and honor. The lives of the friends and family he came into contact with during his life were drastically influenced for the better. He was an excellent example and role model to many and, due to the fact that the U.S. government does not see fit to delegate its time and energy into ensuring that veterans are taken excellent care of, he sadly ended his own life on the 26th of June 2010.

Meet Matthew R. Leininger of Des Plaines. Born in Los Angeles, California, he died Saturday, June 26, 2010. Matthew served in two tours of Iraq with the U.S. Army Military Police. He was the loving father of Philomena and Arthur; dear son of Stephen M. and Patricia A. (nee Johnston); dear brother of Michael S. (Amy) and Robin M. (Timothy) Berg; and cherished uncle of Maximilian and Dominic, Zachary, Alexander, Nathaniel, Samuel and Anna.

With all the support that the active duty military offers its service members and the efforts put forth by the leadership, we have begun attempts to lower the number of suicides and deaths, at that, of current active duty service members. The amazing thing is the ability of the U.S. Military to put procedures and policies in place governing the approach of suicide prevention and the same organization not being able to do so through the Veterans Affairs Office.

“As I’ve often asked, mostly of myself, but also of others from time to time, why do we know so much about suicides but so little about how to prevent them?” VA Secretary Eric Shinseki (NYDailyNews.com)

I honestly believe I heard the most disappointing thing this morning.

I was in a meeting with several soldiers, including a retired SFC who works as a civilian for the Army. The retired SFC said, “I’d rather you kill yourself than other people.”

To this, one SGT in the corner responded, “Yeah, it’s an easier mess to clean up.”

I was caught off guard, but very upset. So I began to question everyone in the room asking how they could take suicide so lightly and be so inconsiderate to those who may have been driven to the edge

by people very similar to themselves. Then the civilian responded by saying, “Everyone’s life motto should be, ‘Homicide, not suicide.’” To which I responded, “But sir, you just contradicted yourself.”

I explained that I knew of three soldiers who had killed themselves in the past week including one veteran and that I did not take suicide very lightly. Most of the people in the room left and the civilian kept laughing in a very snarky way.

Needless to say, I believe the Army as a whole is a failure when it comes to suicide prevention, especially considering that the rate of suicides in the U.S. Military was at its highest in 2008 since records started being kept in 1980.

All in all, I believe the Army needs to reconsider its approach to suicide prevention. In several news articles, including articles with www.wsws.org and The Huffington Post, Army Secretary Pete Geren stated that they are committed to doing everything they can to address the issue, but somehow the rate still climbs.

More effort needs to be put forth on even the lowest level in everyday encounters with leaders and their soldiers to include punishments for infractions those soldiers commit. I honestly believe that the problems should be handled on the lowest level due to that being where the issue originates in the first place.



Photograph by Mike Hastie, U.S. Global Empire

From: Mike Hastie
To: Military Resistance
Sent: August 04, 2010
Subject: When The Truth Becomes Unacceptable

When The Truth Becomes Unacceptable

The worst thing I experienced in Vietnam was the lie.
100% of the Vietnam War was an absolute lie.
100% of the Iraq War is an absolute lie.
100% of the Afghanistan War is an absolute lie.
When an active duty soldier or a veteran puts a gun to his head, and blows his brains out, he is putting a bullet in America's head. (I saw that happen in Vietnam.)
You kill the lie!
You kill the conflict that is unbearable.
Whenever the truth threatens one's belief system,
and the lie out weighs your ability to cope,
you pull the trigger.
Instead of putting the American flag over the casket, they ought to put the American flag in the casket with the body,
because they both died.

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71

MORE ABOUT SUICIDE:

Why Are US Troops Killing Themselves? Army Prescription Of Suicide-Linked Antidepressants, Antipsychotics And Antiseizure Drugs Exactly Parallels The Increase In US Troop Suicides Since 2005

[Thanks to Linda O, who sent this in.]

August 3, 2010 By MARTHA ROSENBERG, Counter-Punch

Why are troops killing themselves?

The long awaited Army report, "Health Promotion, Risk Reduction, Suicide Prevention" considers the economy, the stress of nine years of war, family dislocations, repeated moves, repeated deployments, troops' risk-taking personalities, waived entrance standards and many aspects of Army culture.

What it barely considers are the suicide-linked antidepressants, antipsychotics and antiseizure drugs whose use exactly parallels the increase in US troop suicides since 2005.

In the report Chief of Staff General Peter W. Chiarelli acknowledges antidepressant risks, saying there's "fair quality evidence that second generation antidepressants (mostly SSRI) increase suicidal behavior in adults aged 18 to 29 years" while adding that "other research evidence shows the benefit of antidepressant use."

But nowhere does he acknowledge the suicide potential of antiseizure drugs so widely used for pain and as "mood stabilizers" by troops even though the FDA mandated suicide warnings on Lyrica, Topamaz, Depakote, Lamictal, Tegretol, Depakene, Klonopin and 16 others in 2008.

(Lamictal also has the distinction of wasting more taxpayer money than any other drug according to a July American Enterprise Institute report.

Medicaid spent an unnecessary \$51 million on Lamictal instead of buying a generic last year, thanks to GSK salesmen. You go guy, guys.)

When asked by NPR's Robert Siegel if the high number of medicated troops contributed to suicide, Gen. Chiarelli said, "The good thing about those numbers is...the prescriptions were all made by a doctor."

Asked why troops who had not even deployed were among the suicides, Chiarelli said there were other stressors involved.

In June Marine Times reported 32 deaths on prescription drugs in Warrior Transition Units (WTUs) since 2007 and said an internal review "found the biggest risk factor may be putting a soldier on numerous drugs simultaneously, a practice known as polypharmacy."

But instead of citing dangerous drugs and drug cocktails for turning troops suicidal (and accident prone and at risk of death from unsafe combinations) the Army report cites troops' illicit use of them along with street drugs. (The word "illicit" appears 150 times in the Army report and "psychiatrist" appears twice.)

No, it's not the 8,000 urine samples in 2009 which showed prescription drug traces according to the Army report -- it's the fact that 21 percent of the drugs were "illicit."

No wonder the revised suicide report form suggested by the Army report doesn't even have a box to enter "adverse reactions to drug or drug combinations."

Instead, it has a box that asks how long before a suicide a patient was "compliant" with the prescription. Was the medication "taken as prescribed? Skipped?" Taken "In excess of prescription? In different manner (e.g., crushed instead of in capsule)?"

Nowhere is there the possibility that the medication was taken as prescribed and compliance not noncompliance was the problem.

On the same day the Army report was released, another suicide report which ignores the elephant in the room called Big Pharma was released.

In response to a request from the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice for help after the recent suicides of two youths in two of its eight WTU-like facilities, the Illinois Models for Change initiative compiled a "Report on the Behavioral Health Program for Youth Committed to Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice."

Like the Army report, the Juvenile Justice report notes lack of staff training and resources, lack of assessment tools, lack of aftercare, family problems and repeated moves and dislocations to explain suicides without mentioning suicide-causing psychoactive drugs themselves.

The team of mental health and corrections professionals mentions youths who fail to "follow the medication orders" and revert to street drugs but nowhere in the 146-page report are the health and mental health effects of psychoactive drugs mentioned. Even though 98 percent of youth at one facility are on them, according to the report! Denial is not just the name of a river in Egypt.

Worse youth are screened for suicide when they enter facilities not after they're put on psychoactive drugs.

The report explores poor food and dorms with no electric sockets so youth "cannot have TVs in their rooms and only walkmans" and visitor policies, but doesn't pursue the one reference to psychoactive drugs: the youth who says he is pretty much "knocked out" on the antidepressant Trazadone they give him.

Like the Army report, the Juvenile Justice report ignores the pharmaceutical elephant in the room and the tax dollars and human costs of feeding it.

Betrayed By Command: Injured Oregon Army National Guard Troops Just Back From Iraq Forced Off Active Duty "While They Still Need Medical Care"

May 18, 2010 The Associated Press

PORTLAND, Ore. — Injured Oregon Army National Guard troops just back from Iraq say the Army has been forcing many of them off active duty while they still need medical care.

National Guard Sgt. Jason Greenlees told The Oregonian of Portland that he broke his leg between tours in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 10 months of wearing 60 pounds of body armor daily while guarding convoys in Iraq, his leg is swollen and painful.

He said when Army staff at Joint Base Lewis-McChord, Wash., told him to return to Portland



"Betrayed," cont'd.

and his own doctor for surgery, he refused.

Greenlees said the Army is wrongly forcing as many as 185 injured soldiers from the 41st Infantry Brigade Team off active duty, accusing some of them of feigning injuries to extend their active-duty paychecks, which can be thousands of dollars more than their Guard pay.

At least 40 injured Oregon soldiers remain at Lewis-McChord, weeks after their units demobilized af-

ter 10 months in Iraq, The Oregonian reported.

U.S. Rep. Kurt Schrader, D-Ore., and Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., have taken up their cause, complaining to the Secretary of the Army that members of Oregon's 41st Infantry Brigade Team are being systematically denied their benefits.

Schrader said he was particularly upset to see staff materials prepared for demobilization of the 41st this spring that depicted National Guard soldiers as weekend warriors that may be trying to game the system.

A Vietnam Soldier Wrote The Book All About How An Armed Forces Rebellion Stopped An Imperial War

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SOLDIERS IN REVOLT, by DAVID CORTRIGHT, Anchor Press/Doubleday, Garden City, New York

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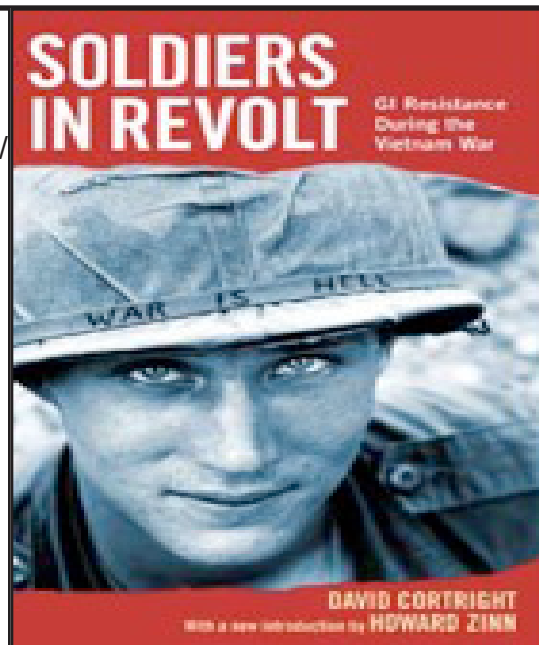
Military Resistance

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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. Contact us at

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

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Troops Invited To Write In

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 contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Phone #: 888.711.2550

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.

Signature Date Application Taken/Received By

MILITARY RESISTANCE MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name (please print): _____

Armed Forces? (Branch) _____

Veteran? _____ Years: _____

Union: _____

Occupation: _____

Mailing address: _____

E-Mail: _____

Phone (Landline): _____

Phone (Cell): _____

\$ dues paid and receipt given by _____
(See next: Calendar year basis)

- Armed Forces Members @ Dues waived
- Civilians @ \$25
- Students/Unemployed @ \$10
- Civilian/Military Prisoners @ Dues Waived

Comments:

NOTE: Civilian applicants will be interviewed, in person if possible, or by phone.

Please Return Application To:
Military Resistance
Box 126
2576 Broadway
New York, N.Y. 10025-5657
phone: 888-711-2550
email: contact@militaryproject.org