

GI SPECIAL 6L19:



He Got That Right: “You Never Know When It’s Going To Stop”

12.29.08 By Gina Cavallaro, Army Times [Excerpts]

The Army will meet its end-strength goal of 547,000 this fiscal year, three years earlier than first planned, but that still won't be enough to meet operational demands, a senior official said.

The Army needs to grow by at least 30,000 more soldiers to meet current demand, Army Undersecretary Nelson Ford said Dec. 16. An end-strength of close to 580,000 is needed to meet the demand, he said.

The Army needs to keep replenishing the force, he noted.

“You can run a machine without oil for so long then it seizes.

“It keeps running because there’s some lubricant in there but you never know when it’s going to stop,” he said.

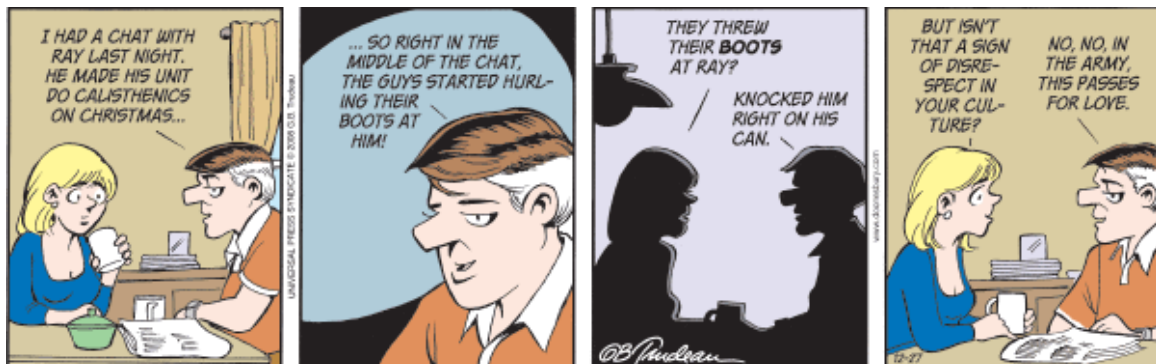
BIG TROUBLE

After many years hard use, the GI Special computer finally wore out, and the last two days have been spent installing a replacement and transferring files, thanks to the expert help of Christian C.

This also meant going from Windows XP to Vista, and from Outlook Express to “Windows Mail,” which is a really tedious, harder to operate piece of shit.

Everything is way behind, especially the war news. Putting the pieces back together now. Thanks for your patience. T

TROOP NEWS



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in.]

“War Skeptics And Recorders Of Suffering, Such As Iraq Veterans Against The War, Are Systematically Excluded From Mainstream Programming”

“Spend Plenty Of Money On The Front End With Bonuses And Improved Salaries; Scrimp On The Back End When Our Warriors, Patriots And Heroes Finally Come Home”



[Thanks to SSG N (ret'd) who sent this in. She writes: "This does a good job of tying together a lot of what's happening to returning GIs."]

December 27, 2008 William A. Collins, CITIZEN-TIMES [Excerpts]

I recently found a National Guard recruiting flier taped to a utility pole. It touted, "100% Tuition Free College," "Up to \$20,000 Enlistment Bonus," and "\$200/month of school G.I. Bill Kicker." Along the bottom were the usual tear-off strips with the recruiting sergeant's phone number, reiterating the \$20,000 bonus.

Forget "Uncle Sam Needs You!" At our annual local Oyster Festival, the Guard augments these enticements with T-shirts, caps, push-up contests, vehicle displays and a party atmosphere. No amputees on hand.

For 18-year-olds with no career focus, all this hype can convey much allure. Smartly paid ex-generals flood the airways intoning about duty, service, foreign evils, and victory.

Meanwhile war skeptics and recorders of suffering, such as Iraq Veterans Against the War, are systematically excluded from mainstream programming.

Thus despite the well-known harsh realities of warfare and occupation, other realities like money, recession and propaganda help to keep filling our relentless recruiting quotas.

They also help to fill our Veterans Administration hospitals. Though even at that, painfully large squadrons of vets have yet to find solace with the VA. Especially those with emotional distress.

But the largest body of troops just do their job and do eventually come home.

Then they enter on a prolonged struggle to find a job, to reintegrate with their family, to increase their education, and to plead for government help with their mental and physical wounds. Unfortunately, there are still no good numbers for casualties from post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or on its destructive effect on home or work. Mostly it simply goes untreated. As does the recently recognized Gulf War Syndrome from our battles in Kuwait.

So too do other veterans' afflictions.

Housing shortages and homelessness weigh heavily on former soldiers. Likewise the lack of rape treatment and counseling, or even any government admission that rape is a common military occurrence. And despite congressional inquiries and diligent investigative reporting, care for veterans remains spotty and unreliable. The White House and Pentagon hush it up, fearful that the truth might sour recruitment enthusiasm.

This unfortunately makes the whole war enterprise sound more and more like a mercenary world, which it is.

Spend plenty of money on the front end with bonuses and improved salaries; scrimp on the back end when our warriors, patriots and heroes finally come home.

That's when they learn how expendable they are.

DO YOU HAVE A FRIEND OR RELATIVE IN THE MILITARY?

Forward GI Special along, or send us the address if you wish and we'll send it regularly. Whether in Iraq or stuck on 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, inside the armed services and at home. Send email requests to address up top or write to: The Military Project, Box 126, 2576 Broadway, New York, N.Y. 10025-5657. Phone: 917.677.8057

Gulf War Illness Report Covers Up Damage From Anthrax Shots

Letters To The Editor
Army Times
12.29.08

While I think the findings of the Veterans' Affairs Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War illness is a great start toward getting the government to admit that something went wrong during Operation Desert Storm, it is still trying to deflect the contention that any of the illnesses could be related to the anthrax shot that we were all given.

First, it was sand fleas, then smoke from oil well fires, and then depleted uranium in munitions with a final cloud of sarin gas.

But not the anthrax shot.

This is starting to sound like Roswell.

Why are there no big complaints of Gulf War illness this time around? Same bugs, fires, and munitions? Just a lot more gas floating around in investigating government committees and a new anthrax shot.

Chief Warrant Officer Patrick O. Brown (ret.)
Chapin, S.C.

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.”

Frederick Douglas, 1852

"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.

"The mighty are only mighty because we are on our knees. Let us rise!"
-- Camille Desmoulins

You Reap What You Sow



From: Mike Hastie
To: GI Special
Sent: December 27, 2008
Subject: You Reap What You Sow

You Reap What You Sow

**The American economy is drowning in bullets,
and nobody wants to talk about it.
The U.S. Military Industrial Complex has
become a swarming locust.
Eisenhower said, " BEWARE."
As always,
You reap what you sow.**

Mike Hastie
U.S. Army Medic
Vietnam 1970-71
December 26, 2008

Photo: Artillery gun at one of the firebases in my unit in Vietnam.

Little did we all know, "Cocaine Cool," would someday be pointed at America. Not just the drug, but the madness that happens when it all comes home, after you invade countless countries for the love of profit. As B.B. King once said in a song, "The Thrill Is Gone."

Mike Hastie

Photo and caption from the I-R-A-Q (I Remember Another Quagmire) portfolio of Mike Hastie, US Army Medic, Vietnam 1970-71. (For more of his outstanding work, contact at: (hastiemike@earthlink.net) T)

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. This truth escapes millions.

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

The German Soldier Who Was Suppose To Kill Him Shot In The Air And Walked Away

From: Johanna Pettit
To: GI Special
Sent: August 05, 2008

My uncle became a prisoner in the Battle of the Bulge.

When the Americans started winning back what they lost they ordered the prisoners killed.

The German Soldier who was supposed to kill him said something in German and pushed my uncle in the bushes and shot in the air and walked away.

I think you will like this story.

**Notes From The Boonies:
“Both Political Parties Support Wall
Street's Long Range Main Strategic
Goal – Dominance Of Mideast Oil For
However Long It Takes, No Matter
What They Say”
“And They Will Fight To The Last Drop
Of Our Blood, If We Let Them”**

Fall 2008 By Paul Wisovaty; The Veteran; Vietnam Veterans Against The War [Excerpts]
Paul Wisovaty is a member of VVAW. He lives in Tuscola, Illinois, where he works as a
probation officer. He was in Vietnam with the US Army 9th Division in 1968.

My Administrative Assistant in the probation office tells me that I'm not all that bad a guy, but that I have an annoying habit of whining. Following my column in the last issue of The Veteran, readers may be forgiven for arriving at the same conclusion. I asked Nam vets to help me figure out why we were so often dissed, or at the least not much appreciated, once we came home.

I mean, it wasn't like we started the damned war. How did we wind up being the bad guys in this scenario?

I received three letters. The neat thing about them was that they were from vets from two different wars, Korea and Vietnam, and a civilian who worked with Army Intelligence during Desert Storm. I sincerely appreciate their having taken the time to write me, and allow me to share their thoughts.

The first letter I got was just signed "Korea GI Joe," from a reader who served in that war from 1952-53. He gave me quite an earful.

"I'm a Korean War vet responding to your question, 'Is Iraq Vietnam all over again?'

“Have you considered that the Iraq War is probably in its infancy compared to the length of the Vietnam-Cambodia (read Iraq-Iran) War supported by both Democratic and

Republican administrations? And if our Iraqistan 'volunteers' and soon draftees decide to refuse to slaughter and die anymore for Exxon Mobil, and US imperialism (I realize that your group is in denial about that term) is forced to pull out, do you expect any different reception for them than the reception when you returned from Vietnam?

"Both political parties support Wall Street's long range main strategic goal – dominance of Mideast oil for however long it takes, no matter what they say.

"And they will fight to the last drop of our blood, if we let them."

I am not certain why Korea GI Joe thinks that VVAW may be offended by the term "US imperialism," but I doubt that many of our readers will disagree with what he had to say.

Thanks, Joe. If I had any idea who you are I'd drop you a line to say that, but hopefully you're reading this now.

I got a second letter from Scott Peer, who had, as a civilian, been working with military contracts for over ten years when Desert Storm broke out.

He is now involved with IVAW.

Scott writes that "The Gulf War made me feel completely betrayed, like some crazies stole my work. 'I was working Army Intelligence. People I had considered friends smiled and talked about 'killing sand niggers.' The military was targeting civilian facilities like water plants and factories hundreds of miles from the front, and slaughtering innocent civilians and POW's. Afterwards I quit in disgust, as did many of my co-workers. Many of us feel that the current military is working against us, and working against the interests of our country. "People like Cheney and his stooges, from generals to privates, are destroying the US and Iraq. Some push back from within, but some are criminals pure and simple. I feel that those who are criminals should be locked up, not cheered."

Thanks a lot, Scott. Isn't "stooges" a strong word, though? Oh, I get it. You were referring to Bush and everyone else who works for the Veep.

Finally, I heard from Arnold Stieber, a Vietnam vet from Michigan.

Arnold puts 'Welcome Home' in the same category as 'thank you for your service' and 'defending freedom' and 'protecting our country,' and describing the military as 'service.' All these words make you feel good about your involvement in the death and destruction industry."

Yeah, Arny, us Americans sure love to feel good about everything we do. We feel good about the good stuff we do, and if we have to we find a way to feel good about the bad stuff too.

As with No Gun Ri, many American's position has always been that if somebody else kills unarmed civilians huddled under a bridge, or invades a sovereign nation, those are war crimes. But if America does it there must have been a good reason. Double standard? Hell no! If you have any misgivings, just contact your local American Legion representative.

I do however look at "Welcome Home" in a different light than "Thanks for your service." I have always thought the former to be a Nam vet to Nam vet thing, pretty much apolitical, as a way of recognizing that no one ever said that to us forty years ago. Just my take; I may be wrong.

Arnold attached in his reply a piece he had written called "War is Slavery – An Awakening."

I would like to finish up by quoting briefly from it.

He says that "my research revealed that the main causes of war are money and markets.

"There is always plenty of flag waving and bluster about the 'evil ones,' but every war I've studied, once you begin peeling back the layers, has money and markets as a common core...

"War is only failure for one side. For the other side, war is magnificent. It is the best business in the world. High profits, little competition, products rapidly used."

Arnold refers to works by Howard Zinn and General Smedley Butler, both of which reinforce what I have just quoted, and with which many of our readers are familiar.

I would only add a line from Platoon, to which Arnold also refers. King, an uneducated but street-smart draftee from rural Tennessee, is talking to Taylor, a middle class white kid who dropped out of college because he believed that "we should all do our part in this war."

King's response, following a long toke and exhale is, "Shit, man. The rich always fuckin' over the poor. Always have. Always will."

I think that says it all.



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.

NEED SOME TRUTH? CHECK OUT 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/> And join with Iraq Veterans Against the War to end the occupations and bring all troops home now! (www.ivaw.org/)

***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-



Indian Bodies on the ground at Wounded Knee

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.

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 send email contact@militaryproject.org: Name, I.D., withheld unless you request publication. Same address to unsubscribe. Phone: 917.677.8057

OCCUPATION PALESTINE

Zionist Terror Hammers Gaza



Palestinian firefighters attempt to douse flames at the site of an Israeli air strike in Rafah. Photograph: Reuters/Getty. [Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]



Palestinians take a wounded man to hospital. Photograph: Mahmud Hams/AFP/Getty Images. [Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]



Bodies from the sites of Israeli air strikes are lined up at a hospital. Photograph: Mahmud Hams/AFP/Getty Images. [Thanks to JM, who sent this in.]

DECEMBER 28, 2008 IBRAHIM BARZAK AND KARIN LAUB, Huffington Post & Rory McCarthy & Paul Lewis, Guardian News and Media Limited [Excerpts]

Gaza's nine hospitals were overwhelmed. Dr. Moawiya Hassanain, who keeps a record for the Gaza Health Ministry, said more than 290 people were killed over two days and more than 800 wounded.

The Palestinian Center for Human Rights, which keeps researchers at all hospitals, said it had counted 251 dead by midday Sunday, and that among them were 20 children under the age of 16 and nine women.

An Israeli air strike yesterday killed seven teenage students at a UN vocational college for Palestinian refugees while they waited for a bus to take them home, said Christopher Gunness, a UN Relief and Works Agency spokesman.

A Palestinian medic said a Palestinian man was killed by Israeli fire during an angry demonstration in the West Bank village of Naalin.

Mowaffaq Alami, 35, was close to the main security headquarters, the Suraya, in Gaza yesterday when it was attacked in the first round of Israeli air strikes at around 11am.

"People were walking through the streets just like a normal day, children coming home from school. Suddenly, without any warning, the bombing started. We didn't even see the jets in the sky. That's why so many people were killed," said Alami.

He said the first round of attacks was over within a few minutes but left dozens dead. "Suddenly people started to run, you saw people running to the ambulances, and the police running everywhere. People were crying. I saw some just sat on the ground against the wall."

Israel yesterday banned foreign journalists from entering Gaza. Israeli journalists have been banned for more than two years.

Hamas has sounded defiant in the face of the attacks. "Today we are stronger than we've ever been," said one spokesman in Gaza, Taher Nounou. "We won't raise the white flag, we won't give anything up, we won't retreat."

[To check out what life is like under a murderous military occupation by foreign terrorists, go to: www.rafahtoday.org The occupied nation is Palestine. The foreign terrorists call themselves "Israeli."]

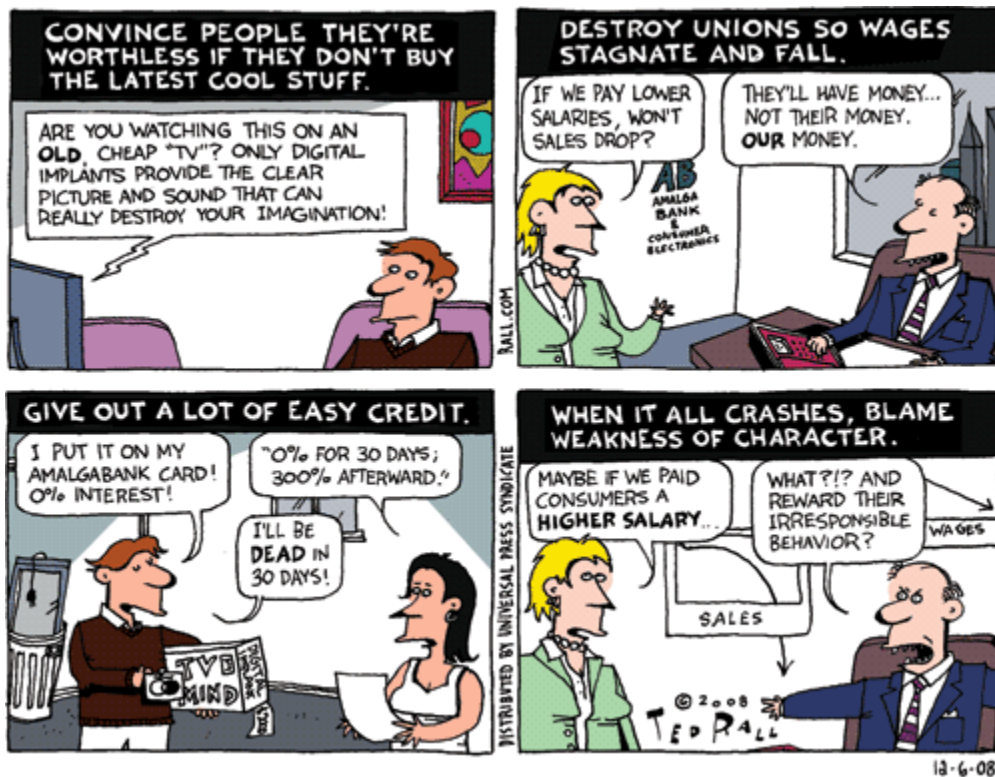
DANGER: POLITICIANS AT WORK



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

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

CLASS WAR REPORTS



RECEIVED

**“Marines, Dependents, Naval Personnel And
Civilians Who Lived And Worked Aboard MCB
Camp Lejeune In NC From The 1950s Through**

1987 May Have Been Exposed To Highly Contaminated Water”

From: Andrea Byron
To: GI Special
Sent: December 23, 2008
Subject: Camp Lejeune

My name is Andrea Byron and I am writing to you because I am trying to let Marines, dependents, Naval personnel and civilians who lived and worked aboard MCB Camp Lejeune in NC from the 1950s through 1987 that they may have been exposed to highly contaminated water.

More than 70 chemicals were found in the water and many of them are known carcinogens.

The U.S.M.C. is asking anyone who was at Lejeune between 1957 and 1987 to register on their website at www.marines.mil.

Anyone looking for information regarding the contaminated water at Lejeune, including an illness registry, discussion board, photo gallery and historical documents library is invited to visit the website of The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten at www.tftptf.com. TFTP TF was formed by 2 Marines whose families were exposed to the highly toxic water.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Andrea Byron
Website Administrator
The Few, The Proud, The Forgotten
www.tftptf.com

PTSD Website Resource

From: Tim Johnston
To: GI Special
Sent: August 04, 2008
Subject: PTSD Website Resource

Hello,

My name is Tim.

I was just browsing your site and thought I would pass along a URL that I think the readers of your website might find useful.

My site is brainandspinalcord.org, it is a resource for those looking for information about brain and spinal cord injuries.

More specifically to the interests of your site, my site also features information pertaining to PTSD which can be found here:

<http://www.brainandspinalcord.org/blog/>

It's a new site, and I want to get my information out. The best way I have found to do so, is to look for other reputable sites that deal in the information featured on my page.

Take a look, I think you will find it informative and a good resource for your users.



GI Special Looks Even Better Printed Out

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