



IRAQ VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR



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Anti-war Iraq veterans arrested at Ft. Benning, Georgia

At a stop on their bus tour of Southern military bases, members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) arrested, charged with criminal trespassing.

COLUMBUS, GA – Three members of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) were arrested yesterday and charged with criminal trespassing when they attempted to gain access to the base to meet with active duty soldiers there. Ft. Benning is the most recent stop of the group's bus tour to military bases in the Southeast to outreach to active duty troops and listen to their stories.

After being told they could not wear 'political t-shirts' onto the base, Liam Madden and Nathan Lewis approached the gates of Ft. Benning to inquire with the guard there about gaining access. Both were wearing t-shirts that read, "Iraq Veterans Against the War." They were immediately hand-cuffed and placed under arrest. Then, after changing out of his IVAW t-shirt into a plain shirt to avoid arrest, fellow member Adam Kokesh approached the gates, but he was also arrested. The three Iraq veterans were detained inside the Ft. Benning military police station for several hours. They were released and issued citations for court appearances on charges of criminal trespassing.

Two days earlier, Madden, Lewis, and Kokesh were among five Iraq veterans on the bus tour to be detained at Ft. Jackson, South Carolina under similar circumstances, but were released with no charges. The veterans have been traveling through the Southeast for the past ten days in an effort to reach out to thousands of service members who are now questioning the war in Iraq. The veterans have been visiting military installations and hosting BBQs for troops, dialoguing with them about the personal impact of the troop surge, and educating them about their rights to express their dissent as active duty personnel. "We feel we have a duty to talk with service members who may be deployed over to Iraq, to let them know what they're in for, and that they do have rights," stated Kelly Dougherty, Executive Director of Iraq Veterans Against the War who organized the tour.

Iraq Veterans Against the War was founded in 2004 to give those who have served in the military since September 11, 2001 a way to come together and speak out against an unjust, illegal and un-winnable war. Today, IVAW is made up of close to 500 members in 32 states, Washington, D.C., Canada and serving in bases overseas.

IVAW gives its members the opportunity not only to connect with other veterans and active duty soldiers but also to speak with one voice. As members of IVAW, they go to colleges, middle schools, high schools, churches, libraries, and to the media – and give first-hand accounts of what is really happening in Iraq. As eyewitnesses and participants in the war on terror, they are viewed as credible sources that are able to explain why the war must end now.

For more information about IVAW's Bus Tour, visit www.ivaw.org.