



# SIT-REP

*Situation Normal: All Fraq'd Up*

A Publication of Iraq Veterans Against the War - IVAW.ORG

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have the right to  
keep one copy of  
this or any  
publication in their  
possession.  
(DoD directive  
1325.6)*

## STAND UP AND BE HEARD *by Sholom Keller*

These are the times that try men's souls. The summer soldier and sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands it now deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.

*-Thomas Paine, 12/23/1776*

With these words, the bestselling author of *Common Sense* rallied our nation's forefathers to the cause of liberty. Several years later, his words would ring true; as the brave men who camped with George Washington at Valley Forge resumed their campaign in June of 1778, turning the tide of the American Revolution and forever changing the course of history.

Fast-forward several centuries, and our country finds itself in a crisis yet again. The war in Iraq approaches its sixth year, with no end in sight. A host of presidential contenders pander to the press while ignoring the important issues, which cannot be addressed with feel-good soundbites and meaningless platitudes. Worst of all, a nation that claims to "support" its troops continues to ignore their needs when

tokenizing them is not politically expedient.

What is a sunshine patriot? What sort of moral cowardice does it take to slap a happy yellow ribbon on one's bumper, while simultaneously turning up one's nose at the sight of a homeless veteran? What sort of intellectual dishonesty is necessary for a politician to claim, and people to believe, that more soldiers need to die; in order to justify with "honor" the four-thousand who have already gone?

Let's get one thing straight: There are no war crimes taking place in Iraq, the war in Iraq **is** the crime. So-called atrocities such as the prisoner-abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib do not take place in a bubble, but are a direct result of established policies - both stated and implicit. Buck privates and sergeants do not violate Geneva Conventions merely because they're bored on the overnight shift, but because their chain of command reports to cloak-and-dagger agencies who consider themselves above the law.

This coming March, we aim to change the very nature

of the debate, the manner in which our nation's populace thinks about the war (on the rare occasions when they bother to think about it). Hundreds of veterans who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan will gather and testify to their experiences. Join us as we show America that back-stabbing politicians don't speak on behalf of the troops, talking-head pundits don't speak on behalf of the troops, nobody but the troops speaks on behalf of the troops.

### ISSUE #4

**FEBRUARY, 2008**

Sit-Rep is published on a near-monthly basis. The contents of this newsletter are written by and for veterans of the Global War on Terror.

This publication provides an outlet for 21<sup>st</sup> Century warriors to express their thoughts and opinions in an uncensored environment.

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# Military Malpractice

by Douglas Connor

As a healthcare provider and Iraq war veteran, I was appalled by the front page article in the Washington Post on December 2, 2007, titled "A Soldier's Officer." First Lieutenant Elizabeth Whiteside went to Iraq with a stellar career of over 7 years both enlisted and as a commissioned officer. After less than a year working in a detention facility in Baghdad, she attempted suicide by shooting herself in the stomach. She is now being charged with attempting suicide and endangering the life of another soldier while serving in Iraq. What is the Army thinking?

Her military doctors are protesting the charges and begging for her to be treated as a human being. Whiteside's lawyer was warned by the prosecutor, Major Stefan Wolfe, against using a "psychobabble defense." Is that what the Army calls it when the head of psychiatry at Walter Reed tries to give his professional

assessment of a patient? Is this how we treat combat veterans who are at the lowest point in their lives? What happened to the changes at Walter Reed after the Building 18 scandal? Do we really support our troops?

The answer to the last question is that we are not able to support our troops as long as the Army relies on commanders to diagnose someone's mental state when they attempt suicide. Our armed forces have great physical and mental healers, but mental illness is still considered 'malingering' by many leaders in the military. Whiteside's own superiors at Walter Reed considered her mental illness "an excuse" for criminal conduct. Are we ever going to get it when it comes to mental health? Post traumatic stress disorder, depression, suicide, anxiety, etc., are all a part of a war time military. The military leadership needs to stop thinking that a lawyer or commander "knows better" than

our mental health professionals. Allowing this to continue is as absurd as having a psychiatrist make combat operations decisions.

Commanders' and lawyers' opinions about the mental health of a suicidal person are irrelevant and a distraction. Obviously,

Whiteside's commanders failed to see the warning signs of someone who was sleep deprived and disintegrating. In fact, it was a soldier in her unit who went to a psychiatric nurse to get help for her. Why then are the same group of leaders being asked to determine her state of mind now?

In the civilian world, if someone attempts suicide they are referred for psychiatric evaluation and treatment. They are not brought up on charges. I believe that our troops who attempt suicide as a result of their experience in combat should be taken care of by professionals, not treated like criminals.

go fight it. Otherwise shut your yellow mouth."

## Recommended Blogs

### The Usual Suspect

*TheUnlikelySoldier.blogspot.com*

Army Infantry Specialist currently in Iraq, "There's bulletholes where my compassion used to be. The mission is FUBAR'ed and the word is Fuck-All. The ONLY objective is getting home."

### GI Kate

*MyAmericanIraqLife.blogspot.com*

A female with six years in the Army, wondering whether to reenlist amid all the BS.

### Irritated Vet

*IrritatedVet.blogspot.com*

An Army intel analyst activated to go to Iraq in 2004, and his analysis skills haven't atrophied while he's been out.

### Army Sergeant

*ActiveDutyPatriot.blogspot.com*

An active duty Army NCO and a proud member of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

### Fight To Survive

*FTSsoldier.blogspot.com*

The E-4 Mafia is a group of soldiers who were deployed to Iraq between January of 2004 and March of 2005.

### Smitty's World

*TheHappySmith.blogspot.com*

Smitty just got out of the military a month ago, and there's a lot of things he's been saving up to say. "If you're going to stand up and declare that we MUST fight this war or MUST fight that one, and you're able-bodied, you had damn well better wedge yourself into a uniform and

### This Fucking War

*ThisFuckingWar.blogspot.com*

Madtom engages in a labor of love, putting together a group of posts from military and veterans - All hard hitting, all straight up.

### The Calm Before The Sand

*CalmBeforeTheSand.blogspot.com*

Active duty Army Specialist in Iraq with a lot of good insight into the situation, and his wife posting her experiences waiting from home.

### False Motivation

*FalseMotivation.blogspot.com*

Toy Soldier, an active duty Army Infantryman posted in Iraq with the Usual Suspect. "False motivation is the definition of hooah"

To the Editor,

*Thank you for the new edition. I am so happy to read more voices from the front!*

*Since I've been here, I've become more and more convinced that this is indeed an occupation by the very definition of the word. What I've become touched by - and bothered by at the same time - is the women of Iraq. They mostly go ignored, unless they are in need of being searched or questioned about their husbands' activities. Other than this and widows' compensation they are mostly ignored, by us as well as their nation.*

*I don't believe this to be a "womens' issues" publication, but as a fucking human being one's got to be blind not to see how badly these women suffer. And if one sex is lost, broken, mistreated, then that makes for half a nation lost, broken, and mistreated as well; and that is just unacceptable.*

V/R,  
Cpl. A.A.P. (Still in Iraq)  
USMC

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I never thought I'd be one to say this: Iraq has come to grow on me. That's not to say I don't want to leave and resume the life I'd left in the states. I often daydream of my coming home, picnics and movie nights with my little boy. I wonder though, what'll happen when I leave? Iraq is a beautiful country, a sad paradise in ruins.

All political and military banter aside, where will the

good people be after this dark chapter in history is closed? At the forefront of my thoughts is what will happen to the women? The women of Iraq are good women. They are like women in all cultures who wish to be safe, loved, respected, and independent. I'll never believe that how they live and how they are treated is acceptable because they know no different. It would be beneficial if they were granted equal rights and political throw with their male counterparts, then their minds would be an asset to themselves and also to their country.

What crazy ideas I have.



In less than two months I will leave Iraq to come home. I will most likely step off a charter bus; my sister, son's father, and my son will be waiting in the crowd. We will embrace. I will conform back into "normal" life. I will forget.

I will never forget. I will forever remember the little girl, dirt poor, who laughs hysterically with her mother, so young and careless. She

comes through every day, carrying giant palm leaves twice her size and sacks of dates. My last memory of her was the day she wore a veil. Her tattered dress became a long black robe, and the headscarf and veil covered her smile. But I could see her eyes, and they did smile.

When she is a woman, will she be the woman who, with marks and knives, shyly lifts her veil and tightens her dress when I search her? Or will she be the scholar who proudly says the books she holds are chemistry, that she has nothing to be found by me? I'll never know the answer to these questions.

My questions may never be answered but my eyes have opened to the possibility of change and reform. No one is, or ever will be, free in an occupation (which is what this is, the policing and occupation of an oppressed people). Man or woman cannot be free under these circumstances, no matter how much 'democracy' and 'republic' is used in a sentence to describe them. Although I'm sure that with common sense and compassion, the utter mess of Iraq could become what it was hundreds of years ago, before the string of European empires came and stripped what was never theirs; a fertile, abundant, stable, and cultured region.

What crazy ideas I have.

*A lot of people have asked me how I can be a sergeant in the Army, believing in its values, and still be a member of IVAW. I believe that the Army's purpose is to protect our country and to defend her Constitution, not to fight foreign wars that we can't win. Its true purpose is noble, but has been subverted by armchair generals and politicians who have never had to serve. They don't know these values and don't live them, but I do; And I feel that those values support, rather than contradict, what I'm doing now as a member of IVAW.*

# Adhering to My Values

*by Army Sergeant*  
(activedutypatriot.blogspot.com)

## **LOYALTY**

Bear true faith and allegiance to the U.S. Constitution, the Army, your unit, and other soldiers

Nowhere in this list does it say "the current leadership of your country, and their political ambitions." I am loyal to my fellow soldiers, I do not want them to die in a senseless war. I am loyal to the Army, I do not want it to be weakened on multiple fronts and taken away from its true purpose, defending our nation; I am loyal to the Constitution, which is under attack by men who have not sacrificed to protect it. I bear true faith and allegiance to all of these, particularly to the Constitution on which our nation was founded.

## **DUTY**

Fulfill your obligations

My highest obligation as a soldier is to my country and to the flag I salute. My obligation as a citizen compels me to defend my country in any way I can, against both its destruction as well as its dishonor. The Iraq War, and the way it is being prosecuted, dishonors us in the eyes of the world; even worse, it dishonors us to ourselves.

## **RESPECT**

Treat people as they should be treated  
Treat the people of the United States, as well as the people of Iraq, with respect.

They deserve to be treated according to their status; if they are prisoners of war, then treat them with the full dignity accorded POWs. If they are criminals, then give them fair and speedy trials, innocent until proven guilty. We do not give up our principles when we step away from our shores.

## **SELFLESS SERVICE**

Put the welfare of the Nation, the Army, and your subordinates before your own

It is difficult to devote time and effort to doing what you feel is right, when your chain of command so firmly believes that it is wrong. It's hard to face the intimidation and harassment that many members of the active duty military face when they begin to speak out. It's hard to stand up and tell your higher-ups that they are issuing illegal orders. The welfare of our country, and her continued survival as an honorable nation, depends on some of us standing up and saying that we will not participate in illegal acts, and that we will report them when and where we see them. We will not train our soldiers to commit them, and will train our soldiers to follow the honorable path. The honorable path, the hard service, means standing up and speaking the truth; so that America can begin to realize it, and bring us home.

## **HONOR**

Live up to all the Army Values

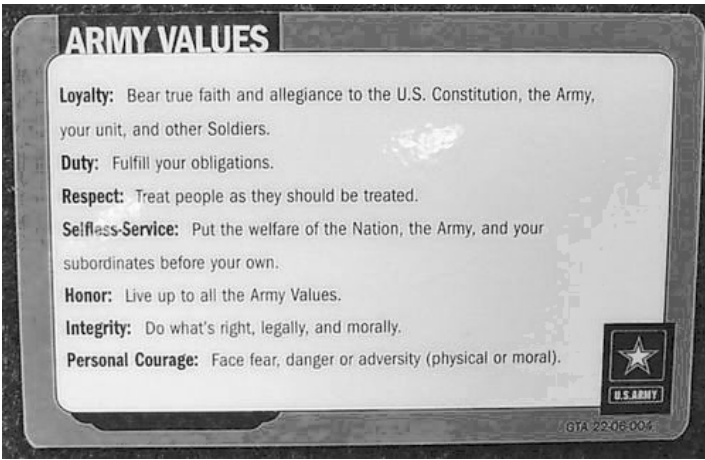
Honor is living up to the Army Values, but it is even older than that. It's what you have when you have nothing else left. It is phrased as living up to all the Army Values, because if you lack even one, you cannot be an honorable soldier. It is the ability to look in the mirror at the end of the day and know you have done all that you can, and that there is no need for reproach.

Our current leadership is dishonorable. By their bending of the torture legislation to allow what they want to take place, they are attempting to put a stain upon our honor that will take at least a generation to erase. As soon as our soldiers have outlived their usefulness, the leadership shuffles them away, by diagnosing them with "personality disorders" instead of treating them. Benefits are cut while contractors reap huge rewards. This is dishonorable, and the only way to restore that honor is to stand up against the people who are doing so.

## **INTEGRITY**

Do what is right, legally and morally

The actions of this country's political leadership are neither legal nor moral. The acceptance of torture, the false notion that Americans no longer have to hold to the beliefs that



shaped our nation once they leave its borders, 'baiting' with weapons caches; and other such tactics that at the very least skirt the fine line of legality, and are definitely not moral.

Claiming that it is okay to treat people dishonorably because they are not an organized force fighting against us is simply wrong, as is the argument that they are not citizens and therefore do not deserve the protections of the Constitution. Aren't we the good

actions, to bring itself in line with the country's beliefs and principles.

**PERSONAL COURAGE**

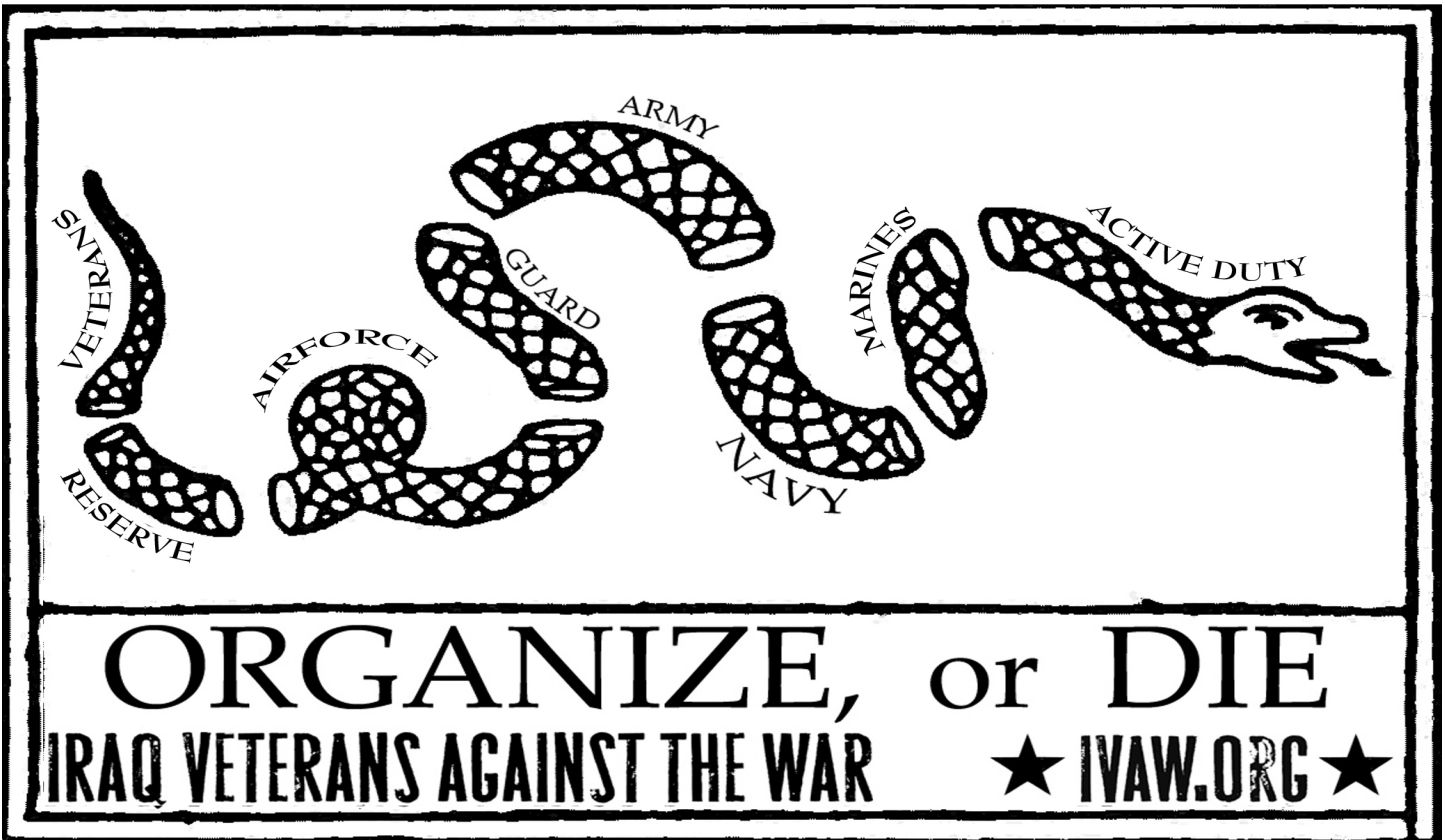
Face fear, danger, or adversity (physical or moral)

It does not take physical courage to stand up and fight against injustice in this fashion, most members have not been physically attacked; instead, the cowards who attack people for their beliefs have gone after the father of a dead servicemember (Carlos Arredondo). It does,

guys? We do the right thing, even if others don't; and if our leadership does not understand that, it needs to pull out of this war and cease its immoral

however, take great moral courage to stand firmly in defense of one's principles. It takes moral courage to stand up for what you know to be true and right, moral courage to say that the country is being steered in the wrong direction, and that you are duty-bound by your oath to turn it around. It takes moral courage to resist a war that your leadership believes in, or to stand against your entire platoon and state that you will not treat a prisoner with anything less than full dignity. And it takes moral courage to be counted, to let people insult you for perceived cowardice; when the truth is that you, like I, may not be against all wars, all places, all times.

...But hopefully you, like I, like many committed and dedicated members of the military community, are against this one.



# Tourist Photograph from Iraq

This is how I wanted to see myself...  
This is what I thought we would do in Iraq  
That's what I always thought we were about...

Barefoot, little kids...I remember that one there...  
he couldn't have been five years old  
Just a damn little kid, you know?  
Little, black, cracked, bare...  
Dust covered feet.  
Tiny little kid...Tuff as hell. His brother too.

The sand must've been 150 degrees, fuck'n  
hotter than that!  
Everything was so damn hot; the heat  
Would come up through my boots like standing  
on a stove.

The kid had baby toes that were like coarse  
callused black elephant leather.  
That kid had the craziest rough-ass skin  
I gave the kid an MRE and some other food.  
A bunch of crap I was sick of eating...

Kids would stand on the roads every  
damn day asking for that crap.  
There was nothing else... bleak  
dead dust days,  
powdered sand-lands of nothing for  
miles and miles.  
There was nothing but an  
unattainable horizon and a damn  
long ass road.

But the fucking little ass kids would  
come out of nowhere...  
Nothing around! Not a damn thing!  
But these damn kids would just  
appear.

I thought we were going over to help  
these damn kids that would come  
out of nothing and go back into it.  
Feed the hungry, help the  
oppressed, give relief from day in  
day out pain.  
That is what I wanted to think I was  
there for.

Barefoot, all day long  
All they wanted was food from us...  
Like damn kids on the 4th of July...  
we were a spectacle, a parade of crazy floats  
passing out food.

But then we hit one you know...That was it! It all  
changed  
We were told not to stop... Don't stop. Not in the  
towns.  
Keep the truck moving and don't stop. Forget  
the kids!

Now, now I can't forget the kids. Damn kid. I'm  
not even there.  
Hundred thousand miles away and its still in my  
fucking head.

Ah fuck'm they were just a part of the damn  
landscape anyway.

*Oil painting and poem by Aaron Hughes*



# Why I'm Attending Winter Soldier

*March 13-16, National Labor College, Silver Spring, MD*

## **Clifton Hicks**

When I volunteered to fight in Iraq shortly after my seventeenth birthday, I never thought for even a moment that I would find myself facing the decisions that I have been forced to make in these past few years. I never dreamed that I would ever find myself going along with things that I would be too ashamed to tell my family about, that I would have to choose sides within my own unit, or that I would ever find myself whittled into the form of a pawn on some spoiled rich boy's chess board. No, I never thought that I, the descendant of so many proud soldiers, would ever have to choose between my loyalty to the Army, and my loyalty to the People of the United States.

I have known of the upcoming Winter Soldier proceedings for a long time now, and I honestly admit that I never intended to testify. I had hoped that I would not be needed, that I could sit this one out, that others would come forward to take my place, but those were selfish thoughts. When I nurtured those hopes, I was not thinking of my brothers who had once toiled tirelessly at my side in the mud and the dust and the filth, nor did I think of my brothers who had been chosen for death while I was unfairly allowed to go on living. I thought only of myself and my own desire to be anonymous.

We do not tell our stories for our own benefit. Indeed,

everything inside of us screams for silence and obscurity, but we must tell our stories for those who cannot. Nearly four thousand of our siblings cry out from beyond the grave for truth, and we must answer them.

## **Jason Hurd**

I enlisted in the U.S. Army as a medic in August of 1997. From November of 2004 to November of 2005, I served in Central Baghdad as senior medic for Troop F 2/278<sup>th</sup> RCT. As a medical professional, I agreed to abide by the central tenants of the Hippocratic Oath. I promised to keep the welfare of my patients as my highest priority. I agreed to practice medicine to the best of my ability and to avoid violating the morals of my community. Most importantly, I agreed to never deliberately harm anyone for the interests of others. As much as I believed in these principles, my unit and I violated every single one of them during our stay in Iraq.

As a member of the U.S. military, I enlisted under the impression that I would always fight on the side of the oppressed, defending them when they could not defend themselves. Instead, I actively participated in the oppression of the Iraqi people. As we drove down Iraqi streets, I sat idly by as my unit opened fire on innocent civilians. I turned a deaf ear as my fellow soldiers spat racial slurs like "haji" and "rag-head." Quite frankly, my

fellow soldiers and I regarded the Iraqi people as less than human and not worthy of equal moral consideration.

As many times as I turned a deaf ear to my surroundings, I once listened intently as an Iraqi man explained the harm caused by the U.S. occupation. "Mister," he said, "we understand that you have good intentions here; but before America invaded, we didn't have to worry about car bombs in our neighborhoods. We didn't have to worry about the safety of our children as they walked to school. And we didn't have to worry about American soldiers shooting at us as we drive down our own streets."

## **Michael Harmon**

According to a recent poll, the war in Iraq is no longer the main issue for voters; it's the economy. They fail to realize that the economy is going to shit precisely because of the wasteful spending on the war. I want to bring to light to congress and other soldiers what was happening from the beginning. I want to end the war, to convince congress to cut off funding or have a withdrawal plan from the war. I want to bring to light the fact that innocent Iraqis were killed in front of me and nothing was done about it. If someone got shot going to work here in New York City, they wouldn't like it.

*Michael Harmon served in Iraq in 2003 with the 1/67 Armor, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.*

## Jason Washburn

After three tours in Iraq, I've seen the whole spectrum. They really did welcome us when we first showed up. They were grateful, they were glad that we got rid of Saddam Hussein. Nobody there liked him, not even his own soldiers. Everywhere we went they came out with their hands up, busloads of them just coming out and surrendering; and the ones that didn't do that, ditched their uniforms, ditched their weapons, and went back to their daily life. They wanted Saddam out as much as anybody. They thought we were going to help them rebuild, which is what we promised to do; but instead, all we did was continuously destroy. The longer we're there, the more we destroy; and little by little people became less and less grateful and more and more angry. I can really understand where they're coming from and why they would build a resistance against this occupation; y'know, I don't think I've talked to a single Iraqi that hasn't had someone in their family killed.

I think it actually deteriorated a lot slower than it would in the United States; if some other nation had invaded our country and the same thing was going on, I think it would deteriorate a lot quicker than it did there. From what I've seen, a lot of the Iraqi people are very open, generous, and hospitable. Especially when we first got there, they were willing to have us in their homes, they would invite us in for food and drink; and even by my third tour

they were sometimes still doing that. I can't even imagine it. If I had enemy troops in my home, I would be poisoning them, not feeding them.

## Margaret Martin

I knew as soon as I heard about Winter Soldier that I needed to be a part of this amazing group of people who are willing to stand up for the truth and for what's right. I need to stand with those who are testifying, to let them know that they have the support of their brothers and sisters in this fight, and the support of all Americans who are sick of the same old political rhetoric. I want to show this nation that we have a voice, and that it will not be silenced by those who would claim that we do not, or that the truth is really not patriotic.

**Having served two tours of duty in Iraq, I believe that it is my responsibility as an American to amplify the voices of my fellow soldiers who have seen the darkest side of humanity.**

I need to stand up so that my soul can rest, with the knowledge that I let my morals and convictions guide me in this life and lead me down a path which I know to be righteous. I need to be there because people whom I love dearly are risking their lives in a war that is bringing death, debt, pain, and shame to this country and stealing away the lives of thousands of innocent Iraqis. I love my country and I want it to

be a nation worthy of our pride and service.

## Joe Wheeler

Spreading the word about what is really happening to soldiers in Iraq versus what the media portrays is of vital importance. The people of the United States need a wake-up call to stir them from their debilitating apathy. One hopes that our collective testimony will serve to positively influence the outcome of the war, and the public's perception of what is happening. Winter Soldier is something that we should all be able to look back on with pride as a turning point in this seemingly endless war.

## Liam Madden

It is rare that everyday people get to make a mark on history. Usually the generals, kings and presidents tell the story and leave out all the inconvenient themes. Winter Soldier will be a moment in history, a moment created by ordinary people, by veterans who care about their friends and complete strangers.

I will be at Winter Soldier because the courageous veterans standing up and sharing their uncomfortable stories need all the support that we can offer. While the majority of this country forgets there is a war raging in Iraq, it is our responsibility to change the way this war is remembered and it is my responsibility to help. Winter Soldier will be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to see the the world stop for a moment... to listen... to us. It will be unforgettable.



## **Steve Mortillo**

Just the fact that this war has cost more than any war in American history; we are in debt billions of dollars for a war that this country never believed in, a war that was sold to this country in lies and deceit. I refuse to let those with whom I served be disgraced like that. There is no forgiveness in my book for someone who orders Americans into battle to die, and profits hand over fist, and lies through their teeth to keep it going.

## **Jonathan de Wald**

I'm attending Winter Soldier in order to hear what I can't in the mainstream political discourse of this country - the truth about the occupation of Iraq from the perspective of the troops who were a part of it. We're constantly bombarded with inaccurate and often utterly dishonest assessments of the war from the so-called experts, most of whom found it inconvenient to ever wear a uniform themselves, and a news-entertainment industry far more concerned with ratings and profitability than with journalistic integrity. It is absolutely insane that the honest voices of soldiers and veterans have no means through which to tell the public what they witnessed in the combat zone and elsewhere, an entire host of terrible truths that form the narrative of Iraq and its aftermath: The deaths of innocents, particularly children. Routine mistreatment of prisoners for the purpose of gleaning information most

could not possibly have, assuming those prisoners are in fact combatants in the first place. The growing population of traumatized veterans who cannot access the support and treatment that they need, and to which they are rightfully entitled. For some politicians and commercial media, and the interests that own them, these testimonies have no place in their vision of America; but for the rest of us, the people of this country and the Winter Soldiers who served in a war that we now know to be wrong, no vision of America denies the truth.

*Jonathan de Wald served in the U.S. Army for ten years and was discharged at the rank of Staff Sergeant.*

## **Army Sergeant**

There comes a time in every man's life where he has to stand up for what's right. Where he has to consign risk to the devil and step forward for a cause worth believing in. For me, the U.S. Army helped with that when they made me a non-commissioned officer. Caring for soldiers is what I do, and it's something I can lift my head up high doing. Something I'll go to the ends of the earth and back to make sure of. My soldiers are my family, and I would give everything, up to and including my life, for them.

But my Army family isn't being taken care of very well. Our leadership is abandoning us. I'm seeing my soldiers being taken for a war they don't believe in and can't win, chewed up and spit out by Washington politicians. Young soldiers, trying to do the best

they can, being given bad and illegal orders. Young soldiers being shoved to the wayside when it comes time for political CYA. Officers denying their orders. Politicians exposing intel agents. Combat medics with PTSD being discharged for 'pre-existing personality disorder' and forced to pay back their bonuses.

Many of these soldiers have tried legitimate means of addressing their grievances. They've tried their chain of command, they've tried the IG, many of them have even tried their congressmen; but these people have laughed it off. They don't want to know what's going on, or how the war in Iraq is hurting the Army and its soldiers. They're too concerned with their own positions and their own comfort. But I care, and I believe that my fellow soldiers do too; and so would the American people, if they only knew how badly we are being treated, and what their sons are being forced to do for a political goal that will never materialize. That's why I'm going to Winter Soldier, because I want to see these soldiers shake down the walls of Congress with the righteous thunder of their voices. I want to hear them with my own ears as they stand up and tell the world that they will not hide what they have seen. And I want to applaud them with my own hands until they blister, because I am that damn proud of them. All of them.

If you love the Army, and your brothers-in-arms in it, but hate what our leadership is doing, join me.

# An Open Letter to Bill O'reilly

Regarding his comments about homeless veterans

by Geoff Millard

First off, I hope you don't mind me calling you Bill, as I have been a guest on your show twice now, so I think we are on a first name basis. That having been said, I would like to address your recent comments regarding homeless veterans. The last time I was on your show, you asked me to give Rush Limbaugh the benefit of the doubt, and I did; thus, I will afford you the same courtesy. With that benefit of the doubt in mind, I would like to address your comments on two of your shows regarding homeless veterans.

The first was with guest Ed Schultz when you said, "If you know where there is a veteran sleeping under a bridge, you call me immediately and we will make sure he does not do it." Again, I'm taking you at your word, so I am asking any veterans who have been or are now homeless to call you on the Radio Factor, so that you may give them a home.

## From your website:

"Call us at 1-877-9-NO-SPIN (877-966-7746) with your questions and comments."

The following night you gave a more lengthy explanation. In your talking points memo, you said the vets are homeless not because of the economy, but because of "addiction and mental illness" and that it is "something politicians can do little about."

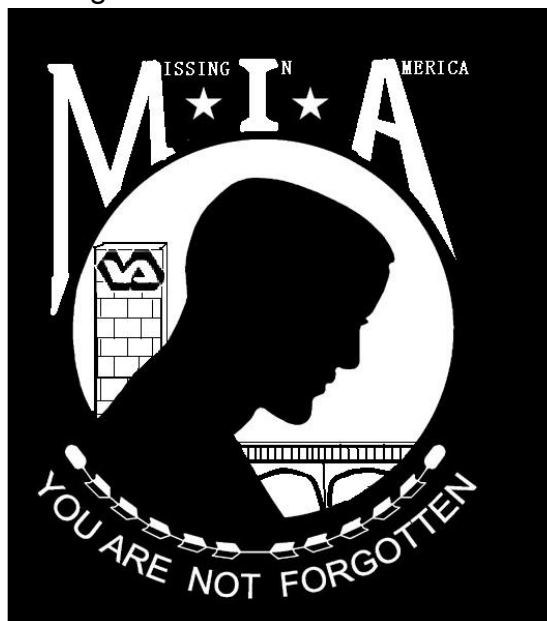
Well, Bill, I will again give you the benefit of the doubt on this, and will address what you

said in your more lengthy explanation. I would like to start with your quote that there is little politicians can do about addiction and mental illness in vets. With all due respect to your Harvard education, do you really think that an increased Veterans Administration budget including more programs for substance abuse, more programs for PTSD, and hell, even more homeless shelters would not make great leaps forward in ensuring that no person who has pledged their life for our country would ever sleep on the streets? The next thing that politicians can do, is to stop any commander in chief from sending our men and women off to wars that are based on lies time and time again. There is plenty that politicians can do for our veterans, yet they continue to funnel that money into an illegal and immoral war, instead of taking care of the veterans

created by it.

As for addiction and mental illness being the cause of homelessness among veterans, I wonder just how many homeless vets you know, Bill? I know quite a few, including the editor of this publication, who recently spent a year bumming his way around New York City.

Bill, we both know that you have never served this country a single day in uniform, so don't try and fool a vet on your knowledge of what makes veterans homeless. If you really want to know the cause, I would suggest that you leave your high-rise office in Manhattan tomorrow and walk the streets just a few blocks, find a veteran living on the streets and ask them why they are homeless. You need to see the human face of homeless veterans, so that it is not just a political talking point for your memos.



J.P. Hornbeck - (shardsoreality.blogspot.com)

*Every time I see those yellow ribbon magnets that people wear or put on their cars, I know there's tons of better things they could have done to show their support; like volunteering as a peer counselor, homeless outreach, benefits counseling, or even the smallest thing like accompanying a vet to the VA or helping them fill out some paperwork. These aren't just things that can only be done on Veterans' Day, nor should one feel inclined to only use holidays as an excuse to help vets and raise awareness for their issues. Any day of the week or year for all those "Sunshine Patriots," it ought to be something they do with a smile, volunteer to help our vets.*

# APPEAL FOR REDRESS FROM THE WAR IN IRAQ

Many active duty, reserve, and guard servicemembers are concerned about the war in Iraq and support the withdrawal of U.S. troops.

The Appeal for Redress provides a UCMJ-authorized means through which individual servicemembers can urge their member of Congress to end to the U.S. military occupation. The appeal has already reached thousands of servicemembers who seek redress from the war. The initial appeal messages were delivered to members of Congress on January 16, 2007. The Appeal for Redress will continue to be delivered to Congress until all our brothers and sisters come home from Iraq. The wording of the appeal is short, simple, and to the point. It is patriotic and respectful in tone.

Clip and send to:

**Appeal for Redress  
P.O. Box 53052  
Washington, DC 20009**

Members of the military have a legal right to communicate with their member of Congress. Article 4.1 of DoD Directive 7050.6, the Military Whistleblower Protection Act, states that "Members of the Armed Forces shall be free to make a protected communication to a member of Congress." Attorneys and counselors experienced in military law are available to help servicemembers who need assistance in countering any attempts to suppress this communication.

**<http://appealforredress.org>**

**(360) 241-1414**

## Appeal for Redress

**As a patriotic American proud to serve my nation in uniform, I respectfully urge my political leaders in Congress to support the prompt withdrawal of all American military forces and bases from Iraq. Staying in Iraq will not work and is not worth the price. It is time for U.S. troops to come home now.**

The information you submit will be sent to members of Congress and the Senate. The appeal's organizers will not release your information to any other individual or organization.

Please indicate your duty status: Active Duty\_\_\_ Active Reserve or National Guard\_\_\_ IRR\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ MI: \_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Secure non-military e-mail address: \_\_\_\_\_

Duty Station: \_\_\_\_\_ Home ZIP Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Have you served in the Iraq Theater? Yes\_\_\_ No\_\_\_

Branch of Service: \_\_\_\_\_ Rank: \_\_\_\_\_

# GIs - KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

## GIs have the legal right to:

Consult with a congressional office, civilian counselor or service, or a lawyer about a problem.

Appeal any court-martial conviction, discharge denial, or non-judicial punishment.

Say what they think and feel about the military, and participate in peaceful demonstrations when they're off-duty, out of uniform, off-post, and in the U.S.A. (DoD Directive 1325.6)

Request redress from their Commanding Officer for any grievance, and write a formal complaint against their CO if redress is not granted. (Article 138, UCMJ)

Call for information from a network of nonprofit, non-governmental organizations. The service is free. The call is confidential.

**The GI Rights Hotline**  
**800-394-9544**

Overseas number:  
215-563-4620

**<http://girights.org>**

[girights@objector.org](mailto:girights@objector.org)

***Remember: Rights are not given, they are fought for and exercised.***

## FEBRUARY IVAW EVENTS

### **IVAW National**

Feb 7, 6pm

*Warrior Writers book release party*  
1400 N American St., Philadelphia

### **Seattle Chapter**

Feb 21, 6pm

*"Soldier You're Not Alone" concert*  
*Active-duty get in free with military ID*  
Hell's Kitchen – 3829 6th Ave., Tacoma

### **NYC Chapter**

Feb 17, 5pm

*Fundraiser at Vox Pop*  
1022 Cortelyou Rd., Brooklyn

### **Western NC Chapter**

Wednesdays at 5:30pm

*Veterans' Voices – WPVM 103.5 FM*

Feb 14, 7pm

*Fundraiser – UNC, Asheville Campus*

### **Chicago Chapter**

Feb 2, 7pm

*Film screening – 2418 W Bloomingdale*

Feb 11, 10pm

*Benefit at Danny's Bar – 1951 W Dickens*

Feb 19, 7pm

*Benefit & film screening*  
*DePaul Art Museum – 2350 N Kenmore*

Feb 22, 7:30pm

*Film screening & dance party*  
742 N. LaSalle

### **DC Chapter**

Every Sunday, 3-5pm

*Homefront Battle-Buddies peer support group*  
715 Princeton Pl. NW

War is a racket.  
A few profit and  
the many pay.  
-USMC Maj. Gen.  
Smedley Butler

It is only those who  
have never heard a  
shot, never heard the  
shriek and groans of  
the wounded and  
lacerated... that cry  
aloud for more blood,  
more vengeance, more  
desolation.  
-Gen. William T. Sherman