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central
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THE OBJECTOR

a magazine of conscience and resistance

Focus on Counter-Recruitment



Evidence Seal

NO.	1515	Shot Down by Students
DATE	1/20/05	OFFENSE
LOCATION	SCCC	OFFICER
		Sgt. 1st Class Jeff Doe



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Editor’s Note

As we go to press with this special counter-recruitment issue of *The Objector*, one can’t help but notice today’s news headlines from Iraq, ‘18 US Troops Killed in Past 7 Days’.

It still baffles me that this news is not more prominently featured in the American newspapers and evening news shows. Instead, we get up-to-the-minute detailed coverage of the Michael Jackson trial, the latest Paris Hilton commercial flap, and the box office success of the new Star Wars flick. When there is coverage of what’s going on in Iraq, it’s the kind of news that you might find in a fictional comedy- like leaked pictures of Saddam Hussein in his underwear.

As the details of these 18 soldiers’ deaths become available, it turns out that most of these casualties were members of Reserve and National Guard units, citizen soldiers not full-time soldiers. Most of their deaths were attributed to small arms fire and improvised explosive devices, indicating another surge in operations by the Iraqi resistance.

How much longer will this war drag out? Today’s tally is 1,647 American soldiers killed since the invasion began two years ago, a number closely tracked by various agencies. Over 100,000 Iraqis have been killed in the same time period; agencies tracking these deaths are hard to name. I often question why so many Iraqis, Americans, and others have had to suffer horrible deaths in this war. The answer to that question is what must motivate us to continue doing this work when the odds are stacked against us. There is a way to end this insanity, and that way is through countering military recruitment. You can’t fight a war without soldiers willing to enlist and fight it.

With this in mind, we at CCCO hope you enjoy this issue of *The Objector*. We have a feature story on the recruiting shortfall that most branches of the military are experiencing, and we introduce our new counter-recruitment initiative in the Bay area, Alternatives to War Through Education (AWE). We have a first-hand report from the historic antiwar march and rally in Fayetteville, NC that spotlights the growing movement of military families and veterans who are organizing to end this war. We take you into the mind of a GI Rights Hotline counselor examining the standards of care we provide to troubled soldiers; we glimpse an overlooked and ignored US-sponsored “regime change” in Haiti. There’s also a very revealing article on how the ASVAB (Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery) is being used in high schools to recruit soldiers and what students are doing to resist it.

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A Rough Road for Recruiters in 2005

by Kevin Ramirez



From left: *Conduct Unbecoming*, a screenshot from a Cincinnati, Ohio news story on recruiters caught lying; a roomful of new recruits taking their oath of enlistment; a woman expresses her views on the war during the May 20 day of counter-recruitment action in New York City.

What do you get when you mix an illegal and unjust war with an all-volunteer military? A recruiting crisis.

If only it were that simple!

It was late February and the 2005 NBA All-Star Game was about to begin. I was sitting on the couch anxiously waiting for the start of this game where the most talented and popular basketball players from the NBA square off in an East meets West showdown. It was a Sunday evening and my mind was preoccupied with the start of another week of counter-recruitment organizing when all of a sudden uniformed soldiers marched onto the basketball court carrying the American flag. I thought to myself, here we go, again! As one soldier offered a tribute to all of his buddies in the military especially those deployed in Iraq, the entire arena erupted in applause especially the two dozen or so uniformed soldiers seated in their very own special section behind the scorer's table. When the applause subsided, someone announced a quick performance by Destiny's Child, one of the most successful R&B groups in history, and the beat dropped to their hit single appropriately titled "Soldier." The message became clearer as the camera centered on the group for the most part except during the chorus where the camera would switch to shots of the cheering soldiers. The chorus went something like this:

*I know some soldiers in here (Where they at, where they at)
They wanna take care of me (Where they at)
I know some soldiers in here (Where they at, where they at)
Don't mind takin one for me (Where they at)*

The message I heard was soldiers were "cool," they're "hot," and they are the "real All Stars." Two months later Destiny's Child would go on to perform at a show called "Rockin' the Corps" at Camp Pendleton for 40,000 Marines returning to the US fresh from the killing fields and streets of Iraq.

Somewhere not far away from where I was sitting, a young person watching the game picked up a brochure they received in their mailbox from the US Army. Quietly humming the tune to "Soldier" they glanced at the tanks, the helicopters, and the camouflaged faces in the brochure and said to themselves, "no, not for me," and swiftly dumped the brochure into the trash.

Despite the continuous blitz of military-recruiting propaganda increasingly embedded in popular culture, recruiters are desperately needing people to fill their quotas. For the first time in at least six years, the military is experiencing a recruiting shortfall they are not likely to pull out of. As of May 1, 2005, recruiters for the Army, the Army Reserves, the Marine Corps and the Army National Guard have all reported significant to alarming drops in their recruitment numbers.

The Army National Guard is perhaps the one branch that has been hit the hardest over the last two years. They were the only service to miss their recruiting goals in 2003, and in 2004 they came up short by close to 7,000. This year doesn't seem to be getting any better as the numbers for the first half of 2005 show the Army National Guard behind their goals for recruits by about 24%. Perhaps sending people who join the National Guard to Iraq for two years, where hundreds of members of the Guard have been killed, has had some unforeseen consequences? The same can be said of the Army Reserves. The Army Reserves are in no better shape at the end of their first half of 2005 and are reportedly 21% short of their annual goal for recruits. For the Reserves, however, the problems don't stop at new recruits. There are additional problems in recruiting and retaining officers that has led to the head of the Reserves, Lt. Gen. James Helmly's description of the Reserves as becoming a "broken force." With only 70% of officer positions in the Army Reserve currently staffed, that description certainly rings true. The first problem is that officers in the Reserves are resigning at an increased rate. In 2001 there were 15 resignations by officers in the Army Reserves; in 2004 there were close to 400! On the other end of this spectrum are reports that Army ROTC enrollment numbers are also down a significant 16%, a trend that has maintained itself for the past two years! To try and offset this grim picture, the Army Reserves have increased their recruitment force by 700 new recruiters and the National Guard has done the same with an additional 1,400 new recruiters. To assist these new recruiters a number of tactics have been deployed in the form of enlistment bonuses. For the National Guard, they are offering a \$2,000 "Quick Ship Bonus" for recruits who can ship to boot camp within 45 days of signing their contracts, and another program called the "Every Soldier a Recruiter" bonus of \$2,500 for soldiers who refer qualified, prospective recruits to Guard recruiters. For the Reserves they have up to \$20,000 enlistment bonuses available for first-time recruits and a re-enlistment bonus of \$15,000. Both services this year have also raised the maximum age for recruitment from 34 to 39 increasing their pool for potential recruits by 22 million. 3

The Marine Corps is currently experiencing a recruiting shortfall they haven't seen in over 10 years! Beginning in January and stretching past April, the Marines continue to miss monthly recruiting quotas by several hundred recruits. Despite this recurring shortfall, the Marines remain convinced they will meet their quota by year's end, citing an improving economy, the war in Iraq and bad weather as possible reasons for the dilemma. We will have to wait and see how the Marines finish this year come September. The largest branch of the military is currently experiencing the largest shortfall. For the US Army, the crack appeared in February with recruiters falling 27% short of that month's quota, the first time a monthly quota had been missed in five years. The crack widened by a significant amount over the next two months, and by the end of April the Army reported a monthly shortfall of 42%. Army officials were quick to point out that recruiting tends to pick up over the summer and that overall Army recruiting is going well and the service is only 15% under their expected goal year to date.

Military officials and recruiters continue to downplay the recruiting situation, citing parental concern over the war in Iraq as the main reason why recruitment is lagging. To address this perception, the Army and Marines have decided to tailor their recruitment pitch to address the concerns of parents, and have announced their newfound strategies. The Army is producing four new television ads aimed at influencing parents; and they are making special efforts at pairing recent veterans from Afghanistan and Iraq with local recruiters as they go about their visits to schools and homes to sell the military. The Army has also recently raised the amount of college money a recruit can receive through the Army Navy College Fund from \$50,000 to \$70,000. They are hoping that money for college and enlistment bonuses, along with parental approval and a chat with a recent vet will sway people's decisions. The Marines have taken a similar approach and have produced a short video called "Parents Speak,"

which depicts the parents of Marines talking about how good the Corps has been for their kids. They are also beginning a direct mail campaign aimed at parents, promoting the benefits of military service and asking for the opportunity to speak with parents of juniors and seniors about possible enlistment. The Marines have even gone so far as to sponsor in-store running advertisements on all the television sets in 2,600 Wal-mart stores (see story on pg. 16) nationwide until the end of summer! The two Marine recruiting commercials that will be playing every hour from 7 am to 11 pm are titled "Family Photos" and "For Country." The military is certainly no stranger to in-store advertising as we have recently seen the National Guard partnering up with Blockbuster Video, inserting recruiting brochures into DVD rental cases across the country; but this Walmart television idea is a new twist to the strategy.

In response, activists are adapting their strategies and in addition to organizing in schools and picketing the recruitment centers, people are starting to protest the war and recruitment outside of Walmart and Blockbuster stores. Counter-recruitment work has literally exploded onto the national scene this year. Kicked off in January with a well publicized photo (see cover) of an Army recruiter being escorted off the campus at Seattle Central Community College, it was solidified on March 20 by hundreds of counter-recruitment actions (see pg. 19) at recruitment centers nationwide. Much of this new energy has been ignited by students in high schools demanding restraints be put on recruiters, and alternative viewpoints on war and the military be

made available to them. College students have simultaneously been pressuring their schools to enforce policies of non-discrimination in regards to the military's policy against homosexuals, and forcing recruiters to leave or stay off campus. Everybody wants to get involved with counter-recruitment work, it seems as if the anti-war movement has finally gotten over the 2004 election results and are back organizing and agitating an end to this war by stopping young people from enlisting. A counter-recruitment movement is quickly building momentum and with each day our numbers are growing exponentially. Certainly the last 10 years of doing this work is having some effect on recruitment as CCCO and other national organizations have sustained a counter-recruitment network in public schools across the nation, but of course it is not the only factor. In truth, there are a variety of factors that are causing the recruiting slump besides the war in Iraq, the concerns of parents, and the work of counter-recruiters. Let's give credit where credit is due: honestly, the youth of today are not easily fooled. Let's have a quick examination of some of the recent headlines and news stories that might be contributing to the current slump in recruiting.

CCCO is well aware of the physical and mental abuse, the indoctrination and the dehumanization process new recruits experience during basic training. We know that a small number of new recruits become fatally ill and sometimes die during this time. We also know that drill instructors scream verbal abuse and often take part in or encourage physical abuse of new recruits who may be poorly performing or those having trouble adapting to military training. On February 8, Jason Tharp, a 19-year-old Marine recruit died when he drowned during water survival training at Parris Island, SC. This story would not have seen the light of day had it not been for what was caught on videotape just one day before he died. In news footage captured by a local television crew, Jason is seen being assaulted by his drill instructor, at first grabbing and shoving Jason and then going on to strike him in the chest. Jason was afraid of water and was resisting the drill on the day he was assaulted. The very next day he gave in, and drowned during a 25-meter swim. According to his last letter home, he told his parents he felt he had "made a mistake in joining up," that he "wasn't cut out for it," and that maybe he should "come home and try to get a grant"; he had joined the Marines to earn money for college. This particular story may not raise much concern taken on its own, but when coupled with more allegations of drill-instructor abuse, young people will begin to rethink any ideas of joining the military. The US Army has experienced two public scandals involving drill instructors this year alone. In January, four Army drill sergeants were punished for selling "PT insurance"—basically accepting bribes for giving passing grades to recruits for substandard physical training. These drill sergeants were also running a lucrative black market for items deemed "contraband" during basic training. By early April another scandal involving four abusive Army drill sergeants and their unit commander made headlines. Apparently these drill sergeants thought it was acceptable to discipline a recruit by:



Verbal abuse and physical intimidation is something new recruits can expect during boot camp. Photo: Thomas Hoepker

- making one drink water until he vomited and then forcing the recruit to eat the vomit.
- slamming recruits into walls and lockers.
- throwing recruits to the floor and dousing them with water.
- punching recruits in the chest.
- dragging them down hallways by their ankles.

After headlines like these, why is there even a question about why young people aren't enlisting?

As if these revelations aren't enough to impact recruiting numbers, perhaps we should consider the conduct of recruiters. It's no secret that sexual assault, rape and violence against women in the military is rampant and out of control; but did you know it's also a problem for military recruiters and potential recruits? A string of sexual assaults of potential recruits by their military recruiters has received absolutely no major media coverage, and no ties have been made between the sexual assaults and the falling recruiting numbers. Stretching from July 2003 to March 2005 there have been five major cases that have caught our attention:

-July 2003: an Army recruiter based in Moreno Valley, CA was sentenced to 16 months in prison for statutory rape of a 17-year-old female recruit.

-January 2004: a Marine recruiter based in Baltimore, MD was convicted of fondling a teenage recruit and was sentenced to probation and ordered to seek counseling.

-May 2004: a Marine recruiter based in Blooming Grove, NY was charged with six counts of rape, the recruit was only 16 years old.

-June 2004: a Marine recruiter based in Riverside, CA was sentenced to five years in prison for raping a 17-year-old high school student.

-November 2004: an Army recruiter based in Riverside, CA was charged with four felony counts of having sex with and providing alcohol to two 17-year-old girls.

-March 2005: a National Guard recruiter based in Castleton, IN faces 31 charges stemming from alleged sexual assaults on seven potential female recruits.

In each of these cases the victims claimed to have met their recruiter in their high schools, and in almost all of the cases claimed the assaults took place either in the recruiting office or in the recruiter's vehicles! It is this type of activity coupled with other factors such as the high rate of female soldiers getting killed or wounded in Iraq, and women being placed in combat positions in direct violation of DoD policy that have contributed to a sharp decline in female recruits. This decline is most notable in the Army where in 2001 women made up 21% of new recruits but this year is accounting for a low 17%.

Racism in the military has also been in the headlines this year and may be having a similar effect on recruiting. Sgt. Asan Akbar was recently sentenced to death for killing two white officers on the eve of the invasion of Iraq. As the only African American soldier in his unit, and the only Muslim soldier in his unit, Akbar claims he killed his fellow soldiers because he was sick and tired of racism against himself and the frequent racist tirades against Muslims in general that he had to endure daily while serving in the military. Of course these allegations are not a factor in the case and no investigation will be conducted to substantiate these claims. In spite of this, allegations of racism within the military, and particularly in Iraq, has been confirmed by at least one other soldier. Aidan Delgado was an Army Reservist who spent some time working at Abu Ghraib prison and received a conscientious objector discharge from the military in 2004. In recent interviews with Aidan, he has recounted several incidents that confirmed the racist bias against Iraqis and Muslims that exists within the military. He witnessed his fellow soldiers mistreating and assaulting Iraqi children, civilians, and detainees with brutal zeal simply for being "hajjis," which he claims is such a frequently used racial slur that it even

appears in official Army documents! In 2001 African Americans made up 23% of new recruits compared to this year's share, which has dropped to a low 13%. Could racism in the military be one of the factors impacting the current recruiting slump?

To make matters worse there are now confirmed reports of recruiters lying, forging reports, and threatening jail time in order to sign new recruits this past May. Army recruiters in Colorado were caught on audio and video tape advising a potential recruit on how to go about getting a fake high school diploma, as well as where to purchase a special concoction to drink in order to pass the drug test. Another Army recruiter in Texas was also recorded leaving a message for a potential recruit threatening them with an arrest warrant and jail time if they didn't show up for a scheduled meeting. These high-profile cases of recruiter misconduct has forced the Army to cease recruiting operations nationwide on May 20, to reinforce the high standards in honesty and integrity the Army holds for its recruiters. One report released by the New York Times showed 480 cases of recruiter misconduct that have been investigated in the Army in 2005. Of those 480 cases, 90 have been substantiated, 98 recruiters have been punished, and eight recruiters have been relieved of duty. Recruiters are reportedly feeling the strain as well, often working long hours with little rest and poor results. The recruiting environment, recruiters say, has been especially hard ever since the "war on terror" began. Since October 2002, 37 Army recruiters have gone AWOL, many have requested other assignments and one has even applied for a conscientious objector discharge.

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Unfortunately for the military, as with the occupation of Iraq, they are failing to understand the complexities of the problem. No amount of college money, enlistment bonus, or shorter enlistment plan is going to make up for the blatant problems that are causing the recruiting slump: an illegal and unjust war based on lies, a disregard for international law and compassion as seen with the abuses at Guantanamo Bay and Abu Ghraib, a disregard for human life as seen with the daily massacre of civilians at roadblocks in Iraq and the caught on tape murder of a wounded Iraqi in a mosque, the sexual violence, racism and homophobia that is rampant in the military, the stop loss orders, the extended deployment of National Guard and Reserve troops overseas, and last but not least the deceptive and aggressive tactics of military recruiters. Young people today are taking all of these factors into account and are overwhelmingly deciding that the military is just not for them.

So let's continue to do the work where it counts the most: in our schools and communities supporting and informing today's teens about the harsh realities of war, and the potentially hazardous opportunities involved with military service. The future of the counter-recruitment movement is bright, as we gear up this summer for an exciting school year to come. In a bleak forecast for 2006, the Army's top recruiter, Maj. Gen. Michael D. Rochelle, told the New York Times that "the Army would most likely start its fiscal year this October with the smallest pool of recruits ready for boot camp in at least a decade." He went on to claim "2006 would be even harder, and perhaps the toughest year for recruiting since the all-volunteer force began in 1973." Perhaps next year the military can persuade the R&B group Destiny's Child to record a remix to their song "Soldier," and the chorus could go a little something like this:

We need some soldiers in here (Where they at, where they at)

They need to sign up for me (Where they at)

We need some soldiers in here (Where they at, where they at)

Would you please sign up for me (Where they at)

Ω

“I'm doing this so that no one will ever have to cut their son down in their basement again.”

by Walidah Imarisha

As the man's wavering voice rang out over the valley filled with banners and posters and bodies, the tears rolled down my cheek as I hugged my friend Bryan, whose body shook with sobs. Kevin and Joyce Lucey stood close to each other on stage and haltingly told of coming home to find their son Jeffrey, a Marine who had just come back from a tour in Iraq, dead by his own hand, hung by a garden hose in their basement. Kevin and Joyce joined Military Families Speak Out Against the War. They were one of dozens of family members, former and active service members and community organizers who spoke out at Fayetteville, North Carolina March 20, 2005, on the second anniversary of the invasion and occupation of Iraq.



Kevin and Joyce Lucey address the rally at Ft. Bragg, NC on March 20, 2005.

Photo credit: Charles Jenks

As a 10-year protest veteran at the ripe old age of 25, I have gotten pretty cynical about rallies and demonstrations and whatnot. Most of the time it's marching around slow as hell to stand around and listen to speakers say the same thing over and over again for hours under the watchful eyes of hundreds of heavily armed cops just itching for an excuse (or itching to manufacture an excuse) to intervene. I go to protests because I don't have anything better to replace it with, and because of guilt.

But Fayetteville was incredibly different. The town is the base town to Ft. Bragg, housing the 82nd Airborne and the Special Forces, so it is definitely a military town. Having grown up on military bases and then gone to high school at a small Oregon school where a disproportionate number of the kids were going into the military, I immediately recognized the feel of Fayetteville. The accents were different, but pretty much everything else was familiar. At least 20 active duty GIs defied orders from Ft. Bragg to come listen at the rally.

Rather than another massive convergence in DC or New York or San Francisco, people were traveling to a spot that has very real historical and political implications. Folks in the community and in surrounding areas of North Carolina and the larger South spent a good year planning and outreaching to affected communities. The result was over 4,000 people coming together in the largest gathering Fayetteville has ever seen (they had a similar protest last year that was over 1,000). I have been to protests with hundreds of thousands of people, been able to look up and down the street and see nothing but bodies, but I can't remember the last time I was so moved, more impassioned.

It was the people most affected by this war who were organizing, planning, speaking and making decisions before, during and after the rally. Led by Military Families Speak Out and the recently formed Iraq Veterans Against the War, the list of speakers included mothers, fathers, siblings, spouses, and children of people currently deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan, people who had come home shattered and wounded physically or emotionally, or people who hadn't come home at all. There was also an impressive slate of people who had gotten out or were trying to get out of the military who loudly voiced their opposition to the racist, imperialist war that this country is waging; some had served prison time rather than be deployed to kill civilians and occupy a country.

Rather than a party line, a didactic rant or a rehearsed spiel, these were folks who were speaking straight from the heart about their real-life experiences, speaking up for their loved ones, other soldiers and themselves. Talking about Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder to stop-loss orders to depleted uranium wasn't an intellectual discussion, it wasn't a theoretical supposition, it was real life that these folks have to live with every day. It was Camilo Mejia, a member of the National Guard, who refused to deploy to Iraq and spent nine months in military prison. It was Jimmy Massey (profiled in the January, 2005 Objector) who served as a Marine in Iraq and testified at a hearing concerning the illegality of the war that his unit bombed civilians and were given orders to fire on a non-violent demonstration of Iraqis with M-16s and 50-caliber machine guns. It was Michael Berg, father of Nick Berg who was decapitated in Iraq after being held by US officials and Muntada al-Ansar. It was Kevin and Joyce Lucey cutting their son Jeffrey down.

The entertainment aspect to the Fayetteville rally was also truly incredible. I traveled down to Fayetteville with the Puerto Punx band Ricanstruction from New York, who performed at a concert the night before as well as at the rally. The organizers did a fabulous job of weaving in talented and engaging performers throughout the speaking, so there was a break in terms of voices and also in terms of energy. Much of what the speakers had to say was incredibly powerful but also incredibly heart-wrenching. Splitting it up with performances touched the chord that art always touches, inspiring people in ways that

simple words by themselves could not. Art has always been a central part of any successful movement of resistance, throughout the history of the world. So of course Ricanstruction was amazing as always, and so were the other acts. But one performance captivated the entire audience, myself included. The Cuntry Kings, a drag king troupe from North Carolina, performing an amazing counter-recruitment drag piece to Trapt's "Headstrong." ("Headstrong/take you on/Headstrong/Take on anyone/I know that you are wrong/ This is not where you belong...") It was utterly stunning. It went through the entire recruiting process, and then the queer bashing that happens when someone is outed or comes out in the military, and finally the determination of the main soldier not to fight for a homophobic, transphobic oppressive military/government. It was an incredible piece of art, very talented, creative and moving. As an artist, I always feel that we have to better incorporate art into our movements in new and innovative ways, and this was the perfect example. You have to check out Cuntry Kings. (Their website is www.cuntrykings.com, they're still adding to it, and there is actually a clip of this performance if you go to traprockpeace.org/fayetteville_rally_2.html and scroll down.)

Another amazing thing about the performances was not just the quality of them but that almost every single group included a military veteran. It was incredibly powerful to see people who perhaps have kept their involvement in the armed forces a secret be able to express their feelings about that, and work to oppose the militarism that is seducing and lying and stealing young working-class people of color and sending them to kill and be killed by other young working-class people of color for the establishment of a global empire and even more disproportionate distribution of wealth.

There was a small contingent of counter protesters across the street from the convergence, probably no more than 100 people. It seemed, however, so much more laughable than other counter protests I had seen, because despite their taunts that we were all "commies" and "dirty hippies," clearly the buzz cuts and desert camo of the vets, the glasses on chains and pressed slacks of the family members belied that. Regardless of whether they agreed with what speakers were saying and what we were there for, they could not deny the fact that these are people who have been intimately and horribly involved in this war.

As someone who is from a pro-military family, it was healing for me to be at the protest. Many of my relatives are or were in the military. My brother, nephews, cousins, grandfather — we represent all branches. It is always a conflict of how to support and love them, while holding true to my principles and being uncompromising in my commitment to justice. How do you love someone you know has committed heinous acts, who has been a part of a killing machine that has bulldozed through so many countries and committed unconscionable acts of genocide? Being at this protest where people understand that dilemma very personally and clearly, seeing soldiers trying to atone

for what they have done, trying to pull something good out of their experience, seeing family members hold the people they love accountable while still affirming that love, even just seeing cheesy slogans like "We support our troops, so bring them home" made a very deep impact on me.

One of the glaring holes in the event, however, pointed out to me by a brotha at an anarchist people-of-color conference I went to the weekend after who had volunteered the day of the protest, was the lack of representation and voices of the over 100,000 Iraqis who have died since the invasion of Iraq, and the over one million Iraqis who died due to the embargos that have been in place since the first Gulf War. The 1,500 u.s. soldiers who have died and the 20,000 who have come back wounded (that's not including mental and emotional wounds for the most part) were very clearly represented, given names, faces and families. Humanized. The Iraqis who are dead were simply a number. Even though the protest was very anti-war, it replicated the government line of seeing "enemy" casualties (especially civilian) as "collateral damage" rather than people murdered by the state. As people in the belly of the beast, we must put out that information, we must make those connections for people, get in contact and support the Iraqi people however we

How do you love someone you know has committed heinous acts, who has been a part of a killing machine that has bulldozed through so many countries and committed unconscionable acts of genocide?

can. We must support people's rights to self-determination. Regardless whether amerika likes another country's government or not (and this current regime has absolutely no credibility when it talks about illegally elected and illegitimate dictatorships), it is not the place of the government to go in and overthrow a ruling body and then engineer a puppet election to install its mouthpieces into positions of power so it can better exploit the natural resources of the

country. We as an anti-war movement, as people of conscience, as souljahs and strugglahs and activists have to constantly question that, and also raise the reality that the Iraqi people don't want the u.s. government there. There has been no headway made in quelling the rebel forces, because they have the support of the people. It is their country, they know it, and they want the u.s. out. That has to be the ultimate demand we make of this government as well as paying reparations for the heinous atrocities it's committed in Iraq for over a decade. But we have to link this war to the other wars this country wages, link it to prisons (most of the young people of color who are recruited into the military are poor with no other job options, and are facing the reality of going to prison for illegal activities to make ends meet or going into the military, and that's called the poverty draft, cause that ain't no kind of choice), poverty, exploitation, sexism, racism, homophobia and transphobia, classism. We have to link it to Afghanistan and Vietnam and Colombia and Venezuela and Syria and North Korea and Compton and Harlem and South Central and North Philly. Without those connections being made, we will never truly win, because the goal cannot just be u.s. troops out of Iraq, it has to be to stop this government's plan for global domination, to oppose oppression in all its forms, to tear down this corrupt system and to build a loving, open society where people can have their needs met and be free to explore themselves.

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Ethical and Legal Issues in Hotline Counseling

by Jackie Thomason

I began volunteering on the GI Rights Hotline late in 2001. The many stories of personal change and transformation I hear every week give me hope in what often feels like a hopeless world.

A few years ago I began helping out in the training sessions for new volunteers, covering ethics, legal issues and counseling skills. I enjoy doing this because it gives me an opportunity to share with new volunteers some of the stories I hear and the inspiration that I get from them. I want to share some of those stories here in order to describe the skills we use and some of the ethical and legal issues that frame our work on the Hotline. The primary work that we do is of course to provide information, resources, and support to our callers. But in this article I'm going to focus on some of the ways that we do that work rather than on the information that we provide.

Confidentiality and Disclosure

The GI Rights Hotline card includes the slogan "The service is free. The call is confidential." In the trainings and here I preserve the confidentiality of the caller by presenting a composite of different callers when telling a story.

A recent caller was reluctant to give a name or phone number. He immediately asked, in a rather angry voice, who I was and why I was volunteering on the Hotline. He wanted to know if I would tell the Army or the government that he had called. These are normal questions and I knew from experience that the anger in his voice was probably motivated by fear and was not directed at me personally.

Of course I could assure him that we were not in any way connected to the military or the government and would not provide them with any information about him or his call. I always give callers who ask this kind of question some information about myself and how I decided to volunteer with CCCO.

Usually this question is really a way for the caller to figure out whether she or he can trust me. I keep my answer brief, honest, and straightforward. It is very seldom that someone requests more information.

I also told him that I am not a lawyer and that I would not be able to provide legal counsel. At the same time I was able to assure him that he was not violating any laws by asking for information from the Hotline.

Besides building trust, this conversation also places us on a more equal footing. Simply asking the question and having it acknowledged as legitimate and answered respectfully is a way that the caller asserts her or his power and is validated for doing so.



GI Rights Hotline counselors at in-service in Oakland, January 22, 2005

After I answered his questions, the caller said that I could call him 'Ernesto' and admitted to being in the Marines, in boot camp. The assurances of confidentiality laid the foundation of safety and trust that he needed to proceed with his call. He said that he was "getting crazy"; that his recruiter had "lied about everything"; that he had made a "big mistake" joining the Marines; and that he wanted out. We continued our conversation, discussing possibilities of separation and discharge. Because he had told me he was depressed, I also gave him the number for the Suicide Hotline (1-800-SUICIDE) for additional support. He told me that he was not actively suicidal and promised that if he became so, he would use that number.

(Not) Giving Advice

While not all callers are in crisis, many do feel vulnerable, disempowered, and sometimes desperate when they first call the Hotline. When presented with a variety of options, a person can also feel overwhelmed and have difficulty making a decision. According to one writer who describes himself as a Master Trainer in the military, "The Army wants to break you down and build you up in their image" during basic training (silentwar-

riors.net). Callers who are or have recently been in basic training may therefore be especially vulnerable.

Alicia called us after having gone AWOL from the Army five days prior. She had finished basic training and was in Advanced Individual Training (AIT). Her parents had told her not to join the Army and now were equally adamant that she must return immediately. They were very fearful about her situation. She reported that two weeks before she went AWOL she had attended a meeting in which she was told that she could be shot if she went AWOL and became a deserter. She was terrified, and yet she felt that she could not go back.

Because of a medical condition, Alicia had the option of returning to her unit within 30 days of having gone AWOL and attempting to get a discharge for her medical condition. She had heard that she could stay away for more than 30 days (at which time she would be classified as a deserter) and then return to Fort

Sill to obtain an Other Than Honorable (OTH) discharge. She asked if this was true and, when I told her that it was correct, wanted more information about this option.

Alicia was relieved to learn that the administrative classification as a deserter was not the same as being charged with desertion. She had a lot of questions about the processing at Fort Sill. Having more facts about what would happen if she chose to do this seemed to be calming for her.

On the other hand, simply having several options was difficult for her. "What is the best thing for me to do?" she asked. I told her that I could give her information but that this was her decision. I said that it seemed as if the Army was telling her what she had to do and her parents were telling her what she had to do but that I was confident that she could make the best decision for herself. This was also a good opportunity to remind her that I am not an attorney.

I asked her what it would be like for her to return and seek the medical discharge. She said she'd had a bad experience when she went to the hospital and believed that the doctor would never recommend a discharge.

She described how her command had humiliated her when she talked about her condition and told her to stop being such a girl and “just suck it up.” She did not feel very hopeful about this option.

She was thinking of staying AWOL until she was declared a deserter and requesting a discharge in lieu of court martial. Alicia wanted assurances that if she chose the option of being categorized administratively as a deserter the Other Than Honorable discharge would have no negative effect on her civilian life. And of course I could not give her those assurances. She continued to ask, in different ways, “What should I do?”

A central tenet of the empowerment model of counseling that we use at CCCO is that we do not give advice or encourage any particular course of action. We believe that the caller has the responsibility — and the ability — to make her or his own decisions. We believe that it is unethical for a counselor to tell a caller what they ought to do. Our work is to provide information, support, and resources, and to listen and ask clarifying questions to help the caller make the best decision for her or himself. We help the caller to develop a plan, or at least a next step, toward implementing their decision.

In Alicia’s case, there are also legal issues that make it imperative that we not give advice. According to the Military Law Task force of the National Lawyer’s Guild, “Counseling soldiers and sailors is legal. We don’t violate any laws by giving them info about their rights and options,” including those related to being AWOL. It is illegal, however, to encourage or advise that someone go AWOL or stay AWOL or that they do anything else that is illegal. Besides being poor counseling, giving advice in this case could put both the counselor and CCCO at risk.

It is, however, legal, to help someone who is AWOL to make preparations to return. With more discussion of the options and her feelings about them, Alicia decided to stay AWOL until she was declared a deserter. She would then turn herself in at Fort Sill and request a discharge in lieu of court martial. She had already sought civilian care for her medical problem. Information about her medical condition might serve as mitigating evidence when she returned. I e-mailed her information about the kinds of information her doctor could include in a letter about her condition, such as how long he had been treating her and what her prognosis was. She decided to bring her medical records and a letter from her doctor with her when she turned herself in, in the hope that her medical condition might help her to obtain a more favorable discharge.

Alicia did turn herself in at Fort Sill, after ver-

ifying that she had been dropped from the rolls. She called us to let us know that she arrived at Fort Sill on a Monday afternoon and left with her processing complete on Friday. Her discharge papers would be mailed to her. She was still concerned about the impact of the OTH but felt that she had made an informed decision and was ready to move forward with her civilian life.

Crisis Intervention: Helping a Caller to Manage Emotions

Occasionally a caller is in extreme emotional distress when she or he calls the Hotline. In these situations, the counselor’s first task is to help the caller to stabilize their emotions so that they are able to take in the sometimes complex information about options and make a plan of action.

John is a 29-year-old in the Army Reserves who had recently returned from six months in Iraq. He was married and had two children. A third pregnancy had resulted in miscarriage four months ago while John was deployed. Two of his best friends had been killed in Iraq and another had committed suicide when they returned to the United States. John was being redeployed. He did not want to go. He said that if he did go he would probably be killed and that he was going to “take someone out” with him. In addition, the military had “messed up” his pay and they were not fixing the problems. This was causing additional financial problems for John and his family.

All of this information came tumbling out in a rush. His speech was very pressured and he seemed not even to be breathing as he talked about all of these things that were going on.

While John’s case is quite dramatic, we have probably all dealt with friends and relatives who are overwhelmed by their situation and perhaps have developed some ways of being helpful to them. With this type of call, the counselor needs to make a judgment about how and when to intercede. We know that many of our callers have no one else to talk to and that for others the call to us will be the first time they talk about these issues. We are also aware that it can be stressful for some people to make the decision to call us and that they may have a lot of anxiety and fear about doing so. These callers have a lot of pent up emotion. Often the most helpful thing to do initially is simply to listen and let the caller release the emotions and thoughts that have been building up. Sometimes just that opportunity to vent emotions and express ideas is enough to calm the person so that they can proceed to the next steps of gathering information and resources and identifying options.

At other times, a person is so “wound up”

that they are unable to move forward. There comes a point when the mere expression is no longer helpful. Usually this is when the caller repeats him or herself and the voice takes on an obsessive quality. At that point an intervention is needed to help the caller manage their emotions. It can be difficult to decide when to do this, and difficult to interrupt someone that is expressing so much distress. However, in order to help the caller that is what we need to do.

This was the case with John. He had focused on the financial problems and his expression had taken on a more pressured and obsessive character. I took a deep breath. “John, I need to interrupt you.” I said. At first, he simply continued to talk over my statement. I repeated it and, when he stopped briefly, I suggested that we step back a moment. I acknowledged the extreme difficulty of his situation and said that any one of the problems he was experiencing would be challenging for most people. I asked him if I could summarize what I had heard, and he agreed. I did that. Knowing that he had been listened to and understood was calming to John. I asked him which of all these issues felt most important right now to deal with. Together we began to prioritize the issues and figure out which ones the Hotline could help with. Whatever our training, when we are on the Hotline we are not functioning as doctors, psychologists or lawyers. However we can identify psychological issues that we observe and provide resources to our callers.

The Department of Veteran Affairs estimates that 30% of Vietnam veterans had experienced PTSD at some time after returning from Vietnam(http://www.ncptsd.va.gov/facts/general/fs_what_is_ptsd.html). I hypothesized that John was experiencing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of his experiences in Iraq aggravated by the other issues he identified. In his statements about his situation, he was describing a high level of depression. I told John that I am not a doctor but that some of the experiences he had recounted — sleeplessness, angry outbursts, a lack of pleasure in any aspect of his life — might indicate depression. I asked John if he was suicidal. He said “not right now.” He gave me permission to provide the number for the suicide hotline and promised me he would use it if he became suicidal. As part of our discussion of his options I also provided the PTSD information and asked if any of those symptoms fit his experience. They did, so I provided him with some resources related to PTSD. This was also a possible avenue for discharge for him.

At the end of the call I asked John to summarize the steps he planned to take this week. He was able to do that. I reminded him that

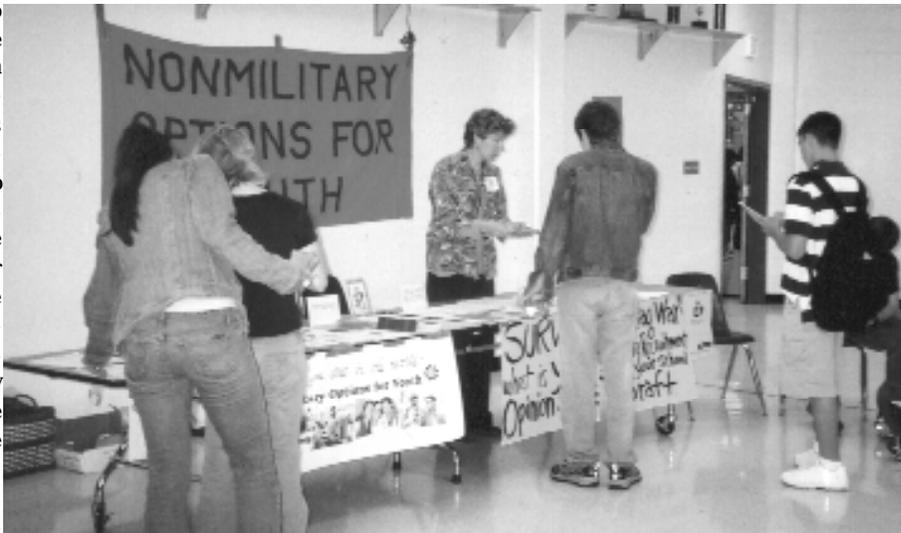
Weapons Trade: Mixing Guns, Schools and the Messages We Give Our Kids

by Susan Van Haitsma

One hour before 16-year-old Jeff Weise began shooting his classmates, I was standing in a high school hallway a thousand miles due south of Red Lake, Minnesota, staring at the image of another young man in a flak jacket brandishing an assault weapon. The US Navy recruiting poster, the largest item on a bulletin board labeled "Student Activities," was captioned with the slogan, "The Timid Need Not Apply."

The slogan was printed in digital-style lettering -- an appeal, I expect, to the geeky and the gawky alike. According to reports, Jeff Weise was some of both. While I can't say whether the increased militarization of US high schools played a role in Weise's fateful decision to go on a killing spree, the mixed messages students receive in school about guns and killing are bound to influence this impressionable age group in significant and sometimes deadly ways.

The Red Lake shootings no doubt will be used to argue for "beefed up security" in high schools across the country. In my district, students must have IDs and are prohibited from bringing into school items such as nail clippers and water pistols. At the same time, guns enter schools every day on the belts of full-time police officers and in the glossy advertisements of military recruiters who represent the biggest arms traders in the world.



Susan Van Haitsma works the counter-recruitment table at LBJ High School in Austin, TX.

Elsewhere in the school I visited on March 21 were brightly colored posters urg-

ing cooperation and tolerance. Perhaps students breeze by these and the recruiting posters without much thought, but it is harder to ignore the recruiters themselves who roam the hallways in uniform, talking to students, drawing them in. It is also hard to miss the flashy recruitment ads on the TV "news" programs piped into the high schools, the Army cinema vans that target schools around the country and the phone calls that students receive at home from recruiters who won't take no for an answer. Recruiters hang around school bus stops handing out their cards, and they show up for college and career fairs to entice students with enlistment bonuses and education benefits.

A Veterans for Peace colleague and I were in the school during the lunch period to share information with students about alternatives to the military. Two US Marine recruiters stopped by our table. One of them had seen combat in Iraq and wanted to make sure we understood the duty he felt to his family and country to keep wars away from US shores. Later, I wondered if, when he heard about the Red Lake shootings, he caught a glimpse of the futility of his goal and the myriad ways that wars always come home.

During our tabling, we conduct a survey asking students to share their views about the Iraq war, military recruitment in their schools, and a draft. On blank legal pads, they offer thoughtful, earnest responses. A solid majority opposes the war, and responses are overwhelmingly

anti-draft. Even pro-war students react strongly to the loss of personal freedom that a draft signifies. Views about military recruitment tend to be tolerant of recruiters, but at this school, more than half who responded on the recruitment issue expressed serious concerns. One student wrote, "The military should come by less often because it makes the students here a little nervous. It brings some fear into the school and an obligation to join a program to which not everyone agrees." Recruiters were described as "dangerous" and "pushy."

"The Timid Need Not Apply." The implication, of course, is not only that strong people use big guns, but also that peacemakers are weaklings. Why does this myth linger? Even a cursory review of US civil-rights history reveals the sheer guts involved in confronting terrorism without body armor and weaponry. And if one cares to look, courageous peacemaking goes on in every corner of the world in the face of widespread brutality and injustice. In recent news, there were the

Palestinian children who, carrying palm fronds and olive branches, faced armed soldiers as they marched along with international supporters and donkeys toward Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Georgetown University students accomplished a hunger strike calling for living wages for campus custodial staff. And there were the Iraq veterans and family members of enlisted soldiers who took special risks speaking out against the war during the hundreds of vigils, rallies and marches on the

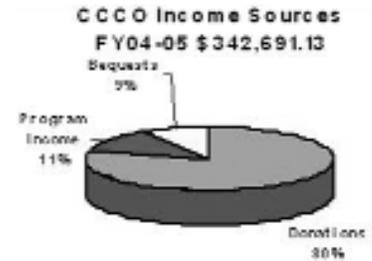
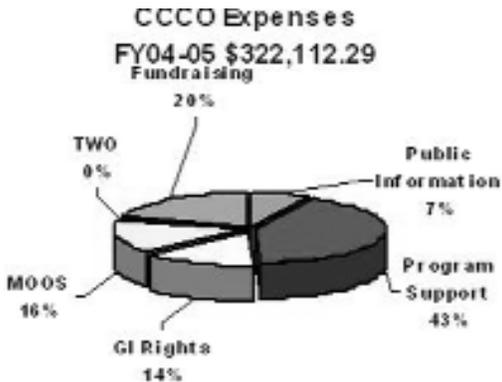
second anniversary of the invasion of Iraq. Did Jeff Weise know that peacemaking requires the bravest hearts of all?

The day after our high school tabling, I paid a visit to a US Navy recruiting center to ask what they knew about the poster I'd seen and if they thought it was appropriate to display in schools. The lieutenant in the office wouldn't comment and referred me to the regional public affairs officer, who cheerfully informed me that the Navy Seal depicted in the poster represented "the most fiercely combat-ready Special Forces program in the Navy," and she felt high school students had a right to know this was an option for them. "Just like college is an option," she said. She stressed that the Modified M-4 military assault rifle displayed on the poster was not available anywhere other than in the military.

While I was waiting for the US Navy recruiting center to open (it was late), I'd stopped into the US Army recruiting center nearby. I wanted to ask what strings are attached to the hefty enlistment bonuses now being offered to recruits. When my conversation with the bristling recruiter moved into the subject of war and peace, he suddenly pulled out his pocketknife and opened it. "See this?" he said, with an intimidating gesture. "This can be used either for good or for bad."

continued on page 20

CCCO Annual Report



**Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors
Fiscal Year 2004 -2005
April 1, 2004 – March 31, 2005**

Income	Amount
Individual Donations	\$256,454.38
Foundations	\$16,150.90
Program Income	\$39,318.49
Bequests	\$30,468.26
Total	\$342,392.03

Expenses	Amount
Program	\$183,077
Program Support	\$139,035.29
Total	\$322,112.29

Whew! Fiscal Year 04-05 (FY04-05) came to an end on March 31, 2005. And not a minute too soon either. CCCO weathered one of its most challenging fiscal periods in recent memory. We also had to overcome changes in staff and deal with a move to a new Oakland office. Talk about being gluttons for punishment; thank goodness the universal draft didn't start too.

When I began as the Development Program Coordinator last July, I could barely contain my excitement. After being self-employed, I had been looking for a way to contribute to the efforts to stop the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq. I responded to the CCCO ad only because I knew it was the right place to be, and I believed I had the skills to be of significant help to the organization. Well, after not knowing if we would survive my first 3 months, here we are, in a brand new fiscal year, with a brand new attitude, and a brand new organizational culture.

CCCO finished FY04-05 with a small surplus after paying off many nagging debts. There is now in place even greater fiscal management and accountability among all CCCO staff (wow - all 3 of us!!). It is amazing that we were able to respond to the expanding needs of the movement last year and still finish the year better off than when it started. My hat goes off to the CCCO Board of Directors and my two co-workers, Kevin Ramirez and Steve Morse for having the wherewithal to buckle down, do the hard work, and make the hard decisions. With a new "if we can't raise it, you can't spend it" philosophy, we were able to move from the brink of closure to expanding our GI Rights Hotline Network and volunteer counselors, to adding a much-needed counter-recruitment component to the West Coast office, to publishing our signature *The Objector* magazine for the first time in over two years, to a planned giving program, to expanding our support base through house parties, special events, community outreach and involvement, to a new AWOL magazine #4 coming this summer.

This fiscal year we will work to solidify and strengthen our program areas while continuing to remain fiscally responsible in order to stabilize your organization and build solidly toward the future.

As I sit here writing this report, I can't help but feel overwhelmed by the love and substantial support shown to CCCO over the last 57 years for its incredible work, from you great folks out there. Without you, CCCO beyond a doubt would not be here today. Much love and appreciation goes out to you, our valued supporters.

In peace & hope for a better tomorrow,

Wendy Carson
Development Program Coordinator

Below the Radar of the Anti-War Movement

by Tamara K. Nopper

Last summer in Philadelphia, about 40 people participated in “Taking it to the Streets,” a counter-military recruitment training that focused on the experiences of non-whites with military recruitment, enlistment and resistance. Sponsored by the Third World Coalition and the National Youth and Militarism Program of the American Friends Service Committee and the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors, and facilitated by counter-recruitment organizer Mario Hardy Ramirez, the training was an opportunity for people diverse in age, political perspectives and experiences with racism and military involvement to come together to learn more about the specific strategies the military recruitment machine uses to funnel non-whites into the armed services.

While such a gathering may seem unimportant in the large scheme of major convergences that went on in cities related to the then upcoming presidential election, any attempt at building resistance against the military industrial complex is significant. And the significance of counter-recruitment efforts by non-whites is even more pronounced when placed within the history of the US-based anti-war movement.

As Ramirez shared in his introductory remarks, the mainstream anti-war movement has historically been preoccupied with saving white people from military service and therefore has spent a lot of energy and resources ensuring their rights to resist military recruitment. In the past, non-whites who wanted to show resistance toward war and forced military conscription generally, tended to be sacrificed or outright dismissed by the mainstream movement, sometimes ending up in jail or, if they had the mobility, fleeing to Canada when other resources did not pan out. And yet, non-whites, particularly Blacks (including Black women), are disproportionately represented in the military, and most non-whites can share stories of being actively targeted—sometimes outright harassed—by the military recruiters who prowled their schools, neighborhoods, subway stops, community centers or hangouts. Many give in to recruiters because they have few options outside of the military to meet their basic needs or are expected to prove loyalty to a country constantly questioning their commitment, worth or existence.

The military lures new recruits with the promise of good jobs and money for school hyped up in glossy ads and television and radio commercials easily paid for by its annual recruitment budget of over \$2.7 billion. As Ramirez pointed out, economic conscription, or the “poverty draft,” is by far more responsible for getting folks of color into the military. Yet, many enlistees end up with job skills that are not transferable to the public sector and 57% never see any of the \$50,000 promised for college. And while promises made to recruits are broken or renegotiated by the military left and right, rates of racial discrimination and sexual violence in the military are high, according to the US government’s own estimates.



A participant sharing a story at the ‘Taking it To The Streets’ training held in Philadelphia, PA during the summer of 2004.

Several veterans of different wars were present at the training to share their experiences, including the ways in which they were recruited and what life was like inside the military. Some of these veterans had also served time in America’s prisons and draw from both experiences to raise awareness about the connections between the prison industrial complex and military industrial complex in ongoing activist work.

Other participants of “Taking it to the Streets” also provided valuable information about how recruitment happens, some of which falls below the radar of even those involved in counter-military recruitment work. Some told stories about how military recruiters would try to play a parental role to the youth they were recruiting or else act as a “buddy,” hanging out with teenagers and driving them around to different places. For example, a Puerto Rican individual described how a military recruiter took a friend to strip clubs during the recruitment process. A Black woman described how the military recruiter came to her house to encourage her son to join the mil-

itary, making promises that her son would be safe. The woman’s son is now in Iraq. A Muslim, the mother described her concern about how the military had brainwashed her son into reconciling himself to killing other Muslims.

A Black woman who was enlisted for a short time in the early 1990s shared how she entered the military because she needed money for college but eventually left because of the culture of the military. She has since become more interested in counter-military recruitment work and through the course of her research, has learned about instances of recruiters raping women whom they are trying to recruit. And folks involved in organizing lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) youth of color in NYC shared how military recruiters hang out after midnight at the Christopher Street Pier, a well known hangout for non-white LGBT youth (many of them homeless), a fact that debunks the myth that military recruiters do not actively recruit LGBT individuals.

Overall, “Taking it to the Streets” was a local effort to bring together non-white people to figure out how we can be more effective in resisting the military industrial complex and its strategic targeting of non-white communities through the all too often empty promises of better jobs, money for school and social acceptance. The training was also a way to encourage participants to consider how non-whites can be important resources to one another in terms of providing support and information with our communities, even in the face of the daily stress of racism, sexism, homophobia, low funds or no funds at all, and the general passive-aggressive selfishness of the institutionalized (read: white) anti-war and peace movement. As the US military seeks to find more and more people to do its dirty work, it is important that stories like those shared at “Taking it to the Streets” are not only appreciated but prioritized as valuable insights into how military recruitment happens and more, what needs to be done to stop it. Ω

Tamara K. Nopper is a volunteer in the Philadelphia CCCO office.

Alternatives to War Through Education (AWE)

by AWE Members

Years into her retirement from teaching at an Oakland Adult School, June Brumer has returned to the classroom. June is a member of Alternatives to War through Education (AWE), a counter-recruitment group in Oakland, CA, working with the Military Out of Our Schools (MOOS) program of CCCO.

Members of AWE are in great demand these days. They make an average of five classroom presentations per week, speak at community forums and churches, participate in press conferences, and provide educational materials to students, parents, teachers, community and church groups, and activists. They publish a semi-weekly on-line calendar of counter-recruitment events in the Bay Area, and have initiated a Bay Area network of over 20 organizations that is now planning a regional counter-recruitment conference for the weekend of October 1, 2005.

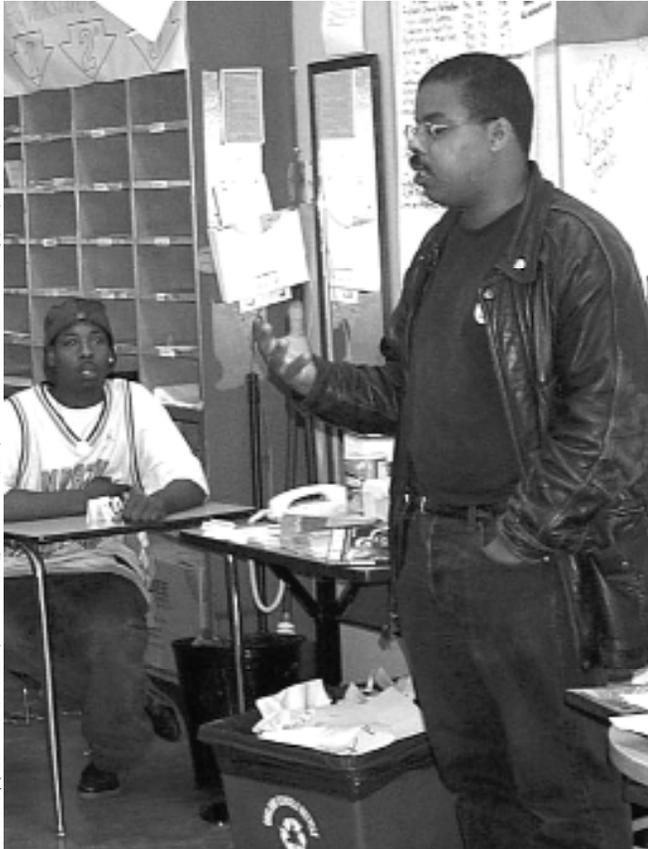
This has come out of work begun less than a year ago. What has fueled all this activity?

Americans are finally waking up to the horrific toll taken by the Iraq war. The number of American military killed in Iraq has passed 1,600, and more than 25,000 have been medically evacuated from Iraq and Afghanistan. Further, more than 50,000 have been discharged and are currently getting medical treatment from veterans' hospitals. Post traumatic stress is common, especially among young women vets. The war and occupation have already cost the US over \$170 billion, and violence continues to escalate as Iraq slides toward civil war. At home, enlistments are down, even though over 7,500 military recruiters are out in force, with a \$2.7 billion dollar budget to attract high school youth into the armed services.

Last fall, Cathy Orozco and Elianne de la Vega, volunteer counselors at the G.I. Rights Hotline, felt called to action. For years they had listened to young soldiers in boot camp who called with stories of false promises by their recruiters: that they wouldn't be sent to Iraq, that they would get the job they signed up for, that they would qualify for over \$50,000 for college. The two women decided that now was the time to launch a Bay Area program that would reach these young people before they found themselves trauma-

tized by a military life that they could not easily leave.

Fortunately, they were able to get help from Kevin Ramirez, coordinator of CCCO's Military Out of Our Schools program in Philadelphia. Kevin came out to Oakland to give a counter-recruitment training. Doing the groundwork for even this first step took



Veteran and CO Tahan Jones talks to students at an Oakland High School as part of his work with AWE.

time and organization. But it paid off, with over fifty 50 teachers, peace activists, veterans and students from Northern California and beyond coming together to discuss ways to inform youth of the truth about military services.

Following the October training, Elianne and Paul Matzner, another Hotline counselor, began meeting on Thursdays at CCCO's Oakland office. It wasn't at all clear what specific direction the project would take—whether the emphasis would be on conscientious objection and the draft, the Opt Out provisions of No Child Left Behind, leafletting at high schools or direct action— but a new counter-recruitment effort in the East Bay had begun. Soon word got out, primarily through a Bay Area listserve that was set up, and inter-

ested folks wanted to get involved.

Gradually the direction of the group unfolded. Susan Quinlan, who had already started making presentations in high school classrooms, served as a model for others who wanted to provide information to students. Though AWE's primary focus is Oakland, she also worked with students at Berkeley High who organized a March 23rd Teach-In in which 2,000 students heard panels on the war in Iraq, military recruitment, conscientious objection and the draft. Meanwhile, June Brumer and Jane Eiseley contacted Oakland teachers to tell them of AWE's availability to speak in classrooms, and the invitations started pouring in.

It is AWE's practice to present in pairs, with one member being a veteran. Marc Liggin and Tahan Jones, both vets and conscientious objectors, provide concrete knowledge of life in the military: crucial information for students considering enlistment. Eduardo Cohen, a Vietnam vet and experienced speaker, has recently joined the presentation team. The group is eagerly seeking additional veterans who are interested in going into high school classrooms. AWE's basic curriculum covers military culture, recruitment myths and realities, the horrors of war, conscientious objection, the possibility of a draft, options for resistance to war and non-military job training and education alternatives. AWE presenters are clear about providing an anti-war perspective to balance what students hear from military recruiters. Students are

encouraged to seek out additional information and to use critical thinking to make their own decisions.

AWE's successes are not due simply to our ominous political climate. They have come because of teamwork. But the demand is great and more volunteers are needed. AWE is off and running. The organizational model can be duplicated anywhere. Together, vets, peace activists, teachers, students and lawyers can work to provide youth and their parents with information to counteract the smooth Madison Avenue recruiter lies.

Ω

AWE can be reached at awe@objector.org or (510) 465-1617 x 4.

A Student's Tale of ASVAB Resistance

by Adriana Cortes

One day we, all juniors at Loara High School, were told to go to the auditorium because we had to take the ASVAB. "What's the ASVAB?" questioned my peers. No one even bothered to inform us that we did not have to take this test, which tells the military whether your talents are "good enough" for them to recruit you. "It's a test that tells you what your strengths are; the career you should pursue," administrators convinced us.

The military believes that most teenagers are confused, especially about the future. They use a "nice fluffy teddy bear" of an excuse to disguise their true intentions. They figure, "wWe could tell them what they are good at, while we find out if they are good enough to drop bombs and fire missiles all around the world."

That day the auditorium was filled with familiar faces and distinctive folks in different shades of green; shoes black and shiny and shirts that are nicely tucked in and ironed. They must be good people because they are dressed professionally right? But intimidation permeated the air like a suffocating mist, making it harder to question the military's intentions and presence.

We had to sign a release agreement—I did not. We had to give them our name and address--- I did not. I had figured that the military could not physically hurt me and so it began.

"Ashley McDonald, come here," the sergeant announced out loud. That was my "unpredictable" alias, together with 123 Fake Street as my address.

Since I had neglected to sign the release form, I was being sought after. "Ashley McDonald!?" she called a couple times and the young girl never responded. The crowd responded with questions and peculiar faces. "Who's Ashley McDonald?" became a familiar symphony with the screeching sergeants complain "Ashley McDonald!"

I did not realize that the code number was the same on all of my forms but I did realize that they would find me amongst the hundreds of students in the room. Forty minutes passed. We had finished the first section of the test when "578212!" was yelled out from the sergeant's mouth. I did not respond.

The defiance increased the throbbing rate of the vein on her forehead. Once again the auditorium looked to their neighbors and friends to try and solve the mystery. Shiny black shoes roamed around the auditorium, chatting and buzzing my classmates were, "578212" was searched. The top right of our tests became the key to uncovering the rebel. Uneasiness decorated the rows and rows of my classmates, while fury stamped the face of the six foot tall sergeant. "578212!?!?!?"

I stood up. "It's my number." Silence flooded the room.

The sergeant walked up to me. "Why didn't you say earlier?!" and my reply sent her in a deeper fury. "I don't know."

"Get out!" she commanded.

As silence pierced loudly through the room, I started on my way out. Half way out, I stopped and turned around to warn my classmates, "Don't take the test...they are only trying to recruit you." I turned back around and headed out the door as black shiny shoes ran after me, from across the room....

The room was like a dark cave, where even a whisper was as loud as thunder.

I don't regret what I did. The sergeant that chased me out of the auditorium told me "Come back in, you seem like a smart girl. It's okay if your classmates think you're anti-American."

His assumptions only proved and concluded that returning to the auditorium would be absolutely foolish. He then smoothly asked me for the directions to the principal's office, I told him, he asked me to follow him. The principal was not there so I was dismissed to the library.

Later that day, discussions and debates filled the classrooms. The ASVAB and my actions suddenly became controversial. My history class was filled with applause for the "protester". My classmates reassured, supported and praised my actions.

As teenagers we need to cut the pink laces that cover our eyes because only when we understand that we can question authority can we begin to fulfill our duty as citizens and protectors of democracy. It takes questioning authority, their decisions and the forces behind them for us to be truly free. When we understand that the military is trying to exploit our families, friends, neighbors and classmates we can begin to see and fight back with curious and informed minds. My confrontation with the military will hopefully serve as a slowing force that shows my peers that just because we're teenagers does not mean we are dumb. Just because we are teenagers doesn't give adults the right to trick us.

It is important for us all to understand that there is a war going on and No Child Left Behind has given more access to the military at our school than ever before. Additionally, the military has upped its recruitment efforts in working poor and middle class schools. Why? Because when it comes down to it we are seen as easy prey. Why? Because our families and communities have a lack of resources to help us pursue careers and upward mobility. Why? Because when it comes down to it, in a way we are all expected to fill low-skill jobs. (Think Wal-Marts, and Disneyland resorts.). The military knows that everyone wants more than that and they sell and try to buy us on the idea that they can give it to us. For the past three months in a row, for the first time since the draft was ended, the Marines have not met their recruiting quotas. Why? Why do you think? Ω

The ASVAB and my actions suddenly became controversial. My history class was filled with applause for the "protester". My classmates reassured, supported and praised my actions.

ASVAB Exposed

Excerpts from USAREC Pamphlet 350-13

School Recruiting Program Handbook

For the Commander:

JAMES M. PALERMO
Colonel, General Staff
Chief of Staff

Official:

BRUCE W. MORRIS
Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5

History. This UPDATE printing publishes a revised pamphlet.

Summary. This pamphlet provides a single-

source document for the School Recruiting Program.

Applicability. This pamphlet is applicable to all elements of the United States Army Recruiting Command.

Proponent and exception authority. The proponent of this pamphlet is the Assistant Chief of Staff, G-5. The proponent has the authority to approve exceptions to this pamphlet that are consistent with controlling law and regulation. Proponent may delegate the approval authority, in writing, to a division chief within the proponent agency in the grade of lieutenant colo-

nel or the civilian equivalent.

Suggested Improvements. Users are invited to send comments and suggested improvements on DA Form 2028 (Recommended Changes to Publications and Blank Forms) directly to HQ USAREC, ATTN: RCMPO-E, 1307 3rd Avenue, Fort Knox, KY 40121-2726.

Distribution. Distribution of this pamphlet has been made in accordance with USAREC Pam 25-80, distribution Y. This pamphlet is published in the Recruiter Management UPDATE. This pamphlet is also available electronically and can be found on the Command Enterprise Portal.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Chapter 6 of USAREC Pamphlet 350-13 contains information that all students, parents and teachers should know about the **ASVAB-Armed Services Aptitude Battery Test**. Here are some choice excerpts:

Chapter 6-1. Program description- “The program serves as a means of sharing extensive knowledge and experience in aptitude testing, career planning, and occupational information with students and their counselors, and as a means of stimulating interest in military jobs and training opportunities in the armed services.”

Chapter 6-2. Purpose- “Within United States Army Recruiting Command (USAREC), ASVAB is designed to: “a. Provide the field recruiter with a source of leads of high school seniors and juniors qualified through the ASVAB for enlistment into the Active Army and Army Reserve.”

Chapter 6-3. Recruiter responsibilities- “b. ASVAB test promotion in HSs, vo-tech schools, and postsecondary institutions in assigned area. ..d. Serve as test proctors, as required... e. Use ASVAB service printouts to your advantage in contracting and enlisting qualified personnel.”

Chapter 6-4. Marketing the ASVAB- “As a recruiter, one of your most

important responsibilities will be arranging the ASVAB in your schools. This process is called “Marketing the ASVAB”...b. Marketing the ASVAB requires that recruiters know the rules of the school and the key decision makers...Once you know who makes the decision, you need to followup with a meeting or presentation on the benefits of ASVAB testing.”

Chapter 6-5. Benefits- “a. First, from the recruiter’s perspective, the ASVAB is not only a valuable tool used to maintain and improve school relations but it is also specifically designed to provide recruiters with a source of prequalified leads. The ASVAB prequalifies potential applicants academically before more expensive and time-consuming medical and moral qualifications are done. The ASVAB recruiter printout provides information you can’t get from any other list. It gives the recruiter the students’ Armed Forces Qualification Test scores, military aptitude composites, and career goals. It identifies the best potential prospects for recruitment that allows recruiters to work smarter. The printout provides the recruiter with concrete and personal information about the student...The ASVAB recruiter service printout is a working document that provides recruiters with a list of students qualified for military service with test scores that are valid for enlistment for 2 years. Ω

CCCO Third World Outreach Simeon and Wal-Mart Partnership with Marine Corps Hazardous to East Oakland's Health

by Thomas Markham, Just Cause Oakland and Wendy Carson, CCCO

Simeon Commercial Properties is a real estate firm headquartered in San Francisco that acquires, develops and manages mixed-used properties in strategic in-fill locations throughout the San Francisco Bay Area. Previous developments of theirs have been opposed by BAARD (Bay Area Residents for Responsible Development). Residents in Richmond, CA have opposed Simeon's plan to build on toxic waste in that city.

In March of 2002, the Port of Oakland's Design Review Committee approved Simeon's design concept for the "Metroport" development on the City of Oakland's Hegenberger Gateway site. The original design was to be Class A office space, a full-service hotel, and a new BART (Bay Area Rapid Transit) connector and intermediate station, on 23 acres. In July, 2003, it was announced that Simeon had drastically scaled back the planned Metroport project, eliminating the hotel and office space, and targeting instead retail opportunities for the site.

In early November, 2003, a Public Review Period began for the Metroport Draft Environmental Impact Report. The Public was never given adequate notice that the Public Review period had begun or that there were any changes to the original planned use. There were six alternative planned uses that were proposed as part of the original plan. Two of these alternative uses included retail components that were not part of the original development plan. Simeon quietly met with some public officials while the general public and community organizations were kept in the dark as to the actual planned use for the site as a retail development with a "supercenter" retailer as its anchor tenant.

In December of 2003, the Public Review Period ended without the community ever being made aware that the Public Review Period had happened.

On January 7, 2004, the Port Commissioners added an addendum to their Final EIR, approving the plan for the retail space and the planned Super Wal-Mart. On January 30, Simeon officially signed Wal-Mart as its anchor tenant, slated to occupy 150,000 square feet. The City of Oakland determined that it has no jurisdiction over Port of Oakland land and that the city's anti-superstore ordinance passed less than two years before cannot be enforced on the Metroport Development.

There has been growing concern and protest against this development in the year or more since Wal-Mart was signed as the anchor tenant. Wal-Mart contributes to urban blight wherever it is located, as it aggressively seeks to put competing smaller neighborhood retailers out of business. It provides mainly low-paying, minimum-wage jobs with either no or inadequate health benefits and actually coaches its employees on how to apply for food stamps and Medi-Cal, thus creating a greater tax burden on the entire community as its employees are forced to use community public health clinics and emergency rooms for basic medical care. These are usually accessed as a last resort when acute health conditions have progressed to the point that treatment is more expensive with a lesser chance for success, thus driving up the costs of healthcare for all consumers in the state.



A Wal-mart customer checks out the Marine Corps commercials playing on the television sets inside the store.

Other opposition to this Metroport development is based on environmental and health concerns due to land toxicity, traffic impact, scale, waterfront location, and distance from mass transit. The whole development threatens the ecological health of the waterfront. Long-term health problems due to the toxicity of the land that it is located on cannot be fully calculated. There will also be increased traffic congestion and emissions from autos that will affect the air quality of the neighborhoods adjacent to the development.

CCCO as part of a coalition of labor, environmental and community groups spearheaded by the organization, "Just Cause Oakland," has demanded that Simeon donate a reasonable portion of their profits for community clinics, job training and education scholarships for East Oakland residents to offset the negative effects of Wal-Mart, particularly since Simeon received a \$10 million loan of tax dollars from the Port of Oakland to buy the land for this project. The community also demanded that all aspects of this project use local unionized construction labor and cease the abuse of non-union workers who were forced to both work and live in the partially constructed Wal-Mart building, which is illegal.

CCCO led the way in making the connection with the Simeon, Wal-Mart project to preparing the youth of East Oakland for military recruitment. To add insult to injury, Wal-Mart nationwide has accepted a contract with the U.S. Marine Corps to show hourly in-store recruitment ads to an audience of East

Oakland youth who are susceptible to all too often broken and erroneous recruitment promises by the military for education money and job-training skills when most will end up in the “killing fields” of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Because Wal-Mart causes the loss of three jobs for every part-time job they create in poor communities wherever they go, they make our youth more susceptible to the false promises of the military because of the high unemployment and underemployment that Wal-Mart helps create.

This makes opposing Wal-Mart and its anti-employee, anti-union, pro-militarist and anti-community policies of even greater urgency; and counter-recruitment work to offset the pressure of the military in partnership with Wal-Mart is even more essential.

In recognition of this reality, CCCO has been an active and integral sponsor and participant in the community coalition in the planning of a major “town hall meeting” on March 23 that brought out 200 community residents, small-business owners, labor and faith organizations to educate the greater community on the negative impacts that Wal-Mart will have on the East Oakland Community and to demand that the developers share their profit, critically subsidized by public funds, with those impacted through a comprehensive community benefits package.

As a follow-up to the town hall meeting, CCCO staff took part in a protest action of 50 community protesters that descended on the Simeon Commercial Properties corporate offices in downtown San Francisco on April 12. This very vocal and effective protest action was taken after two weeks of attempts by the coalition to get a response from Simeon on the demand to meet to negotiate community benefits for East Oakland. The protesters and their negotiation team of seven community group representatives, (including Wendy Carson from CCCO), were able to gain entrance to the Simeon offices on the 11th floor of 655 Montgomery St. in San Francisco and force the Simeon Vice-president of Retail Development, Rajiv Parikh, to meet with all seven representatives and hear the community’s demands. After a 20-minute meeting, Rajiv Parikh agreed to bring the demands to the attention of his superior, Russell J. Pitto, the chairman of the company and give a response within a week to the coalition.

After hiring an outside firm specializing in public affairs and crisis communications for incident response teams for major corporations, Davies Perceptioneering, to help represent them, Russell Pitto agreed to meet with the community coalition’s negotiating representatives on April 22. The community coalition representatives went as scheduled back to the Simeon corporate offices for an 11:00 A.M. meeting with Simeon and their representatives on April 22 and were greeted with members of

the San Francisco police department, threat of arrest, and an increased building security presence at 655 Montgomery St. Ultimately, they were denied entrance to the building. Simeon offered little in the way of reasoning for its heavy-handed approach and refusal to meet with the coalition after having already scheduled the meeting in advance.



Wal-Mart protesters outside a Planning Commission meeting in Bakersfield, CA.

To date, Simeon Commercial Properties has refused to meet to negotiate community benefits with the community coalition, and further direct action is being planned. Readers can support this effort by writing to the CEO of Simeon Development, Russell J. Pitto, at 655 Montgomery St., Suite 1190, San Francisco, CA 94111, to express your outrage at their bringing Wal-Mart to Oakland and the treatment of the community coalition. Readers can also express their outrage over Wal-Mart’s airing of military recruitment ads by contacting S. Robson Walton, Chairman of the Board of Directors of Wal-Mart Inc. (and son of Wal-Mart founder Sam Walton), by calling him at 479-273-4000.

Bay Area residents can also contact the Port of Oakland and their Oakland City Council member condemning their complicity in bringing Wal-Mart to East Oakland, and demanding that the developer negotiate for community benefits in the areas of community healthcare, job training programs and higher-education scholarships for the families of East Oakland.

There will also be an organized protest at the opening of the Oakland Wal-Mart, a date that is yet to be announced. CCCO supporters can also join others in the community in boycotting shopping at the new Wal-Mart store, making it clear to Wal-Mart and those who would partner with and do business with Wal-Mart, that their unfair labor and business practices lead to a greater burden on community services, underemployment, the decimation of competing small businesses, and the exploitation of economically depressed communities. This forces our youth to become vulnerable to the lies of predatory military recruiters. We say that neither Wal-Mart nor the recruiters are welcome in Oakland.

To add insult to injury, Wal-Mart nationwide has accepted a contract with the U.S. Marine Corps to show hourly in-store recruitment ads...

At the very least, these efforts will serve as notice to Simeon and other developers and our own public officials that they need to take pause before engaging in future developments of this type in Oakland and other East Bay communities. There must be broader, public scrutiny of “backroom,” “bait and switch” business dealings that affect our lives and communities.

At CCCO, we believe that taking stands on appropriate policy matters, and promoting those positions, are important ways in which we serve our constituents and our cause. We must not only serve our communities — we must advocate for our communities. Ω

Haiti: With Our Own Eyes

by Marilyn Langlois

Haiti is not a poor country, it is a robbed country. While visiting the Port-au-Prince area for two weeks in September 2004 as part of the Haiti Accompaniment Project, Sister Stella Goodpasture and I engaged in many conversations, heard eye-witness testimonies, visited organizations, rode crowded Tap Taps, and walked the streets of Port-au-Prince and neighboring areas. We witnessed how the potentially rich, fertile and beautiful country of Haiti has had its resources sucked away and squeezed out over the last 500 years by the effects of slavery, racism, colonialism, imperialism, anti-communist hysteria, militarism, kleptocracy, corporate globalization and free trade. Haiti's most recent setback was the US-supported coup d'etat just over a year ago on February 29, 2004, with dire political, economic and social consequences.

With our own eyes, we saw how positive initiatives undertaken by the popular Lavalas government from 1994 - 2004 are now being thwarted by the current regime that was installed by the US State Department. Adult literacy programs have been discontinued, a public medical school has been closed, and construction of low-income housing has ceased.

Since our visit, political repression has intensified, with ongoing arbitrary arrests, detention and killings of Lavalas party supporters. On February 28, 2005, during a spirited and nonviolent demonstration in one of Port-au-Prince's poorest neighborhoods, police in black uniforms, helmets, ski masks, and large guns shot into the crowd, as witnessed by Bill Quigley, law professor at Loyola University.

Quigley further noted, "Though the march for democracy in Haiti was halted by police shooting into the unarmed crowd, the people I talked to said their march for the return of democracy in Haiti will continue."

Representative Barbara Lee issued a statement on the anniversary of the violent ouster of Haiti's democratically elected President, Jean Bertrand Aristide, which included the following excerpts:

"Today marks the one-year anniversary of Haiti's 33rd coup d'etat. The internationally orchestrated ouster of President Jean Bertrand Aristide last year sent Haiti into a political, social and economic downward spiral and cast a dark shadow of doubt on our nation's commitment to the principle of democracy.

"As we reflect on this tragic anniversary, it is high time that we remove all doubt as to our commitment to democracy and demonstrate our commitment to a healthy, democratic Haiti.

"We would oppose the overthrow of our own government, and there must be no doubt that we would oppose the overthrow of other democratically elected governments. Yet today, grave doubts remain about

the role the Bush administration played in the removal of President Aristide. This is a fundamental issue of democracy, and the American people deserve to know the TRUTH about just what happened.

"That is why I have reintroduced the The Responsibility To Uncover The Truth about Haiti (TRUTH) Act. The Truth Act will create an independent, bipartisan commission to investigate the unanswered questions about the Bush administration's role in this violation of democracy.

"A year after this crime against democracy, the situation in Haiti is deplorable. The unconstitutional government has allowed the political



Haitians confront US Marines in the aftermath of the US-supported coup d'etat on February 29, 2004.

violence of armed gangs and thugs to grow, while schools and hospitals close. We have a responsibility to ensure that Haiti disarms these thugs and stops the political violence, that political prisoners are freed, and that truly democratic elections set Haiti back on the course to democracy. We must know the TRUTH about the full degree our nation's involvement in creating this situation, and we must set about making it right."

Here are some things you can do to show your support for

the return of democracy in Haiti:

- Thank Barbara Lee for re-introducing the T.R.U.T.H. Act
- Urge your own Congress member to sponsor the T.R.U.T.H. Act
- Contact Senators Feinstein and Boxer and ask them to introduce similar legislation in the Senate
- Sign the petition to support the Porto Alegre Declaration on Haiti, which was launched in an international workshop at the 2005 World Social Forum (http://www.haitiaction.net/News/FL/1_30_5.html)

For more information and updates, visit the websites of Haiti Action Committee (<http://www.haitiaction.net>) and the Institute for Justice and Democracy in Haiti (<http://www.ijdh.org>)

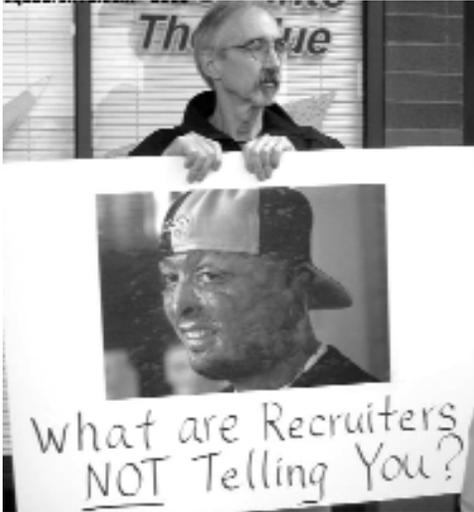
Last September, Sister Stella and I left Haiti with heavy hearts and profound feelings of humility. Our hearts were heavy because the hope that had become so palpable during the past ten years of struggling, vulnerable, participatory democracy had suffered such a great blow in the aftermath of the February 29, 2004 coup d'etat and kidnapping of the president. We were humbled to interact with so many people whose hope was nevertheless still alive; people who refuse to give up their dream and vision of a Haiti in which everyone's basic needs are met and the human spirit can thrive. Ω

Marilyn Langlois is a member of the Haiti Action Committee and resides in Richmond, CA. She is also a counselor with CCCO on the GI Rights Hotline.

Counter-Recruitment Actions

March 20, 2005

During the week leading up to March 20, 2005, activists across the country were gearing up for national peace marches and organizing local actions in their communities. There were hundreds of events nationwide that took place to mark the second anniversary of the invasion of Iraq from teach-ins, workshops and conferences, to rallies, marches and acts of civil disobedience. One estimate from United for Peace & Justice put the number of peace protests at 765! Here are some of the pictures from those events that had a specific counter-recruitment focus. Many of these pictures were taken during actions and protests outside of military recruiting stations across the country.



March 18 - Eugene, Oregon



March 19 - New York, New York



March 19 - Cleveland, Ohio



March 19 - Boston, Massachusetts



March 19 - Baltimore, Maryland



March 19 - San Francisco, California

You can find links and stories to accompany many of these images online at: <http://indymedia.us/en/topic/m192005/archive.shtml>

(Ethical and Legal Issues in Hotline Counseling continued from page 9)

he could call our Hotline at any time and that CCCO would return his call if a counselor was not available. He agreed to call during my next Hotline time so that he could let me know how things were going and we could continue to identify next steps. I reminded him about the Suicide Hotline number and his promise, as well as about the PTSD resources.

Sometimes people are reluctant to ask about suicide or to name psychological problems such as depression or PTSD. We are not functioning as psychologists or doctors and cannot and should not provide diagnoses. However, we can let a caller know that they sound depressed to us and ask them about it. We can also state that many people in their situation do suffer from depression or PTSD. Giving a name to these issues can be very helpful. Research indicates that, contrary to what people may fear, asking someone if they are thinking of committing suicide actually reduces the likelihood that they will commit suicide. Summarizing the issues and naming the problems that we observe demonstrates that we have heard and understood the seriousness of their distress so that the caller is validated in their experience. This in turn is empowering as they face the challenges of dealing with discharge and other processes.

I continue to be inspired by the courage of the people who seek to resolve what may seem like overwhelming problems in relationship to their experience in the military. At the same time that I am very saddened by the damage that we are doing to people in the military - physical, psychological, financial, and spiritual damage - I am made hopeful by the brave responses to this damage. I am proud to be part of an organization that helps people to heal themselves from these assaults on their being. Ω

Jackie Thomason lives in Oakland, CA. She has been a GI Rights counselor with CCCO since November, 2001. Jackie holds a masters degree in feminist psychology from New College of California. She recently joined the Board of CCCO.

(Weapons Trade: Mixing Guns, Schools and the Messages We Give Our Kids continued from page 10)

For the life of me, I can't think of any good that is done with an assault rifle, military-issue or not.

Afterword: My VfP colleague and I wrote to the principal of the school to share the survey results and question why recruiters were allowed to wander the hallways when our group was specifically instructed to not solicit students unless they approached our table. Eventually, after repeated follow-up phone calls and another visit to the school, the principal phoned me back and we had a long talk. He said that he didn't want recruiters soliciting students in hallways and had instructed all vice-principals to make sure recruiters stayed with their tables or made appointments through the office to visit particular students. I also expressed concern about the Navy Seal poster and asked if he felt it was appropriate for a school setting. He said that he didn't see a problem with it because he thought it accurately portrayed what the military does. When I asked if we could post a CCCO poster (the WAR/DEATH, LIFE/PEACE design) next to the Navy Seal poster, we were approved to do so.

I stopped into the school a month later, and the Navy Seal poster and the CCCO poster were still up. The principal had told me that recruiters must seek permission like anyone else to post something on school bulletin boards. However, when I checked the Seal poster to see where the principal had initialed it for approval, I found nothing. Ω

Susan Van Haitsma is active with Nonmilitary Options for Youth and is an associate member of Veterans for Peace in Austin, Texas.



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