

Quaker House Newsletter

40 Years Front-Line For Peace . . . & Just Getting Started

Spring 2009

Fayetteville, NC www.quakerhouse.org

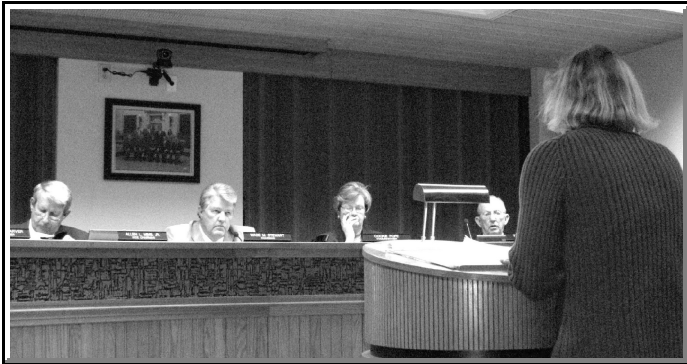
Chuck Fager, Director

Torture Accountability: A Movement Picking Up Speed & Clout

Chuck Fager

He probably wouldn't admit it, but I think Wade Stewart is beginning to get nervous.

Stewart is Chairman of the Johnston County NC Board of Commissioners. His county is home, among other things, to Aero Contractors. And Aero, a CIA shell company, is the home of "extraordinary rendition," or more plainly, torture flights.



Wade Stewart, center, listens as NC Stop Torture Now's Christina Cowger urges him to investigate charges of war crimes at Aero Contractors.

Along with NC stop Torture Now, we've been protesting Aero for almost three years, both at its airport site, and more recently, before Wade Stewart and the other county commissioners who have jurisdiction over the airport.

At their February and March meetings, we told them we suspected war crimes were being committed there and urged the Commission to investigate. Stewart and his colleagues [p. 2 >>](#)

Tough Times for AWOL Resister

Late in April, the list of unpleasant surprises for Private Daniel Marble got longer: he was notified that he would be court-martialed.

As reported in our last newsletter, Marble went AWOL in 2007 after paratrooper training, because he couldn't accept the idea of killing others, and did not know about conscientious objection or other options. He was arrested in January of this year.

Marble was first sent to Fort Knox, where AWOL GIs are typically processed out of the army in a week or two. He had written orders that promised such a discharge as a "one-shot deal."

But then he was sent to Ft. Bragg, where he became one of scores of AWOL soldiers hunted down and crowded into a replacement barracks. There has been no official explanation for this intense manhunt, but large deployments of troops from the post to Afghanistan in April suggests one: significant numbers of these returnees were persuaded to join the deployment, in return for wiping the AWOL slate clean.

The army has been hard-pressed to "make numbers" for units headed into combat zones; and sweeping up AWOLs would be one more way to fill slots.

Marble was not interested in such an arrangement. At different times he was told different stories, mainly that he would be processed out "soon." Then in March he was hit with an "Article 15," a kind of misdemeanor charge, for his AWOL, and punished with 45 days of extra duty and a loss of pay; and he was told again that he would soon be discharged.

Then, in the same week in late April, a superior officer first started the paperwork for a discharge, then three days later, abruptly called Marble in and told him he was to be court-martialed.

To a civilian, such a twist would sound like double jeopardy, being tried twice for the same offense, which is [p.2 >>](#)



Daniel Marble: No window on Ft. Bragg yet.

RIP: The Post 9-11 Peace Movement

This spring there were not one but two "major" national antiwar marches. Did you notice?

Me neither.

Actually, I did, because keeping track is part of the job.

But it wasn't easy. Turnout for the rallies organized by the once-dominant national umbrella groups (United for Peace & Justice and the ANSWER Coalition) was negligible, and media coverage so minimal that it took much searching to find any traces of it.

These two groups are pretty much out of gas; I wouldn't be surprised if they disappeared. Their "movement" has stalled.

As recently as January 2007, they were useful vehicles for the many who felt a need for large public opportunities to protest the Iraq war, including me. I'm grateful for that.

But times change. After the huge shifts of opinion that shaped the 2008 election and its aftermath, their style and rhetoric just don't work anymore.

I've seen such changes before; they remind me of a hand of cards that's been played out – it's now time to reshuffle the deck.

What the new "hand" will look like I won't try to predict. Certainly the need for organized peace action continues: wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, military budgets still growing, the torture mess to clean up, and more. There's plenty to do.

In such times of transition, though, what stands out for me is the presence of those groups and projects which are still there after the big coalitions dissipate, as they usually do.

Quaker House is one of those. Times are definitely changing. We're adapting too. But we're not going anywhere.

Accountability, cont: shrugged off the request, demanded to see our evidence, and told us to take our concerns to Washington instead.

During the previous eight years, the Commissioners and Aero have had nothing to fear from Washington. But in 2009, the ground has been shifting under their feet. Rapidly. Shortly after the Commission's

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March session, the U.S. Senate Intelligence Committee announced it would investigate CIA treatment of detainees during the "war on terror."

And at the Commission's April meeting, we were back, to let Stewart know we had taken his advice, in part: I gave him a copy of a thick packet of news articles, public documents, and human rights reports which we have now submitted to the Senate Intelligence Committee, as input to their torture investigation.

The packet is jammed with specific details about apparent violations of international, federal – and yes, even North Carolina law under Aero's auspices. Plenty of fodder for a serious investigation.

But we were not, however, giving up on Stewart, the Commissioners, or Aero for that matter. And that was when the signs of nervousness began to show.

It isn't because we pacifists are so fearsome, though we are persistent. Rather, in the background, as Stewart and his colleagues know well enough, this spring there has been a succession of damning reports about the torture program, each more shocking than the last. With this cascade of repugnant revelations, pressure has been building for just the kind of investigations we have been advocating for so long.

And if (when?) this accountability process really gets moving,

its path, like Interstate 95 and the Amtrak line, leads straight south from Washington through Smithfield. Johnston County can hardly hope to escape its close, and likely very damaging scrutiny.

We've been urging Wade Stewart and the Commission to get out in front of this process, by launching their own investigation. So far they're still saying No. But we'll keep urging.

And I'm almost sure they're getting nervous.

Reorganization For the GI Rights Hotline

Major changes are underway in the GI Rights Hotline Network, particularly involving one of the founders, the Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors (CCCO).

CCCO had long handled the Hotline's toll-free 800 telephone account as an informal service to the network, without incident. But in recent years sentiment grew to organize the Network and its Hotline more formally and accountably.

Differences then surfaced between CCCO and other groups, particularly over ownership of the original 800 phone number, and protracted efforts at resolution have been unsuccessful. In the process, CCCO claimed unilateral control over the 800 number, and in late March, began withdrawing access to that phone line from other groups. Quaker House ceased receiving calls from the 800 number on April 23.

An alternative Hotline number (877-447-4487) had been established as a backup, and is in use by Quaker House and other Hotline organizations. According to the most recent available phone records, by late 2008 the new number was receiving almost as many calls as the original 800 line.

The other groups have now reorganized into the GI Rights Hotline Network, with bylaws, an accountable structure, and collective responsibility for the Hotline. Quaker House is a founding member of this new Network, as it was of the Hotline back in 1994.

As part of our ongoing commitment to providing high-quality counseling for as many servicemembers as possible, Quaker House has launched promotional efforts for the new Hotline number, to help maintain the visibility and access of this service, and is prepared to join other promotional work.

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**1969-2009: 40 Years of
Front-Line Peace Witness . . .
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Marble, cont. unconstitutional. But it is permitted under military law. Other AWOL returnees from his unit who have faced court martial have been given lengthy jail sentences, up to fifteen months.

Marble's case is perhaps unusual in that for each of these stages, there has been a paper trail for the discharge agreements unfulfilled by the army.

Now, after all the promises, he faces jail. The arbitrariness and vindictiveness of military "justice" is on full display here, and the story is not finished.

Except in one respect. Daniel Marble is still resolved that, jail time or not, he's not going to kill in these wars.



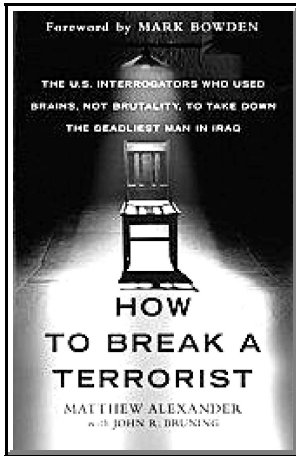
**Real Owner:
The CIA**

Books: War, No Torture Needed

How To Break a Terrorist: The U.S. Interrogators Who Used Brains, Not Brutality, To Take Down the Deadliest Man In Iraq. Matthew Alexander. Free Press, 287 pages.

Sometimes I think we anti-torture crusaders get a bit soft-headed about our subject.

It's tempting to take a kind of emotional refuge in the stories of shrewd World War II interrogators, coolly wheedling secrets out of hardened but out-classed Nazis during deceptively quiet sessions of chess, with maybe some brandy and cigars thrown in.



I don't doubt the achievements of these legendary questioners. But that was 1944, and they were working in green seclusion outside Washington DC.

The air of gentility surrounding their efforts, at least in retrospect, makes torture seem, not only useless, but in dreadfully bad taste, like wearing white after Labor Day.

This tweedy ambience dissipates instantly when Matthew Alexander's book is opened. "What's the difference between [an interrogator] and a used car salesman," goes one of their in-jokes. "Answer: 'A 'gator has to abide by the Geneva

Conventions."

Not laughing? Good; he's not after chuckles; more like a cup of cold water in the face. "We 'gators don't hawk Chevys," he writes, "we sell hope to prisoners and find targets for shooters."

Targets for shooters. Alexander makes clear that he despises torture as a way of seeking useful intelligence. He went to Iraq in part to reclaim the interrogations efforts from it. He's a certified good guy.

But even so, he's no preppy chessplayer. One day, as he and a colleague interrogate a prisoner called Abu Ali, the man gives up some information on a suicide bombing safe house. Once he starts talking, Alexander shoves a laptop screen at him, on which something like Google Earth is displaying and following the road he is describing.

They track his data in real time, moving the pointer across the desert and then zooming in til the specific building is clearly visible, its coordinates plain. Abu Ali nods; that's the place.

Alexander soon steps out and feeds this information directly to Special Forces and other commando units, which are on standby. Their choppers are quickly airborne. The next day, on the same laptop, Alexander shows Abu Ali video of the house being blown up, with some of his relatives still inside. The sight breaks the Iraqi down completely; it is his world disappearing in smoke, blood and debris.

Reading this, and the other similar episodes, I had to remind myself that Alexander had done this without torture. No beatings, no waterboarding; no sensory deprivation, spiders, or sleepless nights filled with blasting heavy metal. He worked strictly by the rules.

Yet even within those rules, Alexander was still a man of war, and war by the rules is still hell: his interrogations were an integral part of its organized death-dealing.

In fact, the entire frame of the book is a deadly serious manhunt: the US army was after Abu Al Zarqawi, one of the leaders of the insurgency that produced waves of massacres in Iraq in 2005 and 2006. US commanders were convinced that if they could find and eliminate Al Zarqawi, they could break the insurgency's back. Alexander's job was to extract clues from Zarqawi's imprisoned

An Excerpt From the Other Book of the Year:

By mid-2005, public support for the Iraq occupation had begun to ebb. Although the White House refused to let the press see or photograph returning coffins of dead soldiers, their numbers could not be suppressed. Added to this was the fact that after two years of searching, there was no sign of the weapons of mass destruction that had been one of the main pretexts for the invasion. And besides the abuses of Abu Ghraib, reports of incompetence and corruption in the occupation itself were piling up.

In response, the White House undertook to reverse the slide by sending the president out to make a series of stirring speeches, aimed at rallying the flagging public spirit. In late June, the eyes of the tour's planners turned toward a locale in North Carolina, where the chief executive could be guaranteed a loyal, captive audience.

Friday June 24 was already a busy day at Quaker House. Chuck Fager was feverishly preparing for a whirl of activity at the Gathering of Friends General Conference, or FGC. It was the largest annual Quaker assembly, a centerpiece of his summer visiting rounds, and was due to open in Blacksburg, Virginia in barely a week.

Then the phone rang. It was an area radio reporter: "The president is coming to Fort Bragg next Tuesday to give a speech," she said. "He's going to try to regain public support for the Iraq war with this speech. What protests do you all have planned?"

Fager blinked. This visit was complete news to him. "Um, the truth is we don't have any plans," he admitted. "But, well – could you call back in a couple of hours?"

The reporter did, and by then, the answer was different.

To read more, order a copy of YES TO THE TROOPS-NO TO THE WARS, The Story of Quaker House. \$18.95 postpaid (\$20.07 with sales tax for NC residents). Order now, from: Quaker House, 223 Hillside Ave., Fayetteville NC 28301

followers that would help the Special Forces flush him out.

Alexander succeeded. In June 2006, Zarqawi was killed in an air strike. The 'gators had done their part, by the book. But throughout the process, no one, on either side, was fooled into thinking that the game was any the less fatal because it was torture-free.

Nor, in the end, was Zarqawi's death really the end. One of the most chilling scenes late in the book involves Naji, the 12 year-old son of a prisoner. Alexander starts a conversation with him to pass the time. It's not even an "interrogation"; the lad is not a combatant. He seems more of a bright, fresh-faced schoolboy.

Yet he interrupts the banter with a sudden outburst, which the startled translator turns into English words that hit like thrown rocks:

"You Americans are all infidels and deserve to die," Naji declares calmly. When a colleague offers a soothing, hey-we're-all-just-human-beings-here response, the youth retorts, "No . . . you're all infidel pigs. I can't wait until I'm old enough to cut your heads off."

Alexander watches the words sink in among his colleagues, hardened men and women who are still amazed. "Matthew," one says later, "he's a Kool-Aid-drinking Al Qaida member. At twelve . . ."

"At twelve," Matthew repeats. [A colleague] Steve and I stare at each other, unable to speak. I know the same thought crosses both of our minds. *How are we ever going to win this war? We can't reeducate all the Najis out there.*

"Steve looks out across the 'gator pit. 'We're going to be in Iraq a long, long time.'"

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Inside:

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Quaker Chuckles

What Are The Odds?

One day God was looking down at Earth and saw all the rascally behavior that was going on. He decided to send an angel down to Earth to check it out. So he called one of His angels and sent the winged sentinel to Earth for a time.

When the angel returned, she told God, "Yes, it's bad on Earth; 95% are misbehaving and only 5% are not."

God thought for awhile and then said, "Maybe I had better send down a second angel to get another opinion." So God called another seraph.

When the angel returned she too went to God and said, "Yes, it's true: the Earth is in decline; 95% are misbehaving, and no more than 5% are being good."

God was troubled by this, but not ready to give up.

After further thought, He decided to E-mail the 5% that were being good, in order to encourage them, to give them a little something to help them keep going.

Do you know what the E-mail said . . . ?

. . . Just wondering; I didn't get one either.

Going For The Gold

A Quaker missionary in Africa, whose hobby was studying the great apes, was asked to judge an informal athletic event.

Expecting a soccer match, he followed a guide through miles of thick forest, arriving at last at an enclosure full of men in strange uniforms and dark glasses. "What's this?" he asked.

"It's the Intelligence Agency Olympics," said a masked man. "The contestants are the KGB, the Mossad, and the CIA. For the final event, they are to go into the bush and bring back a live chimpanzee. You're to be the judge of whether they have succeeded."

Before the missionary could reply, the three teams ran shouting into the forest, each in a different direction.

After an hour, the KGB team returned, with a large hairy creature. The missionary turned thumbs down. "Sorry," he said, "that's an orangutan."

After another hour, the Mossad crew marched triumphantly in with a somewhat similar creature. The missionary again shook his head. "Nope," he said, "that's a baboon."

At that moment there was a loud commotion in the forest, then the CIA team came barging doggedly ahead, pulling behind them a bruised and dripping elephant. "Okay, okay" the animal trumpeted desperately, "I'm a chimpanzee, I'm a chimpanzee!"

Thanks for your continued support in hard times, which makes the work of Quaker House possible.
Have you considered including Quaker House in your estate planning?
