

Quaker House Newsletter

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

Early Autumn 2009

Fayetteville, NC www.quakerhouse.org

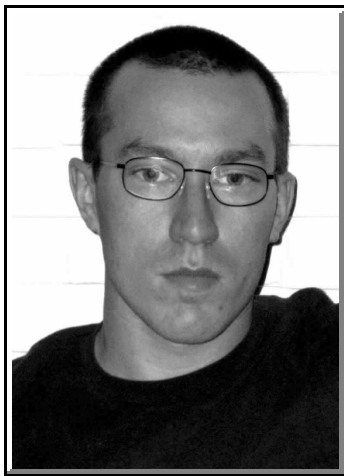
Chuck Fager, Director

Good News & Bad News: Good News: GI Resistance Continues

Dustin Stevens turned down the chance to be a warrior. But he's still a fighter.

The Army calls Stevens a deserter, and plans to court-martial him this fall.

Stevens says that he "refused duty in 2002 after just five months of service after having panic and anxiety attacks. I found that the more I thought of killing another human being, the worse the attacks got."



Dustin Stevens, standing firm at Ft. Bragg

When Stevens spoke out, he says his sergeant told him to go home to Kentucky and await instructions. He did, and there a trusted mentor told him about pacifism, and affirmed his resistance stance. When he didn't hear from the Army, Stevens soon went to work. But last winter – seven years later -- he was abruptly arrested and sent to Ft. Bragg, to Echo Company, where dozens of AWOL GIs have been clustered.

His months back under military control have only firmed up his refusal to go to war. Here's how he put it in a recent email:

"I was asked today by a fellow Echo soldier if I was afraid of the 82d Airborne making an example out of me. Why do you ask, I said? Well, he said, you stood up to them. You basically let them know that you don't regret your decision to quit the Army. Another young man said that he was scared that they would throw the book at me, that he could see them being pissed.

"So I asked the group around me one question. Does anyone standing here feel that I was wrong in speaking my mind or fighting for my beliefs? They were all in agreement when they said no, we all feel that you did the right thing.

"There's your answer I said. I am not worried about what anyone in the Army thinks about me or anywhere else for that matter. If I didn't fight for what I knew to be right then I would be just as bad as the men and women above us that feel that it's right to hand down twelve month prison sentences for quitting a job. You see, I have to stay true to myself or the 82d Airborne at Fort Bragg will win. I refused to go to Afghanistan in exchange for no jail time or record. . . .

"Yes, they could throw their unjust book at me. I may or may not go to jail for a long time. But I will be the same man I am today when I am released. They will never break me, and I will never stop fighting for what I know in my heart is right. I love my life on the outside in Louisville, KY. But I'd never be able to look myself in >>

More Good News: Truth In Recruiting Wins!

It took more than four years of negotiating, and a lawsuit by the NC ACLU, but Friend Sally Ferrell of Boomer NC has prevailed in her effort to bring Truth In recruiting materials into the high schools of Wilkes County.



After seven hours of intensive talks on August 11, the Wilkes County school board agreed to a mediated settlement which will allow Ferrell access to the schools in the coming academic year, on the same basis as that long enjoyed by military recruiters.

She will also be able to distribute "Sgt Abe The Honest Recruiter" materials as part of her work. Sgt. Abe items had been specifically excluded by school officials.

Katherine Lewis Parker, the NC ACLU's Legal Director, said afterward that "we fought hard to keep all the material in, including the Quaker House materials. [Our attorneys] did a great job arguing that the school district has no business parsing through the various brochures. They certainly don't do that with the military's materials.

"We were thrilled that the school district ultimately backed down on that issue. All of the material gets in now. So yes, the victory is definitely Quaker House's as well!"

Sally Ferrell added that, "I explained to the superintendent that my approach was not anti-military; nevertheless, I was continually denied access to speak with students in our local high schools who were being aggressively recruited by the military. I am glad the schools have finally recognized N.C. Peace Action's First Amendment right to express our viewpoint, and I look forward to providing truthful, job-related information about military careers and alternatives to careers in the military in all Wilkes County high schools."

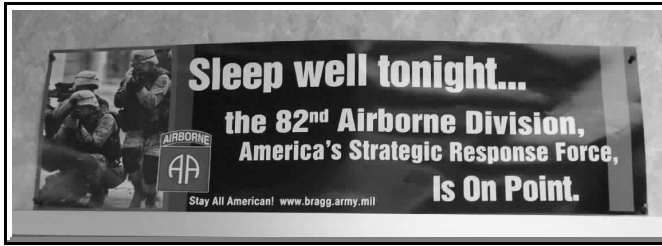


the mirror or look into the eyes of my friends and family knowing that I stood by and did nothing while 50 plus human were made examples of during an unjust war."

You Can Help Dustin Stevens With the Costs of a Civilian Lawyer at his court martial. Go to: www.couragetoresist.org for details. More Resistance News Inside.

THE BAD NEWS: Bigger Military, More War Spending, More War, More Casualties, More Secrecy

Bigger military: Army Times, August 17, 2009: "Defense Secretary Robert Gates has said he plans to increase Army end strength from its current 547,400 to 562,400 in 2010 and to a peak of 569,000.



Sign in Donut Shop, Fayetteville NC, Summer 2009.

"The latest expansion of the Army follows a recent permanent end-strength increase of 65,000 in the Army and 27,000 in the Marine Corps, both also aimed at reducing strain on the force during the ongoing wars."

http://www.armytimes.com/news/2009/08/military_contingency_fund_081609/

More War Spending: "The [new administration's first] budget includes \$533.8 billion for the Pentagon and \$130 billion for the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The Pentagon's budget would be about \$20 billion, or 4% more than the FY 2009 budget" -- FCNL

MORE WAR:

January 25, 2009: The Obama administration warned the US public yesterday to brace itself for an increase in American casualties as it prepares to step up the fight against al-Qaida and the Taliban in Afghanistan and the border regions of Pakistan.

The Obama administration is to double the number of US troops in Afghanistan to 60,000

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/world/2009/jan/25/obama-airstrikes-pakistan>

As Good As Their Word: A columnist in the Bangor (ME) *Daily News* put it this way:

"The BBC reported that in the first six months of 2009, the conflict in Afghanistan had resulted in 1,013 civilian casualties compared to only 818 in 2008 and only 684 in 2007. There has been a parallel rise in suicide bombing and roadside explosives, which usually result in many civilian deaths. There were no suicide bombings in Afghanistan before this "war of terror" began."

--Katrina Bisheimer, "Obama's 'War on Terror' has terrifying human toll," August 22, 2009,
<http://www.bangordailynews.com/detail/117134.html>

Prison Secrecy Grows - Bagram, Afghanistan: The prisoners at the largest U.S. detention facility in Afghanistan have refused to leave their cells for at least the past two weeks to protest their indefinite imprisonment The prison-wide protest . . . offers a rare glimpse inside a facility that is even more closed off to the public than the U.S. detention facility at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba

Unlike at Guantanamo Bay, where detainees have access to lawyers, the 620 prisoners at Bagram are not permitted to visit with their attorneys. Afghan government representatives are generally not allowed to visit or inspect the Bagram facility.

In recent years, Bagram became the destination for many terrorism suspects as Guantanamo Bay came under more scrutiny through legal challenges. The Bagram prison population, meanwhile, has ballooned. U.S. officials are building a bigger facility there that will hold nearly 1,000. -- Washington Post, July 16 2009

More Casualties:

Afghanistan US Casualties (as of August 23, 2009): For all of 2008 the total was **155**; as of late August, the 2009 total was **166**. The overall total US casualties in Afghanistan is: **796**

Afghani Civilian casualties due to US war: UN and other agencies' estimates are in the range of 8000-20,000.

Pakistan Civilian Casualties: US Drone attacks in Pakistan are killing as many as 10 civilians for every targeted insurgent, with the 2009 total likely in excess of 600 civilian deaths thus far. Other estimates put the civilian-military death ratio at closer to 15 to 1. http://www.brookings.edu/opinions/2009/0714_targeted_killings_byman.aspx?p=1

Remember Iraq?

US Casualties: Over the summer, US military casualties in Iraq totaled less than thirty through late August.

Especially Civilian Casualties: Yet in the same period, Iraqi civilian deaths from sectarian fighting topped 100 per week, over 1200 from June through late August. To get a sense of the impact of these numbers, multiplying the casualty figures by ten makes them comparable to the US population: over 12,000 in under three months. Figures from <http://www.iraqbodycount.org/database/>

– **July 9:** BAGHDAD (AP) - Bombs killed more than 50 people in Iraq on Thursday in the worst violence since U.S. combat troops withdrew from urban areas last week.

– **August 10:** 51 people were killed across Iraq, including 28 members of the tiny Shabak sect cut down when two truck bombs detonated in the village of Khaznah outside of Mosul.

– **August 17:** Iraqi militias are carrying out a spreading campaign of torture and murder against men suspected of homosexual conduct, or of not being "manly" enough, and Iraq authorities have done nothing to stop the killing, Human Rights Watch said. . . . Silence and stigma surrounding sexuality and gender in Iraq make placing a precise figure on the number killed almost impossible, but indications are that hundreds of men may have died.

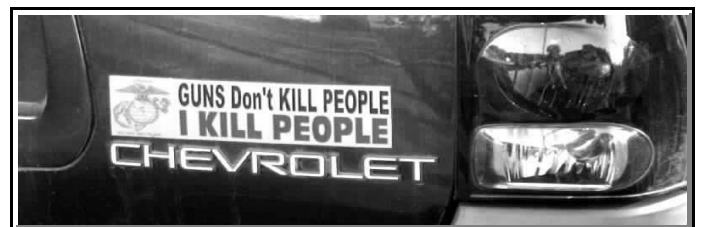
– **August 18:** BAGHDAD — two huge and deadly bombings . . . killed at least 95 people and wounded nearly 600 at and around the Foreign and Finance Ministries in central Baghdad, assaults . . . that lent an air of siege to the capital. . . .

MORE US SOLDIER SUICIDES:

As many as 12 soldiers killed themselves in July, the Army announced today, and the service remains on course to setting a record for suicides in a single year.

In June, there were 13 confirmed or possible suicides. Between Jan. 1 and July 31, there have been 96 reported active-duty suicides. Of those, 62 have been confirmed as suicides and 34 are still under investigation. There were 79 suicides among active-duty soldiers for the same period in 2008.

– Army Times, August 14 2009



Bumpersticker near Camp Lejeune NC

Counselor's Notebook:

Will You Visit Cliff Cornell - Jailed GI Resister?



Resister Cliff Cornell, a sketch

At Quaker House, we visit GIs in the brig who are serving time because of their refusal of war.

In early May I made the first visit to Cliff Cornell in the brig at Camp Lejeune. Cliff went AWOL several years ago, as a refusal to fight in Iraq, and spent four years in Canada. But he was one of the GI resisters deported by the current unsympathetic government there, and wound up being court-martialed at Fort

Stewart in Georgia.

(Read more about Cliff here:

<http://www.couragetoresist.org/x/content/view/685/114/>)

Convicted of desertion, he's been sentenced to a year in the brig, at Camp Lejeune, in Jacksonville NC.

That's a pretty long stretch of time, in an isolated location. Cliff has no family or friends nearby, and he could use more visitors to break up the tedium. We've been to see him, as have a few other folks; but schedules are busy, and it's a long trek.

Thus we're turning to you for help. If you're going to be in the southeast before February 2010, I'm hoping you will consider helping out with this compassionate work, and make a weekend trek to Jacksonville. Bring a friendly face to a war refusenik who's paying some serious dues.

Here are the specifics: Visiting is permitted at the Lejeune brig on Saturdays, Sundays and holidays, noon to 3 PM. Visitors don't need to be on a special list; you just have to bring ID and sign in. Visitors can come in groups too, two or three is not a problem.

For more information, email us at: chuckfager@aol.com .

If you can't visit, you can still write to Cliff at:

Clifford Cornell,
Bldg 1041, PSC Box # 20140,
Camp Lejeune NC 28542

FREE: A New Torture Accountability Resource:

**TORTURE:
ACCOUNTABILITY TODAY
STOPS TORTURE TOMORROW.**
WWW.QUAKERHOUSE.ORG

To get yours, write to:

Bumpersticker-Quaker House, 223 Hillside Avenue
Fayetteville NC 28301 - *Spread the Word.*

From Our GI Rights Hotline Counselors: The Mirage Of "Job Security" In Today's Army

Lenore Yarger & Steve Woolford

Hard economic times mean good news for the military. Hotline callers often report joining because they needed a paycheck, and keeps them a lot more scared to try to get out. The Army has already cut back on the big signing bonuses offered when it was desperate for bodies. Now it's the recruits who feel desperate.

One caller, Tom, explained that he had always been the family provider until being laid off from his civilian job. Bills were piling up, and Tom felt hopeless when he walked into the Army's recruiter's office. The recruiter promised a "recession-proof" job. He took the bait.

By the end of training, he regretted having listened. The first time he called the GI Rights hotline he was unsure of himself. He said he had been hiding the signs of his psychological problems from the military because he saw how others with issues were harassed. His command saw a high performer, but that was just his facade. We discussed possible discharges; he said he'd think them over. Tom knew things weren't right, but wasn't ready to see himself as a failure.

In the next few days he felt even worse. Tom searched the internet and realized he was having all the signs of severe depression. Scared and unsure where to turn, he checked internet forums. The advice he found: **call the GI Rights Hotline**. Soon he was back on the phone. He couldn't pretend anymore, and his wife supported him in seeking help. Tom is now getting several disqualifying medical problems diagnosed so that he can be discharged from the Army.

Read the Exciting Quaker House Story - Order YES TO THE TROOPS-NO TO THE WARS, a Quality paperback, 244 pages, illustrated, \$18.95 postpaid. (\$20.07 with sales tax for NC residents). From: Quaker House, 223 Hillside Ave., Fayetteville NC 28301

"Job security" is a misnomer in the military, when you look at the job description. How much "security" is there in multiple deployments, inadequate medical care, and the constant threat of death? One soldier, just three days back from 18 months in Iraq, hadn't even reached home on leave when he was called back for redeployment to Afghanistan—his unit's "dwell time" had been waived by the general. Another caller reported that his unit was set to deploy to Iraq for six months, and then it would be on to Afghanistan.

Most recently, we heard from Kevin, who had begun having medical problems while deployed in Iraq. Upon return, he followed up with specialists who called for a medical board evaluation for possible discharge. Then his command abruptly said his medical board had been cancelled and ordered him to return to Iraq in four days.

A mad scramble ensued as Kevin, with our support, tried to exercise all his rights to challenge the order. Despite the strength of his case, time and circumstances were against him. It was one day until the weekend, the JAG and the inspector general offices were closed for a holiday, and the commander who cut the orders was himself now in transit to Iraq.

After a number of rejections by people whose jobs are supposedly to fix such things, Kevin felt discouraged and worried that he would be stuck in Iraq for another year while medically unfit to serve. Our list of options was drying up.

Then, at about four PM on Friday, Kevin managed to talk his way into seeing the deputy commander at the base hospital, who was finally able to stop the deployment. Had he not worked so hard to find the right person to help him, Kevin would have joined countless other combat veterans who are redeployed despite serious and unresolved health problems.

Where's the security in that?

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Forty Years Front-Line for Peace . . .

. . . And Just Getting Started

223 Hillside Avenue, Fayetteville NC 28301

www.quakerhouse.org

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Early Fall 2009

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Quaker Chuckles

True Confession?

So you're a Quaker minister?" asked the old man in Amsterdam.

"That's right, Friend," said the visitor.

"Well, you remind me of my favorite priest," said the Dutchman. "But he's passed on, and I feel like I'd like to confess something I meant to tell him."

"Hmmm," said the Quaker. "I'm not much for this priest business; but call me 'Friend' instead of 'Father,' and go ahead and give it a try."

"All right: forgive me, Friend, for I have sinned. During WWII I hid a refugee in my attic."

"Well," said the Quaker, "that's not a sin."

"But I made him agree to pay me 20 Gulden for every week he stayed."

"I see. I admit that wasn't ideal, but thee did it for a good cause, right."

"Oh, thank you, Friend; that eases my mind. But I have one more question..."

"What is that?"

"Do I have to tell him the war is over?"

Taking A Stand

Homer was known for his weekend benders. One First Day he turned up in Peacedale Meeting, sobering up from the night before.

There were several heartfelt messages delivered, but Homer had trouble listening and finally nodded off.

Obadiah Brown, the weightiest elder on the facing bench, finally rose, resolved to make an example of the snoring visitor.

Brown preached fervently about the need for reform, and finally declared, "All those wishing to have a place in heaven, please stand."

The whole room stood up except, of course, Homer.

Then Friend Brown said even more loudly, "But he who would prefer a place in hell, please STAND UP!"

Homer, who had caught only the last part, got groggily to his feet and peered around the room in confusion.

Scratching his head, he turned back to Brown. "I don't know what we're voting on here, Preacher," he said, "but it sure seems like you and me are the only ones that are for it!"

We need your continued support in these hard times, when the work of Quaker House is more critical than ever. Have you considered including Quaker House in your estate planning?
