OMNI SPECIAL NEWSLETTER ON IRAQ #7, April 29, 2010, BUILDING A CULTURE OF PEACE TO REPLACE THE CULTURE OF WAR and EMPIRE, Dick Bennett, Editor.  (#6 March 17, 2010, # 5 June 1, 2008; #4 April 3, 2008; #3 March 24, 2008, #2 Jan. 16, 2008, #1 Nov. 2, 2007.) Here are the direct urls for these newsletters.  they are all listed on the newsletter archive page and fairly well marked.  http://omnicenter.org/newsletters/index.php  marc

March 17, 2010 NEWSLETTER ON IRAQ #6  http://omnicenter.org/newsletters/2010-03-17.pdf
April 3, 2008 SPECIAL #4, FILMS ON IRAQ  http://omnicenter.org/newsletters/200804_03.pdf

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**LEAVE IRAQ: REMEMBER APRIL 9, 2003, BAGHDAD CAPTURED, OCCUPATION BEGAN**

(OMNI has consistently and persistently voiced our opposition to the illegal, brutal invasion and occupation, carrying out our responsibility as informed citizens and peace and justice makers.  Let's keep it up until the killing stops, the people are fed, have clean water, and medicines, and the 4 million refugees and 2 million internally displaced are returning to their homes.)

**FROM THE AMERICAN FRIENDS SERVICE COMMITTEE**
Grassroots Oversight on Iraq: March 20, 2010
“Iraq War 20 March 2003 – ???  When will it end?”

**Speak out for WITHDRAWAL**
Dear James,

This weekend marks seven years since the invasion of Iraq in 2003.  It is a moment of tremendous sorrow as we acknowledge the absolute terror that war has brought the people of Iraq.

Millions have been forced from their homes as refugees or internally displaced; hundreds of thousands have been killed and basic services remain unattainable for many.  Hundreds of thousands of US soldiers have been sent to fight resulting in over 4,000 deaths and many more injured.  In addition, the war has cost U.S. taxpayers at least $3 trillion that could have been spent on jobs, healthcare, and schools.  There are no winners, only lost lives and lost opportunities.

It is time to end this war now and remove U.S. troops.

Many of you are engaged with public actions to end the war this week, a march in Washington, local vigils, regional protests.  Memorials are being planned to remember the lives lost and the names of the fallen will be read.  But we must continue to act beyond this
anniversary date. We cannot go back to our everyday lives and forget Iraq until next year. Let’s build on the momentum that Iraqis have created as they move forward to build a better future for themselves. AFSC is urging folks to take action....

**Call your member of Congress to make sure that U.S. troops are being withdrawn. The date for all combat troops to be withdrawn is only 6 months away.** There are talking points posted on [www.CountdowntoWithdrawal.org](http://www.CountdowntoWithdrawal.org) AFSC's site that monitors the troop withdrawal.

Thank you for helping us end the Iraq war,
Peter Lems and Mary Zerkel
For AFSC's Wage Peace Campaign team.....

American Friends Service Committee
1501 Cherry Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

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[March 19, 2003] is the seventh anniversary of the Iraq invasion. There’s a temptation as we begin to end our combat presence in Iraq to search for a happy ending. But there has been no ‘victory’ in Iraq. We created this video as a reminder of the damage done to Iraq and to our country over the last seven years.

We also know that there will be no economic recovery here at home as long as we're spending $100 billion a year on another war that isn't making us any safer - the war in Afghanistan. That's why we're asking you to report the Iraq and Afghanistan War waste, fraud and abuse on the White House's official economic recovery website, [Recovery.gov](http://Recovery.gov), today. Simply scroll down to the field marked "What" and paste this message into the text box:

"I'd like to report the waste of billions of dollars of our national wealth in Afghanistan on a war that doesn't make us safer. It's fraud to portray this as a war that increases our security, and it's abusive of U.S. troops and local civilians to drag out this war any longer. End the war so we can have real economic recovery."

Join the discussion and tell us what you think on Rethink Afghanistan's [Facebook Page](http://Facebook Page)

KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM:
THE MORAL CORRUPTION OF OUR TROOPS BY WAR SHOOTING CIVILIANS IN BAGHDAD, IRAQ IN 2007 (Dick)

Collateral Murder in Iraq
A United States military video was released this week showing the indiscriminate targeting and killing of civilians in Baghdad. The nonprofit news organization WikiLeaks obtained the video and made it available on the Internet. The video was made July 12, 2007, by a U.S. military Apache helicopter gunship, and includes audio of military radio transmissions.

Amy Goodman, Democracy Now (April 6, 2010), devoted her program to the killing of unarmed, innocent people in an incident in Baghdad on July 12, 2007. (Google Democracy Now for the text.) I first read about this atrocity by our airborne troops in The Good Soldiers by David Finkel. Now the US Army’s own film of the murders is available through a whistleblower, and it shows the killers even laughing as they machine-gunned people and fired into a rescue van containing children with 30mm shells.

COVERUP (like My Lai): WikiLeaks has released a classified US military video depicting the indiscriminate slaying of over a dozen people in the Iraqi suburb of New Baghdad -- including two Reuters news staff. Reuters has been trying to obtain the video through the Freedom of Information Act, without success since the time of the attack. The video, shot from an Apache helicopter gun-ship, clearly shows the unprovoked slaying of a wounded Reuters employee and his rescuers. Two young children involved in the rescue were also seriously wounded. Videos (short and long version) at http://collateralmurder.com/

The great significance of Amy’s program is that it goes beyond one incident to reject the military’s claim that it and similar killings are aberrations. Rather, the deliberate firing on civilians is shown to have followed SOP: Standard Operating Procedure. But probably every opponent of the US wars already knew this, knew this about wars, and opposed them among many other reasons because they morally demoralize our own citizens, as it transforms some into killers and many more into the silently complicit (but not all: see below on Josh Stieber).

Amy followed up on April 7 with this program:

EXCLUSIVE: One Day After 2007 Attack, Witnesses Describe US Killings of Iraqi Civilians As the US Central Command says it has no plans to reopen an investigation into the July 2007 helicopter attack that killed a dozen people in Baghdad, including two Reuters news staff, we play never-before-seen eyewitness interviews filmed the day after the attack.

And on April 8 Amy interviewed Philip Alston, US Special Rapporteur on Extra-judicial Executions. The connection was not made, but the deliberate killing of these unarmed civilians was a kind of extrajudicial execution.
(Tell Amy thanks for her 3 programs to expose the covered-up truth.)

If you missed the film of US helicopter gunners murdering Iraqi civilians July 12, 2007 (on Democracy Now and other places), you can see some clips and read some dialog in In These Times (May 2010) pp. 26-27. After such atrocities, and there were many more, as in Vietnam (My Lai only well-reported), can there be victory? What do the Pentagon and White House mean by “winning” after so much vicious killing?
ARMY SPECIALIST JOSH STIEBER

http://www.opednews.com/Podcast/Member-of-Same-Bravo-Compa-by-Rob-Kall-100409-149.html

Rob Kall Speaks to Veteran of "COLLATERAL MURDER" Company WikiLeaks Reported By Rob Kall

Josh Stieber, a former U.S. Army Specialist, is speaking out. A member of the Bravo Company 2-16 whose acts of brutality made headlines this week with the Wikileaks release of the video "Collateral Murder," Stieber says such acts were not isolated incidents, but were commonplace during his tour of duty. [bold added, D] "After watching the video, I would definitely say that that is, nine times out of ten, the way things ended up," says Stieber

Reader Supported News WikiLeaks Soldiers | An Open Letter of Reconciliation
http://www.readersupportednews.org/

Josh Stieber and Ethan McCord, Mike and Friends Blog
If you didn't feel connected by anything human to the WikiLeaks Video, Josh Stieber and Ethan McCord's Letter of Reconciliation to the victims and the community will do it.


If you have not listened to Rob Kall Speaks to Veteran of "COLLATERAL MURDER" t, RK strongly encourages you to do so. Josh Stieber was in the same Bravo company as the men whose voices were captured on the Wikileaks video. Josh was there in Baghdad at the same time, in the same company. His message is a powerful one. A few days before the Wikileaks video was taken, Josh tells me, he refused to fire randomly on civilians. Otherwise, he may have been on that mission that, listening to it, causes us revulsion. His assessment of the situation is not an easy one to face or accept. He's also written a blog that he permitted us to reprint. RK strongly suggest you read the blog Collateral Murder? Wikileaks, Soldiers Speak and then listen. Together, they are very powerful, especially when you consider they come from a 22 year old veteran-- a former warrior who sought and achieved conscientious objector status.

“Collateral Murder? Wikileaks, Soldiers Speak” By Josh Stieber . Thanks to OEN managing editor Cheryl Biren for producing and researching the show. There's a reason the senior editorial team calls her Cherlock.

DICK ON THE KILLINGS IN OUR WARS
In my special report on the “Harms of Iraq War” (2006), these sections were included: “Subversion of Law and Love: Training to Kill,” “Another Air War by US Against Civilians,” “Mass Killing of Civilians,” and “Even larger Mass Killing of Animals.”

In my Newsletter on Iraq #2, January 16, 2008, I included these 2 sections:
Cost of the Wars: Money, Killings, Suicides, Desertions, Rape.
And Killings by Soldiers Back Home.
In my Newsletter on Afghanistan #2, “26 Reasons for Leaving Iraq and Afghanistan,” March 1, 2009, I wrote the following.
21. BRUTALIZATION OF US SOLDIERS AND CITIZENS. Read Tyler Boudreau’s Packing Inferno: The Unmaking of a Marine. See his article “To Kill or Not to Kill,” The Progressive (Feb. 2009), 30-32. “To master one’s reluctance to take life, one must stop revering life so much, particularly that of an enemy. This unseemly dimension of war…was almost universally taken for granted within the Marine Corps.” In military desensitization training “the enemy’s death is meant to be regarded with indifference and sometimes with amusement.” And who are the enemy in Iraq and Afghanistan? What about civilians? “...[O]n
the battlefield...‘objectives’ always supersede life....in our headlong pursuit to deliver “freedom and democracy” and to “expel an oppressive regime” and “combat terrorism,” we had inadvertently lost sight of the very people we’d been deployed to help.” Boudreau served 12 years in the Marine Corps infantry. And many of the public back home are also desensitized. Sure, they say they dislike war, but they do nothing about the slaughters caused by one US war after another, and devote themselves to the limitless diversions offered by US affluence and commercialism. Let people listen to General Eisenhower: “I hate war, as only a soldier who has lived it can, as only one who has seen its brutality, the futility, the stupidity.” 1946.

22. CALLOUSNESS OF US LEADERS. Secretary of State Madeline Albright, in response to the question: Was the death of a half-million Iraqi children as the result of the Clinton/Blair embargo and bombings during the ’90s worth it? She replied: Yes. Too many Democrats or Republicans, people who seek and win high office, feel too little empathy with the innocent victims shot and bombed by soldiers under their orders. The soldiers have been trained to harden their hearts. But the civilian leaders? They can feel sympathy with no victim of their bombs? They have read nothing about the human beings of Afghanistan—by Khaled Hosseini, for example? Their upbringing in compassion, the religious precepts and stories, the literary vicarious identification with the feelings and thoughts of others, did nothing take? Did they become, as they seem, mechanicals in pursuit of empire and “national security”?

TWO FILMS ON WAR CONTRASTED
Slavoj Zizek in “A Soft Focus on War,” In These Times (May 2010) pp. 30-32, contrasts James Cameron’s Avatar to Kathryn Bigelow’s The Hurt Locker. Avatar clearly opposes the superpower Corporate-Military Complex, “a force of brutal destruction serving big corporate interests.” The Hurt Locker on Iraq does present the absurdities of war, but “its heroes are doing exactly the same job as the heroes of Green Berets,” and we are drawn to identify with “our boys...their fears and anguish, instead of questioning what they are doing at war in the first place.”

WE ARE WINNING IN IRAQ? WE HAVE WON?
Call your member of Congress to make sure that U.S. troops are being withdrawn. The date for all combat troops to be withdrawn is only 6 months away. There are talking points posted on www.CountdowntoWithdrawal.org

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Fayetteville office: 251-1380
Senator Mark Pryor: Phone: (202) 224-2353 Fax: (202) 228-0908

BOOK

The Importance of Investigative Reporters and Whistleblowers.
Because the Pentagon covers up such events and mainstream media mainly report what the government reports, the public is generally uninformed about military crimes. (See the documentary on My Lai recently shown on PBS.) (The Pentagon has now $700 billion dollars a year, with untold and unexamined waste, and these killings, yet not a single organization is devoted to exposing it for the public good.) But we have eyes and ears thanks to a few
investigative reporters/editors and whistleblowers. The My Lai massacre (the wanton killing of a large number of unresisting human beings) was finally revealed by whistleblowers (including an officer), and investigative reporters, who also revealed that My Lai was just one of many. These 2007 Baghdad murders have been revealed by the digging of reporters like Julian Assange of Wikileaks, Jerome Starkey of the Times of London, and Robert Greenwald, independent reporter. Let us call on all soldiers to go public with the truth about criminal war experiences. In memory of Namir and Said, photographer and driver/translator, among those killed by those gunners in that Apache Hellfire.

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END OF IRAQ WAR NEWSLETTER #7, April 29, 2010

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