Proposal: You recall The War Department? In a linguistic coup, the Pentagon changed its name to the “Defense” Department when the Cold War shifted into high fear gear by the creation of the US National Security State in 1947 (unified military services, CIA, National Security Agency (NSA), Truman Doctrine, McCarthyism). Now most citizens of the US think all of our invasions, occupations, interventions are in “Defense”! Let us never say or write “Defense” Department, but return to the true name: War Department.

Contents, Grassroots Militarism USA Newsletter #1, Chronological Order, 1989-2014
Dick: Washington County USA 1989
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Dick, Our Troops Died for Our Freedom? 2012
Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Robert F. Foley, Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient and Army Emergency Relief Director, poses with the UA Army ROTC Color Guard Team prior to the event. L to R: CDT Chris Gentry, CDT Ethan Sumrall, LTG (R) Robert F. Foley, CDT Robert McQuilkin, CDT Walton Davis, Master SGT Norman D. Harvey, and CDT Kevin Dunavan

The Army ROTC Color Guard had the exceptional honor of presenting the colors for the Medal of Honor Gala held Thursday, May 15, at Crystal Bridges Museum of Art in Bentonville. Present were 13 Congressional Medal of Honor recipients, including Lt. Gen. (Ret.) Robert F. Foley, Army Emergency Relief Director and Col. (Ret.) Bruce P. Crandall, vice president of the Congressional Medal of Honor Society.
Former President George W. Bush was also in attendance and received the Congressional Medal of Honor Society's Patriot Award for his assistance to veterans. The Master of Ceremonies for the gala was former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee.

The event was hosted by Wal-Mart Corporation and sponsored by 14 other corporations. This event gave the cadets exposure to the massive efforts given in the part of private enterprise in supporting veterans and military personnel.

For the U of A Army ROTC Color Guard, this represents a culmination of the hard work, attention to detail, and motivation which these cadets routinely exercise in rendering honors during events such as this.

"This is the first time in my 23 years of service that I have had the honor of being in the same room with a Medal of Honor recipient." said Master Sgt. Norman D. Harvey, director of the Army ROTC Color Guard.

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Dick Bennett, *Grassroots Militarism: A Model for Community Research*. Eureka Springs, AR. Center on War and the Child, 1989. 30pp. Available at UAF’s Mullins Library. Although Arkansas’ Washington County has no large military contractor, it reveals the pervasiveness of violence and military presence, of the US military-industrial complex, which goes either unnoticed and unremarked or is celebrated. It’s the USA, Washington County, AR, Washington, DC, Pentagon-Corporate-Congress-White House-Mainstream Media-Security Complex, from the towns and counties to world domination.

**UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS MULLINS LIBRARY COMMEMORATES WWI**

Dick Bennett May 15, 2003
The Mullins Library on May 14, 2003, held a Memorial Day Commemoration on “World War I: The Home Front Here and Abroad.” Here is the total project:

1. Attractive, expensive, large postcard invitations, with a picture of a soldier climbing out of a trench and upwards toward a stairs of books leading to a city, entitled “Knowledge Wins: Public Library Books Are Free.” The Program of four pages, with a dramatic poster on the front.
   a. The Poster cover: The US Eagle is dropping a laurel wreath onto the head of the British Lion, accompanied by the words: “America’s Tribute to Britain.” Explanation of the contribution of the Liberty Memorial Museum of Kansas City.
   b. Music Program Notes (two compositions played by one of the university’s best pianists).
   c. Description of three exhibits, summarized by the title “Over Here? The American Home Front.”
   d. “Remarks on the Main Exhibit.”
   e. Lecture by a professor of English on “Gender and Paradox in Great War Britain.”
   f. Bio of the pianist.

ANALYSIS

Picture Postcard: The picture and message apparently affirm the superiority of learning over armed violence.

Program Cover: This poster seems neutrally historical, until one recalls that just a few weeks prior to the event the U. S. and Britain invaded Iraq in violation of international law/the U.N. Charter, against the Security Council, and against overwhelming world opinion, resulting in the deaths of thousands of Iraqi civilians and soldiers, the widespread destruction of Iraqi infrastructure, including priceless cultural collections (the National Museum, etc. destroyed), and ensuing human misery and social chaos.

Lecture: This excellent account of the response of women to the war, of their struggle to be active participants, and of men’s ambivalent attitudes toward women’s participation, is entirely appropriate to a program on WWI British Home Front. However, in the context of the second brutal invasion of Iraq just ended (and the ten years of embargo and bombing) in which so many women and children were killed, and the context of the slaughter that was WWI-- practically a genocide of an entire generation of young men on both sides of the war--the lecture seems to sanitize the war, to deflect the audience from the horror. Let me give a detail: “On one day in World War I, the British army lost 19,240 men. That was July 1, 1916, a Saturday. A single regiment, the storied 1st New Foundland, was virtually annihilated. Maj. Gen. Sir Beauvoir de Lisle, reporting on what had happened, wrote, ‘It was a magnificent display of trained and disciplined valor, and its assault only failed of success because dead men can advance no further.’” I am not blaming the speaker, who was asked to speak on the “home front.” But the program committee should be asked why they avoided the charnel context, the carnage, the bits and pieces of the 400,000 soldiers never identified.

Music: The escapist element of the lecture was then enlarged and emphasized by the first of the two musical presentations, Rachmaninoff’s “Variations on Theme of Corelli, Op. 42,” which has nothing to do with WWI, the home front, or war. The second composition, however, Prokofiev’s “Sonata No. 7,” according to the program notes “belongs to the trio of ‘war sonatas’” composed by Prokofiev. Yet of course even this composition, with its “thrilling” ending, does not evoke, does not even begin to draw attention to, the terrible realities of WWI trench warfare.
The Exhibits: One displays materials “relating to the American and Arkansas home front during WWI” from the Liberty Memorial Museum of Kansas City. The Museum was created soon after the end of WWI to memorialize “the men and women who served, and to those who died during World War I.” That is, it is a war memorial. The problem is, contrary to popular patriotism, the war was not fought for liberty but over empires; it was a colonial conflict in which the U.S. took one side; and a recent scholarly study has made the case that Britain was the main cause of the inexpressible, five-year holocaust. The program notes describe the Museum: “Its enormous tower, temple-like buildings, enormous carved stone sphinxes, and massive courtyards are truly a national landmark.” A landmark promulgating war, yes.

The second exhibit displays U.S. WWI posters “that reflect national sentiments of the period, and that encouraged social actions and attitudes relating to the home front.” What this euphemistically deceptive description does not reveal is the jingoism of the posters.

The third exhibit contains two parts: sheet music of U.S. popular songs during WWI, and the research of Prof. James H. Hudson “on the history of the American aviators who fought in the war.” The songs are patriotic pro-war songs, and the research promotes air war, which became Guernica, Rotterdam, Hamburg and Dresden, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and continues today.

But was the program planned to so much support war? Clearly not, I think: the mixed messages suggest something else, and the reply from a library official to my query regarding the creation of the program makes its randomness clear. One official had a brother-in-law who was curator of the Liberty Memorial Museum. Another official knew the English professor who had just written a book on the home front during WWI. The Dean of the library was a friend of the pianist, who “agreed to play a couple of pieces by two composers who lived in exile in between the wars after the Russian Revolution”; that is, pieces not connected with WWI or its home front. And the official who told me about this process, wrote, “We wanted to stress the ‘home front,’ rather than the war itself,” without explaining why.

No one librarian, no group of librarians, set out to promote war in this program; no conspiracy occurred. Rather each and all reflected the group think of the US National Security State. Most of the content is either for war or (the music) is neutral. How could this happen, in a university with a college named for J. William Fulbright, and when all involved are so intelligent and well-informed? Perhaps the culture in which they live, with its militarism everywhere exerting support and pressure for violence and war, decreased their ordinarily critical alertness. The Mullins Library Memorial Day Commemoration, “World War I: The Home Front Here and Abroad,” May 14, 2003, offers a fascinating, complex illustration of Grassroots Militarism in Northwest Arkansas in the year 2003.

NORMALIZING MILITARISM AND PERMANENT WAR
By Dick Bennett, August 31, 2008.

I always read the "Our Town" section of The Morning News Sundays, for the understanding it adds to how the corporate warfare state sustains itself at the grassroots. Whether intentionally or not, "Our Town" functions effectively to decontextualize local events and make them conform to the standard of militarism and empire, in two ways, by 1) publicizing mainstream fundraisers and 2) supporting the troops.
All of the fundraisers are for worthy causes—Polo in the Ozarks, Savor the Flavor, Starry Starry Night, Dancing with the NWA Stars, Pink Trash Ball, Charity Challenge of Champions, Chefs in the Garden, Black Ties and Toolbelts, and many more—and all are noncontroversially, impeccably, complicitly isolated from the wrongdoings of our government. Sunday after Sunday you would never know our government was squandering five or six trillion dollars and causing the deaths perhaps a million Iraqis and Afghans and over 4000 of our own warriors on an illegal war for oil and empire, when that money could have been spent for the human needs for which our good citizens perform fundraisers (for cancer victims, ill children, battered women, and on and on), and the lives of our soldiers, of Iraqis and Afghans, and of our own sick, injured, and dying saved.

And on Sunday after Sunday, year after year, our warriors are singled out for special recognition and sympathy—in the "Military News" section, stories accompanied by photos of individuals. The Morning News also presented a special profile each Sunday about Bravo Company National Guard men and women (headquarters Rogers), and the newspaper makes the series available on its web site. These practices are reinforced Sunday after Sunday, by the "Local Notes" reporting local military events—one day, for example, the Rogers Ladies Auxiliary Veterans of Foreign Wars vigil, the Patriotic Scholarship competition offered by the National Veterans of Foreign Wars locally sponsored by the Bella Vista VFW Auxiliary Ladies and Post, and the Purple Heart Chapter meeting.

By suppression and avoidance of the contexts of aggressive US foreign wars, on the one hand by our generous, hardworking fundraisers, and on the other hand by media reporting our warriors and foreign wars also devoid of context, our citizens and media help to ensure the continuation of the US warfare state. And it is all considered normal.

So we must speak up. Indirect or direct acceptance of wars is not natural but constructed by people. Through our great power of nonviolent resistance, we must examine and try to impede whatever leads to wars and preparations for wars. And by doing so we become a peace movement.

OZARK MILITARY MUSEUM

All We Are Saying Is Give War a Chance

By Jonah Tebbetts, Friday, January 25, 2008
Remember a couple of years ago when OMNI wanted to have school children decorate Peace Poles and place them on public property? City Attorney Kit Williams went off on how these monuments to peace could be read as opposition to the debacle in Iraq and could create a public forum in our city parks. Don Michaels of the Northwest Arkansas Times editorialized against the idea, so OMNI backed off and dropped their gentle idea to praise peace in our parks.

Well, glorifying war is a different matter altogether. Down at Ray Boudreaux's corporate jetport on South School Street, we have allowed the Ozark Military Museum to set up shop on city property and display military weapons and other totems that sanctify war. The museum just received city approval of a building permit for a 6,000-square foot prefabricated metal addition on public property.

This is being done in the name of economic development and the claim that 10,000 visitors toured the shrine in 2007. That's about five paying customers an hour, if you believe that. We must be competing for tourist dollars with the Air and Military Museum of the Ozarks (AMMO) in Springfield. We are also shaping the views of future generations of children by aggrandizing the weapons of war. Lauding an armored military vehicle, Leonard McCandless, president of the museum's board of directors, said, “Every little kid would like to have that to drive to Wal-Mart, make their own parking place... It's a neat little thing. Every kid and big kids, adults, would like to have that to play with.”

I would argue that those military artifacts might make good plowshares, but our city's leaders and editorial writers would think that a dangerous political statement.

MEMORIALIZING CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS AND BATTLES
Dick Bennett June 10, 2012

“Memorial Group Celebrates Anniversary” by Kate Ward. *Northwest Arkansas Times* (June 3, 2012). A celebration of the founding of the Confederate Cemetery in Fayetteville, Ar, 139 years ago, and of the founding women. Reenactors dressed as Confederate soldiers and fired weapons from those times.

The event and explanations raise questions.

“...The mission of these women was to find a final resting place for the men who died for a cause,”’ said Linda Doede, historian for the Southern Memorial Association. A member of the Sons of Confederate Soldiers was present, who said: “…these men are not honored enough. There’s no greater honor than to die for a cause.” [But it’s not just a cause, any cause: the slavery cause is affirmed by the celebration. And they don’t really mean all causes; I suspect they would not celebrate Islamic suicide bombers, dead for their cause. And more generally, these people are celebrating war and warriors. Let honeysuckle cover up that cemetery.]

Sixty-three new headstones identify previously unknown or unmarked graves of soldiers (of the possibly 900 soldiers buried in the graveyard). Said the man who paid for them: “It’s our duty to remember to never forget these men or the sacrifices they made.” [Why must we remember them? Their cause was not just. Rather we should celebrate the Southern whites who fought for black rights continuing to the present. Or let us build monuments to the opponents of wars. The US has thousands of war cemeteries, and not one for the anti-war dead. Or why not devote time and money to gravestones for the countless paupers who have died in our country unmarked?]

Why does this matter? Monuments become a force imprisoning in the past the minds of the generations that follow, conditioning and reinforcing wars instead of peace. The Son of Confederate Soldiers brought his son with him to the celebration: “I think it’s really important he learn about the history.” To the contrary, let us teach our children to celebrate the struggle to bring into being the United States of the future in the spirit of the Declaration of Independence.

REPORT AND SUPPORT THE TROOPS

WHAT WOULD WE DO WITHOUT THEM?

By Dick Bennett. 2012

Our mainstream media, day after day, serve the warmakers in Washington much like the individuals and groups already described, by reinforcing reverence for the military. An example is Joe Seffense’s letter to the *Arkansas Democrat Gazette*, “Find a Place of Honor” (11-29-12): referring to a Booneville soldier killed in Afghanistan, who “gave his life so you would be free to print your newspaper we would be free to read it.” Or Leeanna Walker’s Thanksgiving 2012 column, “Thankful for Family, Friends, Food, Football” (*Northwest Arkansas Times*, Nov. 22, 2012). She writes: “I am thankful for those people who serve. . . .The military. Without them, where would we be? Under the thumb of a terrorist regime, I suspect. Our way of life may have been impacted by some crazy people, but, day to day, we still live free.” Or Cheryl Brannan’s letter to the *NAT*, (10-15-12), “Should Make Sacrifices”: “Our veterans have fought for our country and our freedom, many sacrificing their lives.”
Our veterans fought for our freedom, we are still “free”? The hundreds of letters saying the same thing without any evidence sounds like they were all reading from the same children’s play, or speaking the equivalent of singing “Jesus Loves Me, This I Know,” which I recall from Sunday School. Name one of the over 50 US invasions and interventions since 1945 necessary to protect our freedom. Vietnam? Grenada? Panama? Iraq I? Iraq II? Our troops sacrificed their lives for these illegal, unnecessary aggressions? Or terrorism—9/11? Where would we be had we pursued bin Laden as a criminal through the international criminal justice system? Right where we are minus the trillion dollars spent, a million civilians killed, and the hundreds of thousands of enemies generated. Bin Laden was finally captured through a military police action using modern police methods. Oh yes, and minus the murder of the unarmed suspect dumped in the ocean! Our troops sacrificed their lives for this? And freedom? Have they, have we, forgotten President Bush’s Patriot Act (II), President Clinton’s 1996 Anti-Terrorism Bill (deserving the title of “Patriot” Act I), the numerous unconstitutional “laws” passed after 9/11, and the egregiously numerous violations of Bill of Rights protections during the Bush and the Obama administrations? Where would we be?

SACRED PENTAGON BUDGET, SELECTIVE REPORTING

*Washington Post* editorial, “Mr. Obama’s Moment” (republished in *ADG* 11-29-12).

“. . .there’s no way to achieve balance without slowing the rate of increase” of education, Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid. What about the Pentagon with its basic budget this fiscal year of $543 billion, plus $88 billion for the wars, plus nuclear weapons in the Energy Dept., and Veterans Admin. with endless wounded from permanent illegal, unnecessary, immoral wars. —Dick

WAR AND PEACE MONUMENTS, NORTHWEST ARKANSAS 2013

Recently an out-of-town acquaintance came to NWA to visit our Civil War battlefield monuments—one day for Pea Ridge, another for Prairie Grove. Others—in Bella Vista, Fayetteville—provide a full day of visiting.

He described himself as an objective historian simply interested in a powerful aspect of U.S. history. But how objective actually was he? He was not interested in visiting peace places. Perhaps that did not occur to him; after all, his hobby is the Civil War. But the result is familiar, mainstream pro-war mentality. Rather than being objective, he was reinforcing war preparation and war, by assuming and acting upon the belief that wars are natural and inevitable, the proper subject therefore of historians, and not “study wars no more!”. Peace is something outside, aberrant, rare.

He was just another nationalist historian who doesn’t study peace; who doesn’t spend his time and money learning about peacemaking and peacemakers, because war and not peace is his interest. And that produces the vicious circle that few scholars study peace places because they assume such places don’t exist, and there are so few peace places because scholars don’t seek to study them, don’t write about them. But in fact there are many peace places in the USA, and several in Fayetteville.
But considering his perspective, perhaps my acquaintance did not know that. So here’s an invitation to my readers to make a Directory of Peace Places in Northwest Arkansas, Fayetteville and environs. Will someone do that? It would make a valuable class project at UAF. Study peace!

**ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE PUBLISHES TWO ARTICLES ON 11th and FINAL HONOR FLIGHT FOR WWII VETS TO WASHINGTON**

Spencer Tirey, “Veterans Visit Memorial.” *NAT* (May 5, 2014, 1A and 4A with photos). “The program, started in 2009, has honored more than 900 veterans in Arkansas with a free, one-day flight.” The National World War II Memorial opened in 2004. Tyson and Wal-Mart paid for most of the expenses. Former Senator Bob Dole greeted them at the Memorial. On return that night they were welcomed by a band and more than 500 people, “many flying flags.” --Dick

[ARTICLES IN THE *ARKANSAS DEMOCRAT-GAZETTE* 2011-2013 GLORIFYING WAR AND WARRIORS]

**War Heroes**

Hughes, Dave. “Couple Hope to Honor War Hero.” *ADG*. 1-7-13

Picture only. “Dedication Ceremony: honoring U of A Alumni, Medal of Honor Recipients and others.” 11-13-12

**Public Schools Supporting the Troops**

Abram, Jerry. “A Round of Applause: Program in Public School to Honor Local Veterans.” *ADG* 12-12

Sterling, Doneta. “3 Brothers, 70 Years of Service.” *ADG*. 11-26-12

Abram, Jerry. “Kudos For School’s Veteran’s Program.” *ADG*. 12-1-12

**Re-enactments, Recountings**

Drew, Preston. “Arkansas Visit To Prairie Grove Great.” *ADG*. 12-17-12

Bowden, Bill. “Prairie Grove Carnage Re-enacted.” *ADG*. 12-2-12


Bowden, Bill. “6 Civil War Structures Pinpointed.” *ADG*. 12-1-12

**Commercialism**
Advertisement Highlands Oncology Group. “Taking Care of Our Veterans in Northwest Arkansas.” ADG.

MIC
Souza, Kim. “Secretary of Treasury Tours NonoMech in Springdale.” ADG. 3-26-11

Supporting the Troops Families
Gittings, Misty. “Military Families Get Early Christmas.” ADG. 12-7-12

Supporting the Troops

END GRASSROOTS MILITARISM NEWSLETTER #1

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Dick Bennett

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