

the  
**sign of peace**

JOURNAL  
OF THE  
CATHOLIC  
PEACE  
FELLOWSHIP

WINTER 2005 • VOLUME 4.1

## Women & War

*On all sides – U.S. soldiers, insurgents, victims – the role of women in war has expanded. An advance for equal opportunity, or an ominous sign of the expansion of violence?*

*A Mother's War* Stacey Paeth

*Of Rape and War* Mia Nussbaum

*SUFFERING AND STRENGTH* SHEILA PROVENCHER

*MAKING GOOD WOMEN SOLDIERS* AIMEE ALLISON

*Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution* A Review

*PSYCHOLOGY, SEMANTICS, AND WAR* RUTHANN JOHANSEN



*... and the editors on the Church's responsibility to young soldiers*

EDITOR

Michael J. Baxter

MANAGING EDITOR

Michael Griffin

ASSOCIATE EDITORS

Benjamin Peters

Brenna Cussen

Joel Schorn

Margaret Pfeil

Geoffrey Keating

Mary Margaret C. Nussbaum

EDITORIAL BOARD

Frederick C. Bauerschmidt

Tom Cornell

Jim Forest

Michael Garvey

Kelly Johnson

Jeremy Langford

Bill Offenloch

Patrick O'Neill

Shawn T. Storer

Julianne Wiley

Mark and Louise Zwick

CIRCULATION

Liz Fallon

Catherine Gehred

Ceil McGowan

Patrick McGowan

WEB TEAM

Nate Wills, csc

Jim Weber

Mike Lewis

*The Sign of Peace* is published four times a year. Annual voluntary subscription rate: \$10. To submit letters to the editor, address changes, manuscript submissions, or questions, contact:

*The Sign of Peace*

Box 4232

SOUTH BEND, IN 46634

TEL: 574.232.2295

Email:

staff@catholicpeacefellowship.org

Visit us on the web:

www.catholicpeacefellowship.org

Cover art: *Woman Warrior*, by

Jan Peters for *The Sign of Peace*

Image used for CPF logo (page and 28):

by Fritz Eichenberg

## contents

**4-5 A Mother's War** *Stacey Paeth shares the experience of sending her son, twice, off to war.*

**6-8 Suffering and Strength** *Sheila Provencher reports from Baghdad on the way women have dealt with war.*

**9 Making Good Women Soldiers** *An essay from Aimee Allison on her life as a Marine and as a conscientious objector.*

**10-13 Psychology, Semantics, and War** *Ruthann Johansen analyzes the work of Simone Weil and Pat Barker in the search for the roots of war.*

**13 They Burned Like This** *A poem by Jacqueline Dickey*

**14-15 A Certain Kind of Woman** *In her 2004 Commencement Address to Barnard College, Barbara Ehrenreich challenges standard notions of gender equality.*

**16-20 Women Warriors** *The staff of the Catholic Peace Fellowship explores the historical and contemporary debate over women in combat.*

**21-22 St. Marcellus Award Acceptance Speech** *From prison in Oklahoma, conscientious objector Camilo Mejia accepts the annual CPF honor.*

**23 Paredes Says No to Deployment** *A Report by Ben Peters on the most recent refusal to participate in the Iraq war.*

**24-25 Of Rape and War** *Mia Nussbaum examines the connection of culture between two social plagues.*

**26 Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution** *A review of the classic and re-released book by André Trocmé.*

## letters

INDIANA

I have the clear sense that the Catholic Peace Fellowship is asking some questions about what it means to work for peace that we Mennonites are not asking. The question of ministering to soldiers returning from war is one example. I have never heard that topic come up in a Mennonite Church. Our historical response has been to excommunicate those who went to war. I hope to hear more about your efforts.

Jonathan Neufeld

Co-Pastor, Southside Mennonite Fellowship Church

VERMONT

My friend Charlie McCarthy helped bring me "home" to the Catholic Church two years ago (after a 30 year absence). Prior to that, I was involved with the Quaker (Friends) Meeting for over ten years. With them, there are just so many resources about conscientious objection and the peace testimony. But in the Catholic Church, it seems

never to be discussed in a specific way and there are no resources available in the vestibules of the churches that we have attended. As we have four children, it is important to me that there is a support network for conscientious objection associated with the Catholic faith.

Lisa Curran Mayer

CALIFORNIA

While reading a recent issue of the *Houston Catholic Worker*, I noted your group's decision to pull out of "United for Peace and Justice" due to the group's support for abortion rights. UPJ's goal is "to welcome the participation of any and all national, regional and local groups who share our goals and wish to work with others." Their focus is not on abortion, but on common causes like the protest of war. The inclusion of different groups shows, to my mind, their willingness to put some of the more polarizing chapters in the struggle for justice aside so as to work in common cause

(Continued on page 27)



# To Whom Shall We Go?

**M**ore than a year ago, in his speech accepting our Saint Marcellus Award, Bishop John Michael Botean suggested a parallel between scandals of the sexual abuse of young people and the ongoing scandal—ignored or even condoned by some—in which the Church says to the military, caretaker of hundreds of thousands of young Catholics: do what you want with them.

Now, as dioceses dole out hundreds of millions of dollars in reparation for the neglect showed to young people, we believe it wise also to ponder the future cost of this present neglect. Actually, the cost is already being paid—by soldiers back from war, scarred by what they saw, what they did and what no one was willing to tell them.

The cost these soldiers bear was the subject of a medical study published in July 2004 in *The New England Journal of Medicine*. Directed by Dr. Charles W. Hoge, a team of researchers conducted the largest study yet of how war in Iraq is affecting the mental health of soldiers who participate. They surveyed 894 soldiers and 815 Marines back from eight-month and six-month deployments, respectively, and they used a protocol approved by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research.

The results are staggering. Over 90 percent report being attacked and shot at; over 50 percent (65 percent of Marines) took the life of an “enemy combatant”; 20 percent report being responsible for the death of a noncombatant; 95 percent saw dead bodies; over 85 percent knew someone seriously injured or killed. As a consequence, the Hoge Report found that 16 percent of Iraq war vets already suffer from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

These and other statistics—like the rates of suicide for soldiers in and after combat—make clear the harm that comes upon our youth in battle, the same youth to whom the Military Archdiocese has spoken not one single word about the right to refuse participation. In a meeting with us last year, as the war was in full swing, Auxiliary Bishop John Kaising of the Military Archdiocese said “This isn’t the time for talk of conscientious objection.”

We disagree. Consider Rob Sarra, a Catholic Marine whose life changed forever when he fatally shot a woman he thought might be a suicide bomber. As she fell, she was pulling a white flag from her bag. Events like this provoked in him a disdain for the war and a return to his faith. Yet chaplains had given him no religious framework to understand his questions of conscience; it was from secular groups that he received help. His search reminds us of the distraught apostle Peter, who in John’s Gospel asks Jesus, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of everlasting life.” (Jn 6:68) Or consider Paul, a young Catholic who made contact with us through the GI Rights Hotline. His Ohio National Guard unit was deployed to Iraq in October, 2004. It was from just north of Baghdad that he sent us a desperate email. “Please, can you please help get me out of here?”

We do not argue that the presence of death or suffering in Iraq necessarily indicates moral failure in not helping youth avoid war. Indeed, great suffering also accompanies moral virtue, and many martyrs and peacemakers have themselves been young people carrying a heavy cross. The early Church even saw themselves as a battle-weary army, the *militia Christi*, bringing forth from the young more soldiers for Christ. The difference is, as St. Clement of Alexandria put it, “The Church is an army of peace which sheds no blood. In peace, not in war, are we trained.”

Today, it seems, instead of training young people to be prophets of peace, soldiers of Christ, we hand them over for another training. And often we do not think twice: You want access to our schools to recruit and enlist young people? Come on in. You want our chaplains to serve as your morale officers? No problem. You want disproportionate numbers of Catholics to kill and die in the nation’s wars? They’re yours.

The situation calls us to reexamine our responsibility to the youth of our Church. Make no mistake, the coming years will bring more recruitment for the War on Terror. The Church—bishops, parents, teachers, all—needs to be there, providing education and guidance to them. Jesus gave the Church the words of eternal life. We should have them ready at hand when more young people find themselves asking, “To whom shall we go?”

—THE EDITORS

# A Mother's War

BY STACEY PAETH

I am a mother of two sons, Justin who is 21 and Robert who is 20. Robert wanted to be a Marine for as long as I can remember. He graduated high school in 2003 and went directly to basic training at Camp Pendleton, CA. Justin was a 2002 graduate of Michigan City High School. He joined the Army two weeks before graduation at the young age of 19. He was a great soccer player, but wasn't quite ready for college. The recruiters painted a rosy picture of Army life. He was sent to Iraq May 1, 2003.

I don't come from a military family, so I had other dreams for my sons. When they made the decision to join the military, all I could do was support them and be there for them. As strong as I thought I was, I wasn't prepared to hear my son tell me he was leaving for a war, for Iraq. My heart sank to the pit of my stomach and I knew that life was about to change, in a big way.

When he left, supposedly the initial fighting was over and they were just going to go into Iraq to maintain peace. But that was not the case: as you know, the war was long from being over.

He was there two weeks and I got my first phone call from him. It didn't sound like the Justin I knew. He was very down with a lot of despair in his voice. There were a couple of suicides in his unit and he had already gone through being ambushed and losing everything he owned.

He called home asking me to send him different supplies because everything he had was burned up. Justin and the other soldiers were left hanging out for three days until they were rescued.

As time went on, I didn't hear from him so often, but every time I did, he was really down. I got a letter from him saying he was sick, that he got sand flea fever at one point and he was sick from the water at another. He was pretty much living on his MREs (meals ready to eat), going on missions and living out of his vehicle.

He was trained to be a mechanic, to repair the Humvees, but he said he was doing everything but that.

On the home front, I was trying to be strong and

optimistic. Inside I was crumbling. Every morning I would turn on the television or my computer to see what was going on in Iraq. I would see the casualty numbers rising and cry. I would pray for those families, thinking of parents who had been told that their child had been killed, mothers and fathers who had that dreaded knock at their door, the knock that we all fear. At the same time, I would pray for my son. I would pray not only for his life, but I would pray that he would not have to kill, not have to see death, and I would hope that God would give him the strength that he needed to endure this awful war.

At times, I felt very alone with my feelings. I did not understand how my son could be in the middle of the desert with a gun in his hand and the world could just go on like nothing was happening. There were weddings to go to, holidays to celebrate and Brittany Spears kissing Madonna. I just wanted to scream out to the world, "MY SON IS IN THIS UNFAIR WAR. HE IS JUST MY BABY. HE DID NOT ASK FOR THIS. DOES ANYONE CARE?"

My emotions were up and down, like being on a roller coaster. I was lucky to have some really great friends who were there for me. I had many bad days. My true friends cried along with me when I had a bad day or when I hadn't heard from Justin in awhile, or when soldiers were killed in his unit. Then there were the wonderful postal workers who knew that every Friday I would

be at the Post Office mailing a package to Iraq. They would always ask me how Justin was doing and how I was holding up. There were many Fridays when all I could do was not burst into tears. Mailing packages was very therapeutic for me. It somehow gave me a sense of control over a situation where I had no control.

On the Tuesday before Thanksgiving, I was on my lunch hour mailing off a miniature Christmas tree with ornaments for Justin and had no idea what would happen upon returning to my office.

Justin walked in. I hadn't seen him in six months. It was very emotional. He was skinny. He had lost 15 pounds. He was dirty. It took him three days to get



---

*Stacey Paeth is a member of Military Families Speak Out. More writing, parents of soldiers, can be found at [www.mfso.org](http://www.mfso.org)*



home. He started from Iraq, went to Italy, then to Ireland, to Baltimore, to Chicago and finally rode a bus home.

Looking at him, I could tell right away that he was in shock and overwhelmed. Being so young, all he could think about while he was over there was coming home. He wanted to see his family. He missed his friends. He didn't want to be a soldier anymore.

He was very loyal to the military but wanted to be home. Right away, he and I left the building. The first thing he said to me was, "Mom, can you please take me for a haircut?"

After calling my husband and my family and having everyone rush over to the house to wait for him, he and I had a car ride. He says to me, "You know, I'm only home because another soldier was supposed to go home, and that soldier was killed, and I was able to take his place."

And then he said, "Look at the bottom of my uniform." There was blood on his uniform, and he said, "I had to carry a soldier who had been ambushed. I can't get the blood out of my uniform. Can you please help me get the blood out?" I said, "Sure."

He was very quiet the first two days he was home. He didn't really talk very much at all and he didn't leave the house. And during the time he was home, Bush did his TV thing about the reasons for invading Iraq. It was a political move, as you all know. At that point Justin wouldn't watch the TV. He wouldn't talk about the war. He just wanted to see his friends and be a normal 20 year old.

His friends all came home from school. They all came over to the house. We had a little party for him. Right away, he went out shopping and bought himself some new clothes. He wanted to be a regular kid. He spent his two weeks at home with us and with his friends, trying to be normal.

He did a lot of partying (and you know that 20-year-old kids go out and party) and he drank a lot. Every night, he was trying to forget the pain; he was out drinking and being with his friends, and not talking about the war and not thinking about the war.

The two weeks were up very quickly and it was time to take him back. It was one of my worst memories of

this war. No mother should have to take her son back to an airport to say goodbye to him as she is sending him back to a war.

What can you say to your child on his way back to a war? I tried to tell him, "You know, Justin, your term is halfway up, you'll be getting out of there in six months. You'll be going back to Germany. It'll be over with before you know it. You have a beautiful girlfriend here. You have your family waiting for you here."

The last thing he did was he handed me his watch. He said, "Hold onto this for me." I looked in his eyes, and never in my whole life have I seen such fear, such sadness, such an overwhelming feeling in anybody's eyes. For that brief moment, I saw the whole war in his eyes, and I saw the fear of what he had to go back to. I realized that I had no idea what he felt and I never would know the depth of his war experiences.

Well, we got through the holidays and started counting down the weeks until his unit would be pulling out. During the next few months, I started speaking out against the war. I hooked up with a great group of people from Military Families Speak Out. With their help, I formed friendships with other parents who had children in Iraq. This was the best thing I could have done because these parents and spouses were experiencing the same feelings that I was. I have a real bond with these people. That is very important for military families. We need to know that there are others who share the same stories, the same fears and the same anxiety. We are not alone.

MFSO was a tremendous help to me when I received a phone call in February from Justin. He was injured in an ambush attack in Baghdad. His leg had a ruptured Achilles tendon and he was not getting flown out of Iraq. His unit got papers saying that their tour in Iraq had been extended because of the need for more soldiers. The doctors basically patched him up, put him in a cast, and by April, put him back on the fighting front, with a cast on his leg.

Justin asked how he could still be in combat with his leg so injured. They said his trigger finger was still good.

Looking for help, I called MFSO. They alerted the media. MSNBC called me to confirm this story and to ask me to bring it to the attention of the world. I gave the interview. The exposure worked. Forty-eight hours after appearing on MSNBC, my son was flown out of Fallujah to Germany where he remains today.

But Justin has been told he is being extended beyond the term he signed up for. He will not be getting out of the Army as planned and his unit was told they are going back to Iraq this coming summer.

Is it just a matter of time before I go through this again? Is Robert going to end up there? Is Justin going to have to go back in June? I have to put these thoughts out of my mind, even if it's just for a while. I have to regroup my family and gather my strength, just in case we have to go through this again...

*For that brief moment, I saw  
the whole war in his eyes,  
and I saw the fear of what  
he had to go back  
to. I realized that I had  
no idea what he felt and  
I never would know  
the depth of his war  
experiences.*

# Suffering and Strength

BY SHEILA PROVENCHER

Before she goes outside, Maysoon swathes herself in an abaya, a black garment that covers her from head to toe. Black stockings are also a must, even in the 130-degree summer heat. She pins a head scarf beneath her chin and walks out into the sun. Later that night, she regales me with “abaya stories”—the time she tripped on the long hem in front of her in-laws, the time the wind blew it open in the marketplace, and, best of all, the time she “accidentally” set fire to her abaya shortly after her marriage. Maysoon, a 36-year-old Iraqi mother of four, really does not care for this garment, and only wears it because her husband wants her to.

“Women used to wear miniskirts,” says Um Yusef, my Iraqi landlady. “We used to go to the cinema, to nightclubs. We used to be able to live.” An Iraqi Christian who has lived in Baghdad her entire life, Um Yusef yearns for a time when simple pleasures were available and fear was not part of one’s daily reality.

But the past 25 years of unrelenting war have irrevocably shaped that reality. The Iran-Iraq war, the first Gulf War, years of economic sanctions, the 2003 invasion and occupation and the present post-occupation

quagmire have created a generation of women and men who remember little but struggle and fear. “Society became unbalanced because of all the wars,” says Hana Ibrahim, a 45-year-old Iraqi scholar and activist. “Many people turned to God, because they needed God more.” Throughout the past two decades, Iraqis increasingly chose a more rigorous interpretation of certain elements of Islam. The most obvious example of this changing consciousness is the return of both abaya and head scarves for women who venture beyond their homes.

But more conservative clothing is not the only change for Iraq’s women. “In the 1970’s, 90% of Iraqi women could read,” says Hana Ibrahim. “Women were [and are] physicians, lawyers, and professors. The first woman lawyer in the Arab world was Iraqi. The first woman judge in the Arab world was Iraqi. But in the 1990’s, only 40% of women could read. Many girls, especially in the villages, stopped going to school. They would stay home and help with the farmwork instead. In the cities, some worked as servants. This was new in Iraq. We never had such a thing before.”

Hana sits in the simple office of Women’s Will, a grassroots organization she founded to support women’s voices in Iraq. Her organization has vast work ahead. While the entire population suffers the effects

---

*Sheila Provencher lives in Baghdad as a member of Christian Peacemaker Teams. For more information, visit [www.cpt.org](http://www.cpt.org)*

Iraqi Pieta, Brian Kavanaugh



of a quarter-century of war, women face particular challenges, due both to the trauma of war and to the conditions in post-occupation Iraq. Hana sums it up: “We are still living inside the culture of war, the culture of death.”

### Where is My Husband?

Lara Hussein came to the Human Rights Organization in Iraq more than one month after her husband was seized by U.S. troops in December 2003. Three months pregnant, she had searched for him at military bases, at the Iraqi Assistance Center run by the then-Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA), and at Abu Ghraib prison. No one had any record of his arrest. She finally found his name on a list of detainees, but he was in Bucca prison camp, eight hours to the south and too far for her to travel alone. Lara is isolated from her family because she, a Christian, married a Muslim. Her husband is her only source of support, and now he is gone, held as a “security detainee” with no charges and no



prospect of trial. “Who will help me,” she asks, “when I have my baby?”

Many women like Lara have lost husbands, fathers, and brothers to the vast detention system begun by the U.S. occupation in Iraq. In a culture in which the man is the primary breadwinner, countless women lost their homes, property, and livelihood when their husbands were arrested. Some even lost their lives in the violent house raids that often precede a detention. And although some of their detained loved ones were guilty, many were innocent. One U.S. official interviewed in Baghdad last March said, “there are thousands of Iraqis in prison right now who should be home with their families.” Ever since the abuse scandal at Abu Ghraib prison,

authorities have been eager to publish reports of released prisoners and improved conditions. But for many women and children, the damage is already done. The prisoner abuse received worldwide attention. But the suffering of many prisoners’ families — also a form of abuse — has yet to be fully acknowledged.

### Silent Foundations

A society scarred by war has ghosts. The demons of Iran-Iraq, the Gulf War, the sanctions, and the latest war show their faces in the marketplace, in the countless men limping without full limbs, in children begging, in missing legs and hands and eyes. But the inner wounds show themselves in secret alcoholism, domestic violence, and psychological illness. Externally, the man is the head of the family, the provider, the one in charge. But more often than not, the strength of the woman holds the household together, and it is she who suffers the full effects of inner wounds and tries to heal them if she can.

Although numerous women have professional roles in Iraqi society, a large percentage work solely in the home, raising children and running the household. Work falls along gender lines, with the woman doing all the cooking, serving, and cleaning. When guests come, the men sit together while the woman of the house bears the burden of the work. When children are sick, she holds them. When the husband suffers from alcoholism, it falls to her to deal with it. Because alcohol is forbidden in Islam, alcohol addiction is usually a hidden problem that all too often spirals into domestic violence. A woman might be able to flee to her parents’ home, but usually has no source of income or support. Safe houses or homeless shelters barely exist.

Two weeks ago, Maysoon took her four children and left. Her husband had started hitting her. She went to her mother’s house and lives there in one room with her children. They weep when they try to talk about their father.

### Work and a Future

The job landscape in Iraq is bleak. During the occupation, unemployment soared to 70%, putting stress on innumerable men who cannot provide for their families. But women have had difficulty finding work for more than a decade. More than one million men died or became disabled during years of war, leaving wives or sisters who need to earn a living. Women make ends meet by sewing, cooking, working in shops, or worst, by begging on the streets. “Don’t give her any money,” said my translator one day, ignoring the baby-toting woman who walked the streets with hand held out. “Begging is just a job for them.”

Hind is an exception to the norm. A 26-year-old single Muslim woman, she owns her own copy shop, speaks fluent English, and hopes to go back to school for a Master’s degree. Her business supports both her and





*In the village of Abu Sifa, 83 of 85 men were detained.*

her mother, who is often ill and relies on the income. “I put my mind to it, I work very hard, and this is what I have accomplished,” says Hind with justifiable pride.

But Hind—representing Iraq’s best and brightest young people—sees no future for herself in her home country. “For me, I think I have no future in Iraq. I have to leave. First, there was the occupation. And this is something unbearable. And now, everything is getting worse. In the past, I walked about freely. Now I need someone to be with me at all times, for security. I am afraid to go out alone. I think the only way is to leave.”

### “Liberation”

Where is the voice of optimism? What about the liberation supposedly wrought by the war? Both Hana Ibrahim and Hind mince no words when they clarify the meaning of “liberation” at the hands of an outside power. Hana says, “Bush and Rumsfeld claim that they came to Iraq to make women free, to create democracy. But democracy is not for us, it’s for the companies. Not for the poor. People will stay poor and in the background. Bush and Rumsfeld mean freedom for them and their partners. But no freedom for us. When there is war, the people always lose.”

Hind concurs. “I don’t think the invasion made an improvement. They came to take, they did not come to give. And now people are attacking each other, and there is a

struggle inside. It’s getting worse because you can’t repair what is broken inside. If this is my society, then I reject this society.”

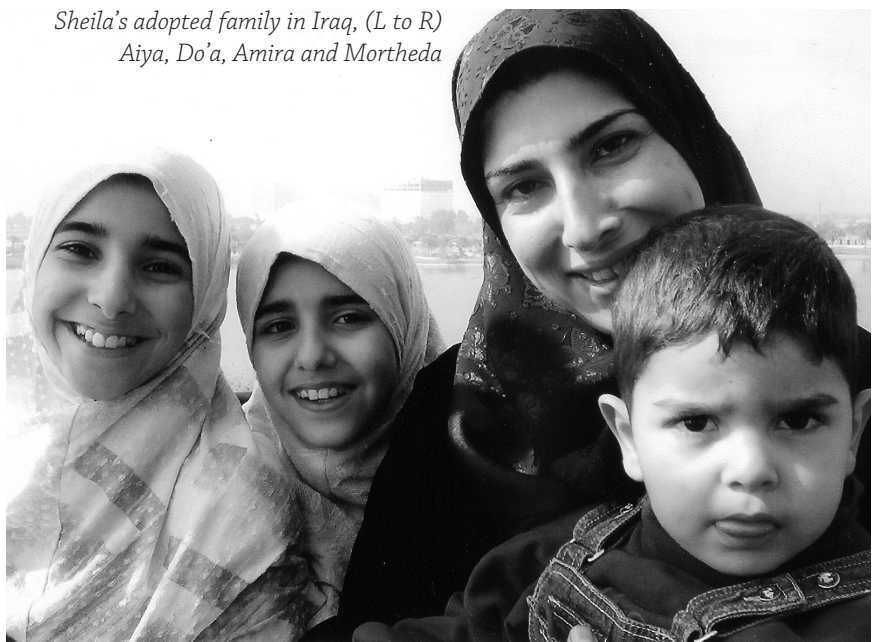
Hind, Hana, Um Yusef, Lara, and Maysoon know from their experiences that liberation is not a gift handed to them by a foreign power. But they and countless other women are digging deep within and finding resilience, strength, and true courage to continue the struggle.

### The First and Last Rule

Iraqi Dominican nun Sr. Marianne, a diminutive woman who stands perhaps five feet tall, runs a private hospital in Baghdad. She persevered through the first Gulf War and years of medicine shortages, and greeted the invading Marines by ordering them to get their priorities straight and protect the hospital! Another woman of strength. Like Maysoon, who has said “no” to domestic violence. Like Lara, who kept searching until she found her husband. Like Um Yusef, who, with her husband, is determined to stay in Baghdad even though the rest of their family is one of the many Christian families who have fled for the safety of other countries.

Hind, though she wants to leave, has a message for all Iraqi women: “Never give up, never give in to despair. If you can work just a little bit, you can still make the suffering less.” And Hana joins countless women working for human rights as she says, “Now I have my voice, and the will of women. I dream of how justice can be the first and last rule. Of how everyone can be free to be really human, to have rights and dignity. We cannot do this just as an Iraqi people — but with all the people of the world. We can do something together. This is our time. But we must struggle. Can we dream? Let us dream together.”

*Sheila’s adopted family in Iraq, (L to R)  
Aiya, Do’a, Amira and Mortheda*





# Making Good Women Soldiers

BY AIMEE ALLISON

The wonder of childbirth and motherhood—a sacred rite of passage shared by many women—has long anchored female identity and perspective. This rite is rooted in life and generosity. However, there is a growing number of young women undergoing another rite of passage—military training and wartime life. They are being led in the ways of violence and domination. The thinking that has convinced generations of men to kill, rape, torture, and oppress in the name of a country or a cause is being peddled to women en masse. And we can be good soldiers, yet only at great personal and collective cost.

But my own experience demonstrates that it is possible to develop a female identity that rejects war and injustice despite military training.

Learning to kill on command isn't a natural state for any human, as veterans struggling to come to terms with their killing and violence in war can attest. And to convince young women to support military missions, shoot M-16s, drop bombs on villages full of other women and children, the military must overcome the socialization that teaches girls to nurture and to express a full range of emotions. As new recruits, we were like five-year-old boys told that Men Don't Cry. The clothing, language, and cadences in military culture are framed as a rite of passage to manhood. One cadence we often sang during long marches was:

Early in the morning  
Thinkin' about my wife

A nasty ol' commie  
He tried to take my life  
AirBorne Ranger – Shoot, shoot to kill!

In boot camp, we female soldiers were encouraged to handle interpersonal conflict “like men.” When our drill sergeant heard about static between myself and another

recruit he arranged for us to fight. We were given thick padded clothing and cloth and foam weapons and ordered to battle in the Peugeot pit in front of several dozen members of our unit. I'd never been in a fight before and when we came out swinging and breathless, both of us were unable to remember the controlled combat moves we'd been taught. We just sort of swung around until we were both tired. The disappointed drill sergeant called us back into formation. “I hope you two learned your lesson,” he said doubtfully.

While in training, we were mocked when we showed signs of physical and emotional weakness. If one of us dropped out of the five-mile PT runs, or cried because it wasn't possible to hold our M-16s at shoulder height any longer, or lay exhausted unable to do five more pushups, the drill sergeants would scream at us for being “too female,” which we all understood meant too weak. I couldn't help but think then that the drill sergeants probably used the same techniques on male recruits.

There's no doubt that it is possible for women to suppress emotion, grow in physical strength, learn to follow orders without question. At the end of my three-month training, I was awarded an accelerated promotion for being a model soldier. But at what cost?

It took me four years to reject my military training and to embrace a more life-affirming identity as a woman. And in fact when I applied for a discharge as a conscientious objector during the Persian Gulf War, it was a validation of my own power and possibilities as a woman.

As the war rages and bodies are needed, military recruitment of young women is intensifying and could mean the first ever draft of women in this country. It is time for all women to examine the forces that are in conflict for our hearts and minds. What will define our path?

There is a deafening silence in the women's movement about these issues. The old feminist argument that women's equality means equal access in the military just doesn't ask the right questions. This former soldier believes we can look to the original female rites of passage—centered on giving life—for the greatest hope, not only for women, but for human survival.



---

*Aimee Allison filed for conscientious objector status while an Army reservist and Stanford University student in 1991. After a habeas corpus appeal to the federal court, her application was approved.*

# Psychology, Semantics and War

BY RUTHANN JOHANSEN

Last May, in the midst of disclosures of prisoner torture at Abu Ghraib, Susan Sontag of *The Guardian* in London asked the question: "What have we done?" She studied the ugly face of the war on terror revealed in the photographs from the prison. Behind her question lurk three others: How could this happen? What drives the endless thirst for vengeance? And, given its horrors, how can we prevent war? Through the imaginations of two twentieth century women writers, this essay investigates the perennial attraction to violence in order to illumine the ethical dilemmas U.S. citizens in particular currently face in light of the "war on terror."

In such times of anguished consternation, the collective wisdom contained in literature across the centuries and from various cultural traditions provides moral grounding from which to understand and respond to present glaring fissures between humane values and behaviors that betray those values. As Sontag herself demonstrates, throughout history the poets frequently served as seer or prophet within their societies to recall people to the path of virtue or right relations in the cosmos and among their fellow human beings, to unmask

illusion, or to warn. For example, in the Chinese *Tao Te Ching*, the Hindu *Bhagavad Gita*, or the Greek epic *The Iliad*, readers can hear the poets proclaim that an intelligible pattern and creative power reside within the world itself; that the political and the mystical are not separate but interacting ways of being; that desire and revenge are the true enemies menacing humans; or that no one on or off the battlefield escapes the impartial and insuperable brutalities of war.

## The Semantics of Violence

Between 1937 and 1938, as tragic events were unfolding in Europe, Simone Weil returned to the Greek poem and wrote an essay, "*The Iliad or the Poem of Force*." She asserted that in the opening sentences of Homer's epic "the true hero, the true subject matter, the center of *The Iliad* is force. The force that men wield, the force that subdues men, in the face of which human flesh shrinks back." Before the essay could be printed in the *Nouvelle Revue Francaise*, Paris was in the control of the Nazis. Drawing upon Greek wisdom of centuries earlier, Weil admonishes her readers then and now, as she does explicitly near the end of her essay, that "only [those] who [have] measured the dominion of force and know how not to respect it [are] capable of love and justice." Weil's analysis of the character of force is especially insightful for thinking about how human beings, in

---

*Ruthann Johansen's latest book, Listening in the Silence, Seeing in the Dark (U. of California Press) narrates her son's struggle for identity after suffering a massive brain injury.*



Depiction of the "Battle of the Ships" between Greeks and Trojans.

an endless and ill-defined war on terror, can afflict torture ruthlessly. She makes clear in the opening paragraph of her essay that force is not simply a physical phenomenon (as in mass times acceleration) but “an active entity, capable of profound, always negative, influences on the lives it touches.” Although the immediate context in which force is exercised in *The Iliad* is in warfare, Weil extends her examination beyond the battlefield. At the outset she defines force as “that which makes a thing of whoever submits to it. Exercised to the extreme, it makes the human being a thing quite literally, that is, a dead body.” Weil provides breathtaking images of this metamorphosis from living being to corpse from Homer’s poem. In Book 11 she cites, “...the horses / made swift chariots thunder along the paths of war / in mourning for their blameless drivers. On the earth / they lie, much dearer to the vultures than to their wives.” (11.159-62) She includes the description of the hero turned to a thing dragged behind a chariot: “...all around, the black hair / was spread, and the whole head lay in the dust, / just before so charming; now Zeus has granted / to his enemies to debase it on his native land.” (22.401-4) And, in the lines also from Book 22—“His soul flies from his limbs, goes to Hades, / grieving its destiny, relinquishing its strength and youth” (22.362-63)—we find no comforting expectation of immortality.

As Weil pushes her examination of force beyond the battlefield, she identifies three additional attributes. First, force may not kill outright, or rather does not kill just yet. This is force that we might call “threat.” In Weil’s words, such force “will kill for a certainty, or it will kill perhaps, or it may merely hang over the being it can kill at any instant; [but] in all cases, it changes the human being into stone.” Those in this condition experience living death. Suppliants, slaves, wives, children, suspected insurgents or terrorists—anyone at the mercy of a superior “force” like soldiers, asters, husbands, parents, interrogators—mimic the dead, for their inner lives are annihilated.

A second characteristic of force is that neither victim nor perpetrator is free from its effects. Weil says, “as pitilessly as force annihilates, equally without pity it intoxicates those who possess or believe they possess it. People in the *Iliad* are not segregated into conquered, slaves, suppliants on one side and conquerors and masters on the other; every human being may at any

moment be compelled to submit to force.”

The third attribute of force follows from the second: it freezes and blinds the souls of all it touches. According to Weil, “its power to transform human beings into things is twofold and operates on two fronts; in equal but different ways, it petrifies the souls of those who undergo it and those who ply it.”

As a meticulous user of language herself, Weil frequently turns to the ways language can be used to exert force on human beings. For example, in “The Power of Language,” written three years before her essay on *The Iliad*, Weil claims that the seeds of war lie in words that are empty. For her European contemporaries of the 1930s and 40s, and still relevant today, she suggests that the role Helen played for the Greeks and Trojans “is played by words with capital letters. If we grasp one of these words, all swollen with blood and tears, and squeeze it, we find it empty. Words with content and meaning are not murderous....” Empty words included absolutes and abstractions of the political and social vocabulary of her time and still familiar to us today: “nation, security, capitalism, fascism, order, authority, property, democracy.” The problem for Weil was that such words can, as Susan Sontag points out, alter, add, or subtract—in short, manipulate—veiling hypocrisy and self-deception.

The consequences arising from the exercise of force as Weil delineates it include the following: First, all who agree to the exercise of force by their participation in it are doomed to suffer. Second, neither strength nor weakness is a permanent condition in the domain of force. Third, delusions of grandeur and impermanence characterize the empire of force. Fourth, the world of *The Iliad* “is one of unrecognized human limits, of boundaries transgressed by the victim-possessors of force.” Fifth, deafness and speechlessness afflict all those touched by force. Sixth, under force people become fatalistic, succumb to psychological unconsciousness, act mindlessly, and abolish all aspiration or reflection. In short, force changes human beings into inert matter.

Although the bleakness of these consequences of force could overwhelm all humans subject to them, Weil reminds us in her iconoclastic interpretation of *The Iliad* that Homer saves the poem from gruesomeness by the bitterness and regret expressed at all human suffering. By bringing the modern reader to a Greek understanding of the inevitable suffering that is the human lot, whether conqueror or vanquished, in the kingdom of force, Weil offers us a window through which to view and reflect upon the current exercise of force in the war against terror waged in Iraq.

Disquieting as her interpretation of force is, Weil warns us that any action or threat that reduces the life of another human being to an x (a thing) also destroys the soul of the one who denies or annihilates another’s humanity. Military systems and government policies based on unquestioning loyalty, hierarchical command

***Disquieting as her interpretation of force is, Weil warns us that any action or threat that reduces the life of another human being to an x (a thing) also destroys the soul of the one who denies or annihilates another’s humanity.***



structures, and the power of threat or superior killing capacity, argues Weil, will eventually freeze the minds and hearts of the powerful as well as their victims. Now nearly seventy years after Weil wrote her essay on the Iliad political leaders have constructed a new kind of war bearing all the marks of force described by Weil. Terrorist acts kill outright; terrorist threats, by their nature, kill not just yet but freeze the spirits of human beings any place on the earth. When attached to the thirst for vengeance, terrorism is a manipulable, murderous word, for it numbs the capacity to look squarely at the causes that provoke terrorist actions.

### **The Psychology of War**

Further insight into the question of what attracts human beings to vengeance and war comes through novelist Pat Barker's blending of history—medical case studies, the biographies of neurologist and social anthropologist W.H.R. Rivers, soldier-poets Siegfried Sassoon, Robert Graves, and Wilfred Owen—with fiction. Barker sets *Regeneration*, the first novel in her World War I trilogy, in Craiglockhart War Hospital, the setting she uses to portray the effects of force among men traumatized by war experiences. By putting war on the couch, Barker writes an ethnography of war, not on the battlefield or in the halls of government, but in human psyches overwhelmed by nightmares, panic attacks, paralysis, and mutism. Through Dr. Rivers' therapeutic relationship with his shell-shocked patients (what we would today call Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder), the reader witnesses Barker's deft excavation of the complex psychological, cultural, and religious motives for war as she reveals the healing of repression in both doctor and patients as they are able to embrace the emotional and intuitive sides of their personalities.

Through Rivers' therapeutic gift for helping his patients confront their terrifying memories, Barker discloses how battlefield traumas can become cathected to any number of memories: childhood experiences resulting from coercive child-rearing practices; social class differences; educational codes reinforced by cultural factors such as religious beliefs used to ennoble war, and the role of science both in the execution of war and in medical treatment of the psychically wounded. Through the therapy sessions that become case studies in the novel, Barker shows the tangled, underground roots of vengeance and war.

Social class consciousness, educational practices, and attitudes toward sexuality affect the developing child's relationship with his world, whether it be trusting, harmonious, and assertive, or insecure, defensive, and hostile. Barker depicts social class differences and the power of educational codes on the psyches of young males through Owen, who came from a lower class and was attached to his mother, and Sassoon, who came from a higher social class and lived more emotionally

independently under the care of governesses. Nineteenth-century distinctions between the athlete and the aesthete were reinforced in English schools by a code of manliness that turned away from anything that smacked of the aesthete or gentleness. Young boys played roughly, learning that suffering was good for the character. The relationships with mothers or mother figures influence male attitudes toward sexuality. As Rivers uncovers in his work with his patients, particularly Prior, if male children were separated from women, they frequently came to regard sexuality as bestial while simultaneously considering the chaste love between men as better than heterosexual love. For Rupert Brooke who before the war suffered a nervous breakdown over his bisexuality, the war became a means of overcoming self-loathing. For Sassoon, the war offered him the opportunity to unite a life of action with his contemplative, aesthetic proclivities. For Rivers himself, the work with his patients at Craiglockhart requires him to confront a memory of being referred to by a former patient as a "male mother." "He disliked the term 'male mother'... He distrusted the implication that nurturing, even when done by a man, remains female, as if the ability were in some way borrowed, or even stolen, from women...." The confusing centrality of sexuality to warmaking becomes clear

*By idealizing sacrifice  
and the endurance of  
pain as avenues for sal-  
vation, the centrality of  
suffering in Christianity  
has often supported  
nation building or  
regime changes.  
Soldiers may become  
confused with Christian  
missionaries.*

as Rivers reflects further: "One of the paradoxes of the war—one of the many—was that this most brutal of conflicts should set up a relationship between officers and men that was ... domestic, caring.... The war that had promised so much in the way of 'manly' activity had delivered 'feminine' passivity, and on a scale that their mothers and sisters had scarcely known."

### **The Religious Roots of War**

Struggling intensely to understand his role as physician in rehabilitating the psychically wounded to return to the front, Rivers reflects on the religious roots of violence and soldiers' compliance to force. For example, during a worship service, Rivers muses on "the two bloody bargains on which a civilization claims to be based. The bargain, looking at Abraham and Isaac. The one on which all patriarchal societies are founded. If you, who are young and strong, will obey me, who am

old and weak, even to the extent of being prepared to sacrifice your life, then in the course of time you will peacefully inherit, and be able to exact the same obedience from your sons.” The Christian ideology of self-sacrifice undergirded the acceptance of suffering and the nobility of death. By idealizing sacrifice and the endurance of pain as avenues for salvation, the centrality of suffering in Christianity has often supported nation building or regime changes. Soldiers may become confused with Christian missionaries. Religion gets used to justify poverty, humiliation, and suffering to preserve oppressive, imperialist power structures.

Finally, by setting her novel in the psychiatric hospital and contrasting Rivers’s non-judgmental therapeutic method of helping patients to recover and reframe traumatic memories with the coercive techniques of electric shock used on a patient with mutism by Yealland (Rivers’ counterpart at the Queen Square Hospital in London), Barker suggests the role played by science and technology in war-making that Sigmund Freud examined in an essay on neurosis and war.

In his 1915 essay entitled “Thoughts for the Times on War and Death,” Freud’s characterization of the times, which Barker has shaped eighty years later into fiction, offer further insight into the persistence of vengeance and war. Criticizing science for lost impartiality through its service to the perfecting of weapons, anthropology for declaring opponents inferior and degenerate, and psychiatry for making diseases of the mind scientific objects of study, Freud concludes that a general state of societal—even civilizational—mental stress prevails. This pervasive disillusionment arises from human cruelty, disregard for all restrictions known as International Law, and a disregard for the priority of the wounded and medical service. In short, he argues that the warring state permits itself acts of violence that would, if performed by an individual, disgrace the individual, and simultaneously exacts from its citizens utmost obedience and loyalty. Against Freud’s depiction of the immorality of the warring state, Barker suggests, in polyphonous fiction grounded in history, that states often scapegoat their enemies (be they German, Communists, or Terrorists) and their own citizens (e.g. pacifists, socialists, homosexuals) rather than acknowledge their own immorality. By writing a fictional ethnography of war that confronts us with our own civilizational dissociation, Barker exposes the institutional structures that buttress the thirst for vengeance and war.

It is  
*Illiad* ar

## THEY BURNED LIKE THIS BY JACQUELINE DICKEY

She kisses her baby,  
wraps herself tightly around him.  
Smells of sour milk  
hide in folds of her flesh  
like rumors, whispered.

I watch her sister methodically crease  
and double fabric, thick as blankets—  
cover each window,  
smother daylight,  
then duct tape corners flat to walls.

I think: these patches look like  
wounds they talk of bandaging—  
if they are not buried in the rubble.  
As a child, I slept with my terror of being  
murdered  
by covering my head with a pillow.

I can endure it, I reasoned, if I do not see it in  
his eyes.  
Her young daughter,  
dark as these windows, refuses comfort,  
shrinks against her mother’s touch.  
Sometimes a child sedates herself with too  
much bravery.

The two women hand crayons to the children,  
tell them to press hard on walls.  
They, too, write.  
If our blood is sprayed,  
These walls will fall with names.

The oldest sister presses her beads into my hand—  
Please, I can no longer pray.  
I have brought her an evergreen branch from a  
tree  
whose fragrance brought me back from the dead.

We hold tight . . .  
I remember her smell  
from deep in the folds of my flesh.

**speak out . . .  
on the discussion board . . .  
coming soon at . .**

**WWW.CATHOLICPEACEFELLOWSHIP.ORG**

# A Certain Kind of Woman

*In her 2004 commencement address at the all-women Barnard College, social commentator Barbara Ehrenreich asks whether female advancement has brought civility to the military.*

I had another speech prepared for today—all about the cost of college and how the doors to higher education are closing to all but the wealthy. It was a good speech—lots of laugh lines—but two weeks ago something came along that wiped the smile right off my face. You know, you saw them too—the photographs of American soldiers sadistically humiliating and abusing detainees in Iraq.

These photos turned my stomach—yours too, I'm sure. But they did something else to me: they broke my heart. I had no illusions about the United States' mission in Iraq, but it turns out that I did have some illusions about women.

There was the photo of Specialist Sabrina Harman smiling an impish little smile and giving the thumbs-up sign from behind a pile of naked Iraqi men, as if to say, "Hi mom, here I am in Abu Ghraib!"

We've gone from the banality of evil ... to the cuteness of evil.

There was the photo of Private First Class Lynndie England dragging a naked Iraqi man on a leash. She's cute too, in those cool cammy pants and high boots. He's grimacing in pain. If you were doing PR for al Qaeda, you couldn't have staged a better picture to galvanize misogynist Islamic fundamentalists around the world.

Here in these photos from Abu Ghraib, you have every Islamic fundamentalist stereotype of Western culture—all nicely arranged in one hideous image—imperial arrogance, sexual depravity ... and gender equality.

Now we don't know whether women were encouraged to participate. All we know is they didn't say no. Of the seven U.S. soldiers now charged with the abuse of prisoners in Abu Ghraib, three are women: Harman, England and Megan Ambuhl.

Maybe I shouldn't have been so shocked.

Certainly not about the existence of abuse. Reports of this and similar abuse have been leaking out of Guantanamo and immigrant detention centers in NYC for over a year. We know, if we've been

paying attention, that similar kinds of abuse, including sexual humiliation, are not unusual in our own vast U.S. prison system. We know too that good people can do terrible things under the

right circumstances. This is what psychologist Stanley Milgram found in his famous experiments in the 1960s. Sabrina and Lynndie are not congenitally evil people. They are working-class women who wanted to go to college and knew the military was the quickest way in that direction. Once they got in, they wanted to fit in.

And I shouldn't be surprised either because I never believed that women are innately less aggressive than men. I have argued this repeatedly—once with the famously macho anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon. When he kept insisting that women are just too nice and incapable of combat, I answered him the best way I could: I asked him if he wanted to step outside....

I have supported full opportunity for women within the military, in part because, with rising tuition, it's one of the few options around for low-income young people.

I opposed the first Gulf War in 1991, but at the same time I was proud of our servicewomen and delighted that their presence irked their Saudi hosts. Secretly, I hoped that the presence of women would eventually change the military, making it more



Cartoonist John Sherrfus, in the St. Louis Post Dispatch, substitutes Lady Justice in the well-known image of a hooded Iraqi attached to electrical wires.

---

*Barbara Ehrenreich is the author of Blood Rites and The Worst Years of Our Lives. She is a frequent contributor to Time, Harper's, The New Republic and The Nation.*



respectful of other people and their cultures, more capable of genuine peacekeeping.

That's what I thought, but I don't think that any more. A lot of things died with those photos. The last moral justification for the war with Iraq died with those photos .... But there's another thing that died for me in the last couple of weeks—a certain kind of feminism or, perhaps I should say, a certain kind of feminist naiveté.

It was a kind of feminism that saw men as the perpetual perpetrators, women as the perpetual victims, and male sexual violence against women as the root of all injustice. Maybe this sort of feminism made more sense in the 1970s. Certainly it seemed to make sense when we learned about the rape camps in Bosnia in the early '90s. There was a lot of talk about women then—I remember because I was in the discussions—about rape as an instrument of war and even war as an extension of rape.

I didn't agree, but I didn't disagree very loudly either. There seemed to be at least some reason to believe that male sexual sadism may somehow be deeply connected to our species' tragic propensity for violence.

That was before we had seen female sexual sadism in action.

But it's not just the theory of this naïve feminism that was wrong. So was its strategy and vision for change. That strategy and vision for change rested on the assumption, implicit or stated outright, that women are morally superior to men. We had a lot of debates over whether it was biology or conditioning that made women superior, or maybe the experience of being a woman in a sexist culture. But the assumption of superiority was beyond debate. After all, women do most of the caring work in our culture, and in polls are consistently less inclined toward war than men.

Now I'm not the only one wrestling with that assumption today. Here's Mary Jo Melone, a columnist in the St. Petersburg Times, writing on May 7:

"I can't get this picture of [Pfc. Lynndie] England out of my head because this is not how women are expected to behave. Feminism taught me 30 years ago that not only had women gotten a raw deal from men,

but that we were morally superior to them."

Now the implication of this assumption was that all we had to do to make the world a better place—kinder, less violent, more just—was to assimilate into what had been, for so many centuries, the world of men. We would fight so that women could become the CEOs, the senators, the generals, the judges and opinion-makers—because that was really the only fight we had to undertake. Because once they gained power and authority, once they had achieved a critical mass within the institutions of society, women would naturally work for change.

That's what we thought, even if we thought it unconsciously. And the most profound thing I have to say to you today, as a group of brilliant young women poised to enter the world—is that it's just not true.

You can't even argue, in the case of Abu Ghraib, that the problem was that there just weren't ENOUGH women in the military hierarchy to stop the abuses.

The prison was directed by a woman, General Janis Karpinski.

The top U.S. intelligence official in Iraq, who was also responsible for reviewing the status of detainees prior to their release, was a woman, Major Gen. Barbara Fast.

And the U.S. official ultimately responsible for managing the occupation of Iraq since last October was Condoleezza Rice.

What we have learned, once and for all, is that a uterus is not a substitute for a conscience; menstrual periods are not the foundation of morality.

This does not mean gender equality isn't worth fighting for for its own sake. It is. And I will keep fighting for it as long as I live. [But] gender equality cannot, all alone, bring about a just and peaceful world....

Women do not change institutions simply by assimilating into them. But—and this is the "but" on which all my hopes hinge—a CERTAIN KIND of woman can still do that, and this is where you come in.

We need a kind of woman who can say NO, not just to the date rapist or overly persistent boyfriend, but to the military or corporate hierarchy within which she finds herself.

We need a kind of woman who doesn't want to be one of the boys when the boys are acting like sadists or fools.

And we need a kind of woman who isn't trying to assimilate, but to infiltrate—and subvert the institutions she goes into ....

It is not enough to be equal to men, when the men are acting like beasts. It is not enough to assimilate. We need to create a world worth assimilating into. I'm counting on you. I want YOU to be the face of American women that the world sees—not those of Sabrina or Megan or Lynndie or Condoleezza.

Don't let me down. Take your hard-won diplomas, your knowledge and talents and go out there and raise hell!

*Women do not change institutions simply by assimilating into them. But—and this is the "but" on which all my hopes hinge—a CERTAIN KIND of woman can still do that, and this is where you come in.*

# Women Warriors

*From Condi Rice to Lynndie England, women have played a visible role in the Iraq war. What has been their effect upon the U.S. military, and its effect upon them?*

**BY THE STAFF OF THE CATHOLIC PEACE FELLOWSHIP**

On March 23, 2003, Private Lori Ann Piestewa was killed in an ambush near Nasiriyah. Piestewa was part of the Army unit that included the soon-to-be-famous Jessica Lynch, but little was mentioned about Piestewa, as if she were simply another casualty in this war. But Piestewa's death was significant. She was the first Native American woman to be killed in combat (at least the first while fighting for the United States). And she was a mother of two young children, a four-year-old son and a three-year-old daughter, whom she left behind when she went off to fight and die in Iraq. She is one of the increasing number of women in the ranks of the U.S. military.

Since the Catholic Peace Fellowship began taking calls off the GI Rights Hotline in early August, we have received a number from women in the military. Like Piestewa, many joined to help pay the bills and support their families. Most of these women are in the Reserves or National Guard, which they joined under the assumption, carefully nurtured by their recruiters, that they would be serving one weekend a month and a two weeks a year. As they are now learning, the reality is different, with some reservists serving in Iraq for eighteen months or longer. Such a long deployment is difficult enough for a single person, but it is nearly impossible for a mother, especially one raising children alone.

One memorable call we took was

from a single mother. She was in the Individual Ready Reserves, having already served six years of active duty. Her IRR unit was being called up, she had applied for an exemption on the basis of hardship. The application was denied, so she prepared an appeal on the grounds that if she were deployed no one would be there to take care of her child. But her appeal was denied. As of this writing, it seems likely that she will join the ranks of literally hundreds of women, and scores of mothers, who are being deployed in order to, as the President glibly puts it, "defend freedom."

Given the important advances made in many sectors of society, it is not surprising that women have found a more prominent place in the U.S. military. But the presence of women in the military is by no means a recent development of the

last ten or twenty years. It is a process that has been underway for a century or more.

## Women in U.S. Wars Past

As early as the Revolutionary War, women served in the military, posing as men to fight the British troops. During the Civil War, they worked as spies for both the Union and Confederate armies. But it was not until World War I that women served in the military in an official manner. During "the Great War," as it was called at the time, 30,000 women served in the military, the vast majority in the Nursing Corps. In World War II, they continued to serve in an auxiliary fashion, with each branch establishing a special division for women. In the Army, it was the Women's Auxiliary Corps or WACs, as they were widely known. In the Navy, there were the WAVES, that is, Women Accepted for Volunteer Emergency Service. And the Coast Guard gave a more high-brow appellation to their division, namely, the Semper Paratus, meaning "Always Ready" (the acronym being SPARS). By the time the troops were hitting the beaches at Normandy, there were 100,000 women in uniform. During the Vietnam era, 265,000 women served in the U.S. military, with 11,000 serving in Vietnam itself. Here too, the majority of women in uniform, some ninety percent, served as nurses, but many served in combat situations as unarmed sup-



port personnel. Also, a great many women worked in military-related civilian jobs, as journalists, in the Special Services and USO, in the Red Cross, as well as with several other relief groups. Needless to say, many of these women paid the ultimate sacrifice for their service, though the U.S. government has never established exactly how many.

The fact that women have played an important part in the military is undisputed. But their part is seen by and large as exceptional, as if any mention of their role needs to be marked with an asterisk. This asterisk-like status stems from a deep ambivalence as to the place of women in the military, an ambivalence generated by conflicting images of the place of women in society at large. There is, on the one hand, the belief that women are full-fledged members of society with the same rights and responsibilities bestowed on men. On the other hand, there is the belief, less openly articulated but still widely felt, that fighting in war is simply not an activity in which women should be involved because it runs contrary to

*The dilemma is understandable. After all, in the minds of many, citizenship in the United States is most vividly exemplified by those who are willing to defend the nation when it is under attack . . . the most effective way to attain full citizenship rights is through military service. And from this it follows that the most effective way to attain full citizenship rights is through military service.*

their nature. As a result, there is a deep tension surrounding the matter of women fighting in our nation's wars.

This tension has been evident for more than a century. It has been most vividly illustrated in the case of Dr. Mary E. Walker. As a physician for the Union Army and later as

a prisoner of war, Walker was a Civil War hero. In 1865, she was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for her service and sacrifice. But in 1917, her Medal of Honor was rescinded. While the official reason was to enhance the prestige of the Medal, many critics believed her medal was rescinded in retaliation for her involvement in the women's suffrage movement. The situation was rectified in 1977 when President Jimmy Carter posthumously reinstated it, and to this day, Walker remains the only woman ever to have been awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor. Walker's story reflects the struggle of women to find a place in the life of the nation, and the way in which their service in the military has functioned as a means to that end. It's as if military service is the price for full citizenship.

### **Citizenship and the Military**

Leaders in the struggle for women's rights in the United States have been quite aware of this connection between military service and citizenship. Indeed, the goal of full citizenship has so consumed the feminist movement that at times any price has been deemed acceptable to attain it, even participation in an organization that, ironically, many feminists themselves regard as patriarchal and misogynistic. This has resulted in a strategy of moral compromise. It was not

always this way. At the dawn of the twentieth century, some key suffragettes were outspoken pacifists. Among them was Jane Addams. After being perhaps the most popular advocate on behalf of women (and the poor), she was marginalized as the country rallied around World War I.

Such marginalization has become a trend. For example, Mary Katzenstein argues in the Autumn 1990 issue of *Signs* that "Feminist consciousness in the military does not embrace a radical agenda that seeks an end to the U.S. interventions abroad, drastic reductions in military spending, or a world constructed on nonviolence. It is only just beginning to make connections among the practices of sexism, racism, and homophobia." And yet, she goes on to argue that in spite of this attenuated moral agenda, "it would be wrong, because of differences in feminist visions, to read military women's activism as a case of co-optation. Feminism in the armed forces has set its sights largely on making the military sex-blind. In another institution, at another time, such an objective might be thought conservative. In the U.S. military at this time, the vision is deeply challenging."

Deeply challenging? Yes, in the sense that it has been challenging for women to break into the all-male military culture. But not when it comes to the primary purpose of the military itself; in that sense, the vision conforms to the typical military endorsement of state-sponsored violence.

The dilemma is understandable. After all, in the minds of many, citizenship in the United States is most vividly exemplified by those who are willing to defend the nation when it is under attack. This becomes crystal clear in presidential politics, as it did this past fall during the vociferous brouhaha over John Kerry's war record, and George W. Bush's lack of one. In fact, nine of the last eleven U.S. presidents served in the military: Eisenhower and JFK, whose records are well remembered, but also Johnson, Nixon, Ford and Bush Sr., all of whom served as well in World War II (with Bush Sr. enlisting right out of prep school at age eighteen). And then there is Jimmy Carter, the so-called peace president, who graduated from the U.S. Naval Academy, served seven years



in the Navy, and re-instated draft registration in 1980.

What is true of the presidency is true for the citizenry at large. The most certain means of displaying your citizenship is through military service. And from this it follows that the most effective way to *attain* full citizenship rights is through military service. This point was not lost on Frederick Douglass, the nineteenth-century proponent of the rights of blacks, who famously declared, "Once let a black man get upon his person the brass letters U.S., let him get an eagle on his button, and a musket on his shoulder and bullets in his pockets, and there is no power on earth which can deny that he has earned the right to citizenship in the United States." While this strategy was not immediately effective, it did bear fruit eventually, a century later. If it worked for blacks, the reasoning goes, it can work for women too.

### Women Warriors?

But should women serve in combat?

There was a time when women served in an auxiliary role, as stereotypical gals supporting the guys in

combat. Thus when Corregidor fell in 1942 and five U.S. nurses were taken as prisoners of war by the Japanese, the U.S. government wasted little time putting their images behind an armed Japanese guard on posters to motivate U.S. defense workers. "Work! To set 'em free!" the posters urged, "Work! To keep 'em firing." As if to say, "build more bombs to save the damsels in distress."

But when it comes to women participating in actual combat, the issue remains controversial. Women are simply seen as unable to undergo the violence of war. As former Marine Commandant Gen. Robert H. Barrow testified before the Senate Armed Services Committee (June 18, 1991), "Exposure to danger is not combat. Being shot at, even being killed, is not combat. Combat is finding ... closing with ... and killing or capturing the enemy. It's killing. And it's done in an environment that is often as difficult as you can possibly imagine. Extremes of climate. Brutality. Death. Dying. It's ... uncivilized! And women can't do it! ... I may be old-fashioned, but I think the very nature of women disqualifies them from doing it.

Women give life. Sustain life. Nurture life. They don't take it."

But proponents of women's equality realize that this traditional picture of the role of women in the military will not earn them the role of full citizens. As Nancy Hartsock has argued in the book *Women and Men's Wars* (Judith Stheim, ed., 1982), for women "to be equal participants in the political community ... either the nature of the political community must change or some women too must become warriors."

This realist strategy has also been taken up vigorously by the National Organization of Women (NOW) with regard to the registration and the draft. When the draft was reinstated in 1980, women were excluded as they had been in past drafts. There would be no purpose in drafting women, the Selective Service Administration argued, because they would not be allowed to fight in combat. But feminist leaders, working out of the notion that women would never be equal citizens until they were equal soldiers, pushed hard to have women included in a draft. Challenges to the exclusion of women from the draft quickly went to the courts. In 1981, the Supreme Court, in *Rostker v Goldberg*, took up

## If Conscription Comes For Women

BY DOROTHY DAY

(reprint from *The Catholic Worker*, January 1943)

I will not register for conscription, if conscription comes for women, nor will I make a statement to the government on registration day as to my stand, lest this be used as involuntary registration on my part. Instead, I publish my statement here, my declaration of purpose, and if it encourages other women not to register, I shall be glad at such increase in our numbers.

### Evil of Conscription

I shall not register because I believe modern war to be murder, incompatible with a religion of love. I shall not register because registration is the first step towards conscription, and I agree with Cardinal Gasparri, that the only way to do away with war is to do away with conscription.

"Nothing would sooner free the world from the scourge of war, the most deadly plague with which humanity is at present threatened," wrote E.I. Watkins some years ago, "than the resolute refusal of a sufficient number to serve in the army. Even a small minority would prepare the way for the future refusal of large masses. All who are not

willing to be conscripts from whatever motive, should unite in proclaiming this refusal.

### Family Prior to State

"The family," Watkins continues, "is a society prior in value to the state, on whose natural right the state may not without usurpation encroach." And it is as a most important part in that family, as a woman whose function it is to bring life into the world rather than to destroy life, that I make this protest.

"Conscription of women will not mean military service," our readers may object.

"When necessary, the state has the right to conscript labor, especially for works of mercy. Surely you would agree to feed people, to grow

the issue and agreed with the Selective Service Administration that since women were exempt from combat, there would be no point to draft women, so their exclusion was not unconstitutional. In her book *Citizenship Rites*, Ilene Rose Feinman has suggested that the *amicus curiae* filed by NOW in Rostker argued in effect "that universal conscription was a critical next step for women to attain first-class citizenship." But again, "first-class citizenship" at what price?

### After Abu Ghraib

This question has taken on added poignancy after Abu Ghraib. The photos of Private Lynndie England dragging naked Iraqi men across the prison floor on leashes, or of Specialist Sabrina Harman cheerfully giving a thumbs up over a pile of naked Iraqi men, graphically demonstrate that women as well as men have the capacity to engage in most violent, dehumanizing acts. And we are not only talking about enlistees. As noted by Barbara Ehrenreich in her 2004 graduation speech at Barnard College (see p.14), as we move up the chain of command, we find more women somehow involved: General Janis

Karpinski, who was in charge of the prison; Major General Barbara Fast, who oversaw the intelligence operations; and, of course, Condoleezza Rice who was serving as National Security Advisor back in Washington at the time and who, for the second-term of the Bush presidency, will be serving as Secretary of State. No one can fairly say that women are not pulling their weight in this war. They have certainly paid their dues and thus, at least according to the logic stated above, they have the right to claim equal citizenship. But at the same time, they now have a fuller share in the most dubious aspects of that title: citizens of a nation that unilaterally went to war for what are now widely seen to be false, if not fabricated, reasons, resulting in a situation of increasing civil chaos in Iraq and increasing resentment on the part of Iraqis toward the United States. From Lynndie England to Condi Rice, the face of U.S. military aggression can

now appropriately be the image of a feminine face.

And feminine faces are emerging not only in the United States but around the world. Since the creation of the Israeli state, Israeli women have served two years of compulsory military service. More recently, Palestinian women have taken up arms in defense of their people. The era of female suicide bombers began in 1985, when sixteen-year-old Khyadali Sana drove a truck into a group of Israeli Defense Force soldiers, killing herself and two soldiers. And in January 2004, Hamas ended its longstanding ban on using women on suicide missions, with Reen Raiyshy, a mother

*But feminine faces are emerging not only in the United States but around the world. Since the creation of the Israeli state, Israeli women have served two years of compulsory military service. More recently, Palestinian women have taken up arms in defense of their people.*

of two young children, blowing herself up along with four Israelis on the border near Gaza. At the Fall 2004 conference of the Catholic Peace Fellowship, one speaker told

food for them, to nurse the sick, to drive an ambulance."

First of all we question the need. Has all available labor been used when Negroes, one-tenth of our population, are discriminated against in industry? Why are so many farmers being drafted for military service, why are Mennonites in conscientious objector camps when there is such need for farm workers, to raise food for the world?

### State Enslavement

But in our blind move toward collectivism on the land, in our worship of the machine which ravages the land, taking all from it and putting nothing back, we are not being conscripted for farm labor. No, women are wanted to work in facto-

ries throughout the land to make the bombers, the torpedoes, the explosives, the tools of war.

And while the Holy Father pleads with us to keep the war out of the school room and the home, housewives are urged to save fat for explosives and school children are urged to buy bonds for bombers, and to bring scrap for shrapnel to disfigure, maim and kill their brothers in Christ, "but with love." And legislation to draft women moves on apace.

This is total war, and that means every man, woman and child, possessed, heart and mind, body and soul, by the state.

### Abusing Scripture

But why object to registering? Why not register and then refuse if your number is called?"

By little and by little we must resist. Why take the first step if we do not intend to go on? Why count on exemption because of work of national importance and so lose the opportunity to testify to the truth that we feel so strongly?

"Mary and Joseph went to Bethlehem to register." I have heard the specious argument. But it was not so that St. Joseph could be drafted into the Roman army, and so that the Blessed Mother could put the Holy Child into a day nursery and go to work in an ammunition plant.

the story of killing an unarmed Iraqi woman as she waved a white flag because it had become untenable to assume she was not a combatant; it turned out to be a mistake. The trend of more women entering into combat will surely continue in the years to come.

As more women have functioned as warriors and terrorists, training has begun to focus more and more on women as targets. This presents something of a problem, in that men still hesitate to train their sights on the female form. In order to meet this challenge (*The Village Voice* reported in its January 2003 issue), training in the U.S. military now includes efforts to desensitize male soldiers to the sounds of women being raped, so that, if captured, hearing their fellow soldiers being raped would not cause them to crack. An eerie connection can be made here to the very high rates of domestic violence among people in the U.S. military, which runs twice that of the civilian population. A connection can also be made to the high incidence of rape of women in the U.S. military by fellow soldiers, which, in Iraq numbered at least thirty-seven as of January 2004 (as

reported by *The Denver Post*). This is not to say that all military people stand on the verge of beating up their spouses or kids. Nor is it to say that the military fosters an atmosphere of rape (though that argument could certainly be made). Rather, the point is this: as women enter more fully into military life, in addition to reaping the reward of full citizenship, they also suffer its consequences—co-optation and socialization into a vast bureaucracy the primary purpose of which is to accomplish the mission at any cost to the enemy or to its own soldiers.

### **A Mighty League of Female Conscientious Objectors?**

As the Pentagon becomes desperate for healthy bodies to wage this nation's wars, the current ban on combat duty for women will look increasingly unviable. In which case, there will only be more opportunities for more women to find a more prominent place in the U.S. military. And this in turn will make it easier for NOW to realize its longstanding goal of promoting the cause of women by making them full participants in military combat.

But will this be an instance of

progress? Or will it mark an expansion of the reach of what Dorothy Day called Holy Mother State?

Needless to say, the Catholic Peace Fellowship sees women in the military as an inauspicious development, one that we wish to resist. So as the work of building up what Dorothy Day called a "mighty league of conscientious objectors" continues, we hope that more and more women will join this league. In our work on the GI Rights Hotline, we have come in contact with many women in the military who have undergone remarkable conversions to peace and peacemaking, or as the regulations call it, "crystallizations of conscience," which have led them to come forward as "conscientiously opposed to participation in war in any form." They are now seeking help to prepare conscientious objection claims in order to be discharged. Several women outside the military have also contacted us, fearful of a possible draft, ready to prepare their CO claim just in case.

Thanks to such women as these, the mighty league is growing. Bad news for Holy Mother State. Good news for Holy Mary, Mother of God, Queen of Peace.

Excerpt from Conscientious Objector Application,  
Female Soldier (application was  
approved by the Army)

My conscience, ensuing meditation and reading, and introspection have compelled me to honor the true nature of myself. I will not be able to live in any sort of peace if I kill, let others kill, or support any act of killing in my thinking or in my way of life. I know that as long as I am participating in the U.S. Army and in the U.S. Armed Forces, I am responsible for the actions taken by the military.

As proof of my sincerity, suppose for a moment that I am not sincere. I would have been better off simply failing weight and PT standards, which I find challenging enough to maintain. Or, in the least, an easier path would be converting to the Amish, Mennonite, Jehovah's Witness or other faith with more precedents of members claiming to be conscientious objectors.

I was reluctant to seek classification as a conscientious objector, because I have never quit anything. However, my moral beliefs have increasingly left me no other option.

## **THE GI RIGHTS HOTLINE**

**1.800.394.9544**

**FREE, CONFIDENTIAL COUNSELING  
ON MILITARY DISCHARGES**

**FOR RECRUITS, SOLDIERS  
AND THEIR FAMILIES**



by Kevin J. Duffy



# Acceptance Speech of Staff Sgt. Camilo Mejia 2004 St. Marcellus Award Winner

*On Saturday, October 30th, the feast day of St. Marcellus, the Catholic Peace Fellowship presented the second annual St. Marcellus Award to Camilo Mejia, in absentia, who is currently serving a one-year jail sentence for his refusal to participate in the evil of war. Mejia's mother, Martiza Castillo, and his aunt, Norma Castillo, accepted the award on his behalf. (Image of St. Marcellus on award created by Jane Pitz.)*

*Like St. Marcellus, Mejia is a conscientious objector to war. In January 2003, as Mejia was starting his last semester of college, his Florida National Guard unit was activated. They were sent into Iraq in April 2003. After spending six months in combat there, as a federalized member of the Florida National Guard, Mejia returned home on a two-week furlough to renew his green card in October 2003. During this time, he reflected on what he had seen and experienced. He decided that he could not, in good conscience, return to Iraq to fight an illegal and immoral war. He did not report back and was declared AWOL and then a deserter.*

*In March, 2004, Mejia turned himself in and filed for conscientious objector status. The Army court-martialed him on charges of desertion. On May 21, 2004 he was sentenced to one year in prison, reduction of rank to private, and a Bad Conduct Discharge. On August 20, 2004 Mejia was informed that his conscientious objector application was denied—for being too political, too focused on war in Iraq. Though Mejia's lawyers argued that one can be a conscientious objector and hold views about a particular war, the denial is likely to be reaffirmed as it moves up the chain of command.*

*Amnesty International has named Mejia a Prisoner of Conscience.*

When I first heard about the possibility of war I said to myself that many unlikely things would have to take place. I felt that without clear evidence of nuclear or chemical weapons, without a clear link between Saddam Hussein and Al Queda, that without clear evidence of Iraq posing a threat to us, we would not really invade—I did not feel we had made a case for going to war. But I was a soldier, I am still a soldier, and as good soldiers, we are told not to question the reasons for war. We are not supposed to concern ourselves with politics, nor foreign policies; we fight wars without questioning them. And so I began training and preparing for war. But we still had not made a case for war, and I trusted that our leaders would do the right thing and use military force as a last resort.

When we deployed to the Middle East in early March of 2003, Saddam Hussein was destroying his missiles. The UN weapons inspectors were asking for more time, and many of our allies were opposing the war. I figured we would make a show of force—and for a while we didn't know if there would really be a war. There was uncertainty, and

there was hope in my heart that peace could prevail.

Then there was war—and I opposed the war, but I was afraid of saying anything. I didn't want to sound like a coward or a traitor, and I knew that soldiers don't question their governments. And I knew of the possibilities of severe punishment for refusing to participate in the war—I knew of the death penalty and incarceration and I knew of the scorn and rejection of my peers. And I was terrified of it all.

I was an infantry squad leader in combat, and when your life is in the hands of the man next to you, and his life is in your hands, you suddenly become more than brothers. I didn't want my brothers to think I was a coward or a traitor and I didn't want to go to prison and I was afraid to stand up and say, "I am against this criminal war." I was so afraid to stand up for my beliefs and principles that I chose to take my chances.

It was a very dangerous environment, and every minute that went by could be



the last we ever lived. So I started praying to God to let me see my daughter one last time, even if I died right after seeing her. I then started praying for my family so they would not suffer on my account. I then prayed for the families of our soldiers, as they too were suffering. I felt that we were trapped in a big lie where war itself was the only real enemy, and I started praying for the Iraqi families. I asked God to ease their suffering. And I asked God to end the war in Iraq, and then I asked God to end every war. And then I realized that my personal prayer had become a prayer for humankind. I realized that in war, through God, I was connected to the rest of humanity. So while it was the unfounded reasons given by our government that made me oppose the invasion and occupation of Iraq, it was my own experience in combat that made me oppose every war.

I want to believe the Iraqi insurgents did not mean to kill their own people; I want to believe that we did not mean to kill the Iraqi people; but the reality was that innocent people were the ones paying the price of this war. I saw that even if the reasons for going to war were politically sound, the loss of human life, the loss of innocent blood, renders every war immoral and unjustifiable.

But it is difficult, if not impossible, to concern oneself with deep questionings of the morality of a war, to place oneself in the position to judge the righteousness of an invasion, when you are in the middle of a war. Nobody wants to die, or for their friends to die, in a foreign land, far from everything we love, far even from ourselves, from our won humanity. And I didn't have the courage to put my weapon down when my life and the lives of my friends were in danger. Upon my return home for a two-week leave, I had the opportunity to put

my thoughts in order. Far from the sounds of machine guns and mortars, it becomes hard not to listen to what our heart is telling us. I came face to face with my feeling about the war. I came face to face with the memory of each and every one of my actions. And I tried to justify my behavior, my being in Iraq in the first place. I realized I was holding myself accountable for my own behavior.

When the sounds of battle are gone, the sounds of one's own conscience takes over. And my conscience is the place where I meet with God. I don't need an angel to descend from heaven to tell me what God wants me to do. All I have to do is listen to my conscience and do what I know in my heart is the right thing.

After being convicted of desertion, during the sentencing phase of my trial, they gave me the opportunity to ask for clemency. I know that I did and said things that ultimately put me where I am this very moment, in prison. But in everything I said and in everything I did, I was following my conscience. To express regret for my actions would be the equivalent to denying God.

God is my only salvation. If I have to ask for clemency, it will not be from a military panel, but from God. And I would also ask God to have mercy on the souls of those who wrongly convicted me. And if I am ever to seek forgiveness on this earth, I shall seek that forgiveness from the Iraqi people.

According to the Second Vatican Council, conscience is the most secret core and sanctuary of a man. There he is alone with God, Whose voice echoes in his depths. Thank you for allowing me to share the voice that still echoes in the depths of my conscience. It is in those depths that I remain a free man. Thank you all and thank you God.  
Sincerely, Camilo

### **The Making of a Conscientious Objector What Camilo Saw**

"When I saw with my own eyes what war can do to people, a real change began to take place within me. I have witnessed the suffering of a people whose country is in ruins and who are further humiliated by the raids, patrols, curfews of an occupying army. My experience of this war has changed me forever."

"One of our sergeants shot a small boy who was carrying an AK-47 rifle. The other two children who were walking with him ran away as the wounded child began crawling for his life. A second shot stopped him, but he was still alive. When an Iraqi tried to take him to a civilian hospital, Army medics from our unit intercepted him and insisted on taking the injured boy to a military facility. There, he was denied medical care because a different unit was supposed to treat our unit's wounded. After another medical unit refused to treat the child, he died."

"Another time, my platoon responded to a political protest in Ar Ramadi that had turned violent. My squad took a defensive position on a rooftop after some protesters started throwing grenades at the mayor's office. We were ordered to shoot anyone who threw anything that looked like a grenade. A young Iraqi emerged from the crowd carrying something in his right hand. Just before he threw it, we all opened fire, killing him. The object turned out to be a grenade, which exploded far from everyone. I know that the man we killed had no chance of hurting us—he was too far away. My platoon leader later told us that we killed three other Iraqis during this same protest although I didn't see them die."

"I also learned that the fear of dying has the power to turn soldiers into real killing machines. In a combat environment it becomes almost impossible for us to consider things like acting strictly in self-defense or using just enough force to stop an attack."

# Paredes Says "No" to Deployment

BY BENJAMIN PETERS

**W**hen twenty-three year old Pablo Paredes enlisted in the Navy four years ago he never thought he would be sent to war. "I woke up one day and said I don't have many choices and this military guy keeps calling me. You know I'm going. Let's go. So I say I will leave this week and I just went, and it was a rash decision, six years of my life I signed away."

Two weeks ago, however, when he was involuntarily transferred from his post in Japan to the USS Bonhomme Richard, a ship that is used to ferry thousands of Marines to Iraq, Paredes faced the reality of participation in war. "I realized that war was not something I'm about. I realize that the military is something I'm completely against, especially the way this country uses it, at least throughout history. I see nothing but a system of muscle for an ideology that is not necessarily promoting peace or promoting positive things in all of history."

And so on December 6, 2004, Paredes stood on the pier where 5,000 Sailors and Marines were boarding ships headed for Iraq, refusing to board his ship for deployment to war. Wearing a shirt that read "Like a Cabinet Member, I Resign," Paredes spoke with reporters. "I don't want to be a part of a ship that's taking 3,000 Marines over there, knowing a hundred or more of them won't come back," he said. "I can't sleep at night knowing that's what I do for a living."

Speaking to the radio show "Democracy Now," Paredes continued to articulate the basis of his decision, "I want people to carefully understand that this is not a decision based on personal fear for my own safety, because there's not really any fear. My job is very safe. I can look forward to working in an air-conditioned space and using the Internet as I please. There is no danger really involved in my job. There's only pretty much benefits. There's extra pay for going to the Persian Gulf. There's the hero status that comes with coming back

from there. And I just want people to understand that this was based on principles and not on fear, because there's really no danger to my job and there would have been a lot of danger to the Marines that I would have dropped off, who would have eventually gone to Iraq, and I can't be part of that."

According to Navy regulations, Paredes will be declared UA (unauthorized absence) seventy-two hours after not reporting to duty, and a felony warrant will be issued for his arrest thirty days later.

Paredes fully understands the consequences of his refusal, but he also understands the consequences of not refusing to participate in an unjust war. "I signed the paper and there was a commitment and that's why I'm willing to face the punishment. Now, as far as being a robot and just, you know, do as I say and don't question it and things like that, I think that is a very dangerous situation for a human being. I don't think you stop being a human being because you become a Navy sailor or an Army soldier. I don't think it is to that extent. In fact, even within the rules that are afforded to us we are told if at any time you find an order to be unlawful you have not only a

right, but a duty not to follow it. And I feel that way about any order that has to do with this war."

**P**aredes is one of the growing ranks of in-service resisters to the war in Iraq, counterparts, in a sense, to the Israeli Refuseniks who will not serve in the Occupied Territories. Refuseniks, whether of the U.S. or Israeli variety, call attention to selective conscientious objection, an objection rooted in a moral opposition not to all war but to a particular war.

As we go to press, Paredes is receiving legal assistance before he surrenders to the Navy. His case will require time, money, and work. Those wishing to offer support to his cause can contact the San Diego Military Counseling Project, at [www.sdmcp.org](http://www.sdmcp.org)

**"I'd rather do a year in a prison in the military than do six months of dirty work for a war I don't believe in—and not many people believe in—and get Marines in harm's way. It's sad to me that some people don't understand what I'm doing, don't understand that this fight takes a lot more courage and that I'm fighting for the very people that they're putting in harm's way."**

**Excerpt from Interview  
with San Diego NBC Affiliate**



# Of Rape and War

BY MARY MARGARET C. NUSSBAUM

"Apart from the fact that they prostitute their daughters, the Lydian way of life is not unlike the Greek."

—Herodotus, *The Histories*

Last spring, one of my students came to class with a bruise eclipsing half of her lovely, tanned face. She applied foundation over the bruise and blush over the foundation and I didn't ask. She was curious and kind. She stuffed her paperbacks with neon flags and put astericks in the margins next to moving passages. She was new to the country of books, and I was glad to walk there with her. I assumed her bruise was only that — she went out drinking, I thought, and, at some point, fell down. Then the center of her violet bruise turned a malignant saffron shade that makeup cannot cover, and she stopped coming to class.

And I knew. I knew like I've known too many times before, like the high school passing period when my friend rushed to the bathroom to vomit, explaining, later, that our hall monitor wore the same cologne as the man who raped her; like the evening, a few years ago, when I met a girl I've loved since first grade at a hometown bar, and there it was on her sad-sad-made-up-face. "I was raped," she said, just like my student, at semester's end, would say.

My student walked from her dorm to a study session one evening. She passed a dark construction site. A man hit her over the head, knocked her down, took her purse, dragged her into the site and raped her. That bruise that eclipsed her lovely, tanned face, that was his — his vampire's bite, his map of an absurd universe. Like 15 out of 16 rapists in the U.S., he walked free. Who knows what's become of him. He's eating pizza somewhere. He's out on a date.

There are stickers on the bathroom stalls: 15% of U.S. women are raped during their lifetimes. Seven of eight rape victims are female. It's violence so quotidian it becomes cliché. "If only he hadn't taken my purse," my student said, because she kept her arms there: mace and a phone, and "I shouldn't have been walking alone," because—though some of us told her, "no, no, it isn't true"—she thought she caused this.

When my student finally and fearfully made it to

Student Health they were unimpressed. Women go to college and get raped. We are very, very sorry, the sum of their response was, and we will give you forms and sleeping pills and graduate students in psychology to talk to but, you know, there are quotas to fill. Now it's time to patch-up, pick-up and move-on. Please do not cut yourself, drop out. Join a support group. There are chapters meeting every night, in every town.

You've read this before. This is an old story and I do not want to write it. There it is in Genesis: Shechem seizes Dinah "and he lay with her by force." In Samuel Tamar's brother feigns illness and calls for her. She tends to him, makes him cake and then he rapes her. Afterward "Amnon was seized with a very great loathing for [Tamar]; indeed, his loathing was even greater than the lust he had felt for her." We do not know the name of the Levite's wife in Judges, but we do know that she was offered by her husband to the "men of the city" and that they "wantonly raped her, and abused her all though the night until the morning." When she returns to her husband he cuts her into twelve pieces and sends her throughout Israel's territory as evidence of gross inhospitality. The long bones of the legs, the arms, the eyes.

So rape is the original terrorism and it's still employed in war. Philip Gourevitch writes that in the 1994 Rwandan genocide pygmies were "enlisted by Hutu militias as rapists — to add an extra dash of tribal mockery to the violation of the Tutsi women." In the former Yugoslavia, Bosnian women were publically raped as a form of "ethnic cleansing." Helen Smith writes in *The Observer* of "rape-babies," abandoned by Kosovar women, "Serb paramilitaries and the Yugoslav army appear to have acted with wanton abandon," she writes "raping [Kosovar] women in barracks, public buildings and private homes."

In his testimony against a sergeant who tortured prisoners at Abu Ghraib, Specialist Matthew Wisdom, referred to the men who were victimized as "it" and "its"—the objectification required to commit such violence. Rape is, as it's always been, primarily a crime committed by men against women. Part of the shock of Abu Ghraib was seeing women torture, photograph and relish the pain of men—those photos of hooded men in hell look, among other things, like some brutal inversion of the movement toward gender equality.

And they looked like madness. The antidote to mad-

---

Mia Nussbaum teaches freshmen writing at the University of Iowa, where she's in graduate school.

ness isn't more—it's clarity and vision and something higher-other-better-truer. The war our country is presently waging is confused and illogical. It's mad. We are, for instance, fighting after the fact of nation-states and physical borders, yet we insist on using models of warfare that are predicated on the existence of nation states and borders. In other instances of terrorism (Timothy McVeigh, apartheid) we've supported criminal models of justice; in this "War Against Terrorism," which is, by definition, a war against an abstraction, we are shooting in the domino theory dark with "smart bombs" and "unmanned antipersonnel vehicles;" offering the bloodied, unholy sacrifice of 19-year-old U.S. Marines.

Our conversations and media suggest that the battle front is where we bomb. But others suggest that peace is a seamless garment; that ends shouldn't be divided from means and that, without a vision, the people will perish.

It is good, again, to think of a vision that is broader, braver and more abiding than torture and bombing. Recall the freshman who gets raped walking to her dorm: there is a connection between terrorism among peoples and terrorism among people. A culture of rape informs a culture of war. Here, then, are a few notes for clearer conversations.

*We are shooting in the domino theory dark with "smart bombs" and "unmanned antipersonnel vehicles;" offering the bloodied, unholy sacrifice of 19-year-old U.S. Marines.*

Of rape:

1) Rape is a right of passage for young women in the U.S. Several universities give "rape whistles" to women during freshmen orientation to attach to their key chains. At the University of Colorado they are hung around showers. These are for the inevitable, unenviable event of...

2) We value certain lives more than others. If, for every college aged woman who is raped, one college aged man had his arm blown off, something would be done.

3) Modern manhood is unsatisfactory. Too many men never live in their bodies, never break a sweat outside of the gym, subdue the earth or themselves. There is a connection between fantasies and acts of violent sex or eroticized rape and disembodied men. Feminism intended, ideally, to free both men and women — too often the failed opposite is true: men are ashamed of traditionally manly virtues, substituting televised football for nobler acts. Women learn to avoid victimization by becoming as coarse as the coarsest men — think of the gestures of female soldiers at Abu Ghraib.

Of war:

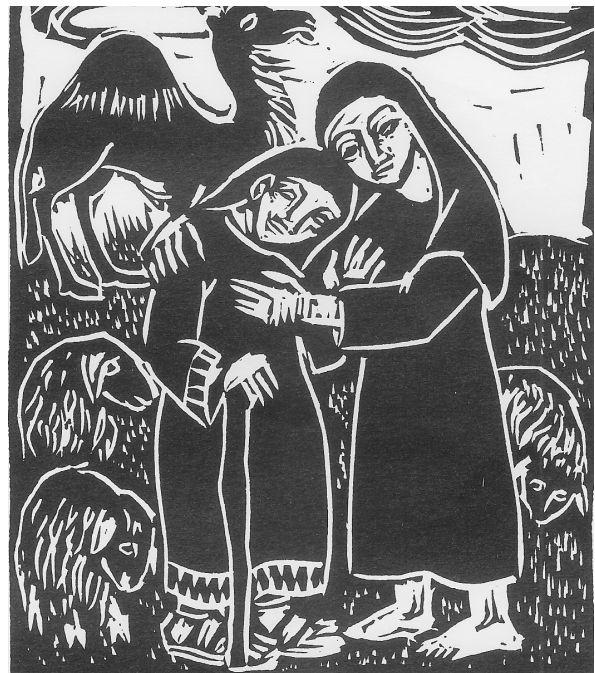
1) War is a right of passage for young men in the U.S.  
2) We value certain lives more than others. We send the poor to war. If the draft were reinstated, the war in Iraq would end sooner.

3) Modern manhood is unsatisfactory and we need a place for warriors that is not war. Think of the pilot in Yeats' beautiful poem, "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death." He knew he didn't hate those he fought, or love those he guarded. He knew that his home was among Kiltartan's poor and that Ireland was an abstraction. He wanted to be brave and electrically alive. Yeats assumes his voice, writing,

A lonely impulse of delight  
Drove to this tumult in the clouds;

In the legend of the Nightingale, Philomela was raped by her sister Procne's husband, King Tereus. To silence her, Tereus cut out Philomela's tongue, but she sewed an image of his crime and sent it to Procne. Procne killed her son Itys and served his flesh to her husband to revenge Philomela. When Tereus went to kill the sisters, Philomela was changed into a nightingale and her sister into a swallow. Thus the nightingale became a symbol of beauty out of betrayal.

A curious footnote in the *Norton Anthology of Poetry* asserts that "The Sacred Heart has a comparable significance in Christian thought and persists in isolated convents." Perhaps this centuries old symbol could persist in high school hallways too. And on college campuses. And in military prisons. Beauty out of betrayal, then; civility out of rubble; a vision beyond fear.



Ruth 1:16Helen Siegl

# Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution by André Trocmé

REVIEWED BY JOEL SCHORN

“There is no easy peace.” These words begin André Trocmé’s *Jesus and the Nonviolent Revolution*, first published in French in 1961 and reissued by Orbis in 2004. And these five words could easily serve as both the thesis of the book as well as his description of the Christian vocation of peace.

Trocmé (1901-1971) is best known as the Reformed pastor who, with many other residents of the French village of Le Chambon, provided escape or safe haven for 2,500 refugees, mostly Jews and children, during the Nazi occupation of France. But Trocmé’s heroism did not end there. After the war, he and his wife Magda worked with the Fellowship of Reconciliation and French military conscientious objectors, and established social service and peace centers in North Africa.

At the core of Trocmé’s book is his analysis of how Jesus’ nonviolent witness avoided the pitfalls of both withdrawal from the world and violent struggle with the powers of injustice. Jesus thus presented to his followers and those of ages to come the challenge of avoiding the easy alternatives of flight or fight and the challenge of taking up nonviolent engagement with the world.

In response to the massive political, religious, and social crises of first century Palestine, Jesus did not retreat to the desert with his followers, like the Essene sect did, to form a community of the faithful separated from the rest of the world. Nor did he put on the mantle of the military messiah and engage in armed struggle against powers of the state, as the Zealots did. He refused, Trocmé says, to resist evil on its own terms.

Jesus adopted a third course: nonviolent engagement. He would be the messiah, but a suffering messiah whose triumph would come through sacrifice and humiliation. He would be a prince, but a prince of peace. Trocmé writes, “Christ’s way was of a ‘vigorous revolutionary capable of saving the world without using violence.’”

Like Jesus, the Christian peacemaker does not act out of mere passivity and is not a mere theorist. Rather, Trocmé says, “The Christian objector to war or military service is . . . not a purist who, on the day he receives orders to kill his neighbor, wakes from his dream to say no. He is a servant with experienced hands, who is so busy helping his neighbor that to interrupt this activity

to undertake the task of killing is unthinkable to him.” Trocmé writes, “The majority is wrong if it accuses pacifists of wanting to keep their hands clean.” While it is “self-evident” that Jesus was nonviolent, “people tend to think of nonviolence as a choice between using force and doing nothing. But for Jesus, the real choice takes place at another level. Nonviolence is less a matter of ‘not killing’ and more a matter of showing compassion, of saving and redeeming, of being a healing community.”

For an example of the “Zealot” temptation to fight, Trocmé points to how “Christians, especially in the West, participate in the power structure. Their ethic is one of ‘realism’ [read, perhaps, the much followed realism espoused by Reinhold Niebuhr]. It is one of compromise with honors, power, money, and war . . .” Those who participate in ‘necessary’ violent actions in order to fulfill their human duty” betray history whose supreme goal is the redemption of the world and the bringing about of peace and justice.

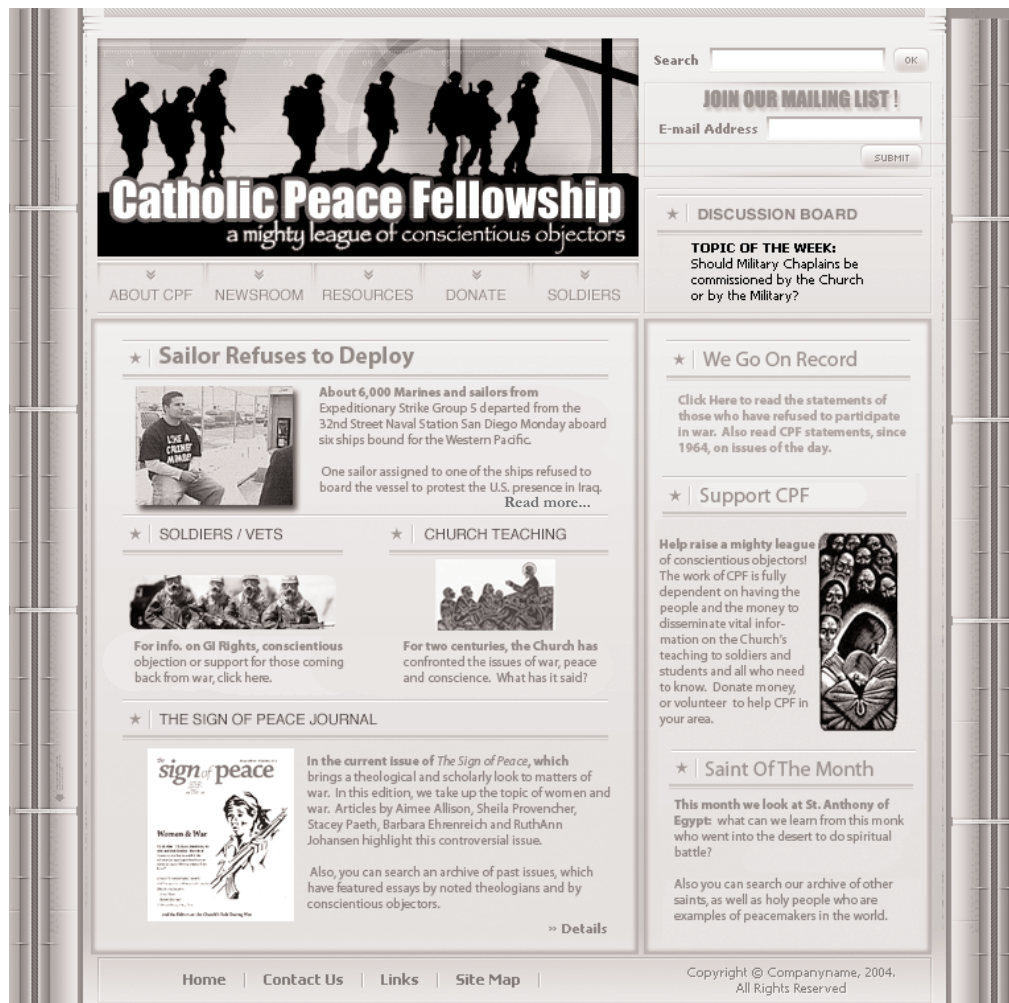
Those who follow the Christ of peace, Trocmé writes, “live in an ‘in-between time’ conditioned by Christ’s redemptive act and placed under the responsibility of those who obey God’s call until the coming of the Messiah’s reign.” Here he makes the valuable point that the struggle for peace is rooted in God’s call to the church. Nonviolence and pacifism are not ends in themselves—as if merely being peaceful were enough—nor, worse yet, are they means to a new kind of injustice and domination. “[The church] has not even to practice ‘pacifism,’ that is, reject arms with the object of stopping war. No, God expects only one thing of it: that it walk in obedience to the gospel, refusing violence in whatever form because of that obedience . . .

Trocmé’s book reminds us that peace is a vocation, the practice of cooperating in God’s loving intention for the world with an “unlimited dedication of our entire being, body and soul, to a cause more important than our life.” Christ overcame evil not through avoidance or coercion, but the through the cross. “To inaugurate his triumph as a peaceable king,” Trocmé writes, “he entered Jerusalem . . . Followed by the long procession of his disciples, Jesus made his entry into the history of each nation and of each century, and continues to do so through his people until the day when his victory will be complete.”

---

*Joel Schorn produces and edits liturgical and prayer aids at TrueQuest Communcations. He also is writing a book, on great doorkeeper saints of the Catholic tradition.*





## letters (continued from page 2)

during the emergency situation in Iraq.

It is of course no easy thing to build and stay within a coalition committed to international peace and justice. Differences of opinion regarding the domestic roots of international conflict are inevitable, but I for one have found UPJ to be an organization that has carefully avoided the kind of ideological tyranny that ultimately fragments and destroys the unity and the original purpose of activist organizations. If the Catholic Peace Fellowship is strong and sure in its commitment to the rights of the unborn, it should have no fear, for now, of being part of this

important (and effective) anti-war movement.

Pat O'Regan

INDIANA

A friend of mine sent me two copies of your journal and I have really enjoyed them. I am currently in Federal Prison for six months for protesting at the SOA at Ft. Benning, GA..

Dave Corcoran

NEW YORK

I have had countless conversations about the Church's "stand" on the war in Iraq. It seems to me that the pope has been quite clear,

though the bishops of this country less so, about the immorality of the war. But some suggest that there was no stand taken and, therefore, Catholics can be for or against the war. Given this "liberal" interpretation, I wonder if there is a need for a clearer statement from Rome.

John

MICHIGAN

Thanks for ideas for my journey as a conscientious objector. I am a Catholic and have a firm and steady belief in Jesus Christ and His values and teachings.

Colleen Doherty

PRESORTED  
FIRST CLASS MAIL  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
MILFORD, IN  
PERMIT NO. 8



## TO OUR READERS

THE WORK OF THE CATHOLIC PEACE FELLOWSHIP is growing. We are counseling soldiers by email and phone on the GI Rights Hotline; we are enlarging and updating our website; we are putting on workshops for students and Church leaders; and we are publishing *The Sign of Peace*. "It's all good," as they say, but it all costs money too. So we need your help. Please, to the extent you can, support our work with a (tax deductible) contribution. Checks may be made payable to "Catholic Peace Fellowship" and sent to P.O. Box 4232, South Bend, IN 46634. Thank you for whatever you can offer.