

Another Mother for Peace

Spring 2006



by Gilbert B. Weingourt

We are all used to reading headlines that say, "Six marines killed by suicide bomber" or "One G.I. killed while dismantling a bomb" or "10 soldiers killed in surprise attack." We read. We mourn. We count the dead. We do what we can to stop the senseless killing and bring home the troops.

But what about the service men and women who don't die; who return home to their families and friends? They are well provided for, right? The Bush Administration supports our troops, right?

Wrong. The Bush Administration supports the war.

Soldiers returning from Iraq learn that support for re-entry to civilian life is limited at best. While they're in Iraq, the Bush Administration gives them medals and calls them heroes — but when they come home and are of no further use for the war effort, this administration loses interest. Last year the Veterans Administration was underfunded by \$1.3 billion. Survivors of World War II, Korea and Vietnam are

still in need of services, yet veterans of these wars are not always factored into the VA's budget.

Many veterans of the war in Iraq suffer terrible injuries but, because medical technology has advanced so much, they do not die. Instead, they live and have to cope with the permanent brain damage caused by head injuries, loss of limbs (sometimes more than one), loss of sight, and the psychological horrors of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. What do our heroes have to look forward to when they arrive home? Cuts in basic VA services and closures of VA hospitals. This means many veterans are forced to travel long distances to and from appointments or seek treatment at civilian facilities.

More than 260,000 veterans who applied to receive health care at the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2005 were turned away!

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Since January 2003, the Bush Administration has barred access to VA care to veterans who do not receive monetary compensation for service-connected disabilities and whose incomes were above an arbitrary threshold. The VA estimated that from January 2003 to September 2005, eligibility requirements barred more than 500,000 veterans from services they are entitled to. In 2005, the income threshold that would bar an unmarried veteran from VA services was \$26,902.

Could you pay for all your medical costs on an income of \$26,902 after suffering a disabling injury?

To add insult to injury, the VA has started to charge an annual fee of \$250 to new veterans who apply for care!

President Bush has said that a budget is a reflection of a nation's priorities, its needs, and its promises. Then he decided to limit veterans' access to VA hospitals, clinics, and medications. By rationing care to the men and women who have fought and almost died for us, President Bush has made his priorities crystal clear.

Another Mother for Peace does not support administrative policies that save money by denying care to veterans, while continuing to campaign for permanent tax cuts for the rich. As far as veterans are concerned, this country is NOT keeping its promises.

In Iraq, our sons and daughters either die or suffer terrible injuries almost every day. Since the war began, more than 2,400 U.S. military men and women have died and more than 17,650 have been wounded. This has to stop! Between now and June, AMP encourages you to talk to your neighbors, one person at a time. Persuade them to vote in the primaries, and when they do, to vote for a candidate who will work to bring the troops home.

DID YOU KNOW ?

The Bush Administration continues to put special interests ahead of veterans and their families. In the 2007 budget the Bush Administration:

- Boasts that it provides \$3 billion more for veteran's services than last year BUT actually funds \$1 billion LESS than is needed and \$10 billion LESS than the amount needed to maintain services at current levels for the next 5 years.
- Penalizes survivors of soldiers killed in combat. Widows, who are struggling to deal with the death of their spouse and provide for their children, must choose between survivor benefits or Dependency and Indemnity Compensation benefits — even though both benefits are due to them.
- Calls for only a 14% increase in mental health services even though an army survey showed that 1 in 6 soldiers in Iraq report symptoms of major depression, serious anxiety, or Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Some experts predict that the number of veterans who eventually will require mental health treatment could exceed 170,000. At these levels, a 14% increase in funding is insignificant.
- Cuts millions in Federal money from medical and prosthetic research just as our troops are returning from Iraq and Afghanistan — where for every soldier killed, about 7 are wounded by explosions that shatter legs and arms and sever muscles and tendons.
- Continues to force disabled military retirees to give up \$1 of their military pension for every \$1 of disability pay they receive. Nearly 400,000 military retirees with service-connected injuries are affected by this rule.

We can do better. America needs to honor the service and sacrifice of our veterans by providing them with the benefits they have earned and justly deserve. Otherwise — not only is war not healthy for children and other living things, but for veterans, peace is not that healthy either.



Peace Homework

The House Committee on Veterans' Affairs reviews veterans' programs, examines current laws, and considers bills and amendments to strengthen existing laws. AMP urges you to contact the committee members (listed below) and let them know that supporting our troops means caring for our veterans.

Steve Buyer (IN), *Chairman*
 Michael Bilirakis (FL), *Vice Chairman*
 Lane Evans (IL), *Ranking Member*
 Terry Everett (AL)
 Bob Filner (CA)
 Cliff Stearns (FL)
 Luis Gutierrez (IL)
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 Darlene Hooley (OR)
 Jeb Bradley (NH)
 Silvestre Reyes (TX)
 Ginny Brown-Waite (FL)
 Shelley Berkley (NV)
 Michael R. Turner (OH)
 Tom Udall (NM)
 John Campbell (CA)
 John T. Salazar (CO)

Continue to work towards peace. Our phone calls and letters and participation in rallies have already helped lead to the lowest approval rating ever for the invasion of Iraq. Let's keep up the momentum!

Peace Materials



Pax Materna Poster \$15.00

*Original AMP purple poster (4 3/4" x 34") from 1985.
 "No mother is enemy to another mother" and our "War is not healthy . . ." logo in 18 languages.
 On the back is our Pax Materna.*

THE PAX MATERNA

I JOIN WITH MY SISTERS IN EVERY LAND
 IN THE PAX MATERNA –
 A PERMANENT DECLARATION OF PEACE
 THAT TRANSCENDS OUR IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES.
 IN THE NUCLEAR SHADOW, WAR IS OBSOLETE.
 I WILL NO LONGER SUFFER IT IN SILENCE
 NOR SUSTAIN IT BY COMPLICITY.
 THEY SHALL NOT SEND MY SON
 TO FIGHT ANOTHER MOTHER'S SON.
 FOR NOW, FOREVER, THERE IS NO MOTHER
 WHO IS ENEMY TO ANOTHER MOTHER.

Medallion \$15.00

*"War is not healthy for children and other living things" (see picture above).
 Logo is approximately 1" x 1 1/4".
 Available in gold or silver metallic finish.*

Embroidered Patch \$ 5.00

Our beautiful "War is not healthy . . ." sunflower logo on a 3" x 3 1/2" patch to sew or iron onto clothing, backpacks, etc.

Letter Seals \$ 2.00

*40 self-adhesive seals per sheet.
 Stamp-size seals with "War is not healthy . . ." logo.*

Prices do not include tax or shipping.
 Please visit www.anothermother.org for a complete list of our Peace Materials and to order online – or use the enclosed order form.

Another Mother for Peace is a non-profit, non-partisan association dedicated to eliminating the use of war as a means of solving disputes among nations, people and ideologies.

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