

Another Mother for Peace

Spring 2005



photo by Gilbert B. Weingourt

The United States military draft officially ended in 1973. Registration for the draft ended in 1975, and since that time we have had an all-volunteer military. Now it is 2005. This is what is happening: Although there is no official draft, there certainly is an unofficial one. American servicemen and women who have fulfilled their commitment are being retained, reactivated and returned to battle without their consent.

After the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the President declared a "national emergency" and gave the Pentagon authority to involuntarily extend military personnel on active duty "for not more than 24 consecutive months." This stop-loss program forces members of our all-volunteer Army to remain on active duty beyond their discharge dates. The tours of duty of Reservists and Guardsmen are extended once, even twice — putting an unfair burden on servicemen and women and the families they left behind. Lawsuits have been filed contending that the stop-loss program is illegal. Legal or not — with the military, once you've signed on the dotted line, you don't have a whole lot of say about it.

In November 2004, President Bush stated that the U.S. engagement in Iraq would intensify in 2005. Ever since the hunt for terrorists evolved into a regime-change war in Iraq, the need for soldiers is exceeding the numbers of men and women volunteering to serve. President Bush and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld repeatedly have gone on record to say that the draft will never be reinstated. That's what they say. This is what they're doing.

Not only are some military personnel being forced to extend their terms of enlistment — others, who had fulfilled their terms of service and were discharged, are being recalled and reactivated to "hot spots" around the globe. According to the *Los Angeles Times* (11/26/04), thousands of recruits who signed up under a plan that would defer their reporting dates for a year are being ordered to report for duty immediately. The Marine Corps is offering bonuses of up to \$30,000, in some cases tax-free, to persuade enlisted men with combat experience to reenlist. Stop-loss measures have been called a "stealth draft" and a "back-door draft."

These measures are contrary to the concept of the volunteer army. Servicemen and women affected by stop-loss are not choosing to serve — they are being required to serve. The end result is that thousands of troops who initially volunteered for military service are being forced or coerced to remain in the military

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and risk their lives whether they want to or not.

In January, a mother wrote to tell AMP that her "heart was aching" because her son had just been sent back to Iraq for his second tour of duty. In February, AMP learned of another couple whose son was killed in Iraq. "He had already served the three years he signed for, but he was kept in the army under the stop-loss program." The e-mail continued, "Why have we put more than 1,400 American families through this? More than 1,400 families ... have had their hearts ripped out."

March 19, 2005 marked the second anniversary of the US invasion of Iraq. Yet two years after the declaration "Mission Accomplished," our government continues to force soldiers to fight and die in a country that doesn't threaten our security and never did. So far, we know that there have been over 1,500 Americans killed. What we don't hear about is the number of men and women who have been maimed — physically and psychologically — in a war whose purpose is vague and ever changing.

We are the victims of a systematic program of lies, half-truths and deceptions. Programs like the back-door draft, the lies that we have been told about nonexistent weapons of mass destruction, and a nonexistent connection between Iraq, Al Qaeda and 9/11, and limited access to information about loss of military and Iraqi civilian lives, have elicited a sense of helplessness and confusion that allows the government to continue their policies without any accountability. Many mothers of soldiers and National Guardsmen and women write to Another Mother to implore us to do our part by insisting that our elected officials actively push for peace. They tell us that their sons and daughters no longer know why we are in Iraq and fear that they will never see home again. One mother wrote: "Does this remind you of anything?"

During the Vietnam War, the peace movement — the massive peace protests and letter writing campaigns — let our senators and representatives know that we fervently believed that war is not the answer. Andrea Hawker wrote to AMP from Michigan, expressing a sense of pain and yearning that speaks to all of us: "There were so many of us that our leaders were forced to listen and to act. We cannot afford to sit back any longer and be apathetic. I beg all of you to get involved again."

Our troops are overextended and it is unfair to punish them because war planners in Washington didn't adequately prepare. It is time to hold our elected officials and political candidates accountable for their actions (or inactions) and insist that they end the war. Spread the word. War is not healthy for children and other living things!

Dear Supporters of Another Mother for Peace,

Are you or is someone you know being affected by the war in Iraq?

We'd like to devote a section on our website to these experiences. Please share them with us by writing to info@anothermother.org or send your stories to: Another Mother for Peace, 8950 Olympic Blvd., Box 194, Beverly Hills, CA 90211.



Anti-War Demonstration — March 18, 2003, Los Angeles, California

photo by Gilbert B. Weingourt

DID YOU KNOW . . .

- The military draft ended in 1973. Registration with Selective Service ended in 1975. *So far, so good.*
- THEN in 1980 registration for a possible draft was reestablished for men 18–25 years old.
- NOW even though there is no draft, all male U.S. citizens and resident aliens are required to register for a possible draft within 30 days of their 18th birthday.
- Proof of registration for the (non-existent) draft is needed to obtain a variety of federal educational grants and loans, to qualify for federal job training and federal employment, and, in some states, even to obtain a driver's license.
- Failure to register can mean fines up to \$250,000 and/or imprisonment for up to 5 years.

SO . . .

the Selective Service system is prepared to manage a draft if and when the President and Congress so direct.

PAY ATTENTION: There may be no military draft today, but there could quite easily be one tomorrow.

Peace Homework

STOP THE BACK-DOOR DRAFT

Another Mother for Peace believes that those serving in the U.S. military have the right to fulfill their commitments and return to their families. They should not to be re-activated, re-mobilized or re-deployed without their consent. They deserve better than to be the victims of this failed war strategy.

Contact the media and urge them to focus more attention on the back-door draft. Media attention will put pressure on the Pentagon to stop exploiting the good will of our women and men in uniform. Write a letter, fax or email (or all three!) to your local newspaper, radio and television stations and other media.

The following is a suggested text. Use this or compose your own. Send a message to those in power: The Back-Door Draft Must Stop.

Dear Editor,

I am deeply concerned about our government's "Stop-Loss" policy and other methods being used to compel U.S. military personnel to serve beyond their agreed-upon commitment. I believe that our government should honor the courageous service of our military personnel by respecting their right to leave the military once their commitment to serve has been fulfilled. The press has a responsibility to cover the stories of the families victimized by military retention policies and hold the armed services accountable for betraying the trust of its personnel.

Sincerely,

Visit the AMP website www.anothermother.org for more information about this Peace Homework, including how to contact your local newspapers and other media outlets.



New 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. A perfect Mother's Day gift!

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.

Mother's Day Cards (set of 5) \$ 5.00

Send these cards to Washington, to friends and family.

For my Mother's Day gift this year,
I don't want candy or flowers.
I want an end to war.

We who have given life must be dedicated
to eliminating the use of war as a
means of solving disputes between
people, nations, and ideologies.

Please work for peace.

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.

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.

AMP is entirely supported by the sale of Peace Materials.

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.

Another Mother for Peace

www.anothermother.org info@anothermother.org
8950 W. Olympic Blvd., Box 194, Beverly Hills, CA 90211-3575

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