War Resister Profiles
Letter-Writing Party
December 10, 2008

Tony Anderson

Tony Anderson is a 19 year-old Private in the U.S. Army who refused to deploy to Iraq in July of this year.

Anderson had vague thoughts about filing for conscientious objector (C.O.) status but was discouraged from doing so by his commanding officers, who told him that it would not be possible for him to obtain, and even falsely informed him that he was "not the right religion." Anderson was led to believe that filing a C.O. application would be futile.

When he was ordered to deploy to Iraq on July 1st, Anderson decided he could not go. Just hours before boarding his flight, he went AWOL, eventually turning himself in after 22 days in hopes of diminishing the severity of his punishment. On his return, Anderson was again ordered to deploy to Iraq immediately. This time, he simply refused, and he says, "they haven't tried to deploy me since then because they realize I'm not going to go."

Private Anderson recently chose to apply for C.O. status, this time with the extra help of his lawyer. The military charged Anderson with disobeying a lawful order from a commissioned officer during a time of war and desertion with intent to avoid hazardous duty. He went to trial in November and received a 14 month sentence.

Tony Anderson is currently serving time at the Ft. Sill stockade in Oklahoma. He is in a low security area. He is living in a dorm, has been assigned wood shop detail, and plans to enroll in as many classes as possible.

To ensure delivery to Tony, letters should be sent care of Courage to Resist The Ft. Sill stockade regulations are that in order to receive mail from someone, Tony must first put that person on his designated mailing list of people first. However, this regulation is sometimes waived for first time correspondence.

Tony Anderson
c/o Courage to Resist
484 Lake Park Ave. #41
Oakland, CA 94610

You can try to write Tony directly if you wish; however, mail from “unauthorized senders” may by returned.

Anthony Michael Anderson
PO Box 305
Fort Sill OK 73503-5305

Blake Ivey

Blake Ivey, currently stationed in Ft. Gordon, Georgia, is publicly refusing to deploy to Afghanistan. The 21 year-old soldier filed for conscientious objector status last July but was ordered to deploy while his application was being processed. He is determined not to go, and as of our last phone call, was still actively serving on his base, weighing his options for refusal.

Blake became a conscientious objector after joining the military, as a result of his personal studies in anarchism and nonviolent philosophy. He is close friends with Ryan Jackson, a high-profile war resister who went AWOL in 2007.

Blake is determined not to go to Afghanistan, and he has contacted a civilian lawyer to discuss his options. Military punishment for refusing deployment varies, but in recent months, sentences have grown longer. Robin Long, an Iraq war resister deported from Canada, was recently sentenced to 15 months and a dishonorable discharge.

Despite the threat of steep punishment, Blake remains steadfast in his commitment to nonviolence. "I don't believe killing makes right in any situation," he says. "Governments use violence to fix situations. It's like fighting fire with fire."

He may have a significant price to pay for adhering to this belief.

You can write to Blake at:

Blake Ivey
c/o Courage to Resist
484 Lake Park Ave #41
Oakland CA 94610

Robin Long

Robin Long, the first Iraq War resister deported from Canada into U.S. military custody, was sentenced in August of this year to 15 months of confinement and dishonorable discharge, receiving credit for 40 days of time served. He is currently serving time at Miramar Military prison in San Diego.

Three years ago, Robin Long fled to Canada rather than fight a war in Iraq he deems immoral and illegal. On July 15th, the Canadian government forcibly returned Long to U.S. military custody, forcing him to leave behind his two year old son. Robin is the first war resister deported from Canadian soil since the Vietnam War.

The Canadian government's actions flaunt its long-standing tradition of providing safe haven for U.S. war resisters and ignore a non-binding parliamentary resolution to allow U.S. soldiers to stay in Canada.

Robin Long
PO Box 452136
San Diego CA 92145-2136

The Miramar brig regulations also state that Robin can only receive mail from people that he put on his brig mail list first. However, that regulation seems to have been waived for Robin. If mail is returned, please send it to Courage to Resist for forwarding:

Robin Long
c/o Courage to Resist
484 Lake Park Ave # 41,
Oakland, CA 94610

For more information about Robin Long, including a photograph, please visit:
http://www.couragetoresist.org/x/content/blogcategory/42/88/

André Shepherd

U.S. Army Specialist André Shepherd applied for asylum in Germany Nov. 26, becoming the first Iraq War veteran to pursue refugee status in Europe.

After attending college and failing to find meaningful employment, Shepherd enlisted in the military early in 2004. He became an Apache airframe mechanic, hoping to someday qualify up to the role of helicopter pilot.

His first unit was already deployed to Iraq when he completed his training, so he joined them immediately,with only one day at his unit's home in Germany. Shepherd spent six months on a forward operating base near Tikrit, working 12-hour days to keep the heavily armed Apaches (and their signature Hellfire missiles) in the air.

Though he enlisted in order to bring freedom, prosperity and peace, Shepherd found none of these traits in the locals with whom he interacted.

"Some had the look of fear, while others looked outright angry and resentful," he said of locals contracted for jobs around the base. "I began to feel like a cruel oppressor who had destroyed the lives of these proud people."

Upon his return to Germany at the end of the deployment, Shepherd began to investigate the options available to an American soldier who questions the morality of war. He spoke with a superior about conscientious objection, but was told the process was lengthy and his application would probably be denied.

After months of deliberations, finding no suitable avenue in the Pentagon's serpentine regulations, he packed his things on April 11, 2007, and went Absent Without Leave from his Katterbach base in the middle of the night.

"We should not be forced to fight an illegal war, nor should we be persecuted for refusing to do so," Shepherd said. "During the past five years we have waged a preemptive, internationally condemned war that was shown to be founded on a series of lies. After learning the truth about the nature of my military's endeavors, I refuse to continue to be a part of this."

“We are honored to help support this courageous war veteran turned resister in whatever ways possible,” declared Jeff Paterson, Project Director of Courage to Resist—a U.S.-based organization dedicated to supporting U.S. troops who refuse to fight.

André Shepherd
c/o Courage to Resist
484 Lake Park Ave #41
Oakland, CA 94610

Daniel Sandate

Daniel Sandate, a mentally ill US soldier, was deported from Canada and sentenced to 8 months in the stockade at the end of a brief court-martial at Ft. Carson, Colorado on November 17.

Daniel grew up with a horrific home life , in which he experienced severe trauma and mental health issues. He hoped that joining the Army would give him a sense of purpose and a reason to live.

In the Army Sandate performed reasonably well in training and did ok until he deployed to Iraq. He came home from Iraq suffering severely from PTSD.

Daniel tried unsuccessfully to get help from the Army. His situation was quickly spiraling downward so he went to live with a friend in Canada to try to regain his sanity.

While in Canada, he became very isolated. After several suicide attempts Daniel was taken into custody by the Canadian police. At his request he was deported to the United States. The military transported him to Colorado where he has been incarcerated in suicide watch.

The Army and the Colorado county Jail have refused to give him the mental health care that he needs.

Letters to Daniel should be sent to:

Daniel Sandate
c/o Courage to Resist
484 Lake Park Ave. # 41
Oakland, CA 94610

Benji Lewis

Marine Benjamin "Benji" Lewis served two tours in Iraq and was honorably discharged in 2007. Recently, he received notification that he was a candidate to be recalled to active duty. At a Winter Soldier event in Portland, Oregon, Lewis publicly announced his intention to refuse reactivation from the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR).

On Veterans Day, Benji published a piece with fellow resister Brandon Neely. (the following is excerpted from their call out)

"On this day, Veteran's Day, we would like to express to the American public why we, veterans of the Global War on Terror, have chosen to refuse orders to reactivate into military service. We are direct witnesses to the horrors of this war, having experienced its atrocities at their source, and we have decided that we can no longer carry out these illegal and immoral policies.....

We believe that veterans and active-duty GIs are in a key position to stop illegal and unjust war, and we are inspired by the resistance of troops who stood against the war in Vietnam. One of the preeminent reasons for the U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam was increasing dissent among the active-duty troops stationed abroad and at home. By the end of the war, there were entire units refusing to participate in combat, many going as far as outright mutiny....

We are veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and members of the IRR who have refused or will refuse any activation orders that would lead to us serving an unjust and imperial U.S. foreign policy. It is a prevailing notion that this refusal is unpatriotic, but we consider our actions the only choice. Not only did the U.S. invasions of Iraq and Afghanistan do great harm to the people of those countries, but it undermined the ostensible goal with which the wars were begun: Instead of stopping terrorism, it has proliferated terrorism, an expectation that was predicted well before the war started....

It is in this vein that we turn to organizations like Courage to Resist, Iraq Veterans Against the War and many other large-scale and grassroots organizations to solicit change in a largely unrepresentative democracy, and to allow the voices of the people to ring through the halls of the Capital."

Please send letters to:

Benji Lewis
c/o Courage to Resist
484 Lake Parke Ave. #41
Oakland, CA 94610