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484 Lake Park Ave #41, Oakland CA 94610

510-488-3559

facebook.com/couragetoresist

Justice for Bradley Manning! Support builds for accused WikiLeaks whistle-blower as Fort Meade hearings advance towards court martial

By Courage to Resist. July 14, 2012

Army PFC Bradley Manning is accused of releasing to the public tens of thousands of documents containing proof of war crimes, government corruption, and corporate influence on foreign policy, via the WikiLeaks website. For his courage, he is facing life plus 150 years in prison.

Bradley's next public pre-trial hearings at Fort Meade, Maryland, are scheduled for July 16-20th and August 27-31st. Yet as Bradley's court martial approaches, it has become apparent to observers that he will not get a fair trial by the US military court. These are the reasons why justice demands that the charges be dropped, and Bradley be released now:

- After his arrest in May 2010, Bradley was held in solitary confinement for ten months, which UN Chief Investigator on Torture Juan Mendez condemned as "cruel and inhuman" treatment.

Bradley was singled out for torturous treatment for nearly a year like no other prisoner at the Quantico Marine Brig. Yet, the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) (Article 13) outlaws pre-trial punishment "any more rigorous" than that required to ensure the accused appears at court hearings. Bradley's illegal treatment is scheduled to be the subject of the August 27-31st hearing at Fort Meade.

- Both President Barack Obama and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Martin Dempsey have publicly declared that Bradley "broke the law," which means that subsequent trial proceedings have been swayed by "Unlawful Command Influence". These comments from members of Bradley's "Chain of Command" are clearly forbidden under the UCMJ (Article 37).

- Military law promises the defendant a speedy trial (UCMJ: Article 10). Yet Bradley was imprisoned for nearly two years before his trial proceedings



began, at which point Judge Lind—who will be overseeing the court martial—told his defense to choose either a speedy trial or access to hundreds of thousands of pages of important evidence.

For two years now, the government has fought against providing access to evidence and witnesses requested by the defense. Thanks to the thorough legal representation of Bradley's attorney David Coombs, the defense has won important small victories. At a June 25th hearing, for example, the military judge ordered the prosecution to explain delays in giving evidence to the defense by requiring them to create a detailed record of their efforts. Yet, there has been no indication the government will be held accountable for violation after violation of Bradley's rights as outlined under military law.

- There has been no evidence presented that Bradley's alleged actions damaged US national security or caused any person to be physically harmed. But the US military says that regardless of patriotic motivations or lack of harm caused, Bradley should be convicted of

Sgt. Lindsey: AWOL to get PTSD help

Keegan Hamilton, Seattle Weekly (excerpts). June 27, 2012

An Iraq War veteran stationed at Ft. Lewis says struggles with PTSD and a lack of responsiveness to his condition by Army doctors forced him to go AWOL.

The soldier, 26-year-old Sgt. Brook Thomas Lindsey, met with members of the media on Friday at Coffee Strong, a non-profit organization, headquartered across the street from Joint Base Lewis-McChord, that advocates for military mental health treatment reform. Lindsey recounted why he decided to leave the base without permission on March 26.

"I'd go over to Madigan (Army



Medical Center), right across the street and I'd tell them, 'I'm having suicidal thoughts,'" Lindsey says. "They would just tell me to breathe. They'd talk me down. The next day I'm still feeling the same

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way, but they'd return me to duty, tell my leaders everything was fine."

Lindsey says he enlisted at age 19 because he felt it was his patriotic duty. He says he was deployed in Iraq for 22 months, and that he was an exemplary soldier prior to his return to the military base just south of Tacoma. Greg Wilson, a member of Iraq Veterans Against the War, says he served in Iraq with Lindsey in 4th Battalion, 9th Infantry, 4th Stryker Brigade, 2nd Infantry Division, and was always impressed with his fellow soldier's resolve.



On May 20th, Iraq Veterans Against the War and Afghans for Peace lead a historic march in Chicago. Vets threw their medals towards the NATO Summit as thousands cheered. Courage to Resist organizer Michael Thurman (above) declared, "I was a conscientious objector from the US Air Force. I'm returning my "Global War on Terror" medal and military coins on behalf of Private First Class Bradley Manning who sacrificed everything to show us the truth about these wars!"

"He literally was one of those guys that loved what he was doing," Wilson says. "Sometimes it drove me nuts he was so motivated. He was trying to go to Ranger school. He loved his job as an infantryman."

But over the past year, Lindsey says he struggled with anxiety, sleeplessness, depression, and other conditions that stem from his combat experiences. He says the gung-ho Army culture initially discouraged him from seeking help, and when he finally did, "it was only a topical, it wasn't a deep solution."

Lindsey says in one instance he told doctors that he was having "homicidal thoughts against the chain of command," but the concerns were ignored. "They said I was fit for duty after that," Lindsey says. "What was so crazy, my unit was in YTC (Yakima Training Center), training with live ammunition. I'm like 'I don't think that's a good idea.'"

Lindsey describes a situation that was compounded by a divorce and heavy drinking, and admits he lost his rank for reasons he refused to divulge. He was eventually prescribed drugs that provided temporary relief, he says, but his requests



OUR LIVES OUR RIGHTS WE DON'T HAVE TO GO TO AFGHANISTAN

for counseling fell on deaf ears.

"They put me on medication and that did help, but I still needed to talk about some issues," Lindsey says. "I just needed to vent out all the things I'd witnessed and they didn't allow me to do that...I'd been a great soldier. But when I started to break down, I noticed the army started to turn its back on me."

Feeling he had nowhere to turn, Lindsey fled Ft. Lewis for upstate New York. He says he worked odd jobs and sought spiritual guidance before electing to turn himself in to military police last Tuesday, June 19. Since then, he joined up with the activist organization March Forward!, which organized the Friday press conference.

March Forward! co-founder Kevin Baker, also an Iraq War veteran, says the record number of suicides last year at JBLM suggest Lindsey isn't the only soldier crying out for help. "The longest war in American history is the occupation of Afghanistan," Baker says. "And the rate of suicide has passed that of people killed in combat. It's a crisis." Baker says March Forward! is starting a campaign encouraging soldiers to refuse orders to deploy to Afghanistan. The group is also providing legal aid for Lindsey.

Lindsey says he was moved to speak out about his situation after learning he faced pre-trial confinement for going AWOL. He also claims his confessions of "homicidal thoughts" to Madigan doctors are now being used against him in the military court system, as he faces additional charges of threatening a senior officer.

Lindsey says he's willing to own up to going AWOL, but he wants the world to know that the Army's mental health system needs a serious overhaul.

"I just want to get help," Lindsey says. "I just want light applied to this system. I want nothing monetary from the Army. I just want help."

Courage to Resist helps raise Peace Flags

By Courage to Resist. May 15, 2012

On International Conscientious Objectors' Day, Courage to Resist activists helped celebrate the 6th annual Berkeley Conscientious Objectors' and War Resisters' Day. This year, Courage to Resist had two new much larger Peace Flags produced, which we expect to use for years to come.

In 2007, on recommendation of the Berkeley Peace and Justice Commission, the Berkeley City Council unanimously passed a resolution and the mayor issued a proclamation which recognized that May 15th is International Conscientious Objectors' Day and stated, "that the Council of the City of Berkeley declares that May 15th of each year be publicly designated and



recognized as the day on which Berkeley honors, acknowledges, and celebrates conscientious objectors and war resisters, civilian and military, past, present, and future." We have been celebrating and raising peace flags over Berkeley ever since. This annual event is endorsed by the War Resisters League-West and Courage to Resist.

GI coffeehouse opens in Germany

By Helen Jaccard and Gerry Condon.
March 25, 2012

US soldiers in Germany now have a GI coffeehouse. The Clearing Barrel Bar and Café opened in March in Kaiserslautern, Germany, home to Ramstein Air Base and Landstuhl Regional Medical Center, among a constellation of US bases, with 50,000 US military and civilian personnel living in the area. The grand opening was a big success, with over 60 people in attendance.

Beautifully printed posters from the “War Is Trauma” art exhibit were displayed on spacious white walls. “War Is Trauma,” a collaboration between Just Seeds, an art collective from Brooklyn, New York, and Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW), is about “Operation Recovery”, a campaign to stop the deployment of traumatized troops and to focus public attention towards Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) and Military Sexual Trauma (MST).

Chris Capps-Schubert, an Iraq veteran and war resister, and his German wife Meike, an organizer-extraordinaire and member of Military Families Speak Out, have been working very hard for the past two years to make their dream of opening a GI coffeehouse a reality. Their efforts have been supported by the Military Counseling Network, Connection-EV, the Center on Conscience and War, the German Mennonite Peace Committee, members of IVAW and Veterans For Peace, and many other friends and activists.

Meike and Chris are both counselors with the Military Counseling Network, the European branch of the GI Rights Hotline. Chris and Meike and other counselors will be available to help soldiers who are seeking to be discharged from the military, facing other difficulties with the military, or seeking help dealing with military trauma.

Meike said, “Having this space

available allows us to bring together in one place what we do personally, socially, culturally, and politically. I am very grateful for all of the help and support that we have received from the peace community and we hope that they will continue to support us.”

Helen Jaccard and Gerry Condon representing Veterans For Peace spoke of the importance of supporting alleged WikiLeaks whistleblower Bradley Manning, and GI resisters like André Shepherd, an Iraq veteran who refused to redeploy to Iraq and is seeking political asylum in Germany.

GI coffeehouses were a mainstay of GI resistance in the Vietnam era, providing

safe, alternative spaces for soldiers to socialize, learn about their rights in the military, receive counseling, engage one another in political discussions, and



Grand opening of the Clearing Barrel, 3/24/12

organize themselves to resist illegal wars and occupations. The coffeehouse movement grew throughout the 60s and 70s. Today’s veterans have revived the coffeehouse tradition in order to build community and resistance. There are two successful GI coffeehouses in the U.S., Coffee Strong just outside the gates of Joint Base Lewis McCord in Washington State, and Under the Hood at Fort Hood, Texas.

You can find out more about The Clearing Barrel on their Facebook page, GI Café Germany, and on their website, www.GICafeGermany.com. Donations are still very much needed, so it’s not too late to contribute to this important new resource for our GIs in Germany.

Brad McCall free after Canada return

By Courage to Resist. July 5, 2012

When Brad McCall joined the Army in 2006, he was enthusiastic about becoming a soldier. After basic training, Brad was sent to Ft. Carson, Colorado, where GIs just back from Iraq told stories of violence against civilians that made him literally sick to his stomach. He began to rethink his decision and took a critical look at the ways the US government had justified the war and occupation.

Brad determined that he was a conscientious objector, yet the Army denied his application for discharge. So he chose to go AWOL and make his way to Canada, where like other GI resisters in that country, he awaited a decision on his application for refugee status.

About five months ago, Brad returned to the US to resolve his situation. With the help of Courage to Resist, Brad was discharged last week without a court martial. Brad shares:

“My name is Brad McCall. I am a soldier that went AWOL to Canada



Brad McCall's iam.bradleymanning.org upload

when I realized that I was not fighting for freedom or anything even close to resembling it. After hiding for 4 1/2 years, I have turned myself into the US Army in order to be with my family, and will thankfully be released from service in a week. I am fortunate...Bradley thus far has not been. Bradley, you are in my prayers. My will is that your valuable effort in this fight against global tyranny will be recognized...and that you will one day soon be with your family as well.”

Rodney Watson—US war resister in sanctuary of church

By Bob Meola, Courage to Resist. July 9, 2012 (long version at couragetoresist.org)

War Resister Rodney Watson wishes he could be with his family and friends in his home town of Kansas City, Missouri. He'd like to see his wife and four year old son more than just on weekends in Vancouver, BC, too. He'd also like to take his young family home to the United States and have his wife and his son meet his parents. But he can't. Rodney has been living in the sanctuary of United Church in Vancouver since September 18, 2009. He eats and sleeps there and cannot leave the Church without the risk of deportation to a military brig in the United States. After a tour of Iraq, witnessing the brutality and the same racism toward the Iraqi people by US enlisted soldiers and American contractors that he knew so well, Rodney was stop-lossed.

Rodney Watson joined the Army under a three-year contract. In 2006,

when his tour of duty in Iraq was over, he was informed that his contractual obligation to serve in the Army was being extended and he would not be discharged from military service at the agreed upon time. Rodney was a victim of the Army Stop Loss program. Rather than continue to serve in the Army and face re-deployment to Iraq in a war he knew was illegal and immoral, Rodney deserted and took refuge in Canada.

Presently, Rodney finds himself in a legal limbo. His lawyer will soon be re-submitting an application for him to be granted asylum on Humanitarian and Compassionate Grounds so that he can stay in Canada. "I still love America. It's my home. I miss my home. I would like to be able to cross any border freely as a free man. There should be amnesty for those who have woken up to the lies and the corruption of the Iraq War.

Being a deserter and a refugee has put a strain on my marriage and



family. I risked my life for a stupid war that was wrong. I have no fear of risking my freedom and my life again for what is right—for truth."

Rodney appreciates the support he has received from Courage to Resist, the War Resisters' Support Campaign, and donations from individual Quakers. It has been fundraising that has sustained him. Rodney welcomes anyone who wants to connect with him to do so at his Facebook page, War Resister in Sanctuary.

Continued: Justice for Bradley Manning!

"Aiding the Enemy" and sentenced to life in prison for making secret government actions public. This would make any kind of whistle-blower defense impossible.

In fact, the prosecution's interpretation of "Aiding the Enemy" is so broad that convicting Bradley will threaten the rights of all American soldiers. The American Civil Liberties Union explains: "If the government is right that a soldier 'indirectly' aids the enemy when he posts information to which the enemy might have access, then the threat of criminal prosecution hangs over any service member who gives an interview to a reporter, writes a letter to the editor, or posts a blog to the internet."

- Bradley's alleged actions helped spark the revolution in Tunisia, which in turn inspired the Occupy Movement. And by shedding light on unpunished war crimes in Iraq, he helped end negotiations

over extending the unpopular troop occupation there.

Both Bradley and his lawyer have expressed appreciation for the supporter presence at these hearings. We always hold vigils outside the main gate of Fort Meade before proceeding to the courtroom. We make our courtroom presence known by wearing "truth" t-shirts, which have been shown in courtroom sketches and mentioned

numerous times in the news.

During the hearings, hundreds of solidarity actions have been staged nationwide and internationally. Last month, hundreds participated in Bradley Manning contingents in

gay pride marches in DC, NYC, Chicago, SF, LA and San Diego. UK supporters organized theater productions and pushed parliamentary representatives to endorse Bradley's Nobel Peace Prize nomination. Here in the US, we're ramping up pressure

on President Obama to do the right thing by cooperating with anti-war veterans groups on creative actions at Obama campaign offices. Occupy LA will camp outside their federal building from July 13-16th in protest of the way Bradley has been treated, and Occupy DC has been inspired to do the same.

Please join us at Fort Meade for the August 27-31st public hearings that may or may not hold the government accountable for torturing Bradley at Quantico. If you can't make it, hold an event or fund-raiser in your community!

Bradley Manning is simply not guilty of "Aiding the Enemy" or violating the Espionage Act. If Bradley did heroically share the truth with us, the government could argue that various "information handling protocols" were bypassed. Yet, Bradley's two years (and counting) in pre-trial imprisonment should be punishment enough for such minor violations of regulations that were routinely ignored by other intelligence analysts serving alongside Bradley while in Iraq. For all of these reasons, we call on Judge Lind to dismiss the charges against Bradley, and for President Obama to pardon him in the event of a conviction.

www.bradleymanning.org



Thousands poured into Chicago to protest the NATO summit in May. Many saw Bradley Manning as an icon of the anti-war movement.