



COURAGE TO RESIST

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1st Lt Jacob Bridge, Objector United States Marine Corps (active duty)

"I read a quote from Chelsea Manning and I agreed with what it said. I started realizing that she was not like I'd been told and that I had a lot in common with her and her experience and her thinking and that was terrifying."

By Bob Meola, Courage to Resist
February 4, 2015

First Lt. Jacob Bridge recently sat down with me and explained the process and events that brought about his transformation from military believer to Conscientious Objector. Jake submitted his application for CO status in June of last year. It is now at Marine Corps Headquarters in Quantico, Virginia and Jake is waiting to hear whether he will be granted CO status.

Jake was 13 years old and in the 7th grade when the World Trade Center was hit on 9/11. He could see plumes of

smoke from Washington Rock Lookout Point, near his home in Stirling, New Jersey. This was the lookout point that enabled General George Washington to view the movement of the British army during the American Revolution. In high school, Jake knew he wanted to be in the military—first in the army, and later in the marines, because they were tough, because they had the reputation of being the toughest of all of the branches of the military.

Jake believed that being a marine would, "make you a man and that it was honorable and a challenge. It was



1st Lt Jacob Bridge, USMC

patriotic. Seeing the planes going into the Twin Towers made me feel like the planes were crashing into my heart when they went into the building.

"I couldn't understand why they would do that. When it was said that they hated our freedom, it was all I needed to hear." Jake graduated from High School in 2007 and attended the University of Colorado in Boulder. There, he enrolled in Naval ROTC. When he graduated from college, in 2011, he also graduated as the Honor Graduate in the Commissioning Class at NROTC at CU, Boulder.

Jake entered the Marine Corps as a commissioned 2nd Lieutenant, in August, 2011. He had one year of training through 2012. He attended TBS [The Basic School] in Quantico, Virginia from March through September, 2012. Jake graduated #22 out of 270, in the top ten percent, from TBS. He later became a 1st Lieutenant, an O-2 classification rate.

Every Marine Corps officer is an infantry officer first, before getting assigned a specialty. Jake attended the Specialty School in Logistics at Camp Johnson, North Carolina, from October, 2012 to February, 2013. There he learned about supplies, troops, munitions, and moving them all around—a broad specialty.

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Edward Snowden: Thank you Chelsea for "your courageous act"

Snowden was one of many supporters to send a message to WikiLeaks whistle-blower Chelsea Manning on her 27th birthday. Other messages came from Terry Gilliam, Michael Stipe, Vivienne Westwood, Molly Crabapple, Birgitta Jónsdóttir, Slavoj Žižek, Alan Moore, Joe Sacco, Lupe Fiasco, Peter Tatchell, Billy Martin, and Saul Williams.



Edward Snowden. December 17, 2014

I thank you now and forever for your extraordinary act of service and I am sorry that it has come with such an unbelievable personal cost.

As a result of your courageous act, the American people are more informed about the workings of our government as it positions itself for endless war. You have inspired an angry public to demand a government that is accountable for its perpetration of torture and other war crimes, for the true costs of its wars, and for conspiring in corruption around the world.

The distinguishing strength of democracy is self-correction—that no matter how bad things get, the public in partnership with a free press can detect and correct mistakes of public officials. You valiantly renewed this self-correcting, self-determining American tradition of governance. For this, we all thank you.

1st Lt Jacob Bridge, Objector cont.

Jake got to his unit in Hawaii in late February of 2013. He was part of the fleet marine force, the FMF, “the fleet”. According to Jake, “It was supposed to be awesome at that point. It wasn’t. I noticed things. The idea is that you are the moral and ethical leader and you

have to set an example for 18 and 19 year old kids. I saw a lack of caring and compassion and love in marine supervisors.

“I was greeted by people who pretended to be that way. But off duty, they would drink and drive and buy prostitutes. They treated subordinates without respect.

They were not ‘the best of the best.’ I questioned that if I didn’t trust my person, my bosses, my bosses’ bosses, Congress, the President, how could anyone be qualified to do what we were doing, to make the choice that this person, squad, or country needs to go to war and who needs to die? And that ‘what am I doing here in this job?’

“My first job in Hawaii was in the operations section. I managed the battalion’s training for the most part, from March, 2013 to September, 2013. Then, in September, 2013, I became a platoon commander. It was a landing support platoon. We got troops and supplies to where they needed to go in the Hawaiian Islands. I did that until June of 2014.

“As I was writing my application [for CO], I realized that I couldn’t train

them to kill any longer and I’d be putting them in danger. I turned in my CO application and my boss—my captain, an O-3 and my major, an O-4 asked what would happen if they sent me into a big training operation in the Pacific Rim. I said that I honestly didn’t know whether

I would show up. They thanked me for my honesty. I had worked for them when I first arrived in another job. I respected those two. Now they were my bosses again.

“The next day, I was no longer a platoon commander and they put me in Headquarters Company as an Executive Officer, managing in an office job—removed from hands on operation.

“Back in late July or early August

of 2013, when I was still at my first job in the operations section, managing the battalion’s training, I had a conversation with my chaplain and I said that I was thinking about filing for CO status. She said that she was going away to finish her Masters in Divinity and I should contemplate it some more. I hadn’t yet been a platoon commander and thought I’d be a compassionate and good commander and wanted that experience. But when she came back a month later, I was absorbed in being a platoon commander and had not been thinking about it. But about nine months from when we first talked, I knew I was a CO. I told the chaplain that it was no longer ‘if’ but ‘when’—that I was certain I would apply for CO status. She was supportive. That was in May, 2014.

“Once I was relieved of being a platoon commander, for the next two weeks, I was writing and editing my CO application.

“In November [2014], I read

a quote from Chelsea Manning* and I agreed with what it said. I started realizing that she was not like I’d been told and that I had a lot in common with her and her experience and her thinking and that was terrifying. Then I saw the *Collateral Murder* video. It was a huge impact on me and I knew there was no going back.” Jake has since written a letter to Chelsea Manning.

Jake became a vegan in July, last year, around the time of his birthday. He is 26 now. He is excited about his nonviolent commitment. I was glad that when he was on leave, he sought out a local contact for War Resisters League, in Berkeley, and found me. It was a pleasure to meet him. Jake’s contract with the Marines will end in September. Jake wants to connect with activists for peace and justice. I salute him. He deserves our support and best wishes for a speedy Honorable Discharge as a Conscientious Objector as soon as possible and long before his contract ends in September.

* * *

The quote Jacob is referring to is from former US Army intelligence analyst PFC Chelsea Manning’s public letter to President Obama, which was read at her August 2013 sentencing for providing documents and video to the anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks. Specifically:

Patriotism is often the cry extolled when morally questionable acts are advocated by those in power. When these cries of patriotism drown out any logically based dissension, it is usually the American soldier that is given the order to carry out some ill-conceived mission.

Our nation has had similar dark moments for the virtues of democracy—the Trail of Tears, the Dred Scott decision, McCarthyism, and the

Japanese-American internment camps—to mention a few. I am confident that many of the actions since 9/11 will one day be viewed in a similar light.

As the late Howard Zinn once said, “There is not a flag large enough to cover the shame of killing innocent people.”

Jacob Bridge’s official CO application and letter to Chelsea Manning can be found at couragetoresist.org



Jacob Bridge

Legacy giving

As you are making out your will, please consider a bequest to the “Alliance for Global Justice project Courage to Resist”, 484 Lake Park Ave #41, Oakland CA 94610. For more information about bequest language in your estate plans, please give us a call at 510-488-3559.

Resister Sara Beining freed from jail, discharged!

By Courage to Resist. December 10, 2014

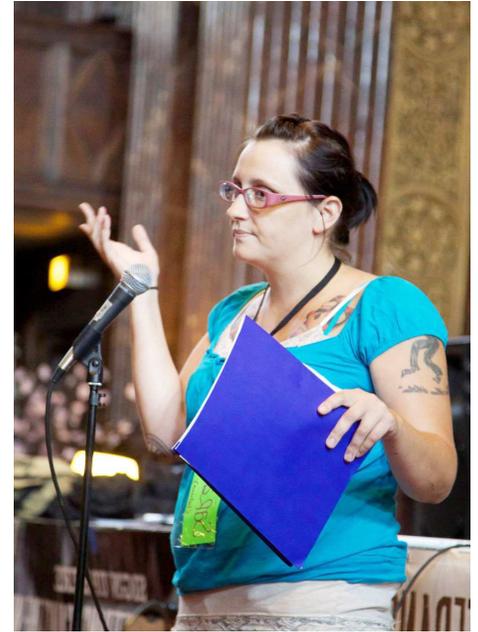
Yesterday, in a military courtroom at Fort Carson, Colorado, military war resister Sara Beining was sentenced to time already served in pre-trial confinement, and a “bad conduct” discharge. Sara was initially facing a decade in prison on two counts of desertion, so this is a huge victory. Sara benefited greatly from the representation of attorney James Branum of Oklahoma City. Mr. Branum’s services and expenses were paid for by Courage to Resist and our supporters nationwide. Sara was released from jail last night and will be out-processed from the US Army in the next few days.

Yesterday, Mr. Branum shared this update via Facebook, “Today’s news from Ft. Carson on case of War resister Sara Beining—Judge gave sentence of 5 months and a Bad Conduct Discharge. Our sealed plea deal was for no more than 4 months and not a dishonorable discharge so she only does 4 months. With credit for time served and good behavior, she is going to be released from jail, likely later tonight.” He added, “We are very pleased with this outcome! Woohoo!”

Sara went AWOL from the Army after returning from Iraq in 2007. During her absence from the Army, she served as a secretary on the national board of directors of Iraq Veterans Against the War.

Days before her arrest last year, Sara appeared on a Portland, Oregon, radio program to describe why she had gone AWOL:

“We did this oath, to swear to ‘uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic,’” she told listeners. “And the longer I was in Iraq, the more I realized that we weren’t really doing anything to defend our own constitution. I was in intelligence. There were



Sara Beining speaking at the IVAW/CivSol national convention in Chicago, 2013

no weapons of mass destruction. The worst that was happening there for weapons was the depleted uranium in southern Iraq. Most Iraqi women gave birth to children, and the first thing people would ask is, ‘Is it normal?’ because there were so many birth defects due to depleted uranium. So many soldiers have symptoms of radiation poisoning and sickness. We weren’t helping our country over there, without a doubt.”



Attorney James Branum, supporter Matt Stys, and Sara Beining during a sentencing hearing break at Fort Carson, Colorado.

SSgt Joseph Hickman exposes murder cover-up at Gitmo

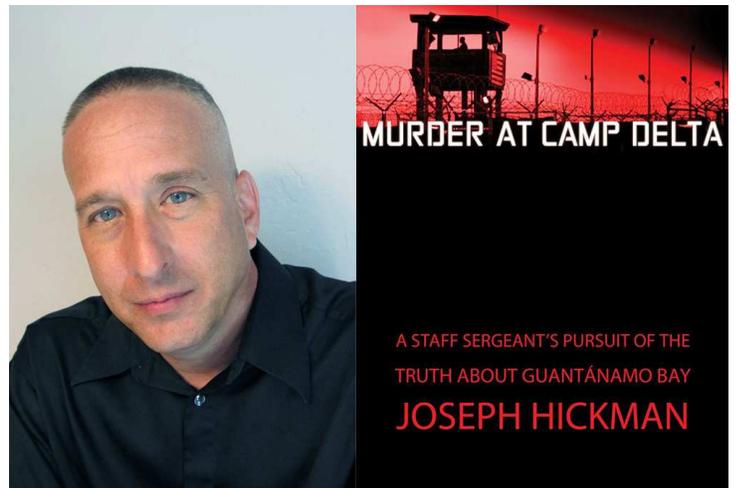
By Courage to Resist. February 24, 2015

Former US Army Staff Sergeant Joseph Hickman has just published his book, *Murder at Camp Delta*. He was stationed in Guantánamo Bay from March 2006 to March 2007 and was the Sergeant of the Guard on the evening that three detainees died. The Pentagon said the three—Yasser Talal al-Zahrani, Salah Ahmed al-Salami and Mani Shaman al-Utaybi—all committed suicide.

Joseph Hickman, through exhaustive research, explains how every aspect of the official suicide story is a lie. That in fact the detainees were tortured to death at a then secret “black site” located just outside the main parameter of the camp.

Recently, Hickman appeared on *Democracy Now* with Amy Goodman, where he explained:

“I’d just like to say that I wrote this book so the truth could come out. And people will notice I dedicated it to Talal al-Zahrani. He is the father of one of the detainees, who has always questioned the US government’s version of what happened that night. And I hope, in some way, this answers some questions and, in an odd way, gives him some peace, so he knows the truth.”



Chelsea Manning preparing for first appeals, making history

By Jeff Paterson, Courage to Resist.
February 25, 2015

Heroic WikiLeaks whistle-blower, former US Army intelligence analyst, PFC Chelsea Manning and her new appellate legal team—led by Nancy Hollander and Vince Ward—are now preparing for her arguments for the appeals process. Recently, Nancy Hollander explained to a gathering at the Hastings School of Law in San Francisco:

“[The Espionage Act] is a law that was poorly written in the beginning and is clearly becoming more and more abused. It was meant to punish spies and saboteurs during the war in 1917, during the World War. But the way the courts have interpreted the law, it’s really become little more than a trap to ensnare those that embarrass the government and that’s exactly how it was used in this case. We have to appeal this on Chelsea’s behalf. And we have to appeal this for all of our sake, and that’s because there is no public interest defense. Chelsea wasn’t even allowed to put on the defense of why she felt it important for the public to know about these human rights abuses.”

The first stage of appeals, heard by the US Army Court of Criminal Appeals, is arguably the most important. This court has the ability to review all aspects of

the original court martial, including the authority to reduce Manning’s 35-year prison sentence without limit.

Meanwhile, Chelsea has formally joined the *Guardian* newspaper as a contributing opinion writer. She will be writing from prison in Fort Leavenworth, KS, and will focus on topics related to war, gender, and freedom of information. Since her imprisonment, she has published a few essays, including “The Fog Machine of Far” (*NY Times*), “How to Make ISIS Fall on its Own Sword” (*Guardian*), and “I am a Transgender Woman and the Government is Denying my Civil Rights” (*Guardian*).

After fighting for the last two years to receive necessary gender-related medical care from prison authorities, Chelsea has finally begun hormone therapy at Fort Leavenworth. The DoD’s approval of care came only after Chelsea’s initial request in August of 2013 and a subsequent September 2014 lawsuit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union,

on her behalf, were ignored. Chelsea’s treatment marks the first time in US military history that a transgender soldier has received gender-related health care. Transgender individuals are not yet allowed to serve. However,

Chelsea cannot be discharged until her prison sentence is complete and so the Army is responsible for her medical well-being.

Despite their approval of hormone therapy, the military is refusing to use Chelsea’s legal name and female pronouns for the upcoming appeals process. “The government’s own medical professionals refer to appellant as female and use female pronouns when referring to her... Under these circumstances it is wrong and contradictory for the government to insist that the court and parties use masculine pronouns when referring to appellant during the course of this appeal. Appellant is female, a fact acknowledged by the government’s own medical professionals,” argues Nancy Hollander in a recent rebuttal to the military’s position.



European Court deals setback to US war resister’s asylum bid André Shepherd refused to redeploy to Iraq in 2008, sought refuge in Germany

By Sarah Lazare,
excerpts from
CommonDreams.
February 26, 2015

US war resister and former soldier André Shepherd, hailed internationally as a hero for refusing to take part in the occupation of Iraq, was just dealt a blow from Europe’s highest court in his bid to win asylum in Germany.

The Luxembourg-based European Court of Justice (ECJ) said Thursday that 37-year-old Shepherd, in order to win refugee status, must prove that he would have been forced to commit war crimes in Iraq if he had not refused to serve in the US military.



The decision goes against the earlier opinion of the ECJ’s Advocate General, who urged the European Union to protect resisters of illegal wars who face persecution as a result.

Supporters slammed the ruling as “insufficient” and “incomprehensible.”

Maggie Martin, Iraq veteran and organizer with Iraq Veterans Against the War, told Common Dreams, “It’s very disappointing to hear the court’s decision, when revelations about Abu Ghraib and other act of torture committed by US forces should leave no question about war

crimes. We owe resisters of the Iraq War our thanks and it’s a shame that Shepherd could be sent to the US to face jail time.”

Shepherd, who hails originally from Cleveland, Ohio, was deployed to Iraq in 2004 as an Apache helicopter mechanic, during which he developed serious concerns about the occupation. When ordered back to Iraq in 2007, he went AWOL from his base in Absbach, Germany—the country where he sought asylum in 2008.

This ruling kicks Shepherd’s asylum application back to the German courts.

But Shepherd’s supporters are still hopeful his years-long battle will be successful. “André’s case gives the German and EU high courts a final chance to render a guilty verdict on the criminal invasion of Iraq by the US,” said Jeff Paterson, project director for Courage to Resist.