

Military Families SPEAK OUT

**Support our troops,
bring them home now,
and take care of them
when they get here.**

March - June, 2017

MFSO Members Outraged!

By Paula Rogovin, MFSO Steering
Committee, MFSO NJ

Former Congressman Dennis Kucinich, D-Ohio, said in a press release of September 17, 2007 "As I have said for five years, this war is about oil. The Bush administration desires private control of Iraqi oil, but we have no right to force Iraq to give up their oil. The constitution of Iraq designates that the oil of Iraq is the property of all Iraqi people." Check out another one of Kucinich's speeches from 2007. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZTb3SLa_2VE

Some of you may remember this sarcastic bumper sticker from United For Peace And Justice from that war.

**HOW DID OUR OIL GET
UNDER THEIR SAND?**

And now, Donald Trump.

"On the day after he was sworn in as the 45th president in American history, Donald Trump stepped into a foreign policy controversy, saying the US should have kept Iraqi oil after its drawdown from the Iraq war, suggesting "maybe we'll have another chance" at accessing that natural resource.

He also said Iraqi oil was responsible for the rise of ISIS. "If we kept the oil, you probably wouldn't have ISIS because that's where they made their money in the first place, so we should have kept the oil, but, OK, maybe we'll have another chance," he said. By Danny McDonald. Boston Globe, January 21, 2017

It's the same oil policy – the greed for oil that belongs to Iraq. This policy that claims that Iraqi oil should belong to U.S. corporations – has claimed the lives of more than 170,635 – 190,240 civilians. (www.iraqbodycount.org) It has claimed the lives of more than 4,515 U.S. service members. (www.icasualties.org.) Data also shows that millions of Iraqi people were displaced internally and externally since 2003. The greed for profit from oil has resulted in the death by suicide of thousands of active duty soldiers and veterans. Many thousands of Iraqi people and U.S. troops suffer from traumatic brain injury and other injuries. The trauma from moral injury has brought great suffering. Families in Iraq and families of service members, including loved ones of MFSO members, have suffered.

Military Families Speak Out reaffirms our opposition to military action in Iraq and Afghanistan. We say – It's not our oil! It's not our minerals. Support Our Troops. Bring Them Home NOW! Take Care of Them When They Get Here! We call on all military families to join this effort!



If you have a loved one serving in the military, please join MFSO. For more information: Contact Pat Alviso at mfso@mfso.org. Find MFSO at www.mfso.org or at Military Families Speak Out on Facebook. Call: 565-579-3980

Donations are welcome.

MFSO Family Receives Long-Awaited Letter of Condolence from President Obama.

by Mary Hladky, MFSO Steering Committee,
MFSO, Kansas City, MO

Military Families Speak Out's (MFSO) last meeting at the White House was August 27, 2015. We discussed ending our military involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan, the high rate of military suicides and VA care. The very next morning we learned that Tyler Westbrook, son of WV MFSO representative, Marcia Westbrook, completed suicide at his home. Tyler was assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 10th Special Forces Group (Airborne), Fort Carson, Colorado.



We immediately informed our WH contact, who was very sympathetic, stating that a request would be made for a letter of condolence from the President.

A few days later, our contact informed us that this letter would not be sent because Tyler died "stateside". We were informed that it is the policy of the Department of Defense that only active service members who die by suicide while deployed can be sent a letter of condolence from the President.

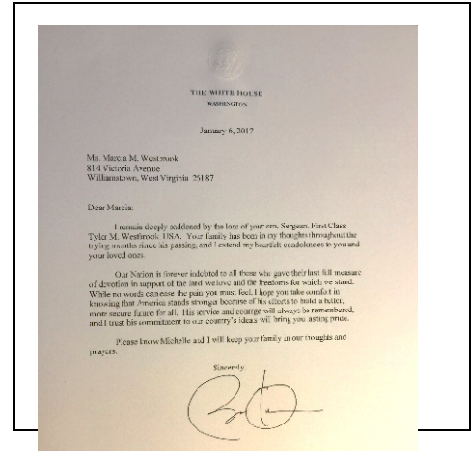
How can such a distinction be made? It is an obviously offensive and ill-conceived policy that is very painful to the families. **This policy reinforces the stigma attached to suicide** making these families feel less than, that their loved one's service was unimportant and their sacrifice not respected.

MFSO diligently worked with our White House contact requesting the Defense Department's policy be changed so that the President could send a condolence letter to the family. In addition, MFSO conducted a campaign to demand a change of policy. This included a video statement by

Marcia, a press release at the VFP convention, and letters sent by MFSO members.

After 16 months, to our surprise and with tears of joy and sadness, Marcia Westbrook and her daughter-in-law received signed letters of condolence from President Obama.

Thank you President Obama.



We are continuing to work on getting the Department of Defense to change its policy so that every family whose military member dies by suicide is entitled to receive a presidential condolence letter.

MFSO members and friends will be a presence at the Veterans For Peace Annual Convention in Chicago, Illinois from **Aug 9-13**. The theme of this year's convention will be: "Education Not Militarization." You are invited to join a special mixer at the convention on Saturday where you can meet other military families, the leadership, hear our stories, and make friends, and meet allies during the convention. We are currently planning a special workshop for military families as well. Go to www.VeteransForPeace.org for details.



Military Families Speak Out Says

NO MUSLIM BAN!

Military Family members - We welcome poems, articles, and stories. Send to Paula Rogovin, MFSO newsletter editor. MFSO@mfsso.org

Mark the 14th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq with action.



Military Families,
please work with
other groups in your

community to mark the 14th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq: March 20, 2003. Say: No Military Action in Iraq! Bring all troops home from Iraq NOW!

Ways you can get involved.

- Participate on one of the vigils listed below
- Check with United For Peace and Justice to see if other actions are planned in your community or region. www.unitedforpeace.org
- If nothing has been planned, work with other groups in your community to plan
 - Teach-ins
 - Community meetings or rallies
 - Meetings with your Senators or Representatives in Congress
 - Vigils or demonstrations
 - Actions at a Federal Office, a National Guard Armory, a war memorial, a busy corner, or other high traffic area in your community

Send a press advisory, then call the press so you can spread the word beyond your immediate community. MFSO Press Director, Stacy Hafley, can by providing talking points and coaching anyone able to do press interviews: Call or email Stacy at 434-983-1760 or hafley75@gmail.com

Ongoing vigils:

Long Beach, Orange County, CA: EVERY Friday. 7-9 pm. 2nd and Nieto in front of the Chase Bank in Belmont Shore. MFSO with the Long Beach Area Peace Network

Huntington Beach, CA: EVERY Sunday. 12 noon. at the foot of the Huntington Beach Pier. ENOUGH campaign.

Orange, CA: 3rd Thursday of every month. 5:30-7pm. at Chapman and Glassell (in the Traffic Circle) in Orange. MFSO and Code Pink

Seal Beach, CA: Last Wednesday of the month. 5-6:60 pm. in front of the globe at Leisure World. Senior Patriots for Peace

Los Angeles, CA: EVERY Sunday. 6am-4pm. Just north of the Santa Monica Pier, under Bubba Gumps. Arlington West

Huntington Beach CA: First Sundays. 7:30am to 3:30pm. 6th and PCH. Arlington West

Teaneck, NJ: EVERY Wednesday, 4-5 pm. National Guard Armory. Corner of Teaneck Rd. and Liberty Rd. in Teaneck. Teaneck Peace Vigil. MFSO, Bergen County, Veterans For Peace, Chapter 21 NJ.

Leonia, NJ: EVERY Sunday, 4-4:30 pm. Broad Ave. and Ft. Lee Rd. Leonia Peace Vigil Group.

Yellow Springs, OH: EVERY Saturday. corner of Xenia Ave & Limestone.

Missouri – Kansas City: ‘Patriots for Peace’

Demonstrations. Weekly, Every Tuesday, 5-6 pm 63rd and Ward Parkway (Median Strip on South Corner) Kansas City, MO. Contact: schwartzkatz@sbcglobal.net
63rd Street Patriots have been standing against the unjust policies since February 2003. We have stood at the corner of 63rd and Ward Parkway every Tuesday during rush hour from 5:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m., during rain, snow and extreme heat. Please join us!

Please sign and distribute this important petition to

End U.S. War in Afghanistan

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/end-us-war-in-afghanistan>

The U.S war in Afghanistan is well into its 16th year. Unbelievably, Army General John Nicholson is requesting that more troops be sent to Afghanistan to “train, advise and assist” the Afghan forces.

Military Families Speak Out is also very concerned about the increasing talk of ground troops not only in Afghanistan but in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen. More troops are not the answer! War has not worked and will not work. Our government must focus on diplomacy and negotiations to bring stability to these countries.

The U.S. is spending \$4 million/hour on planes, drones, bombs, guns, and over-priced contractors in a country that needs food and agricultural equipment, much of which could be provided by U.S. businesses. Thus far, the U.S. has spent an outrageous \$783 billion with virtually nothing to show for it except the death of U.S. soldiers, and the death, injury and displacement of millions of Afghans.

But the war has had a substantial impact on our security: it has endangered us. ...terrorists targeting the U.S. have stated their motives as revenge for the U.S. war in Afghanistan, along with other U.S. wars in the region.

MFSO Marches on Inauguration Day and at the Women's March in January!



Washington, D.C.



New York City, NY



Kansas City, MO



Los Angeles, CA



Denver, CO

These were just a few of the cities where MFSO members and friends were marching. Well, in some cases, we stood still, because there were so many people.

Federal Hiring Freeze Hurts Military Families

A federal civilian hiring freeze ordered by President Donald Trump has forced military bases to indefinitely suspend some child care programs, depriving families of the support they need to do their jobs. The Associated Press reported that Pentagon officials sent a memo saying that child care workers were not to be impacted by the freeze. Many are fighting back. Let MFSO know if your child care has been impacted by the freeze:

mfso@mfso.org. or contact
VoteVets: www.votevets.org

MFSO Salutes Dede Miller,
June 16, 1958 - January 22,
2017

By Pat Alviso, MFSO, Orange
County, CA

Dede Miller, member of the MFSO Steering Committee, and dear friend to so many MFSO and Gold Star family members, passed away after a long battle with cancer. Dede was a tireless advocate for peace. She inspired many military families to speak truth to power by her gallant actions. Dede was there inspiring me from the beginning days of my activism, from Camp Casey to Senator Feinstein's front porch in the rain. We still talk about her stellar work as the leader of the Hollywood Eleven. She taught us how to turn grief into actions that helped so many military families and veterans. She was fearless and will be missed tremendously.

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Innovation: Container Housing for Homeless Veterans!

Midway, California unveiled a nearly completed Potter's Lane container housing complex! The 16 studio-apartment units were created out of refurbished cargo containers and will be used to house homeless veterans.

The housing complex was built and managed by the nonprofit American Family Housing and includes a common room and a central patio with a barbecue and a garden with raised beds to grow vegetables. Pets are allowed.

Rents will be subsidized, with wraparound services offered through the VA and Orange County's Illumination Foundation, a nonprofit that, along with the VA, is placing the veterans in the housing units at Potter's Lane.

Illumination Foundation will also provide services for as many as 25 homeless individuals recovering from health emergencies with recuperative after-care. Check on-line

