

How to Honor Veterans on Veterans' Day: End the Wars and Restore Liberty, Justice and Opportunity for the 99%

By [Washington's Blog](#)

Global Research, November 11, 2011

[Washington's Blog](#) 11 November 2011

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#), [US NATO War Agenda](#)

Soldiers Want the Wars to End

I [wrote](#) the following on Veterans' Day 2008:

Today, I sincerely and passionately honor our veterans.

So many have endured unimaginable hardship, trauma or injury. Some have paid the ultimate price to defend our country.

Veterans are Against the Iraq War

You might assume veterans of the Iraq war support the war.

Overwhelmingly, that is false.

Talk to some of the veterans. By and large, they think that the invasion of Iraq, or at least our continued occupation, is wrong.

They have seen first-hand the killing and maiming of innocent Iraqi civilians.

They have heard the cries of those falsely accused, who were shipped off to Abu Ghraib.

They have woken up in the middle of the night in a cold sweat, reliving the nightmares they experienced.

They know that the chicken-hawk civilians who started the war and their yes-men in the military leadership are wrong, that the war should be stopped, and the troops brought home.

Renewing My Commitment

That's why on Veterans' day, I am honoring the brave men and women who served in the military by renewing my commitment to end the Iraq war.

The Iraq war might have been forgotten by the mainstream media, but I will not forget the troops and veterans. I will fight to end the war . . . for them.

Indeed, many active-duty service men are opposed to the endless wars, which only weaken our national security and increase terrorism. See [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), [this](#) and [this](#).

(The troops want to come home, and [the American public want them to come home as well.](#))

Veterans' Day Began as a Pledge to End ALL Wars

David Swanson notes that [Veteran's Day began as a pledge to end all wars](#):

Believe it or not, November 11th was not made a holiday in order to celebrate war, support troops, or cheer the 11th year of occupying Afghanistan. This day was made a holiday in order to celebrate an armistice that ended what was up until that point, in 1918, one of the worst things our species had thus far done to itself, namely World War I.

A ten-year campaign was launched in 1918 that in 1928 created the Kellogg-Briand Pact, legally banning all wars. That treaty is still on the books, which is why war making is a criminal act and how Nazis came to be prosecuted for it.

“[O]n November 11, 1918, there ended the most unnecessary, the most financially exhausting, and the most terribly fatal of all the wars that the world has ever known. Twenty millions of men and women, in that war, were killed outright, or died later from wounds. The Spanish influenza, admittedly caused by the War and nothing else, killed, in various lands, one hundred million persons more.” — Thomas Hall Shastid, 1927.

Given that [war is a racket that only benefits the 1%](#), we should honor the original intention of Veterans' Day.

Veterans Are Part of the 99%

I [pointed out](#) last week:

Veterans [from every branch of the military – and across 3 generations – are coming out to support the “occupy” protests](#). But they are not just outsiders supporting the protesters ... they are part of the 99%.

As AP [notes](#) today, the veterans fighting the imperial wars for the 1% are part of the 99% who are hurt by the never-ending-war-for-profit-model:

U.S. military veterans ... [say] corporate contractors in Iraq made big money while the troops defending them came home – and can't make a living now.

“For too long, our voices have been silenced, suppressed and ignored in favor of the voices of Wall Street and the banks and the corporations,” said Joseph Carter, a 27-year-old Iraq war veteran who marched Wednesday to Zuccotti Park, the epicenter of the movement that has spread worldwide.

Their unemployment rate outstrips the national average and is expected to worsen. [\[See this.\]](#) They worry about preservation of First Amendment rights. And they're angry.

“For 10 years, we have been fighting wars that have enriched the wealthiest 1 percent, decimated our economy and left our nation with a generation of traumatized and wounded veterans that will require care for years to come,” said Carter, who leads the national Iraq Veterans Against the War group.

In New York on Wednesday, police circled the veterans as they stood in formation in front of the New York Stock Exchange, chanting, “We are veterans! We are the 99 percent!” and “Corporate profits on the rise, soldiers have to bleed and die!”

“I swore to defend their freedoms, and they were being taken away. It’s very unconstitutional,” said McBride, who said he was less than honorably discharged for medical reasons.

McBride said the Occupy Wall Street protest is exactly the kind of civil disobedience protected under U.S. law.

“They wanted to kick us out. This is a peaceful assembly,” he said Thursday. “In the Constitution, the people have the right to peacefully assemble. It’s plain and simple. That’s why I’m here, to defend the Constitution of the United States.”

Back in New York, Bordeleau blamed some financial institutions for U.S. involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“Wall Street corporations have played a big role in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan,” said Bordeleau

He said private contractors have reaped big profits in those countries “in pursuit of corporate interests that have had a devastating effect on our economy and our country, benefiting only a small number of people.”

“The 99 percent have to take a stand,” Bordeleau said, to rectify the biggest income gap between rich and poor since the Great Depression, fueled by what protesters say is Wall Street’s overblown clout in Washington politics.

“Halliburton and Bechtel think these wars are swell,” they chanted, invoking the names of American companies that received federal contracts for work rebuilding Iraq.

They say those who risked their lives fighting for their country have the right to protest economic policies and business practices that give them a slimmer chance of finding jobs than most Americans.

Police have been [beating and harassing veterans](#).

If we want to honor veterans, we should stand with them as they fight for liberty and justice

for the 99%.

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