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Veterans, grannies protest war

Matt Rocheleau, Collegian Staff

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As a sergeant in the U.S. Army serving in Iraq, Scott Palmer recalls having his weapon aimed at a silhouette of what appeared to be an armed person standing in the tower of a building.

Keeping himself from pulling the trigger prevented Palmer from making what he said would have been the biggest mistake of his life, as the silhouette turned out to be a young boy holding a broomstick.

This was just one of many stories shared by members of the local Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) chapter who provided emotional testimonies of their service in Iraq and Afghanistan at the Cape Cod Lounge Wednesday night.

The event called "Winter Soldier" is one of many talks being held across the U.S. by the IVAW as a continuation of an event held in March when over 200 veterans and soldiers, as well as many Iraqi and Afghan civilians, met in Maryland to discuss their experiences.

The main goals of the IVAW and the panel discussion are immediate withdrawal of forces in Iraq, reparations for Iraqis and better support for returning servicemen and women.

"It's not easy for us to tell our stories. They drudge up difficult emotions," said Ted Goodnight who left the Army National Guard after 15 years of service including a tour in Afghanistan.

Goodnight said when he realized there was no support for the troops from the government he decided to leave his service.

After returning from Afghanistan, Goodnight was sent to Mississippi to provide humanitarian aid through the National Guard after Hurricane Katrina.

He said his group was deployed with weapons and ammunition, which had never been the case in his four previous humanitarian aid assignments.

"Instead of doing humanitarian work we were marching up and down the streets with loaded rifles to stop the supposed looting," he said.

The speakers told similar stories of how they came to oppose the wars they were fighting and how some memories are hard to get over.

"Things were definitely not right when I returned home after what I'd seen, witnessed and done in Iraq," said Palmer.

Nathan Lusignan, who served as a military police officer in Iraq, told how his compound was attacked by a suicide car bomb, killing a fellow soldier.

"These people were so disgusted with us and could not tolerate us so much that they killed themselves. When I talk about it, it just makes me feel…not well," he said.

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Ed Cutting
posted 10/02/08 @ 7:19 AM EST

I look at this quite simply – it is a violation of the UCMJ to commit war crimes, and it is a violation of the UCMJ to fail to report others committing war crimes. (Continued…)

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