



Written by [R. Cort Kirkwood](#) on August 8, 2024

Vance Hits Walz's Military Record as Questions Continue About His Claims

GOP Senator J.D. Vance nailed Democratic Governor Tim Walz yesterday for Walz's bailing out of a deployment to Iraq so he could run for Congress.

A former U.S. Marine who served in Iraq, Vance also accused Walz of "stolen valor" — perhaps referring to the 2013 Stolen Valor Act, which made it illegal to profit from fraudulent military service — because Walz suggested that he served in combat.

The comments came after the controversy about Walz's service, and what rank he actually held when he retired after more than two decades in the National Guard, went viral on social media. The controversy erupted almost immediately after Democratic presidential nominee Kamala Harris picked Walz as her running mate for the November election.

The Harris presidential campaign defended Walz, but can't explain away either his past or his words.

Vance's Speech

Vance was speaking in Michigan when he directly attacked Walz's integrity and military record.

"When the United State Marine Corps, when the United States of America asked me to go to Iraq to serve my country, I did it," Vance said:

I did what they asked me to do, and I did it honorably and I'm very proud of that service. When Tim Walz was asked by his country to go to Iraq, you know what he did? He dropped out of the Army and allowed his unit to go without him, a fact that he's been criticized for aggressively by a lot of the people that he served with.

Vance [said it was "shameful"](#) that Walz, as a command sergeant major, didn't join his unit.

He also noted that Walz lied about his military record in a statement on gun control.

Vance explained that Walz "said we shouldn't allow weapons that I used in war to be on America's streets." He noted that Harris' campaign likely regrets publicizing the remarks.

The Harris campaign released just such a statement from Walz. "I spent 25 years in the Army and I hunt," he said:



AP Images
J.D. Vance



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I've been voting for common sense legislation that protects the Second Amendment, but we can do background checks. We can research the impacts of gun violence. We can make sure those weapons of war, that I carried in war, are only carried in war.

Vance zeroed Walz in a brutal rejoinder.

He asked, "I wonder, Tim Walz, when were you ever in war?":

When was this ... what was this weapon that you carried into war, given that you abandoned your unit right before they went to Iraq? And he has not spent a day in a combat zone. What bothers me about Tim Walz is the "stolen valor" garbage. Do not pretend to be something that you're not. ... I'd be ashamed if I was him and I lied about my military service like he did.

Walz "Has Some Explaining to Do"

Vance isn't the only GOP veteran who questions Walz's service.

Representative Mike Waltz of Florida, a former Green Beret, said the same thing. He added that Walz did not retire from the military as a command sergeant major, as [The New American reported](#) yesterday.

"I've seen the reports on Tim Walz's military record and he has some explaining to do," Waltz said over a video in which he explains the problem with Walz's record.

"A lot of discussion out there in the veterans community about Governor Tim Walz's military record. And I think it boils down to two issues," Waltz said:

One is the fact that he's described himself over his political career as a sergeant major, as the highest enlisted rank in the Army. He was promoted to sergeant major; but then in order to stay in that rank, you have to complete certain training.

Walz did not complete training at the sergeant major's academy, as two command sergeant majors explained six years ago [in a paid letter](#) to the *West Central Tribune*. Walz was demoted to master sergeant before he retired. But Waltz said the bigger issue is "walking away from his soldiers after they had been called to go to Iraq."

Continued Waltz:

It's kind of like the quarterback of a big team walking away from their team right before they go to the Super Bowl. I've never heard anything like it, especially the fact that he was a command sergeant major. I've never heard of the commander, a sergeant major stepping away from their unit before they go down range. The media needs to do their job and ask these tough questions. And Walz needs to answer them. The veterans community, for one, is demanding an explanation of why he didn't fulfill his duty as a command sergeant major and go into harm's way with the men and women he was leading.



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Official Harris Campaign Website

Walz's "stolen valor" aside, the [Harris campaign says](#) that he rose through the ranks to command sergeant major and "retired as the highest-ranking enlisted National Guard soldier in southern Minnesota."

That's only true if Master Sergeant Walz was, indeed, "the highest-ranking enlisted National Guard soldier in southern Minnesota" when he retired.

Walz did *not* retire as a command sergeant major, according to the above-noted letter in the *West Central Tribune*.

Walz retired from the Guard to run for Congress in May 2005, just before his unit was deployed to Iraq. "On September 10th, 2005 conditionally promoted Command Sergeant Major Walz was reduced to Master Sergeant," the [letter says](#).

Like the Harris campaign, Walz's biography at his governor's webpage [strongly suggests](#) that he retired as a command sergeant major.



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