



Written by [Becky Akers](#) on June 8, 2010

## Killers-cum-Cannon-Fodder

Anyone who loves liberty must have relished the criticism Memorial Day earned this year. Whether at the mainstream Los Angeles Times or alternative websites, Americans increasingly condemn the holiday's glorification of war as they reject the Empire's preposterous claim that its aggression defends our freedom.

But though we recognize politicians and the Pentagon for the killers they are, we still romanticize the enlisted ranks. "The sad reality is that many of the enormous sacrifices made by so many young Americans had nothing to do with freedom," [says one writer](#). "This was not the fault of those who fought and died, but of the political leaders who sent them."

Certainly, we can and should blame politicians - and pray God that's the least of the punishment for these lying murderers. But since 1973 and the suspension of the military draft, anyone marching off to battle does so by choice. Should we continue excusing the troops who force our rulers' whims on the rest of the world?

Sometimes these volunteers are sincere - but that doesn't mean they're either bright or right. Rather, they're tragically foolish "patriots" who swallow politicians' pabulum about liberating other people by forcing American democracy on them. Pete Patriot for all his jingoism has never cracked a copy of the Constitution, so he doesn't realize it prohibits the Feds from building an empire, even if they euphemize the construction as "liberation" or "regime change." But Pete also seems ignorant of the Golden Rule, nor does he ask himself whether he'd appreciate Iraqis or Afghans imposing their governmental philosophy here - especially if the price for his new set of political masters is an executed father, a raped sister, and a shattered mother with whom he scavenges food since Iraqi forces bombed their home while installing said masters.

Alas, Pete pondered none of this when he agreed to do unto Iraqis what he would never want them to do unto him. But what about his parents? Where were his grandparents, aunt, uncles? And his teachers, particularly those who quoted Scripture to him on Sundays? Why didn't the older, wiser people who say they love him - and who will grieve agonizingly, mercilessly, unendingly if he becomes yet another casualty - warn him away from such utter wickedness? Why didn't they caution him that yes, recruiters promise all sorts of benefits and adventure, [particularly in these hard times](#), but those who fall for this cynical pitch pay emotionally and often physically for the rest of their lives? Assuming they survive, that





is.

More usually, though, it's Steve Selfish who populates boot camp. [Steve's very frank](#) about why he's joining up: [the bennies](#). He wants to see the world on our dime. Or he craves free tuition for college or vocational training as a pilot or in another of the skills the military teaches. Occasionally, he's simply bored. Cushy modern life with its climate-controlled SUVs, McMansions, and Stairmasters doesn't challenge a guy much.

I know one such Steve. He enlisted, returned briefly to the civilian world, then re-enlisted. "When I was overseas, I got to blow things up - cool!" he told me. "And there were whole weeks when I was out on patrol, I didn't know what was coming next, always had to be on my toes. Back home, there I was sitting at a desk 9 to 5, shuffling papers for some suit."

But being all that you can be doesn't justify murder. Cops would have arrested Steve had he strolled out of his corporate office one day and shot up the mall for a little excitement. Yet when a politician hands him a gun and points him at Koreans, Vietnamese, Iraqis or Afghans, those same crimes turn Steve into a hero. Invading another man's home and killing him is murder; why isn't it when we invade another man's country and kill him? Are we that intellectually and morally stupid?

Steve doesn't see it this way, of course. And if we overlook his enthusiasm for exploits at the cost of others' lives, he's a fine fellow. He thinks so, too, though he'd die before admitting it. Steve has a strong, commendable code: heroes perform certain feats, such as protecting the weak, but they never brag about it, or lie, or complain, and they pull their own weight. He genuinely and earnestly tries to live up to this.

Odd, then, that he never sees the contradiction between his ideals and his profession. One reason may be Americans' prevalent but often subtle idolatry of all things martial - or all *American* things martial. Folks who cringe at pictures of goose-stepping Nazis or battalions of Chinese communists go all gushy when it comes to American platoons. Many of Steve's relatives "served" in the military; his parents are proud of their valiant son and encouraged his own "service."

You, too, can raise a killer-cum-cannon-fodder for politicians and their corporate cronies. Begin by proving your own unthinking loyalty to America's regime and its minions: insist that it's our country, right or wrong. Venerate those minions as they posture and prate for the cameras; refuse to hold them to the same standards you demand of the grocer or the guy who fixes your dishwasher. When Uncle George invites you to his speech on Veteran's Day, take little Stevie and Pete and sit in the front row; bonus points for dabbing your eyes. After the atrocities George saw - and perpetrated - overseas, he of all people should despise the military for its vicious cruelty, corruption and deceit. But hey, your boys love his stories, and George is what your teachers used to call "living history," right? Besides, spreading the Pentagon's propaganda to the next generation is the classic definition of "patriotism." Shop at stores that discount merchandise for military families even though you don't qualify. Donate to "charities" like [the USO](#). Denounce books such as Dalton Trumbo's *Johnny Got His Gun* as un-American; buy Stevie and Pete biographies of William Sherman, Teddy Roosevelt, Douglas MacArthur. Thank your pastor for praying for our President and troops; include both President and troops but never their victims in your grace before meals. Support schools and teachers who portray domestic soldiers, a.k.a., cops, as kindly and benevolent, eager to help lost children, everybody's friend.

If you're successful, you may reap the same reward as the parents in the Third-World villages Stevie and Pete bomb one day: you too may wail at your children's funerals.



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